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KEYNOTE I

09:30 – 10:30, Tuesday 26th August 2025

Ballet and Opera Hall, Slovak National Theatre

Empowering Early Years Practitioners to Promote Inclusive and Equitable Education for Everyone

Following the 2018 European Union Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching, this presentation considers how knowledge about learner differences can be integrated with the broader pedagogical and curriculum knowledge that early years practitioners have to learn and be able to apply in the classroom. It considers the concept of inclusive pedagogy as essential working with diverse learner groups as the demographic profile of schools change in response to meeting special educational needs in mainstream schools increasing diversity associated with unprecedented levels of migration.

Speaker Bio

Professor Lani Florian is Bell Chair of Education Emerita at the University of Edinburgh. She is best known for her research on inclusive pedagogy and teacher education for inclusive education. Over the years, she has worked with UNICEF, the OECD, Open Society Foundations, the British Council, the Council of Europe and the European Agency for Special and Inclusive Education to ensure the results of her research are being applied in schools and integrated into first and higher degrees in universities in around the world.

KEYNOTE II

11:00 – 12:00, Tuesday 26th August 2025

Ballet and Opera Hall, Slovak National Theatre

Children's Multilingualism and Linguistic Agency in Families and ECEC Contexts

This keynote presentation is divided into three main parts. Drawing on data from research in different countries it discusses examples on opportunities and challenges regarding children's multilingualism and linguistic agency in ECEC contexts and families. Secondly, it addresses children's linguistic identities and linguistic rights. It argues that children's linguistic agency and multilingual voices have in many cases been overlooked or silenced and how this can affect the development of children's linguistic identities. However, findings from research have shown that when provided with supportive and flexible learning spaces, children can become active agents in developing language practices both in ECEC contexts and in their families, contributing to these contexts with their input, ideas, choices, and language preferences. Finally, drawing on data on good practices from families and ECEC contexts, it discusses how ECEC contexts can provide better opportunities and learning spaces for multilingual children in partnerships with their families.

Speaker bio

Hanna Ragnarsdóttir is a professor at the School of Education, University of Iceland. She completed a BA in anthropology and history from the University of Iceland in 1984, an MSc in anthropology from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1986, and a Dr.philos in education from the University of Oslo in 2007. Her research has mainly focused on immigrants and refugees (children, adults, and families) in Icelandic society and schools, heritage language research, bi- and plurilingualism, multicultural education, multilingual education, and school reform. She has published numerous articles in peer reviewed academic journals and altogether published eight books.

KEYNOTE III

09:30 – 10:30, Thursday 28th August 2025

Ballet and Opera Hall, Slovak National Theatre

Stories of inclusion: Neurodivergent Individuals' Pathways from Early Childhood Education to University

The presentation aims to explore the concept of neurodiversity and the inclusion of individuals with neurodivergent development in the context of lifelong learning and education. Reflecting international research and experiences from the Slovak educational setting, we examined the narratives of neurodivergent individuals as they navigate educational pathways from early childhood education to university. Using a qualitative approach, we conducted semi-structured interviews with neurodivergent young adults who shared their experiences in different educational settings. The findings reveal a spectrum of inclusion levels, highlighting the critical role of supportive educators, tailored learning approaches, and inclusive policies in improving developmental outcomes. Early childhood education, family support, and intervention programmes emerged as vital in fostering self-advocacy skills and social integration, offering neurodivergent children opportunities to develop academically and personally. However, challenges such as stigma, inadequate resources, and systemic barriers were noted, significantly impacting participants' educational trajectories. Transitions from one educational level to another posed particular obstacles, including the need for greater institutional support and awareness of neurodiversity. The analysis of individual stories of inclusion underscores the importance of inclusive practices in educational settings and advocates systemic changes that prioritise neurodivergent perspectives. Ultimately, these narratives emphasise the need for a collaborative approach between educators, policymakers, and neurodivergent individuals to foster a more inclusive and supportive educational landscape. By amplifying the voices of neurodivergent adolescents and young adults, we are able to understand early childhood experiences and reflections on living with a neurodivergent condition.

Speaker bio

Lenka Sokolová is an Associate Professor of Educational and School Psychology at the Institute of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

She has been involved in research and practice of educational psychology focused on a variety of target groups from early childhood to higher education and the continuous professional development of teachers. She worked as a school psychologist, primary and secondary education language teacher, and teacher and parent educator. Her research interests include relationships and mental health in the school community, inclusive education from early childhood to higher education, school-based prevention and intervention, psychology learning and teaching, and teacher and psychologist education and training.

She is a board member and former president of the European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations (EFPTA, www.efpta.org). She also served as a chair of the Slovak Association for the Teaching of Psychology and a member of the Board of Educational Affairs of the European Federation of Psychologist Associations (EFPA, www.efpa.eu). Currently, she is a member of the Slovak and international school research team of the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children study (HBSC, www.hbsc.org).

KEYNOTE IV:

11:00 – 12:00, Thursday 28th August 2025

Ballet and Opera Hall, Slovak National Theatre

The Power of Potential: Addressing Exclusions and Possibilities from Early Childhood Care and Education in Africa

Africa, as the "children's continent," provides rich insights into breakdowns leading to inequities and exclusions. Conversely, it offers breakthroughs that build resilience to support a more just and sustainable ECCE facing perpetual crises. This presentation is divided into three parts. It begins with a critical analysis of dominant ECCE models that have created exclusions based on, but not limited to, geographical location, socio-economic conditions, culture, language, abilities and gender. Such an analysis is critical given the changing global demographics and choices to be made – continuity along unjust ECCE pathways or disrupting them through radical change. The presentation continues into the power of potential that foregrounds the breakthroughs – local efforts to make ECCE relevant and responsive to the daily realities of young children and their families. In the concluding section, the leverage points are illuminated to support a call to action through networks of solidarity. Such structures defy majority and minority world ECCE polarisations. As such, they should pay deep attention to interdisciplinarity, intersectoral practice, cross-cultural exchanges, indigenous practices and equitable partnerships for change.

Speaker bio

Professor Hasina Banu Ebrahim began her career as a teacher in the early years. She holds a PhD in the Constructions of Early Childhood with and for Children. She is a full professor and the UNESCO co-chair of Early Education, Care and Development at the University of South Africa. Her research coheres around Early Childhood at the Margins, specifically concerning policy, practice and workforce development. Her work has earned her the status of a rated researcher with the South African National Research Foundation. She has also won prestigious institutional and national awards for her research. She continues to be influential in the ECCE field through her expansive publications, international keynotes, appointments on task teams and advisory teams, and the convener of the knowledge generation working group in the Early Childhood Cluster in the African Union. She has led projects on knowledge transfer in ECCE, professionalisation of the ECCE workforce, and policy development for ECCE. Her current project is on Workforce Sustainability and System Building in ECCE.

Poster Session A

14:55 – 15:35, Tuesday 26th August 2025

The Atrium, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava

A1: Sharing personal stories with preschool children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds: the significance of group participation

Presenters
Hellen Vretudaki, University of Crete, Greece

All authors
Hellen Vretudaki, University of Crete, Greece
Maria Kypriotaki, University of Crete, Greece
Panagiota Alexiou, Directorate of Primary Education, Greece

An intervention program based on Favot et al. (2018) study was designed. Research aimed to enhance nineteen (19) preschool children who come from disadvantaged environments ability to narrate complete and comprehensible personal narratives. The study took place in Crete, Greece. Personal narratives have been linked both young children's social skills development and their future literacy outcomes. Studies have shown that when preschool children be at risk to face learning disabilities participate in narrative language enhancement programs, they have a positive impact on strengthening a range of language, emotional, and social skills (Spencer et al., 2015). In the eliciting personal narratives process, family photos of the children's everyday life were used as a stimulus to enhance their engagement to the process. The program was divided into three phases, each of which participated children interacting in different group settings (dyads, small group, whole class). concurrently, the intervention was also carried out on an individual level with a toddler diagnosed with autism without functional speech in order to determine the effect of the program in this condition (one-to-one setting), (Gillam et al., 2015). Dealing with ethical considerations informed consent received from the parents of the children for their participation in the study. The results showed that the children, interacting in different groups, reached the point they were freely narrate complete personal narratives without the classroom teacher's mediation and support. This research expands the existing in the narrative interventions field as it includes the effect of group size (small, large, plenary, individual) in low SES children.

preschool, personal narratives, autism, low socioeconomic environments.

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A2: Engaging in the process of inclusion: the perspective of children in early childhood education and care

Presenters
Chantale Breault, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
Clara Soulez, Université de Montréal, Canada

All authors
Chantale Breault, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
Clara Soulez, Université de Montréal, Canada
Nathalie Bigras, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

This study aims to understand what a successful experience of inclusion in early childhood education and care (ECEC) means for children identified as needing special support. Children have opinions about their educational context (Chicken et al., 2024; Macha et al., 2024), even when they have limited language (Pickering, 2022). However, their views are rarely considered regarding inclusion (Lyons et al., 2022). This study draws upon the sociology of childhood (Swauger et al., 2017), recognizing children as "experts in their own lives" and requiring adults to actively listen by adapting to children's preferred communication (Clark, 2017; Edwards et al., 2011). Within a participatory paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997), the Mosaic approach (Clark, 2017) was used in this multiple-case study. Interviews, photographs, role-playing and observations were conducted during six visits, in three ECECs. Qualitative data were interpreted using a thematic analysis method. Through the ethics of listening, the researcher constantly adjusted her interactions with participants. Particular attention was paid to children's consent, by presenting the study visually and verifying their desire to participate throughout the visits. As Clark says, each mosaic was "as different as the children themselves" (2017: 135). Themes shared by all participants were having time and space to play at their own pace, knowing they could count on adults to support their autonomy, feeling comfortable interacting with peers, and contributing to group life. Children's perspectives should be central in determining how to promote inclusion in ECEC. Employing a multi-method, polyvocal approach appears to be a promising avenue.

inclusion, co-constructed practices, child's perspective, Mosaic approach, communication

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A3: Examining young children's learning of scientific practices and science content in a STEM project

Presenters
Ching-Ting Hsin, Department of Early Childhood Education, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan

All authors
Ching-Ting Hsin, Department of Early Childhood Education, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan
I-Yun Chang, Department of Early Childhood Education, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan
Di Tam Luu, Department of Early Childhood Education, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan

This study investigated how a STEM project impacted young children's scientific practices and understanding of respiratory diseases—a topic that gained increased attention following the COVID-19 pandemic. STEM projects benefit children's development of scientific practices, math skills, and other domains (Clements and Sarama, 2014). However, research on the learning effects remains limited. Using the theoretical framework of the project approach (Helm and Katz, 2016; Krajcik and Czerniak, 2018), we developed and implemented the project (Authors, 2022). The project contained 11 lessons and was implemented over a month, covering disease causes, lung damage, prevention, medical treatment, and immune enhancement. Participants included 8 kindergartners (average age: 5.7 years) in northern Taiwan. Adopting a mixed-method case study approach, we collect data including pre- and post-tests on scientific practices and classroom observations. Three focal children with low pre-test scores were selected to examine factors influencing their improvement. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test and qualitative analyses were applied. Parental informed consent was obtained, ensuring that children remained anonymous and could withdraw from the study at any time. Results showed no significant improvement in scientific practices, possibly due to high pre-test performance. Qualitative analysis indicated that all children learned the five core concepts, and five achieved over 80% of the total scientific practices score. One focal child demonstrated the most improvement in scientific practices tests. Qualitative analyses showed that he achieved most of the learning goals and was strongly engaged in each lesson. This research provides insights into the effective implementation of microbiology projects for young children.

early STEM, project approach, scientific practice, science content, early chilhood education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A4: The Effect of Pretend Play on Children's Social Competence: An Intervention Study in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Mireille Smits-van der Nat, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

All authors
Mireille Smits-van der Nat, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
Femke van der Wilt, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
Martijn Meeter, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
Chiel van der Veen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

This study examined the effect of a pretend play intervention on social competence in early childhood education. A recent meta-analysis by Smits-van der Nat et al. (2024) found an overall positive relation between pretend play and social competence, but noted that most studies are correlational in nature, inconsistent in findings, and have methodological shortcomings. This emphasizes the need for rigorous intervention research. From the perspective of Vygotsky's cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Vygotsky, 1978), pretend play is considered essential for the development of higher mental functions like social competence. Using a controlled intervention study design, this study examined the effect of an eight-week social pretend play intervention on social competence in N = 333 preschoolers (aged 3-7 years). Before and after the eight week period, children were tested on social-cognitive skills and their social-emotional behavior during pretend play was observed. Active parental consent was obtained by distributing consent forms and information letters. Children were allowed to withdraw at any time, ensured by test-assistents. Data were processed anonymously processed and used exclusively for this study. Contrary to our expectations, the results indicated no significant effects. This may be due to the standardized intervention, limited adult guidance during pretend play, and the social competence measurement of the current study. The findings underscore the complexity involved in pretend play interventions and the assessment of social competence in young children. We discuss how future research can address these challenges to enhance its impact on practice and policy to support all children in developing social competence.

pretend play, intervention study, social competence, social-cognitive skills, social-emotional behavior

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A6: Executive Functioning in Children Aged 6-11 Years: Validity of Rating Scales and Performance-Based Tests

Presenters
Eva Košíková, Comenius University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology, Slovakia
Diana Demkaninová, Comenius University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology, Slovakia

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Margaréta Hapčová, Comenius University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology, Slovakia
Barbora Mesárošová, Comenius University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology, Slovakia

This study explored executive functions (EF) in children using performance-based tasks and rating scales, examining the relationship between WCST-64 and BRIEF2, and their links to academic performance. EF are commonly assessed via structured tasks and rating scales, though these often show weak correlations, raising concerns about their convergent validity (Toplak et al., 2013). EF are top-down processes essential for goal-directed behavior, including

cognitive flexibility and inhibitory control (Diamond, 2013). This study distinguishes between cognitive performance in tasks and everyday EF behavior assessed via rating scales. Weak correlations may arise from "task impurity" and method variance—rating scales are subjective, influenced by rater perceptions, while performance tests are objective but lack ecological validity. This study used a correlational design with 163 children (6–11y). EF were assessed using WCST-64 and BRIEF2, controlling for age. Ethical standards were followed, including informed parental consent, child assent, and minimal distress. Results showed that after controlling for age, the number of cards needed to reach the first category in the WCST significantly correlated with BRIEF2 scores. This was negatively correlated with the total BRIEF2 score (r = -.218*) and the CRI index (r = -.012**). BRIEF2 scores correlated more with Slovak language grades than mathematics grades, suggesting language tasks require more cognitive flexibility. In contrast, WCST outcomes did not correlate with academic achievement. These findings highlight the importance of integrating ecologically valid EF assessments in schools. The lack of correlation between WCST and academic achievement suggests a need for a broader EF assessment approach combining objective and subjective measures.

executive functions, WCST-64, BRIEF2, rating scales, performance-based tests

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A7: The link between ECEC staff's responses to child-related emotions and their evaluation of children's social competence

Presenters
Hà Phạm-Đào, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

All authors
Hà Phạm-Đào, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Merja Koivula, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Eija Sevón, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Eija Räikkönen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The study examines the associations between ECEC staff's responses to child-related emotions and children' social competence, an essential skill for their inclusion and participation in ECEC. It also investigates if the evaluation of children's social competence differs according to the background factors of the children and ECEC staff. Extant literature shows parental responses to children's emotions significantly influence children's social emotional competence (Denham et al., 2019), but research on how ECEC staff's responses to child-related emotions link to children's social competence is scant. Thus, grounded in emotional socialization theory (Denham et al., 2019), this study focuses on ECEC staff's responses to child-related emotions and their relation to children's social competence. The study was conducted with multilevel modeling using Mplus software with latent variables of ECEC staff's responses to child-related emotions (PERS's 2 subscales, Pereira et al., 2017), children's social competence (MASK scale, Junttila et al., 2006) and their background variables. Its data was based on ECEC staff's evaluations (N = 84) of children (N = 249) in different Finnish ECEC centers collected in January 2022. Written consent and assent were obtained from ECEC staff and parents before the data collection and pseudonymized data were utilized. The findings from preliminary analyses show that ECEC staff's emotion-oriented responses have positive and negative relations with children's prosocial and antisocial behaviors respectively while their emotion-accepted responses are negatively related to children's prosocial behaviors. The implications are additional professional development programs on ECEC staff's social emotional competence to foster children's social competence.

social competence, emotional socialization, ECEC staff's responses to child-related emotions, background factors

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A8: Coping with the daily drop-off and pick-up transitions in and out of daycare centres

Presenters

Johanna Weiss, University of Augsburg, Germany

All authors

Johanna Weiss, University of Augsburg, Germany

The study aims to analyse the management of drop-off & pick-up-micro-transitions by children and adults. The focus is an investigation into positioning/social interactions, that are carried out by those involved in these micro-transitions. As a qualifying paper, this work builds on existing research, such as the ethnographic case study by Lee (2010), which found, among other things, that parents and children reading storybooks aloud during morning transitions facilitates separations. Research indicates a gap concerning the child's positioning when transitioning between "family-child" and "kindergarten-child" (Harring, 2024), which can be addressed by applying the "doing-transition" concept (Walther, 2015) to emphasize active engagement in these microtransition-experiences, and by using Griebel and Niesel's (2013) model to frame transition as a co-constructive-developmental-task. The study is methodologically grounded in ethnography, utilising the 'grounded theory' framework (Strauss and Glaser, 1996) as an analytical paradigm. The study is predicated on participant observation & ethnographic interviews. Research with young-children in their 'safe-space' (daycare-centre) is ethically challenging due to generational power gap. Parental consent is obtained, participation is voluntary, children and adults can refuse observation or withdraw any time. It is anticipated that a diverse range of interaction-patterns will be observed during the transition-processes within the same daycare-centre and generational orders and power relations are reproduced. It is expected that the study will provide information on types of action in arranging the drop-off-pick-up-transitions. Daycare-centres can use this to reflect on and optimise the designs of their micro-transitions. This can increase children's well-being, reduce stress, improve children's learning conditions, intensify cooperation between families and daycare-centres.

drop-off-pick-up-situation, micro-transitions, ethnography, participant-observation, interaction-patters

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A9: Learning in Play Areas: Taiwanese Preschoolers' Perspectives

Presenters

Yuling Su, University of Taipei, Taiwan

All authors

Yuling Su, University of Taipei, Taiwan

This study explores what children perceive as learning within play areas and the factors they consider as supporting their learning. This study builds on research that emphasizes children's agency in learning through play (Colliver and Fleer, 2015). Wu (2015) found that children's retrospective accounts challenge the traditional Chinese cultural view, which separates play from learning. While existing research primarily focuses on Western contexts, this study contributes insights from Taiwanese preschool settings. The study is grounded in socio-cultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978), emphasizes learning through social interaction, and children's rights theory (United Nations, 1989). The Mosaic Approach (Clark, 2017) further informs the methodological approach, emphasizing participatory research with young children. Twenty-four children (aged 4–5) were invited to take photographs, create drawings, and engage in interviews with the researcher to share their learning perspectives. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) identified key themes, supported by frequency analysis to quantify learning themes and sources of support. Ethical protocols included university approval, child-friendly study introductions, ongoing consent, anonymity, and the right to withdraw (Flewitt, 2005). Findings revealed eight key learning themes ranked by frequency: hand skills, perseverance, observational and pattern recognition skills, creative material use, tool manipulation, game rule comprehension, writing skills, and peer relationships. The main sources of support were: teachers, learning materials, peers, self-initiated learning, and sufficient time. Educators can foster persistence by designing play environments that encourage extended engagement and self-directed challenges. The study broadens international research by offering perspectives from a non-Western early childhood education context.

children's perspectives, learning through play, play areas, preschool, teachers' roles

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A10: When Motivation Is Not Enough: Parental Adherence in a Shared Reading Intervention for Preschool Second Language (L2) Learners

Presenters
Merete Haugstad, University of Stavanger, Norway

All authors
Merete Haugstad, University of Stavanger, Norway

This study aims to examine the relationship between parental adherence to a shared reading intervention and social validity, defined as multilingual families' perceptions of the intervention's acceptability, feasibility, and utility. L2 intervention studies have rarely addressed social validity (Larsson, 2020), particularly in experimental group studies (Hur, 2020). Recent work emphasizes social validity's critical role in bridging the research-practice gap (Rowe et al., 2025). Social validity theory (Wolf, 1978) emphasizes participants' perceived relevance and acceptance of interventions. In this context, the intervention's practical benefits and alignment with diverse linguistic and cultural practices, are particularly crucial. This postpositivist study involved 101 parents of children aged 3 to 4 in an intervention group of a digital shared reading RCT to promote children's L2. Adherence was measured via logged reading time. Social validity and demographic variables were gathered via questionnaires. Logistic regression will assess the relationship between adherence, social validity, socioeconomic status, and language background (Arabic, Polish, Lithuanian). The participants provided informed consent with the option to withdraw and agreed to data usage in the main project's RCT. A post-intervention questionnaire was incorporated for the current study, obtaining additional consent for linking responses to prio Findings showed that parents read an average of 2.51 hours over nine weeks, well below the expected daily dosage. Reading time varied widely (SD = 2.83, range = 0.0142–15.4 hours), with a few outliers showing high adherence. This study may uncover inconsistencies in family routines and cultural variations, guiding policy and assisting educators in providing support aligning with families' preferences.

social validity, adherence, L2 learners, implementation, literacy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A11: Metaphorical Storytelling and Young Children's Perception of Migration: Fostering Belonging and Cultural Awareness in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Duygu Yalman Polatlar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye

All authors
Duygu Yalman Polatlar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye
Semiha Arslan, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye

This study explores how metaphorical storytelling influences young children's perceptions of migration, identity, and belonging. Using Guridi's How to Put a Whale into a Suitcase, it examines:

- How does the suitcase metaphor shape children's understanding of migration and belonging?
- How does storytelling foster cultural awareness and emotional connections?

Children's literature shapes cultural understanding. Prior studies (Hope, 2020; Short, 2019) highlight migration narratives' role in fostering empathy. This study uniquely focuses on the suitcase as a metaphor for movement, security, and belonging. Grounded in reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978) and narrative theory (Bruner, 1991),

it also draws on critical literacy (Janks, 2010) and anti-bias education (Derman-Sparks and Edwards, 2010) to explore children's engagement with migration narratives. This interpretivist, qualitative phenomenological study explored migration narratives through observations, diaries, photographs, and interactive storytelling with 15 purposively selected six-year-olds from a disadvantaged early childhood center. Thematic analysis, validated through independent coding, identified five key themes. Ethical approval, parental consent, and child assent were obtained. Identities were anonymized, and non-intrusive storytelling methods were used. Thematic analysis identified five key themes: Security and Attachment, Emotional Connection, Exploration and Adventure, Imagination, and Personalization. Children reimagined the suitcase as "a little home that moves," "a treasure chest of memories," and "maps and secrets," illustrating migration as both personal and adventurous. Findings highlight storytelling's role in fostering cultural awareness, emotional expression, and inclusive attitudes in early childhood. Findings underscore the need for migration-themed literature in early childhood curricula. Storytelling can foster cultural sensitivity, identity discussions, and inclusive learning environments.

metaphorical storytelling, cultural awareness, child agency, inclusive education, social-emotional development

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A12: Tribal Aboriginal Mothers' Conversations with Young Children on Three Types of Negative Emotions

Presenters
Pei-Ling Wang, University of Taipei, Taiwan

All authors
Pei-Ling Wang, University of Taipei, Taiwan

This study aims to examine the narrative styles and content in mother-child discussions of sadness, anger, and fear among 20 pairs of tribal Aboriginal mothers and their children age 4-5 Emotions are fundamental to children development, influencing children's mental health. Mother-child discussions about emotions serve as a critical mechanism for fostering children's emotional understanding (Wang, 2001). However, research on emotional conversations between Indigenous mothers and their children—the earliest inhabitants of Taiwan—remains scarce and largely overlooked Vygotsky (1978) proposed that language is a thinking mechanism that serves as a pivotal bridge connecting an individual's internal life with external society. Post-positivism guided the study Mothers were instructed to talk to their children at home three events in which their children experienced sadness, fear, and anger. The conversations were audio-recorded, transcribed and analyzed. The study was approved by the University of Taipei IRB in 2022. All names in this report are pseudonyms. The study found that in terms of narrative style, mothers were more likely to extend discussions on sadness with daughters, while their retelling styles for anger and fear showed no gender differences. Regarding narrative content, mothers used similar emotional words for boys and girls. In terms of themes, sadness and anger were more related to interpersonal topics, while fear was linked to personal experiences. Notably, this study found that children independently proposed solutions to negative emotions, unlike non-Indigenous children, who typically relied on parental guidance. More resources should be provided for aboriginal mothers in guiding their children on effectively confronting and regulating negative emotions.

tribal aboriginal mother young children, negative emotions

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A13: Exploring indigenous intergenerational learning of cultural curricula and aesthetic experience: A case study of an indigenous preschool in Taiwan

Presenters
Yu-Ting Chen, University of Taipei, Taiwan

All authors
Yu-Ting Chen, University of Taipei, Taiwan

This study explores a cultural curriculum for indigenous intergenerational learning and the participants' aesthetic experiences in an indigenous preschool in Taiwan. The research addresses two questions: (1) How did the preschool educators develop a cultural curriculum of indigenous intergenerational learning? (2) What were the participants' aesthetic experiences in learning? Previous research has primarily focused on students' aesthetic experiences in learning (Chen, 2024). However, little research has explored aesthetic experiences in intergenerational learning within indigenous communities (Chen, 2025). This study is grounded in Deweyan aesthetic experience (Dewey, 2005), which is a complete experience, involving emotions, interactions between doing and undergoing, and feelings of pleasure and fulfilment. It employed a case study method to gain a holistic understanding. Participants volunteered and included 19 preschoolers, six community elders, and two preschool educators from an indigenous preschool. Data collection included observations, interviews, curricular journals, etc. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Consent letters were obtained from all participants. There was no potential conflict of interest. Findings revealed that the educators developed a cultural curriculum focused on indigenous traditional toys. They invited indigenous elders to share cultural meanings of traditional toys and teach preschoolers to make toys using plants. They played with handmade toys and innovated new ways of playing. They constructed aesthetic experiences through making and playing. The elders enjoyed interacting with the preschoolers, while the preschoolers concentrated and enjoyed making and playing with the elders. This study provides new perspectives for cultural curricula in indigenous intergenerational learning and aesthetic education.

aesthetic experience, intergenerational learning, indigenous cultural curricula, indigenous traditional toys, indigenous preschool

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A14: Integrating indigenous culture into an aesthetic curriculum for intergenerational learning at an indigenous preschool in Taiwan

Presenters
Yu-Ting Chen, University of Taipei, Taiwan
Li Tsung-Wen Kuo, National Taitung University, Taiwan

All authors
Yu-Ting Chen, University of Taipei, Taiwan
Li Tsung-Wen Kuo, National Taitung University, Taiwan

This study explores the integration of indigenous culture into an aesthetic curriculum for intergenerational learning at an indigenous preschool in Taiwan. The research addresses two questions: (1) How did the preschool educator integrate indigenous culture into an aesthetic curriculum for intergenerational learning? (2) What was the impact of the curriculum on preschoolers' aesthetic abilities and ethnic identity? Intergenerational learning has gained attention in Taiwan. However, few studies have explored intergenerational learning through aesthetic curricula between preschoolers and elders, especially within indigenous communities (Chen, 2024). This study was based on cultural-based curricula (Hong and Chen, 2014) and the aesthetic domain from the Early Childhood Education and Care Curriculum Framework (MOE, 2016). Using a case study approach, it involved indigenous preschool educators, preschoolers, and elders. Qualitative data (e.g., interviews) were analyzed by coding and categorizing, while quantitative data (e.g., pre-/post-tests measuring aesthetic ability) were analyzed using statistics. This study received IRB approval in Taiwan. Consent letters were received from all participants and no conflicts of interest were reported. The results revealed that the educator integrated Kanakanavu culture into an aesthetic curriculum centered on the River Festival Story. She guided the preschoolers in exploring the story and Kanakanavu traditional artifacts and customs, with elders sharing their knowledge and experiences. The preschoolers explored the tribal

village, created artworks, and performed a drama with the elders. The curriculum positively influenced the preschoolers' aesthetic abilities and ethnic identity. This study provides insights into culture-based indigenous aesthetic curricula for intergenerational learning and offers references for future research.

indigenous culture, aesthetic curriculum, intergenerational learning, aesthetic abilities, ethnic identity

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A15: Drawing Rights: Manga to Illuminate the CRC in Japanese ECEC

Presenters
Kei Kihara, international committee of Japan Federation of Accredited ECEC Centers, Japan

All authors
Kei Kihara, international committee of Japan Federation of Accredited ECEC Centers, Japan

The challenge of effective implementation the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into practice is a concern shared globally. Japanese ECEC settings also concern that. This study represents a challenge to broaden the entry points for understanding the complex and lengthy CRC. While various studies have been implemented globally to facilitate the understanding of the CRC, As one of approaches, we decided to use MANGA, a distinct cultural asset of Japan. The Japan Federation of Accredited ECEC Centers hold a workshop at a conference, focusing on the CRC, where participants were encouraged to recall episodes they encounter in their daily activities and illustrate these in MANGA (four-panel comics). The reason for adapting MANGA format is to make it easier to understand the content of the CRC. In December 2022, our Federation published a book that compiled 47 episodes related to the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" that nursery teachers encounter in their daily ECEC settings presented in a MANGA format. Japan Federation of Accredited ECEC Centers, “HOIKUNIIKASUKODOMONOKENRIJYOUYAKU”, ISBN:9784871686853, Eidell Institute Co., Ltd. 2022 This study uses manga to present data, used pseudonyms for all individuals and informed consent was obtained from all. Many of the episodes highlighted situations in which nursery teachers struggled to properly understand children's views and thoughts. This presentation will explain the background and process leading to the publication of this book, and analyze how the CRC in ECEC in Japan, using these episodes, research reports, survey results, and other data to identify and examine the issues.

CRC, Manga, alternative-approche, Japanese ECEC setting, visualization

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A16: Learning in the making. Exploring the Imaginative, Artifactual and Multimodal Sense-Making of Young Children in ECE

Presenters
Hanneke Saaltink, PhD, University Groningen, Netherlands

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Barend van Heusden, University College Groningen, Netherlands
Marijn van Dijk, University College Groningen, Netherlands, Netherlands
Annerieke Boland, Lector Jonge Kind at Hogeschool iPabo, Netherlands

This research aims to investigate how the imaginative, artifactual and multimodal sense-making of young children (3-7) is defined theoretically in literature, how ECE is connected to this thinking process and what role professionals have. Building on the culture theory of van Heusden (Dorsten, 2015; van Heusden and Gielen, 2015), imagination is considered a basic cognitive skill that plays an important role in the development of young children. The thinking of young children is imaginative, rooted in experience and connected to action (Bodrova and Leong, 2019; Nelson,

2009). The making of images, gestures, stories, drawings etc. that constitutes imaginative thinking is conceptualized as artifactual cognition (Dorsten, 2015; Kress, 1997). Following up on an exploratory literature search (Saaltink et al. 2022), the research presented is a scoping review, according to the PRISMA-ScR format, of the literature on the development of imaginative thinking in ECE, and teachers' support of this development. By studying the research-literature as extensively and broadly as possible, justice is done to equality, diversity and sustainability. Imagination seems to increasingly structure thinking and learning of children in ECE (Fleer, 2021; Nilsson et al., 2018). Various studies describe approaches corresponding to artifactual sense-making, e.g., multimodal literacy (Pahl, 2017), Reggio Emilia and Mosaic approach (Brandao and Theodotou, 2020), arts practice in science (Caiman and Jakobson, 2019), drawing and shared meaning-making in play (Kukkonen and Chang-Kredl, 2018). The findings suggest that professionals who learn to support the imaginative, artifactual and multimodal sense-making of young children can have a great impact on their development.

imagination, sense-making, artefact, multimodality, thinking

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A17: Cultural Responsiveness in Practice: Teachers' Perspectives on Education of Migrant Children

Presenters
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Alperen Şenol, İstanbul Aydın University, Türkiye

This study aims to explore early childhood and primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the inclusion of migrant children in classrooms in Türkiye. It focuses on teachers' self-reported competencies, attitudes, and the institutional support they receive. Previous studies indicate that migrant and refugee children encounter educational barriers, including limited curriculum inclusivity and unprepared teachers (Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc, 2021; Celik et al.,2023). This research explores teachers' preparedness and the inclusivity of educational processes and identifies barriers to effective inclusive education. The study is based on the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) framework, which highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in teacher attitudes, methods, training, and interactions (Gay, 2013). CRT values cultural backgrounds as important assets in learning. A quantitative research design was utilized, involving a survey administered to teachers (N=103). The survey assessed teachers' competencies, attitudes, and perceptions of institutional support through the lens of CRT principles. Informed consent was obtained via an online survey, ensuring that participants were aware of the study's purpose, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses. Findings indicate that while teachers generally express a willingness to support inclusive education, many feel underprepared due to a lack of CRT-aligned training and resources. Teachers in schools with a higher proportion of migrant students reported greater confidence, although challenges such as language barriers and limited institutional support persisted. The need for professional development focused on inclusive pedagogical strategies and cross-cultural skills emerged. Policy interventions that enhance institutional support systems could contribute to a more equitable educational environment for all.

inclusive education, migrant/refugee students, culturally responsive teaching (CRT), teacher opinions, early childhood and primary education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A18: Effective management strategies perceived by middle leaders in public kindergartens: Analysis on wellbeing and professional development.

Presenters
Takako Noguchi, Tokyo Kasei University, Japan

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Yoshiyuki Mukuda, Kansai University of International Studies, Japan
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Riyo Kadota, Seinan Gakuin University, Japan
Junko Minowa, Musashino University, Japan
Fuminori Nakatsubo, Hiroshima University, Japan
Masatoshi Suzuki, Hyogo University of Teacher Education, Japan
Yumi Yodogawa, Chiba University, Japan

The purpose of this study is to explore how public kindergarten teachers perceive their role as middle leaders and practice effective management, and the factors that support their wellbeing. The Japanese MEXT (2024) reports that the number of public kindergartens has decreased significantly compared to other early childhood education facilities, and they are expected to respond to changes in the organization of classes and the teaching staff structure due to the decrease in the number of children. While Noguchi et al. (2023) explored management strategies from directors' perspectives, it is also crucial to examine middle leaders' challenges amid rapid change. This study focused on the disjuncture (Jarvis, 2009; 2018) that occurred when middle leaders experienced confusion between management and their well-being. A questionnaire was sent to teachers who took role as middle leader at each public kindergartens across the country, and 657 responded. The questionnaire comprised seven sections, including items on facility characteristics and participants' career, as well as scales measuring perceived management effectiveness, working conditions, well-being, and an open-ended response section. The questionnaire was anonymous and voluntary. This study was ethically approved by the University Ethics Review Committee. Most public kindergartens had small numbers of children, which was a challenge for management. Over 80% of middle leaders found it worthwhile working, but some teachers said they did not. It was suggested that relationships with children and teaching staff were particularly important. Identifying the factors that promote a sense of wellbeing and professional development will enable us to consider the skills and support that are needed.

public kindergartens, middle leaders, effective management, well-being, professional development

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A19: "Parenting in These Times- Is Not Easy": Perceptions of Parents of Young Children on Educational Systems for Evacuated Children During a War

Presenters
Vered Golan, Lecturer in Education Faculty at Tel Hai University on the Rise, Israel

All authors
Vered Golan, Lecturer in Education Faculty at Tel Hai University on the Rise, Israel

This research examines parents' perceptions of early childhood education systems in evacuation complexes. Furthermore, the research examines whether those systems indeed provide a response to parents and children according to the parents' perceptions. This research is based on evacuation research (Tal, 2014) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), examining parenting and early childhood education during crises. A population that is evacuated from its home due to war or disaster is referred to as a 'Refugee Population' (Tal, 2014). Evacuation considered successfull, mainly depends on the manner in which the evacuees are absorbed in their new temporary communities and on creating conditions that are adequate for them (Tal, 2014). Therefore, the opening of stable and meaningful educational systems for the evacuated population is more important, especially when it comes to young children. Mixed-methods research used a semi-structured questionnaire with closed and

open questions, yielding qualitative and quantitative data from 69 parents of young children under three evacuated due to war. Digital questionnaires were distributed via WhatsApp groups, ensuring participant anonymity and researcher independence. The research received prior approval from Tel Hai College's Ethics Committee. During evacuation, children's ecological systems are disrupted. Effective educational systems require compatible hours with parental employment, stable and trained early childhood staff, and safe facilities. These elements support children's development and parental needs during displacement. This research illuminates crucial insights for educators, caregivers, and authorities regarding evacuated populations' needs: supporting children's development while providing essential assistance to families during crisis situations.

parents of young children, evacuated families, early childhood trauma, early childhood education systems, parental perceptions.

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A20: The Impact of Computational Thinking and Teaching Creativity on Early Childhood Teachers' Digital Competency

Presenters
Yungeui Yoo, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea

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Yungeui Yoo, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea
Su Hyeon Bang, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea
Yun Ho Jang, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea

This research aims to explore the impact of early childhood teachers' computational thinking and teaching creativity on digital competency. While there are many studies on digital competencies of early childhood teachers (Park, 2024; Lim, 2023; Jang, 2023), there is a lack of research on the impact of computational thinking and teaching creativity. The Ministry of Education's Digital Competency Theory for Early Childhood Teachers (2021), Denning's (2009) and Wing's (2006) theories of computational thinking, and Halliwell's (1993) theory of teaching creativity. The study population was a random sample of 241 early childhood teachers working in Chungcheongnam-do, South Korea.The data was analyzed using SPSS 21.0 program, and reliability analysis, descriptive statistics analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis (stepwise selection) were conducted. The purpose and ethics of the study were explained and consent was obtained. Participants had a right to withdraw at any time and their anonymity was preserved. Higher computational thinking and teaching creativity were associated with higher digital competence. This has implications for early childhood education because in the digital age, we need to educate young children to be digitally competent, which means teachers need to be well-equipped. This suggests that early childhood teachers should be trained in computational thinking and teaching creativity to improve their digital competencies. In the future, the level of digital competence will be an important factor in teaching and can be expected to have a positive impact on the digital competence of young children.

digital competency, computational thinking, teaching creativity, early childhood teachers, early childhood digital education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A21: Features and meanings of children's outdoor playgrounds : Toward an affordance perspective

Presenters
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Sunhee Yang, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea

Yungeui Yoo, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea
Eunjung Jang, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea

We aimed to explore the features and meanings of outdoor playgrounds that children spontaneously and actively create from the perspective of affordances. An affordance is a concept that describes how a space induces or supports human behavior, either positively or negatively, for its users (Gibson, 1986). When applied to outdoor playgrounds, this means that they should be organized in a way that takes into account the characteristics, needs, preferences, and educational goals of children. The outdoor playground is a space where children can freely lead play (Kim and Kang, 2019; Lee, 2018). As active agents who give meaning to space (Im et al., 2012), it is important to understand outdoor play areas from the child's perspective. This study is a qualitative study, and the analysis went through the process of open coding, categorization, and re-categorization (Creswell, 2010). The participants of the study were 20 7-year-old children and two classroom teachers in a daycare center in Chungcheongnam-do. All participants were provided with informed consent, all names were pseudonymized, and they were informed that they could withdraw from the observation and interview at any time. The outdoor playgrounds that children create is an interesting space that is in harmony with nature, a space that we need to protect from neglect, and a creative play in an open space that can be transformed freely rather than having a prescribed use. The significance of this study is that it explored the characteristics and meanings of outdoor playgrounds that reflect the characteristics and preferences of children as agents of play.

Outdoor playgrounds, Affordance, Children's agency, Children's rights, A case study

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A22: Understanding Children's Wartime Experiences: A Qualitative Study of Reality Perception and Parental Influence During War

Presenters
Nufar Gavrieli, Tel-Hai university on the Rise, Israel

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Vered Golan, Lecturer in Education Faculty at Tel Hai University in establishment, Israel
Or Perah Midbar Alter, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, United Kingdom

This study investigates how children perceive wartime reality and how family circumstances shape these perceptions, examining both children's experiences and parental responses. This study builds upon Freud and Burlingham's (1943) foundational work on children's trauma responses and extends contemporary research on childhood resilience during crisis situations, addressing a notable gap in understanding family circumstances' impact on children's wartime reality construction (Masten, 2012). The research is grounded in developmental psychopathology and resilience science, viewing children as active agents in their reality construction. It draws from postmodern and "sociology of childhood" approaches, emphasizing children's role as knowledgeable social agents. The study employs qualitative methodology, examining 18 families (72 participants) through semi-structured interviews and children's drawings. Participants include families with deployed parents, evacuated families, and those in conflict zones, with children aged 4-8. Information and consent forms were provided to participants. Informed consent was verbally discussed with the involved children and their parents. Pseudonyms were used and everyone could withdraw anytime. The interview was age-appropriate, created with pr Findings show that children primarily experience wartime through their personal sphere. Evacuated children focus mainly on social concerns, such as peer relationships and isolation, rather than the broader conflict, often attaching to familiar objects from home. Results will inform the development of targeted support systems for families in conflict zones and enhance professional understanding of children's wartime experiences, contributing to more effective educational and therapeutic interventions.

wartime experiences, children's perception, family resilience, childhood trauma, parental mediation

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A23: Early Childhood Development in a Low-Income Community: Caregiver Perceptions and Contextual Adaptation of the PEDS Developmental Screening Tools

Presenters
Mignon Botes, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

All authors
Mignon Botes, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

This study explored caregiver perspectives on the linguistic and cultural applicability of the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) tools in a low-income South African community. Developmental screening tools are widely used in high-income settings, their direct application in low-resource contexts may not be appropriate due to linguistic and cultural differences. Previous research highlights the need for cultural adaptation beyond mere translation (Botes et al., 2022). This study integrated a structured, community-driven adaptation process. This study applied community-based participatory research (Collins et al., 2018), cultural adaptation theory (Botes et al., 2023), and health communication models to guide culturally relevant modifications that align with caregiver beliefs, language use, and early developmental health practices. A pragmatic paradigm was adopted, utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure both statistical rigor and rich contextual insights. A mixed-methods design was implemented. Quantitative survey data from 102 caregivers identified items of the PEDS tools that were culturally inappropriate. Qualitative data from a community focus groups (n=11) generated specific item adaptations. A two round Delphi method with 12 early childhood experts refined adaptations, followed by final validation with the original tool developers. Ethical approval was secured, informed consent was obtained, and community participation was prioritized to promote ethical, culturally responsive adaptation Caregivers identified multiple linguistic and cultural challenges in the PEDS tools. Of the final adaptations, 71% stemmed from community input, ensuring greater applicability. The adapted PEDS tools-SA can enhance early identification of developmental delays in similar low-income contexts, improving accessibility and accuracy.

cultural adaptation, developmental screening, caregiver perspective, community involvement, early identification

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A24: How Should Early Childhood Education Facilities Prepare for Climate Change Risks? - Flood Damage in Japan Case Study

Presenters
Miho Nishimura, Tokyo Future University, Japan

All authors
Miho Nishimura, Tokyo Future University, Japan

This study explores how early childhood education (ECE) facilities can effectively prepare to resume childcare services quickly following climate-related disasters, particularly flooding. Disaster preparedness in ECE settings is emphasized internationally, especially in disaster-prone countries like Japan. However, while many facilities reopen quickly after floods—as noted by Nakano, Nishimura, and Kanai (2024)—the absence of structured recovery strategies suggests a gap in current approaches. This study draws on theories of disaster risk reduction and organizational resilience. It introduces the "Continuity of Childcare Plan" (CCP), adapted from business continuity planning, as a framework for planning and managing recovery in ECE settings. The CCP emphasizes clear, phased strategies from emergency response to service restoration. Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, this qualitative study used semi-structured interviews with ECE facility leaders in Japan (2022–2024). Facilities were selected using

purposive sampling to reflect diverse settings. Each interview lasted 60–90 minutes and focused on recovery decisions, timelines, and challenges. Thematic analysis revealed a three-phase recovery model: emergency response, preparation for reopening, and resumption of normal operations. The study was approved by the author's university ethics board, and participants provided informed consent. Most facilities resumed childcare within 10 days, but none followed a formal plan. Recovery was largely improvised. Integrating CCPs into emergency plans can support faster, more consistent recovery and safeguard children's well-being during and after disasters.

climate change, natural disasters, guarantee of educational opportunities, continuing early childhood education, disaster response

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A25: Touch as a pedagogical action for male teachers and children in ECEC

Presenters
Ricardo Gonçalves, Örebro University, Sweden

All authors
Ricardo Gonçalves, Örebro University, Sweden

This study aims to understand different types of physical touch in the interplay between male teachers and children through a pedagogical perspective. Previous research shows touch has been subject to surveillance due to a discourse on children's protection and their rights to bodily integrity (Piper et al., 2013). Men, as a minority group working in Swedish ECEC, even in other countries, express that they are extra careful when involved in touch situations with children (Brody et al., 2020). There is, though, a lack of observational studies focusing on touch interactions between men and children in ECEC. The study draws upon pragmatism by examining touch as a "transaction" between teachers, children, and their environment (Dewey and Bentley, 1949/1991). Fieldwork with participant observation has been conducted in three preschool groups in Sweden, with 45 children and three male teachers. Field notes and video recordings were used for data collection, which was analyzed using a qualitative abductive approach. Ethical principles such as anonymity, confidentiality, and informed and negotiated consent, were followed continuously during the research process. The findings show five types of touch as pedagogical actions: focus-oriented action, guiding action, assisting action, affectionate action, and playful action. Touch can be short or long-term and is used in different forms, such as patching, holding, and other light-touch forms. These findings suggest that touch, as a pedagogical action, can support children's learning and caring relations with their teachers during several situations. Touch, understood as a pedagogical action, also contributes to strengthening male teachers' professional practice in ECEC.

male teachers, children, pedagogical action, touch, ECEC

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A26: Preschool Teachers' Professional Burnout in Relation to Stress Management Strategies

Presenters
Ilona Tandzegolskiene-Bielaglove, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

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Anželika Taluntienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

To identify the links between professional burnout and stress coping strategies. Maslach and Leiter (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. World Psychiatry, 15(2). Maslach and Leiter (2008). Measuring burnout. The Oxford handbook of organizational wellbeing . Van Dick, R. ir

Wagner (2001). Stress and strain in the teaching: a structural equation approach. British Journal of Educational Psychology. Many researchers are interested on phenomenon of burnout itself, but also in its relationship to job satisfaction, perfectionism, prevention and coping stress strategies (Lucunas, 2021; Hall, 2007; Certer, 2006; Grakauskas & Valickas, 2006; Weigard, 2004; Maslach, 2003, Butler, Constantina, 2005; Wolmer, 1998). The research will be carried out using a quantitative research strategy (standardized questionnaire's: Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, 1996 and Four Factor Stress Management Questionnaire). 209 participants took part in the study. SPSS Statistics 25.0 was used for data analysis. The study was conducted between October and November 2024. The study was carried out on the basis of the principles of anonymity, fairness and freedom of expression. Participants were informed about the purpose and conduct of the research and agreed to ta The study showed that there is a link between professional burnout and stress coping strategies. Emotional exhaustion is directly correlated with the emotional discharge strategy and the problem-solving strategy for coping with stress. The empirical validation of the link between the dimensions of occupational burnout and coping strategies encourages further research in this area.

professional burnout, stress, strategy, teacher, pre-school education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A27: Are all children included in the Early Childhood Education? Inclusive dialogues in Cantabria (Spain)

Presenters
Noelia Ceballos-López, Universidad de Cantabria, Spain
Ángela Saiz Linares, Universidad de Cantabria, Spain

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The project (PID2023-146966OB-C31) aims to analyse the situation of early childhood education acess policies (0-3 years) in Cantabria. The challenges of ECE policies in Cantabria are the existence of an extensive private network and limited equitable public policies (Ceballos, Saiz and Susinos, in press; Britto and Sherr, 2016). In Spain, around 28% of children are living in poverty(Unicef, 2023), which is higher than in countries like Portugal, Finland or Greece, with minimal changes over time. ECE should provide an opportunity to reduce inequalities, especially among vulnerable groups (Heckman et al., 2013). Additionally, the expansion of 0-3 education is a current challenge on political agendas(Moss, 2010; Urban, 2010). This research is framed within the participatory-qualitative paradigm (Flick, 2022) through interviews and focus groups with heterogenuos groups (Kamberelis, Dimitriadis and Welker, 2017): teachers and technicians, responsable of nurseries, continuing education advisors, future teachers and faculty profesor. This research has received approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Cantabria and follows the recommendations of the EECERA ethics guide regarding access, consent, informed assent, and anonymity The results highlight the existence of a weak network of public ECEC, with a limited focus on children in vulnerable contexts. This 0-3 education is attended by private centres under market criterias. There are partial public policies based on the creation of classrooms in primary school; a system of tax reductions that do not reach vulnerable families; the public places require a stigmatizing process. The proposals highlight ECE policies in Cantabria within the current context of the development of the educational law.

poverty, early childhood, children's rights, inclusive dialogues, educational policy

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A28: Seeking the child's voice in inclusion: An evaluation of the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) Programme

Presenters
Chloe Beatty, LINC Consortium, Ireland

All authors
Chloe Beatty, LINC Consortium, Ireland

The aim of the current research was to assess the extent in which the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) Programme influenced Early Childhood Teachers' (ECTs) competencies in creating inclusive Early Learning and Care (ELC) settings in Ireland. While data were also collected from LINC graduates, other ECTs, and parents of children in six ELC settings, the current research focused on data gathered from the children within these settings. This research comprises part of the Final Evaluation of Phase 2 (2021-2025) of the LINC Programme and builds on from the Programme's Phase 1 (2016-2020) Final Evaluation. An adapted version of Guskey's (2002) framework for evaluating continuing professional development (CPD) underpins the present research while the Lundy Model of Participation provided a framework for understanding child rights-based participation (Lundy, 2007). A map-making methodology was employed to gather children's perspectives on inclusion. Children created maps of their setting, used as a basis for child-led tours and dialogue based on key principles of inclusion (Ring et al., 2021). Ethical approval was gained from the institution's ethical committee. Further to parental consent, children's assent to participate was secured. Data highlighted that the LINC Programme had a positive influence on increasing graduates' competencies in creating inclusion for children within their ELC settings, with all child data highlighting inclusive cultures, practices, and pedagogies existing within their settings. The methodology used shows playful participatory approaches as powerful tools for identifying impact in ELC settings, and Guskey's (2002) framework as a holistic approach for evaluating CPD programmes.

Inclusion, early years, educator CPD, child's voice, map-making

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A29: Supporting Children's Digital Funds of Knowledge in Early Childhood Education and Care

Presenters
Jess Hardley, Edith Cowan University, Australia

All authors
Jess Hardley, Edith Cowan University, Australia

This study sought to examine how children's digital funds of knowledge (DFoK) are developed and supported in early childhood education and care (ECEC). Children have a right to be digital citizens (AGDE, 2022; OECD, 2023), therefore it is important to provide opportunities to build upon and engage their DFoK. DFoK has been explored in primary and secondary education (Marsh et al., 2017), but its role in ECEC remains under-examined. This study draws on sociocultural learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978) and post-digital perspectives (Jandrić et al., 2018). A qualitative interpretive paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018) and scoping review framework (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005) guided this study. A scoping review identified a small number of DFoK studies in United Kingdom and European ECEC contexts. As this study reviews existing literature, ethical considerations are low but providing accurate representation and transparency of the works being evaluated was considered. DFoK in ECEC is an underexplored topic globally. Findings highlight the complexities of educators supporting children's DFoK in ECEC. There is a lack of educator understanding, training and policies for integrating children's DFoK in learning experiences as well as a paucity of research in this area. Children live in a post-digital world (Marsh, 2019) and this research highlights the importance of integrating children's DFoK into ECEC practices. More research is required in this area, as well as the creation of policy initiatives to up-skill and enable educators to recognise children's DFoK as valuable learning resources.

digital funds of knowledge, early childhood education and care, young children, digital technologies, post-digital

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A30: The Profile of the Educator funded under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)

Presenters
Claire Butterly, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

All authors
Claire Butterly, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

This PhD study aims to identify the profile of educators who are employed in Irish Early Childhood (EC) settings and funded under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). EASNIE (2017) discusses inclusion in education as being the ultimate vision for all children, where everyone can engage in meaningful, high-quality opportunities in their local community, alongside friends and peers. AIM is allowing this vision to become a reality in Ireland. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (1994) forms the theoretical foundations for this research. The study was conducted using an explanatory sequential mixed method research design (Creswell, 2014), which consisted of three survey types being completed by Owners and Managers, Lead Educators and general Educators and Educators funded through AIM. Following the analysis of 409 surveys, interviews were conducted. The data for creating the profile of the educator funded through AIM has been collated from the survey findings. Survey data was analysed using SPSS and thematic analysis. Ethical approval was granted by MIREC, Mary Immaculate College's Ethics Committee. Participants received an information sheet and consented to engage in the online survey, having the right to withdraw at any time. The findings demonstrate that educators employed in these roles are highly qualified and seeking out further CPD opportunities to further support themselves in their role. However, there is uncertainty around the role, even in terms of the title being given to these educators. The findings from this PhD study will provide suggestions on how policies can be improved to retain educators funded through AIM.

early childhood education, inclusion, educator, AIM, professionalisation

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A31: Preschool teachers' experiences and perceptions of the child's imaginary companions

Presenters
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The study investigated preschool teachers' experiences and perceptions of the child's imaginary companions (IC). An IC is a character, invisible or embodied in an object, which is animated by a child and treated as real (Gleason, 2017). It most often appear in early and middle childhood (Aguiar et al., 2019). Parents' and professionals' beliefs about children's IC were not always positive, although IC have many positive effects on children's development (Majors & Baines, 2017). Attachment theory is theoretical framework of the study. The study was conducted within a quantitative (descriptive statistics) and qualitative (content analysis) interpretive research paradigms. The questionnaire was filled out by 225 preschool teachers (94.7% women) from the eastern part of Slovenia. Participation in the research was voluntary, fair, transparent and anonymous. The participants do not have much experience and knowledge about children's IC. Those who had these experiences reported that IC most often elicits positive emotions and encouraging social relationships in children. Participants recognized that the child seeks and maintains closeness with the IC and experiences emotional distress when they separated. IC is a safe haven for him and a safe base for research. These are the criteria of attachment. Participants would participate in the child's symbolic play and use the child's IC to the child's advantage. They would also help parents to eliminate prejudices

related to their child's IC. The results showed the need for additional education of future and current educators of preschool children about the importance of IC and how to deal with children who have IC.

imaginary companions, attachment, teacher, experiences, perceptions

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A32: Inclusive Research in Mathematics Education: A Mediated Learning Approach

Presenters
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This study presents one of the first applications of inclusive research in mathematics education in ECEC in Norway, framed within Feuerstein's theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM) and Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). Inclusive research involves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) as co-researchers, ensuring their perspectives shape the research process. Inclusive research is well established in the UK and Australia and was introduced in Norway through the adaptation of Johnson and Walmsley's model by Østby and Haugenes (2019). Its application in mathematics education, however, remains limited. The theoretical framework is grounded in Feuerstein's MLE theory (1991), which promotes intentional mediation to support cognitive development for all learners. It is complemented by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) and Bartolini Bussi and Mariotti (2008), who highlight the role of mediation in mathematics. The conceptual framework draws on the 3-Steps Model (fish model), focusing on shared conceptual mediation in inclusive mathematics learning. This study adopts a qualitative, participatory research paradigm rooted in inclusive research principles. The methodology integrates mediated learning and inclusive co-production. Methods include workshops, semi-structured interviews and field observations. Four adult co-researchers with IDD were selected based on their experience in inclusive education. Data were analyzed collaboratively using thematic analysis. Some participants had IDD, then a specific information sheet in Norwegian, English, Italian was created, integrating graphical, written, and verbal explanations. Inclusive research framed through MLE supports meaningful engagement in mathematics education. This study shows how inclusive methodologies can deepen understanding and participation in mathematics education through shared mediation.

inclusive research, mathematics education, mediated learning experience, co-researcher participation, structural cognitive modifiability

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A33: Animal-assisted therapy as a school based intervention for children with communication disorder

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The aim of this study is to map existing research on various types of animal-assisted therapy as a school based intervention for children aged 4-8 years with communication disorder. Previous research and reviews have focused mainly on animal-assited therapy provided to children with physical disabilities or autism. Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) uses targeted contact between a person and an animal, which is aimed at improving the client's psychological or physical condition (Freemanová in Velemínský, 2007). The study follows the scoping review methodology (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005), which systematically identifies and categorizes research on animotherapy in schools. Data collection includes a systematic search of scholarly articles in databases (PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science). Inclusion and exclusion criteria are based on the target population (children with impaired communication skills), type of intervention (animotherapy), and setting (schools). Data are evaluated by thematic analysis to categorize types of animotherapy interventions, their goals, and methodologies used in the research to date. The research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the FSES CU in Bratislava and is in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and the EECERA ethical code. Only studies with ethical approval were included. The studies evaluate animotherapy positively, but with an emphasis on the need for further research. Compared to the research on children with autism or physical disabilities, research on animal-assisted therapy in children with communication disorders is still scarce. Based on previous research is animal-assisted therapy a beneficial complementary therapy for increasing communication in children with communication disorders, potentially as a school-based intervention.

animal-assisted therapy, hippotherapy, intervention, communication disorder, school

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A34: Managing inclusion for children with developmental disabilities in primary schools

Presenters
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This study investigated the experiences of four children age 5-6 years-old with a developmental disability attending mainstream primary schools in England, to explore different types of support and approaches to inclusion. Literature suggests children with disabilities in mainstream schools are at risk of isolation, have less opportunities to practice social interactions, and less quality teaching when in close contact with teaching assistants (TAs) rather than qualified teachers (Vincett et al., 2005; Radford et a.l, 2015). A critical realism view recognises disability is a complex phenomenon which is shaped by physical, medical and psychological factors as well as social-cultural, economic and political influences (Bhaskar and Danermark, 2006). Using an adaptation of the Mosaic Approach (Clark, 2011), the children and school staff shared their experiences and perceptions of inclusive education through 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. This study highlighted the range of pedagogies and approaches that schools used to include children with disabilities. TAs played a significant role in supporting children and staff, by developing knowledge of both the child and the disability through close, responsive working (Shotter, 2006) and an unhurried approach (Elkind, 2006) which often occurred outside of the classroom. This study helps to question how inclusion is managed for children with developmental disabilities, through the different use of pedagogy and spaces within the school.

school support, teaching assistants, developmental disabilities, inclusive education, unhurried approach

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A35: An Analysis on Young Children's Pictorial Responses to Poetry

Presenters

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Min-Ling Tsai, National Taipei University of Education, Taiwan

This study intended to understand how young children responded to poetry by drawing pictures after the routine poetry reading activities. Different from this study, most inquiries analyzing children's drawings focused on developmental issues (Cox, 2005). The analysis of the poetry reading activity itself was published in an acclaimed journal in Taiwan (Author, 2023). Vygotsky's (1978) view on the functions of sign system was applied to explain how poetry reading facilitated young children's interaction with "the immediate" and "the mediated" world (Eisner, 1993). Committed to social constructivism, the researcher collected and analyzed 348 drawings by 29 young children aged 3 to 5 after reading 12 poems in a year. The analysis focused on the contents of the responses, the ways of responding and the changes discerned overtime. The researcher went to the classroom and explained to the children with photos and pictures about the research and their rights. The parents and the two teachers gave their informed consent after the researcher's oral and written description of the resear The contents of the pictorial responses changed from a heavy influence of daily lives to references of other poems. Meanwhile, more and more children drew out what they would do if they were the protagonists of the poems. These children's pictorial responses indicated they had a good grasp of the essential elements of poetry. In making pictorial responses to poems, these children were engaged in a creative process of thinking and drawing.

young children, literary response, children's pictorial responses to poetry, drawing as a form of literary response, drawing

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A36: How can dispositional aspects influence educational science students' willingness to use Outdoor Education? The role of thinking style and Nature Relatedness

Presenters

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This study explores educational science students' willingness to Outdoor Education (OE), and possible associations with Nature Relatedness (NR) and thinking style. Previous studies show a correlation between NR and willingness to OE (Barrable and Lakin, 2020). Higher NR levels are linked to a Right(R)-thinking style, which is holistic and innovative (Legon et al., 2014). Since OE promotes child development (Szczepanki, 2008), interest in OE is growing, and educators need to be trained; preference for unstructured tasks and intuitive problem-solving are key for outdoor educators (Wolf et al., 2022). 310 educational science students (Female=94.5%, Male=25.8y) completed: Nature Relatedness Scale (NRS); Style of Learning and Thinking (SOLAT), and ad hoc scale to investigate willingness to OE. Quantitative methodology: ANOVA and a mediation model was conducted. Ethical principles of informed consent, data confidentiality and anonymity were respected. Student teachers with R-thinking style showed higher NR ($F(2, 307) = 19.734$, $p=<.001$) than those with Left (L)-thinking style (test post hoc Tukey HSD $p=<.001$). They also show greater willingness to OE ($F(2, 307) = 10.150$, $p< .001$), compared to L-thinking style (test post hoc Tukey HSD $p=.001$).The mediation model ($R^2=.195$) showed an association between R-thinking and NR ($b=-4.55$, $p< .001$) and between NR and willingness to OE ($b=0.12$, $p<.001$), with NR mediating this relationship (95% CI=-0.80, -0.32; b=-

0.54, bootstrapping 5000 samples). These findings highlight the relevance of thinking style and NR in designing training programs that promote OE adoption among educators, in order to improve children's well-being and ensuring high-quality, inclusive education in ECEC contexts.

outdoor education, thinking-style, nature relatedness, student teachers, dispositional aspects

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A37: A study on the impact of parental involvement on children's emotional and physical development

Presenters
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This study aims to explore the impact of parental involvement on the emotional and physical development of young children. Lerner (2016) and others found that parental involvement has a positive impact on adolescent development in the context of an environment. Lin (2022) and others found that parental involvement has a significant impact on the emotional development of young children. This study focuses on the impact of parental involvement on the physical movements and emotional development of young children. According to the Relational Development Systems Theory (RDST) (Overton, 2015), there may be systematic changes in person-context relations across time and place. Parental involvement may promote or limit young children's physical movement and emotional development. Using the secondary data research method, we collected data on 4-year-old children released by the Taiwan Academic Survey Research Data Archive (SRDA) in 2021, including parent participation, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, emotional awareness, emotional expression, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation. The sample size was 2031. Consent has been obtained. The model of the impact of parental involvement on the emotional and physical development of young children has a good overall fit. Parental involvement has a significant positive impact on children's emotional and physical motor development. The estimated value of the impact of parental involvement on children's emotional development is .43, $p < .05$; the estimated value of the impact of parental involvement on children's physical motor development is .11, $p < .05$. Improve the effectiveness of parental participation to promote children's physical movement and emotional development.

parental involvement, emotions, physical movements, survey research database (SRDA)

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A38: Implementing Work Groups in Infant Education: Enhancing Educator Practice Beyond the Dyadic Model

Presenters
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This study offers a practical framework for implementing work groups in infant education. It explores how educators can move beyond dyadic models by supporting collective agency, emotional regulation, and peer learning. Emphasis is placed on structuring environments, adapting practices, and observing infants' group dynamics to improve quality in early childhood settings. Building on Babies in Groups (Bradley et al., 2024) and Bion's (1961) work group theory, this study shifts from theory to practice, guiding educators in recognising and supporting naturally occurring infant group interactions that demonstrate cohesion, shared regulation, and problem-solving. Bion's work group theory views groups as purposeful, self-organising systems. Applied to infants, this study shows how group-based wellbeing and learning emerge when educators facilitate peer interactions alongside dyadic care. A qualitative ethnographic approach was used, including thick description and language shadowing, to examine how educators enable infant work groups in an Australian early childhood setting. Ethical practice centred on observing natural group behaviours with minimal adult interference, while safeguarding confidentiality and ensuring informed parental consent. Educators observed infants initiating peer connections, co-regulating emotions, and problem-solving together. Infants took turns, cooperated, and led interactions without adult prompting. Group-based care strengthened bonds, reduced distress, and enhanced social competence. Integrating this with dyadic care promoted resilience and wellbeing. This study outlines practical strategies for embedding work groups in infant routines, supporting collaborative learning and social development.

work groups, peer-led, collective agency, regulation

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A39: Fieldwork Initiatives to Broaden the Perspectives of Students in the ECEC Training Program: Through Fieldwork Activities with Students from Department of Architecture & Design

Presenters
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Students in ECEC training program learn specialized knowledge and skills through classroom lectures and off-campus training, but they also learn through fieldwork in seminar classes. The purpose of this study is to clarify what kind of learning occurs when students in ECEC training program engage in fieldwork activities together with students from department of architecture and design. Shirakawa et al. (2024) found that there are learning benefits when students in ECEC training program do fieldwork with students from other departments. In this study, we will examine what kind of learning is possible for students in ECEC from students in other department. Our study draws on the theories of L. S. Vygotsky who described 'zone of proximal development' and Wood's theory dealing with 'scaffolding'. We surveyed 3 students in ECEC training program and 11 students from department of architecture and design with a questionnaire. The methodology and paradigm used in this study was quantitative approach. 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. The fieldwork used in this study included nursery schools and nature experiences. It was clear that the students in ECEC training program became more aware of their own professionalism in childcare by observing children's activities in nurseries and conducting interviews with caregivers together with students in department of architecture and design. This research can contribute to the development of implications to enhance the childcare qualities of students in ECEC training programs.

ECEC, students in pre-service, fieldwork, childcare, scaffolding

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A40: Enhancing child-friendly hospital environments: The role of ECEC practitioners in improving ward spaces

Presenters
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This study examines how early childhood education and care (ECEC) practitioners enhance the physical environment in hospital wards to support children's development. Although ECEC practitioners have worked in Japanese hospitals since 1954 (Ishii, 2017), their presence remains limited. Given the high child-to-practitioner ratio, the physical environment plays a crucial role in their practice. However, little is known about how practitioners design and utilize hospital spaces to support children's well-being. This study is referring to theories emphasizing the physical setting as the “primary medium for learning” (Weinstein and David, 1979). To explore this issue, an online survey was conducted with all 207 hospitals in the Kanto region of Japan. Participants submitted photographs of areas where they actively create a supportive environment for children, as well as areas they find difficult to improve. A total of 34 ECEC practitioners participated. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Findings indicate that practitioners focus on creating warm, emotionally safe spaces for children and their families, emphasizing safety and cleanliness. However, consideration of children's developmental stages in structuring the environment was not widespread. The study underscores the urgent need to better equip ECEC practitioners in Japan with the knowledge and resources to enhance their practice in hospital settings. These findings have key implications for curriculum design and policy development to improve the quality of care for hospitalized children in Japan.

early childhood care and education, hospital environment, hospitalized children, practitioner practices, child development

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A41: Estonian Preschool Teachers’ and Leaders’ Understanding and Experience of Multiprofessional Teamwork in Supporting Child Development

Presenters
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The aim of this study was to analyze the knowledge, collaboration experiences, and expectations of preschool staff in Estonia—including management, teachers, and teacher assistants—regarding multiprofessional teamwork. While Estonian education policy and national documents highlight the necessity of multiprofessional collaboration, practical challenges remain, including unclear roles and areas of responsibility, as well as limited access to support specialists (Leino, 2021). Multiprofessional teamwork is an essential strategy for supporting the holistic development of children in preschool institutions. The theoretical framework of the study is based on research in social pedagogy and early childhood education, emphasizing that interdisciplinary cooperation is crucial for ensuring the comprehensive development of children (Karila and Kupila, 2023; Oberhuemer et al., 2023). A mixed research strategy was employed in the study. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey and individual interviews. Data collection and analysis followed ethical research principles, ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality. All study participants provided informed consent. The study results indicated that although preschool staff recognize the importance of multiprofessional collaboration, its effectiveness is hindered by role ambiguity, differing

expectations, and limited communication channels. The success of multiprofessional teamwork depends on support from education policy, which must ensure the systematic integration of support specialists into preschool support structures. Additionally, further training and regular team discussions are necessary to enhance teamwork and provide appropriate support for children's developmental needs.

social pedagogy, multiprofessional teamwork, child well-being, early childhood education, education policy

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A42: Early childhood educators' awareness of 4- to 5-year-olds' mathematical skills

Presenters
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Tuire Koponen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

This study aims to explore early childhood education and care (ECEC) educators' awareness of 4- to 5-year-olds' mathematical skills. Educators' awareness of mathematical skills is critical in supporting age-appropriate (Clements and Sarama, 2021, Parviainen et al., 2024), wide-ranging (Björklund and Barendgret, 2016; Gonulates and Gilbert, 2023), and regular (Parviainen et el., 2023) mathematical learning in ECEC. It is not, however, evident how comprehensive ECEC educators' awareness of children's mathematical skills is. In this study, educators' awareness of mathematical skills is conceptualised as an ability to identify age and developmentally appropriate core mathematical skills and is explored in relation to Parviainen's (2019) theoretical framework of early mathematical skills development. Web survey data were collected from ECEC educators (N = 54) who participated in Early Math research project. Data were analysed with the qualitative, theory driven, content analysis. Ethical review was conducted for the research project and the ethical principles (e.g., voluntary nature of research participation and careful data analysis) were meticulously followed (Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2023). The findings demonstrate that ECEC educators were best aware of 4- to 5-year- olds' numerical skills and fairly of abilities for spatial thinking and mathematical thinking and reasoning. However, there were differences in the quality of skill descriptions made by educators: Many of them failed to identify core skills comprehensively and description of different sub skills, developmental level or age-appropriate number range was often missing. The findings suggest that ECEC educators need professional development for their awareness of 4- to 5-year-olds' mathematical skills.

awareness, educator, mathematical skills, early childhood education, 4-5-year-olds

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A43: Emotions in Physical Education Classes for Pupils with Disabilities

Presenters
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The research examined emotional positivity in physical education (PE) for pupils with disabilities in the first to third year of primary school. Primary school pupils have PE three times a week, so positive emotions are crucial to a

lasting sports relationship. Previous research (e.g. Kurková and Nemček, 2018) shows that pupils enjoy PE and experience positive emotions. Kanzari et al. (2025) state movement boosts pupils positive emotions. Jayakumar, Overbeek & Ring (2015) note emotions from movement activities are age-independent. Our sample included primary school pupils with disabilities in Slovakia (n=75) with a mean age of 7.24±0.73 years. The PACES (Physical Activity Enjoyment Scale; Kendzierski & Decarlo, 1991) questionnaire was used for data collection. We applied Chi-Square test to detect the significance of differences in the respondents' answers and Mann-Whitney U-test to detect differences in emotions between boys and girls. A consent form and information sheet were provided. Informed consent was negotiated and renegotiated with the children. Pseudonyms replaced names and participants could withdraw at any time. The ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Education (reg. No. 4/2 We found positive emotions dominate in PE for pupils with disabilities. They enjoy PE (χ^2=74,48; p=0,000**), find PE pleasurable (χ^2=74,48; p=0,000**), feel interested (χ^2=62,72; p=0,000**), find PE energising (χ^2=28,52; p=0,000**), and feel good after PE (χ^2=65,84; p=0,000**). Girls found PE more pleasant than boys (U=475; p=0,025*). These findings highlight positive emotions' motivation role. Our research highlights PE's positive impact on emotions in pupils. The research was supported by grants UK/1198/2025 and VEGA 1/0694/24.

positive emotions, girls and boys, physical education, disability

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A44: Museum Education for Fostering Citizenship in Early Childhood: Focusing on the Role of Art in Norwegian Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Kozue Matsuda, Musashino University, Japan

All authors
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This study explores museum education for young children in Norway. It does so through a review of the literature and a field study of three museums. The study focuses on how museums facilitate learning through experiences related to citizenship and equity. Previous research has shown that museum visits have positive effects on young children (OECD 2016, Cromarti et al., 2021; Erdman et al., 2021; Terreni, 2015), especially in the development of cultural citizenship skills (Wallis and Noble, 2024). In Norway, early childhood education includes the arts as an important part of a child's holistic development (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). This study applies Bourdieu's (1979) theory of social reproduction, which emphasizes how early education influences future learning and participation. It also draws on Eisner's (2002) theory, which argues that visual and sensory experiences foster citizenship. A literature review was conducted alongside an analysis of policy documents, including the Kindergarten Act (2015), Early Childhood Education Curriculum (2017), and educational policies (2011). Field research at three Norwegian museums was also carried out, using qualitative content analysis. As this study relies on literature review and secondary data, ethical considerations focused on ensuring fair and comprehensive source selection. The findings suggest that Norwegian education policy fosters social participation and creativity through the arts, with museums playing a key role in integrated learning and citizenship. Museums support children's societal awareness and equal arts access, emphasizing education and equity. This study provides insight into equitable museum practices. Strengthening partnerships between preschools and museums will further enhance cultural experiences that support children's holistic development.

museum education, citizenship, equity, early childhood education, Norway

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A45: Representation in Classroom Materials: Is Inclusion Really Celebrated?

Presenters

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Michaelene Ostrosky, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, United States
Alison Hooper, University of Alabama, United States

We will present two survey studies that aimed to understand to what extent disability is represented in classroom materials, e.g., in picture books included in preschool curricula, and in materials included in kindergarten classroom environments. The importance of diverse content in school materials is well-established (e.g., Casey, 2021; Dahlen, 2020); research shows they emphasize white, European culture, and non-disabled characters (Favazza et.al, 2017; WordsRated, 2022). Cognitive load theory suggests the mental effort required for learning affects the acquisition and retention of information. Learning can be maximized by approximating content to one's personal characteristics, thus reducing the "cognitive load." The first study included analysis of 302 read-aloud texts from the five most-common preschool curricula (i.e., Creative Curriculum). The second study focused on 32 kindergarten classrooms; representation of individuals with disabilities was examined using the Inventory of Disability Representation. University procedures were followed and teachers signed consent forms before participating; pseudonyms were given to protect confidentiality. Across studies we observed few positive examples of disabilities. In the first study we also did not observe any transgender, non-binary, or gender-neutral characters, or characters of other races besides white/Hispanic/Latino, and Black. In the second study, most classroom had low to no representation of disabilities. Based on cognitive load theory, we conclude that critical consideration of representation is needed, to ensure that all children have opportunities to see themselves in school environments. Reflection on classroom materials can lead to action, as educators consider what is available in their classrooms.

materials, disability, representation, bias, literacy

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A46: Perceptions of Childcare Among Nurses Working with Children with Medical Complexity in Childcare Facilities: A Qualitative Study

Presenters

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All authors

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In Japan, with the enactment of the Medical Care Children Care Children Act, children under medical care are enrolled in regular early childhood education early childhood education centers. which requires collaboration between childcare professionals and nurses. However, it is thought that the gap between the different fields of between the different sectors of childcare and medical care makes collaboration difficult, and the aim is to identify this gap and to explore the nature of professional collaboration between childcare and medical care. Yamamoto et al. (2024) state that communication between carers and nurses that respects each other's position is important in working together, but they do not specify what this means. The gap is identified using Sakurai's (2023) framework of collaboration, which allows professionals to work together even when they have different values. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted and the data obtained will be analysed using Sato's (2008) qualitative data analysis. Consent was obtained after informing them that their participation in the research was voluntary and that they could stop at any time without prejudice if they did not wish to participate. It was clear that the nurses saw it essentially from the perspective of providing support based on a doctor's prescription, and therefore felt there was a gap in understanding and supporting the differences in development and characteristics of each individual, as is the case in childcare. Need to work together based on some manuals and instructions for childcare.

children in medical care, professional collaboration, frame collaboration, nurses, childcare professionals

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A47: Gaze Behavior of Nursery Teachers during Mealtime Assistance in Childcare Facilities: An Analysis Using Wearable Eye-Trackers

Presenters
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This study investigates the gaze behavior of nursery teachers during mealtime assistance with wearable eye-trackers, comparing expert and novice practices. Although national guidelines exist for preventing choking and aspiration in childcare facilities (Children & Families Agency, 2023), little research has examined how teachers monitor children's eating. Expert performance theory suggests that repeated practice helps experienced individuals develop efficient attention and information-gathering strategies, while visual attention theory explains that focus shifts with task demands and expertise (Brams et al., 2019; Ericsson and Tesch-Römer, 1993). Based on these theories, we expect experienced teachers to use a dynamic, global scanning strategy to track a child's eating progress efficiently. We conducted a mixed-method observational study with five nursery teachers assisting infants (0–1 year) transitioning to solid foods. Using eye-trackers, we measured gaze duration, fixation frequency, and average fixation time across defined areas: the child's face, hands, utensils, the teacher's hands, and other regions. Ethical approval was obtained through an ethics review at the University of Tokyo, and informed consent was secured from all teachers and guardians. Results indicated that the expert teacher exhibited a higher frequency of saccadic movements and fixations on the lower facial region, reflecting an efficient scanning strategy. Moreover, significant individual differences were observed in fixation patterns across all areas, and gaze behavior varied between the late weaning and complete feeding stages. These findings underscore the need to integrate dynamic visual monitoring strategies into training programs and revise safety guidelines to enhance mealtime assistance and reduce choking risks in childcare settings.

gaze behavior, mealtime assistance, nursery teachers, wearable eye-tracker, expert-novice comparison

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A48: Perceptions of professional staff on benefits of compulsory ECE in Slovenia

Presenters
Marta Licardo, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education, Slovenia

All authors
Marta Licardo, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education, Slovenia

The aim of the research is to analyse perceptions of professional staff on benefits of compulsory ECE in Slovenia. Research consistently shows kindergarten programs are more effective than home care in fostering children's development. Children from lower SES or immigrant background have limited access to ECE and they lack behind later in school (Eurydice, 2009; 2023; 2025). In Slovenia ECE is not compulsory, although majority of children are included in kindergartens (e.g. 94,7 % of children age 4 and 5 were in ECE and 85,5 % of children age 1 to 5 were in ECE in year 2024). Despite high enrolment rates, Slovenia has yet to meet the EU's target of 96% ECE participation by 2030 (European Council, 2021). The data were collected within National Evaluation study of short-term ECE program in Slovenia (Licardo et al., 2024). We analysed perspectives of ECE teachers (N = 2110), ECE counsellors (N = 155), ECE management staff (N = 208) with surveys and focus groups. Research included informed consent of all

participants. Professional staff reported significant advantages in social and language skills among children who participated in ECE, underscoring its role in leveling socio-economic disparities, the most convinced are ECE management staff. Children who were in ECE have higher level of social skills, language skills, and have more often fulfilled basic needs (e.g. safety, food, care) in comparison to children who were not in ECE. These findings support the need for policy interventions to make ECE accessible for all children, ensuring equitable development and learning opportunities.

early childhood education, Slovenia, benefits, compulsory program, perceptions

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

A49: How Can Local Communities Sustain Early Childhood Education Facilities in The Face of Declining Birthrates? Implications from The Trend Towards Consolidation and Complexification of Nursery Schools in Rural Areas of Japan

Presenters
Yasuhito TAMMA, University of Tsukuba, Japan

All authors
Yasuhito TAMMA, University of Tsukuba, Japan

The aim of this research is to clarify how to sustain early childhood education facilities in areas where the birth rate is declining. We report on the movement in rural Japan to reform the way early childhood education facilities are run and located. According to the OECD 2018 survey, Japan has a low percentage of preschool facilities in areas with small populations. In Japan, research is mainly focused on combining facilities for children and the elderly. In contrast, Izumi et al. (2008) focusing on Europe has highlighted cases of integration, such as the “KITA” in urban areas in Germany, and measures to ensure childcare in mountainous areas in France. Previous studies have discussed collaboration between early childhood and elderly care facilities in terms of spatial and activity aspects. This study analyzes whether lifelong living and learning environments are comprehensively designed in local communities and examines how early childhood is positioned within them. We compare three case studies using qualitative research methods. We analyze local government plans and conduct interviews with nursery school principals and local government employees. These interviews are conducted with the permission of the organization and the data sources are used. In communities with extremely low populations of children, the challenge is to create an environment that can provide both pre-school childcare and school education. We also need to consider the connection to learning opportunities after the early childhood years. We propose that a comprehensive plan is needed that allows adults in the local community to be involved in the care and upbringing of children.

population, sustainability, lifelong learning, mlti-generational interaction, long-term planning

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A50: Superdiverse experiences of community and togetherness

Presenters
Marit Frimannslund, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway

All authors
Marit Frimannslund, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway

The main aim of this ongoing doctoral project is to examine experience of community among 2–6-year-old children in a superdiverse kindergarten in Norway. The research question is: How is community expressed in a superdiverse kindergarten, and what generates such experiences? Former research on 1-3-year-old children shows that community is expressed in a bodily manner (Løkken, 1996). Many studies on 3–6-year-old children’s community

focus on verbal expressions (Einarsdottir and Ólafsdóttir, 2023; Nilsen, 2015) and several studies find that a sense of community is challenging in diverse groups (Einarsdottir and Ólafsdóttir, 2023; Giæver, 2020). This emphasizes the need for more knowledge about a variety of expressions among 3-6-year-olds. This case study builds on a qualitative paradigm, and the analytical framework is based on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception (2012). The data consists of field notes from participant observation and video observation in a kindergarten. The Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt) has approved the study. Information was given orally to children, parents, and employees, in addition to written information provided to parents and employees in different languages Preliminary analysis suggests that rhythm, repetition, and mirroring may be manifestations of children's sense of togetherness in superdiverse groups. These manifestations occur in fleeting moments and especially when something unexpected happens. The findings are discussed using Tjora's (2018) seven concepts of community. Understanding superdiverse experiences of togetherness might provide perspectives on inclusive practices in ECEC.

kindergarten, superdiversity, community, togetherness, case study

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A51: Parallels with Differences: Changes in Qualification Standards for Kindergarten Staff

Presenters
Szilvia Golyán, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

All authors
Szilvia Golyán, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

This poster presents a historical overview of secondary-level kindergarten teacher training operating alongside higher education programs. In Hungary, kindergarten teacher training has been part of higher education since 1959. To address shortages of qualified kindergarten teachers (Golyán, 2023; 2024), secondary-level training was reintroduced twice: first in 1972 as a temporary four-year vocational program and again in 2023 as a technical training program, now an alternative to higher education. This study examines how parallel training systems influence professional expectations, workforce dynamics, and early childhood education quality. Using professionalisation and systems theory, the analysis explores how varying qualification pathways shape professional identity and institutional practices. The research applies a constructivist, qualitative comparative analysis of policy and training documents, employing content and thematic analysis to trace evolving notions of professionalism, identity, and institutional expectations within early childhood education. Although no personal data or human participants were involved, the research complies with the EECERA Ethical Code (2024), acknowledging relevant cultural and historical contexts. Key aspects highlighted by the research include: (1) Defining entry and exit requirements, as well as the psychological characteristics and core competencies required for teaching. (2) Structuring and implementing training content to equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills for preschool education. (3) Considering labour market needs. (4) Aligning secondary and higher education programs. The study reveals both convergence and divergence in training standards and professional expectations, shaping the roles, competencies, and pedagogical approaches of kindergarten staff—and thereby influencing the overall quality of early childhood education.

comparative analysis, historical overview, professional expectations, societal needs, training characteristics

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Poster Session B

09:55 – 10:35, Wednesday 27th August 2025

The Atrium, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava

B1: How do you support preschoolers to belong in a group?

Presenters
Ilse Aerden, UCLL, Belgium

All authors
Ilse Aerden, UCLL, Belgium
Caroline Vancraeyveldt, UCLL, Belgium

The study aims to capture preschool teachers' educational beliefs concerning peer relationships and their (possible) intervening roles. Bukowski et al. (2019) stress that to understand children's development, peer relationships must be comprehended and the three dimensions, the individual, the dyad and the (sub)group must be integrated. A socio-constructivistic approach emphasizes the role of teachers in preschoolers' peer relationships in free play (Singer and de Haan, 2007). And the international movement on agency (Santosa, 2018) highlights that the role of the preschooler should not be underestimated either. The 'Politics of Belonging', in particular het concept of 'communities', describes how inclusion and exclusion can take place in groups (Johansson and Rosell, 2021). In three collaborative case studies, teachers, researchers and (sometimes) children, made videos of free play. Different interpretations are discussed in five focus groups of participating and non-participating teachers. Conversations were recorded and transcribed. Qualitative analysis was conducted through a grounded approach within an interpretive research paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). The concept of belonging was added as additional framework to gain a more in-depth understanding. A GDPR informed consent form was provided to teachers and parents of participating children and children can pull out at any time. During focus groups confidentiality was stressed. The video-discussion improved critical reflection and enabled multi-perspectivity on issues in the interactions. The concept of communities helped to understand why children interacted the way they did and what support they sometimes need from an adult. This resulted into eight recommendations to achieve more 'sense of belonging' for all children.

peer relations, belonging, inclusion, agency, teachers role

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B2: Developing an ecological indicator framework to support child refugees with complex trauma in early childhood settings

Presenters
Cherie Lamb, University of New England, Australia

All authors
Cherie Lamb, University of New England, Australia

This poster aims to provide guidance for developing an ecological psychosocial indicator framework for refugee children presenting with complex trauma in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. Presented is a subset of data from a study exploring barriers and enablers to participation in ECEC services for refugee families.

Findings demonstrated the interplay between trauma; poverty; limited language rights; cultural variance between home and ECEC settings; and structural racism (Lamb 2020; Lamb, 2025). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Theory of Human Development was used locate a child in the center of their universe. Parents, support workers, and ECEC practitioners were sampled through focus groups and interviews. Analysis followed the principles of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), viewed through a critical/interpretive paradigm. This research was approved by the UNE HREC (Approval No: HE15-092). Informed consent was obtained from participants, and the researcher held a 'Blue Card 'for working with children. An ecological indicator framework mapping a child's trauma indicators, resilience factors, and indicator domains was developed based on McFarlane, Kaplan and Lawrence's (2011) framework. The framework documents a child's unique circumstances, to highlight the need for more effective planning and responses by ECEC services, and to demonstrate the first step in designing strategies to meet the needs of traumatized children within the context of their family, community and society. Targeted care needs to be sustained through a multifaceted approach involving ECEC services, families, cultural communities, and better linkages with family support, and mental health services. Centrality of the voice of the child is pivotal.

refugees, children, trauma, early childhood; ecological indicator framework

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B3: How Japanese nursery practitioners think about the quality of their childcare

Presenters
Junko Minowa, Musashino University, Japan

All authors
Junko Minowa, Musashino University, Japan
HIROKO INOKUMA, Komazawa Women's Junior College, Japan

This study aims to find This study aims to explore how Japanese nursery managers and practitioners perceive the quality of their childcare and the issues they face. It is said that experiencing high-quality childcare during infancy positively impacts development and other factors (e.g., OECD, 2001; 2006; 2010). Japanese childcare teachers ideally value carefully interacting with children and grasping their individuality (Japan Research Institute, 2022) and emphasize meeting children's needs from their perspective (OECD, 2019). The OECD (2006) definition of 'quality of childcare processes' includes the relationships between teachers and children, between children, and between teachers. These relationships bring up children and include a sense of security and educational intent. In February or March 2025, we conducted interviews with 17 nursery practitioners, asking the following questions: What do you value in your childcare? What are your concerns about providing childcare? We explained the purpose and content of the study and asked only those who agreed to cooperate to fill out the questionnaire. We also told them that they could withdraw their consent later. We found that nursery teachers for children under age three think fostering attachment, satisfying physiological and psychological needs, acquiring essential daily habits, and interacting with other children is important. It also became clear that there is a framework of "seeing, accepting, and responding" . This research can be used to create environments and policies that support what childcare teachers value in their work.

childcare under age three, quality of childcare, nursery teachers, assessment

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B4: Preschool and Nursery Teachers as Models in DVDs: Focusing on Play Scenes of 1-, 2-, and 3–5-Year-Olds

Presenters
Yuko Ohgami, Wayo Women's University, Japan

All authors

Yuko Ohgami, Wayo Women's University, Japan

This study aimed to identify examples in DVDs, which are video teaching materials that demonstrate the support provided by childcare providers as models for trainees in play scenes. Previous research has shown that video recordings of childcare scenes are effective tools for the self-reflection of teachers (Saeki et al., 2018). However, in childcare training courses, video materials of childcare scenes are often used as an introduction and model before novices engage in practical training. Although various DVDs have been published in Japan, how childcare providers are viewed in such educational materials has not been adequately explored. This study is based on the theoretical framework of social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) and aims to clarify the characteristics of models in DVDs. The methodology involves an observational study of published DVDs in Japan between 2010 and 2022. A total of 64 chapters from 24 DVDs were analyzed. The classification of caregiver support in the play process was used. As the data are from publicly available DVDs, the names and affiliations of the children and caregivers in the videos are not identifiable, and direct citation of images was avoided in this study. This study revealed that various play scenes were edited in a short time. Caregivers in the DVDs were close to children during play with 1- and 2-year-olds, while they offered suggestions, asked questions, and actively participated in play with 3–5-year-olds. These video materials reflecting the characteristics of nursery teachers are useful because novice teachers can observe them efficiently.

preservice teacher education, instructional DVDs/videos, three- to five-year olds, infants, play scenes

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B5: Self-regulation and Reactivity: How They Influence Children's Decision-Making in Uncertain Situations

Presenters
Eva Košíková, Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty Of Arts, Department Of Psychology, Slovakia

All authors
Daniela Turoňová, Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty Of Arts, Department Of Psychology/ The Research Institute Of Child Psychology And Pathopsychology, Slovakia
Eva Košíková, Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty Of Arts, Department Of Psychology, Slovakia
Barbora Mesárošová, Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology, Slovakia
Ivan Sleziak, Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Physiology, Slovakia
Katarína Babinská, Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Physiology, Slovakia

This study examined how children's temperament—particularly reactivity and self-regulation—influences decision-making under uncertainty, focusing on developmental differences between early (ages 6–8) and later childhood (ages 9–12). We hypothesized that age would moderate the link between temperament and decision-making. These traits are key for impulse control and emotional regulation (Rothbart and Bates, 2006), affecting responses to risk and reward. Dual-process theories (Evans and Stanovich, 2013) suggest younger children rely more on intuitive, fast System 1 processing, while older children increasingly engage reflective System 2 reasoning. According to Piaget, children under 8 are in the concrete operational stage, reasoning based on tangible experiences with limited abstract thinking. Grounded in temperament theory (Rothbart and Bates, 2006), self-regulation involves modulating reactivity. High negative emotionality may lead to impulsivity, while strong self-regulation supports attention to cues and inhibitory control (Posner and Rothbart, 2000). Children aged 6–12 completed the Balloon Analogue Risk Task (BART) (Lejuez et al., 2002), simulating risk-based decisions. Eye-tracking recorded attention to risk cues; temperament was assessed through the TMCQ. Ethical standards were followed, including informed parental consent, child assent, and minimal distress. Children with high negative reactivity and low self-regulation were more impulsive, showing shorter decision times and reduced attention to relevant cues. In contrast, those with high reactivity but strong self-regulation made more deliberate decisions. Age moderated the relationship between reactivity and attention. Findings emphasize the need to account for temperament and developmental stage in

interventions targeting self-regulation and decision-making. Early identification of at-risk children can guide strategies to enhance attention and metacognition.

self-regulation, reactivity, BART, TMCQ, eye-tracker

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B6: Vision versus Reality: Preschool Education Policy in Israel in the Last Decades

Presenters

Yaara Shilo, Efrata College, Israel

All authors
Yaara Shilo, Efrata College, Israel

This study investigates the evolution of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policy in Israel, with a focus on the influence of political instability, the legal right to early education, and the professionalization of the early childhood workforce. While global research has emphasized the developmental importance of high-quality preschool education (Bowman et al., 2001; Jeong et al., 2021; Shavit et al., 2018), Israeli ECCE policy has been shaped by dynamic local, cultural, and political contexts (Adi-Yafe, 2022; Jensen, 2017). Anchored in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998), the research analyzes the multi-level interactions between policy frameworks and practical implementation across chrono-, macro-, exo-, and meso-system levels. A mixed-methods design was adopted: qualitative analysis employed Process Tracing methodology to explore ECCE policy development over time, while quantitative data were collected through standardized questionnaires measuring professional identity, self-efficacy, and background characteristics from 137 ECCE center managers. The study adhered to EECERA's Ethical Code (2024), including informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, right to withdraw and prior ethical approval. Findings reveal key developments, including the reconceptualization of ECCE institutions as educational rather than custodial settings, the implementation of universal preschool education and recent reforms focused on staff training and regulatory frameworks. Ongoing political crises have disrupted governance structures, hindering policy coherence and long-term planning. The study proposes a multidimensional conceptual model illustrating how systemic forces drive and constrain ECCE reforms. This model contributes to the global discourse on sustainable early childhood policy by highlighting the importance of stability, continuity, and professional investment.

early childhood policy, child development, ecological theory, process analysis, mixed-methods

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B7: The Significance of Extracurricular Activities in ECEC Teacher Education Program -Examining through Pre-Service Teachers' Perspectives of Children

Presenters
Riyo Kadota, Seinan Gakuin University, Japan

All authors
Riyo Kadota, Seinan Gakuin University, Japan
Yoshimichi Iwabuchi, Seinan Gakuin University, Japan
Fukiko Masuda, Shokei University, Japan
Kazuo Takahashi, Kobe Shinwa University, Japan

This study examines how extracurricular activities are positioned within the ECEC teacher education program. It focuses on what students have learned from extracurricular activities compared with formal curricular activities (ECEC practicum). Kawai (2015) states that extracurricular courses improve university education and practical skills.

Ileritürk (2023) reported that extracurricular activities in ECEC have promoted awareness of teaching methods and plans for pre-service teachers. However, no research has examined extracurricular activities compared to the formal ECEC curriculum. This study uses as its theoretical framework Lunnenberg's argument (2010) that extracurricular activities have four effects: improving learning, supporting compulsory and elective courses, integrating knowledge, and realizing the goals of democratic life. To clarify the impact of extracurricular activities on the image of children, a questionnaire (n=18 university ECEC students) and further in-depth interviews (n=8) were conducted with those that expressed a desire to participate. Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the open-ended questions in the survey, and the frequency and relationship of the words that appeared in the interviews were analyzed through KHCoder (Higuchi, 2001). Participants are informed that they can withdraw their participation at any time, their identities will not be revealed. The fact that students came to understand children with eyes of “trust” after extracurricular activities and that “distrust” decreased suggests that involvement with children through extracurricular activities positively changed the students' image of children. This study suggests that extracurricular activities may foster experiences and competencies that enhance professionalism, which cannot be acquired in the regular ECEC teacher education curriculum.

teacher education, curriculum, extracurricular activities, image of children, pre-service teachers

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B8: From Rhetoric to Reality: Traveller children’s perspectives and experiences in Irish Early Years settings

Presenters
Teresa Heeney, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

All authors
Teresa Heeney, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland
Carmel Ward, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

The research aims to investigate the inclusiveness of Irish Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings for the Traveller Community, illuminating children’s views and experiences. In Ireland, research in primary and secondary schools highlights how societal discrimination undermines Traveler children’s sense of belonging (Quinlan, 2021). However, much less is known about younger Traveller children’s experiences in formal ECEC settings. Grounded in critical race theory to consider power, privilege and oppression (Escayg, 2019), a rights-based, anti-bias conceptual framework was developed to facilitate a critical and contextualised study with members of an indigenous and marginalised ethnic minority. A qualitative, Transformative Action Research approach shaped the social justice agenda and aspirations for change (Mertens, 2021). Child-led tours and participatory observations (Clark and Moss, 2011) with forty Traveller children (2-6 years) and their peers took place in 5 ECEC settings; activating children’s meaningful participation. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks were applied to a thematic data analysis (Braun and Clark, 2012). Guided by the EECERA ethical code, the research embodied social responsibility and deep respect towards the community involved (Bertram et al., 2024). Informed consent was obtained from children where possible, and assent was negotiated throughout. Findings illuminate Traveller children’s environmental and relational experiences that make them feel happy, unhappy or wish to change; shedding light on the extent to which Ireland’s ECEC anti-bias inclusion guidelines and rights-based curriculum are evident in practice (Murray, 2021). Children’s views and experiences point to practice-based actions that can improve inclusive and rights-respecting experiences of Traveller children in ECEC settings across Ireland.

Irish Travellers, inclusion, rights-based, anti-bias, transformative

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B9: Supporting early learning and language development for children from culturally diverse backgrounds in ECEC settings

Presenters
Lynn Ang, UCL, United Kingdom

All authors
Lynn Ang, UCL, United Kingdom
Yu Ishii, University of Tokyo, Japan
Sachiko Nozawa, University of Tokyo, Japan
Sachiko Asai, University of Tokyo, Japan
MIKIKO TABU, Seitoku University, Japan

The study aimed to examine early childhood practitioners' perspectives on supporting early learning and language development of children in Japan who speak a home language that is different from Japanese in the ECEC settings they attend. We draw on existing literature in early language development in education and psycholinguistics to underpin the research including Hammer et. al. (2014). The language and literacy development of young dual language learners: A critical review. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 29(4), 715–733; Unsworth et. al. (2019). Predicting bilingual preschoolers' patterns of language development: Degree of non-native input matters. Applied Psycholinguistics, 40(5), 1189–1219. We also conducted a scoping review to examine current evidence on supporting early language development. Sociocultural theoretical framework was used to understand and conceptualise the social and cultural context in supporting children's early learning and development. Qualitative design using a web-based survey with 335 public and private ECEC settings. Survey responses from 48 ECEC practitioners and interviews with 8 practitioners were analysed. Institutional ethics approval and informed participant consent were obtained. Findings showed ECEC settings focused on creating a safe and inclusive environment for children but did not overtly tend to children's language development needs. It highlighted practitioners' lack of confidence in supporting children's language development and the importance of enhancing ECEC practitioners' knowledge and understanding in supporting early language development in culturally appropriate ways. There is urgent need for better policies and professional development to improve practitioners' practice to confidently support the learning needs of children with culturally different backgrounds.

early learning, language development, cultural diversity, early childhood care and education, practitioners

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B10: Child Rights, Cocreation and Empowerment: A Pilot Project to Explore the Effectiveness of a Play Provision Assessment Tool in Kyaka II refugee settlement, Uganda and playgroups across Botswana

Presenters
Debra Laxton, University of Chichester, United Kingdom

All authors
Debra Laxton, University of Chichester, United Kingdom
Sarah Ndlovu, Children on the Edge, United Kingdom
Priyanka Handa Ram, Learn to Play, Botswana

This project explores the effectiveness of a co-created, child-centred play provision assessment framework (PPAF) SDG target 4.2 (UN, 2015) has driven global ECE access and demand for reliable assessment tools (Pisani et al., 2018; Raikes et al., 2023). Challenges persist in measuring development across domains in low and middle income countries (Fernald et al., 2017; UNICEF, 2023). While universal ECE quality is debated (Chen & Wolf, 2021) structural and process quality are widely recognised as key components (Pianta et al., 2016; Fernald et al., 2017; Eadie et al., 2024). Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory underpins the study, emphasising social interaction and scaffolding. Child rights theory (UNCRC, 1989) frames quality ECE as a right. Co-creation and empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 2000) shaped the framework development and project methodology. Grounded in a sociocultural paradigm, the methodology employed a mixed-methods approach. Simple random sampling identified 30 ECE settings in Kyaka and

five playgroups across Botswana (143 children). Online questionnaires (n=41) provided broad perspectives on the tool's effectiveness and usability and informed semi-structured interviews (n=8) allowing for deeper exploration of the tool's impact in diverse contexts. Document analysis systematically reviewed assessment tools and data systems. Informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation were ensured with trauma sensitive and signposting safeguards. The PPAF was found to be a versatile, child-centred tool with potential to support the improvement of early education practices. Genuine child-centeredness should be a core principle in any assessment development and use. An upscaled study is needed. The Ugandan Government is currently reviewing the PPAF.

assessment, refugee, play, community, empowerment

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B11: Are Children's Voices Excluded from Teacher Training Processes? A Practicum Proposal that Listens to the Voice of Childhood

Presenters
Ángela Saiz Linares, Universidad de Cantabria, Spain
Noelia Ceballos-López, Universidad de Cantabria, Spain

All authors
Ángela Saiz Linares, Universidad de Cantabria, Spain
Noelia Ceballos-López, Universidad de Cantabria, Spain

This study analyses an educational innovation in the training of Early Childhood Education students at the University of Cantabria. It focuses on two formative strategies—"From My Window" and "My Favourite Place in the Neighbourhood"—which aim to enhance students' reflection through active listening to children's voices. Grounded in participatory pedagogy (Susinos et al., 2018) and the recognition of children as rights-holders (Gillett-Swan and Coppock, 2016; Jerome, 2016; Lundy, 2012), this research contributes to debates on inclusive, democratic education. Drawing on critical reflection (Schön, 1998; Vieira et al., 2021) and guided inquiry in the Practicum (Beavers et al., 2017), this work merges these with participatory approaches that foreground children's voices as agents of educational change (Susinos and Ceballos, 2012). Concepts such as "childhood geographies" and "languages of communication" are used to explore how children express their understanding of space and identity. The study follows a qualitative, evaluative case study approach (Schwandt and Gates, 2017), analysing portfolios from 14–20 student teachers per course, developed during their practicum. All participants provided informed consent. The study adheres to ethical standards outlined in the EECERA code. The results indicate that these strategies promote deeper student reflection on the socio-cultural dimensions of childhood ("childhood geographies"), and foster methodological competencies in inquiry with children, such as authentic listening and the recognition of diverse expressive languages (drawings, narratives, movement, etc.). The research advocates integrating participatory strategies into teacher education, making children's voices central to reflection and practice.

initial teacher training,practicum, children's voice, children's rights, reflective training

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B12: Educational Robotics and Environmental Education: Experiences and Ideas from Initial Early Childhood Teacher Education

Presenters
Maria Figueiredo, CI&DEI and School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal

All authors
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Sandra Ferreira, School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal
Cristina Gomes, CI&DEI and School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal
Isabel Abrantes, School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal
Valter Alves, CISeD and School of Technology and Management, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal

The connection between nature-based experiences and educational robotics was explored in a project on environmental education in early childhood education. Future teachers contributed to the study on the potential of educational robotics to enhance nature-based experiences for children for environmental education purposes. Direct experiences with nature in early childhood contribute to care for nature across their lifespans (Chawla, 2020; Ernst et al., 2021). The explicit connection between nature experiences and sustainability in early childhood education is a relatively recent development (Elliott and Hughes, 2023). Educational robotics and other technologies can be used to support the connection between indoor and outdoor experiences as well as provide an engaging learning experience that combines the excitement of robotics with the wonder of the natural world (Figueiredo and Ferreira, 2024). As an interpretative study (Cresswell, 2014), the data was collected through observations of 20 teacher education students (female) in their practicum, and group interviews on educational robotics, environmental education, and nature outdoors. The data was analysed using content analysis. Information about the study and a consent form were provided to all participants. Anonymity was assured. Participants could withdraw at any time. All participants found proposals for combining robotics and nature in meaningful ways. Articulating those experiences with environmental education was challenging beyond the idea of connection to nature. Being-in-nature is necessary but insufficient for environmental education, requiring further work by educators, for example on ethical relationships between humans and “more-than-humans” (Elliott and Young, 2015). It would be beneficial if awareness of these dimensions was incorporated across teacher education.

nature, outdoors, robotics, environmental education, technology

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B13: Teachers' Perceptions of Augmented Reality Use in Early Childhood Education

Presenters

Arwa Alzahrani, Queen’s University, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Belfast, United Kingdom/ Najran University, College of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

All authors

Arwa Alzahrani, Queen’s University, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Belfast, United Kingdom/ Najran University, College of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

This study examines early childhood teachers’ perceptions of augmented reality (AR) as an educational tool, . Despite evidence highlighting AR’s potential to enhance early learning (Shams, 2019), its classroom integration remains challenging (Abdul Rahman, 2020). Using a unified framework combining the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Activity Theory (AT), the study explores teachers’ internal beliefs and how these interact with contextual elements such as tools, community, rules, and division of labour. The study adopts a mixed-methods design, guided by post-positivist and constructivist paradigms. This abstract highlights qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews with ten early childhood teachers in Saudi Arabia—five with AR experience and five without. Interviewees were self-nominated from a pool of 105 questionnaire respondents and gave informed consent after reviewing their rights as participants. Primary contradictions emerged within the teacher community, as non-users had limited knowledge of AR, reducing adoption willingness. Disparities in digital skills between urban and rural children caused teacher hesitancy. Additionally, large class sizes and lack of assistants hindered AR implementation. Secondary contradictions appeared between the subject (teacher) and tool (AR): users saw value in AR but lacked access to suitable, often paid, applications. Another contradiction arose between the subject and rules: non-users wanted to adopt AR but needed training, while users struggled with unequal access to devices and internet across schools. The

study recommends developing culturally relevant AR content, offering practical training for teachers, and improving school infrastructure—key to supporting effective and sustainable AR integration in early childhood settings.

early childhood education, teachers' perceptions, augmented reality, activity theory, technology acceptance model

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B14: Toddlers´ literary conversations

Presenters
Hanna Thuresson, Örebro University, Sweden

All authors
Hanna Thuresson, Örebro University, Sweden

This study aims to widen the understanding of literary conversations in Early childhood education settings for 1- to 2-year-olds. What different types of literature conversations occur when younger preschool children interact with each other in activities with literature and materials for storytelling? Previous research shows that preschool teachers can enhance children's verbal language and vocabulary by intentionally engaging them during read-aloud sessions (Pillinger and Vardy, 2022). Additionally, children's literacy learning is improved through conversations that explore language, words, and content from literature (Snow and Ninio, 1986). Theoretical framework is based on a social and multimodal approach to literacy, drawing from Rowsell and Pahl (2015). During a five-month fieldwork period, observations of 43 children across four Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings were conducted to capture children's peer interactions with literature and storytelling materials. The data comprises video-documented observations and field notes of interactions. To interpret patterns in the material, the analysis is based on a qualitative and thematic content analysis. 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 study identifies three types of literary conversations. The findings indicate that literature conversations are not fixed on verbal processing of the content but highlight different ways for children to express their perspectives and knowledge. This study provides valuable insights for educators who aim to enhance reading experiences and nurture lifelong literacy skills in young learners.

toddlers, early childhood education and care, literary conversations, multimodality, play

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B15: Understanding the practices between a Japanese kindergarten and a Buddhist temple from an agential realism perspective

Presenters
Yosuke Hirota, Osaka Metropolitan University, Japan

All authors
Yosuke Hirota, Osaka Metropolitan University, Japan

My study focuses on the practices at a kindergarten in Japan from the perspective of agential realism. The kindergarten was founded by a Buddhist temple, and the education and care have been joint efforts. The purpose of this study is to analyse how the practices including Buddhist rituals and concepts are carried out through the entanglements of humans (children, teachers, temple staff, family members and the local community) and materials. Agential realism is onto-epistemology formulated by Barad (2007), which defines 'intra-action' between humans and materials. Agential realism aims to understand how the activities of each agency are enacted as 'intra-action,' which are the entanglements between agencies in the apparatus. Lenz-Taguchi (2011) advocated for the 'intra-active' pedagogy in ECEC research on Swedish educational settings. Agential realism brings a democratic perspective to

ECEC research against the traditional view of the teachers and the researchers as subjects. The research consists of long-term observations, interviews and joint projects with kindergarten teachers, researchers, children and their families. I have obtained the research approval from the participants. Personal information is not disclosed in the survey or the presentation. My findings focus on various entanglements of agencies in the kindergarten and the temple. My study's unique aspect is to consider how the temple and Buddhism functions as agencies and the religious aspects work to the educational ones. Several cooperations of agencies, especially between humans and materials, can be revealed through this methodology. The future vision of education beyond anthropocentrism is presented by this study.

agential realism, 'intra-active' pedagogy, entanglement of agencies, Buddhist rituals and concepts

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B16: To What Extent Have Japan's Early-Childhood Physical Activity Guidelines Been Adopted? A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

Presenters
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All authors
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This study aimed to clarify qualitatively and quantitatively the extent to which the "Guidelines for Physical Activity in Early Childhood" (2012) points have been disseminated to childcare providers. In Japan, 20 years have passed since the first reported decline in children's physical fitness (Central Council for Education, 2002), and 10 years have passed since the "Guidelines for Physical Activity in Early Childhood" (MEXT, 2012) ("the Guidelines") were formulated. This study adopts Rogers's (1962) diffusion of innovations theory. A questionnaire survey was administered to 1,976 childcare providers in metropolitan Tokyo. It asked about (1) demographic information; (2) key aspects valued in physical activity instruction at childcare centers; and (3) awareness, perceived importance, and confidence levels regarding the three key points of the Guidelines. The study received ethical approval from the Wayo Women's University Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. A one-way ANOVA examined the differences in awareness, perceived importance, and confidence regarding the three key points among childcare providers with varying experience levels. Childcare providers with less than five years of experience had significantly lower awareness and confidence. Additionally, an analysis of the open-ended responses revealed that the key aspects that childcare providers value—frequently mentioned words, co-occurrence networks, and contexts—are closely aligned with the three points. Childcare providers have adopted the three key points outlined in the Guidelines for Physical Activity well; however, support for less experienced childcare providers is needed for effective implementation.

physical activity, guidelines, childcare providers, quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B17: Improvements in Social Cues for Children with Autism Through Inclusive Dance Class

Presenters
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This ongoing inquiry explores the use of dance and group games to improve social interaction among children with autism. Research has shown that autistic pupils in an inclusive setting showed improvement in social interaction, joint attention, maintenance of proximity and social play through the use of music and dance (Stamou et al., 2022). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon Stamou et al's Teacher Researcher and theories of movement therapy (Sharoun, et al., 2014), positive impact of dance (DeJesus et al., 2020) and Social Constructivism Theory. Dance and games are used in an inclusive setting, where the facilitator and typical children demonstrate and model social interaction, response to music, and social play. The study was conducted as action research with a group of children in a dance class setting in Singapore. We constantly observed children's engagement and responses, evaluating the set-up and components in a lesson and adjusting our ways of encouraging social interaction and public engagement with the community. At the onset, all parents were informed verbally and with an information card that this class is an attempt to improve social inclusion, interaction and participation. It explains why it is a $1 class, and parents are invited to the open class at the end. The use of dance, music and games in an inclusive setting improved social interaction, engagement and participation in the main class activity. This research suggests ways to improve social interaction and engagement for autistic children in an inclusive setting.

inclusion, dance movement, social learning, autism, teacher researcher

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B18: How 3-6-year-old children choose and enjoy picture books with the aid of their teachers?: Questionnaire survey on ECEC teachers and observation of childcare setting.

Presenters
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The purpose of this study was to clarify how 3-6-year-old children choose and enjoy Picture Books ("PB") with the aid of their teachers. Children in ECEC develop several abilities and skills throughout PB. PB also provide contexts that support children's development, not just because they usually contain verbal texts as well as images, but also because they engage children as active meaning-makers, stimulating conversations and the use of imagination (Niland, 2023). Although such important roles of PB in several aspects of child development were identified, not many studies discussed child agency when selecting and enjoying PB. Young children develop from having adults read PB to choosing and enjoying PB on their own. This study was based on the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1987) which emphasize the interaction between child and socio-cultural factors. This study was based on an interpretivist paradigm, and used a mixed research method using a questionnaire survey on 63 teachers and participant observation in Japanese kindergarten. Informed consent for the purpose and procedure of the study, personal information protection policy, and research participation/withdrawal policy were obtained from teachers and parents. The findings demonstrate that since teachers tended to choose indirect approach (92.2%; arrange environment and read aloud etc.) to help children read PB on their own initiative, they tended not to use direct approach (18.1%; PB lending activities etc.). To encourage children to read PB voluntarily, it is effective to foster their motivation to read PB using indirect approaches, then using direct approaches.

picture books, 3-6-yers-old-children, questionnaire survey, participatory observation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B19: The Reading Act of Five-Year-Old Children in Different Types of ECEC Institutions in Japan

Presenters
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This study focuses on two classes in different types of ECEC institutions and aims to identify differences in the act of reading picture books by five-year-old children. Some studies found that children read picture books in the same time slots, especially after lunch, and after class's activities (Lu, 2023). However, the specific act of reading and reading environment need to be discussed. As children's reading was considered informal in this study, reference was made to informal learning theories (Crowley et al., 2014). The participants were class A with 25 children from a public kindergarten and class B with 18 children from a private nursery school. The participants were observed and videotaped once a week. The analysis focused on the children's reading acts as a method of informal learning. Permission for the observation, recording and the use of data was acquired from the ECEC institutions and the parents. The privacy of the children was strictly protected, and the data was allowed to be used in research only. As a result, the act of reading alone and reading in small groups are common. However, Children were often observed reading to other children and playing with pictures in nursery school due to longer daycare hours. It is implicated that the accessibility of picture books encourages the act of reading in children. In addition, the provision of sufficient time is conducive to informal acts of learning among young children.

the act of reading, long-term observation, early learning, different types of ECEC Institutions in Japan

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B20: Comparison of Children's, Parents', and Teachers' Awareness of Children's Resilience

Presenters
Izumi Ishiyama, Tokoha University, Japan

All authors
Izumi Ishiyama, Tokoha University, Japan

The purpose of this study was to verify the scale analyzing children's, parents', and kindergarten teachers' responses to the resilience scale under development. Resilience is the ability to adapt well to difficult situations and is considered a necessary factor for mental health (Fraser and Smokowski, 2004). Research on this ability will contribute to the development of non-cognitive abilities or socio-emotional skills (Heckman, 2013). I referred to existing teacher rating resilience scales, and created a scale child responds by himself/herself. The novelty lies in its ability to assess children's resilience from multiple perspectives-children themselves, their parents, and their teachers-using a single measurement. The scale was constructed based on four components of resilience which could empower children to face an unpredictable future. I conducted structured interview surveys on 80 children aged 4-6, and self-administered questionnaire surveys on 66 parents and 28 teachers. I analyzed the responses of the three types of participants. Children with parental permission were included. They received developmentally appropriate explanations and gave assents. Consent was received from all parents and the teachers. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any tim Factor analyses indicated that children and parents have a different tendency in responses. Results of the χ²-test showed that teachers, in comparison with parents, assess various aspects of children's resilience more positively. In the future, we would like to increase the number of participants, perform verification by statistical analysis. Standardization of this scale will contribute to develop children's resilience in cooperation teachers with parents.

resilience, scale, socio-emotional skills, structured interview survey, parent

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B21: Professional reading about diversity and inclusion: educators' and leaders' perceptions and experiences

Presenters
Jackie Brien, The University of Melbourne, Australia

All authors
Jackie Brien, The University of Melbourne, Australia

This research aimed to explore professional reading habits of early childhood professionals to examine how this informs knowledge and practice. The poster, in its visual format, will refer to professional reading about diversity and inclusion. Existing literature provides limited information, although it is recommended that educators read research (OECD, 2022; Ramia et al., 2023). Rudland and Kemp (2006) found that schoolteachers engaged in limited professional reading. This study was informed by ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), since a diversity of professionals across the system, and their interactions, were studied. Professional learning theories (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002; Rickinson et al., 2020) underpinned research as professional reading is a form of professional learning. An interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methodology was used, including questionnaires and interviews.43 educators and leaders self-selected to participate in response to an invitation in national online newsletter. The research met Australian ethical requirements (NHMRC, 2023). Participants were provided with plain language statements and gave written consent to questionnaires, interviews, writing and distribution of research. Professional reading informs and inspires knowledge, learning and inclusive practice, supporting all children's 'best interests' (UNHCRC, 1989). Participants sought out specific reading to enhance understanding and implementation of inclusive evidence-informed pedagogical practice. Educators wrote of their experiences, contributing to practice-based evidence. Leaders used professional reading to develop policy and regulatory expectations for inclusion. This poster will visually depict participant voices to illuminate perspectives and experiences. Implications for policy and practice include the importance of enabling professional reading to support practice that fully celebrates diversity and enacts inclusion.

professional reading, diversity, inclusion, learning, professionalism

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B22: The Effect of Gender-role Stereotype, Social Networking Service (SNS) Usage and Materialism on Attitudes toward Marriage

Presenters
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All authors
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SeulGi Kwon, Chung-Ang university, South Korea

South Korea's fertility rate of 0.78 (Statistics Korea, 2024) and increasing negative attitudes toward marriage have raised demographic concerns. In response, population education was introduced in kindergartens to foster positive views on marriage and family (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2022). This study examined key factors shaping marital attitudes to inform early childhood education. Gender-role stereotypes are defined as socially constructed norms prescribing distinct expectations for men and women, grounded in societal conventions (Vogel et al., 2003). Traditional family values have been shown to be positively associated with intentions to marry (Im and Park, 2014). Based on Festinger's Social Comparison Theory (1954), social comparison through SNS usage and materialism has been shown to influence individuals' social attitudes including those related to marriage. These social comparisons and materialism have been found to be positively related to the intentions to marry (Jang and Cho, 2025). This study

used panel data collected from 3,492 South Koreans aged 19 to 49. The data was analyzed using correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. Consent was obtained from survey participants, ensuring the right to withdraw, anonymity, and confidentiality. The results showed that gender-role stereotypes, SNS usage, and materialism were associated with attitudes toward marriage in that order. Additionally, gender-role stereotypes and materialism positively influenced attitudes toward marriage. Early population education should address materialism and SNS usage, and foster social responsibility, as these factors shape marriage views from early childhood.

Gender-role stereotype, SNS usage, materialism, attitudes toward marriage, population education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B23: Tree of Knowledge co-creation in regional Australian preschools to support family engagement and service access

Presenters
Jubilee Smith, Southern Cross University, Australia

All authors
Charmaine Bernie, Southern Cross University, Australia
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Michelle Neumann, Southern Cross University, Australia

The Tree of Knowledge Project aims to support educators and families in early childhood settings, by co-creating and evaluating a "living" resource for evidence-based information and community supports. In Australia, the Early Years Strategy and the National Quality Framework highlight the importance of family engagement in early childhood education and care (ECEC) (AGDSS, 2024; ACECQA, 2020). These evidence-based frameworks also advocate cross-sectoral strategies enabling children's early access to supports. The project is founded on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model, recognising an interrelated nexus between communities of support that promote positive outcomes for children and families. This research is embedded in a pragmatist paradigm, using a mixed-methods research design inclusive of codesign, pre and post surveys and focus group data, incorporating the perspectives of educators and parents involved. Resource feasibility, service engagement, family support perceptions and educator confidence and competence will be explored. Informed consent, privacy and data security are rigorously adhered to, in accordance with national guidelines and committee approval (No. 2024/168). Survey and focus group data analyses via descriptive statistics and Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis (2021) are pending. Findings will be presented across constructs of feasibility, educator confidence and competence, and family engagement. In line with the Australian Early Years Strategy and the National Quality Framework, it is essential that practical, culturally-responsive ECEC-based methods of supporting children and families to access needed resources and community-based supports, as required, are implemented and measured. Such research can inform best practice in cross-sectoral service engagement approaches for children with early support needs, and their families.

preschool, childhood, education, inclusion, access

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B24: A Communities of Practice Model of Continuing Professional Development for Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years in Ireland

Presenters
Claire Butterly, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

All authors
Claire Butterly, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

Linda Kelly, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

The research investigated the extent to which the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme (LINC+) effectively supported participants to develop Communities of Practice (CoPs) that provide fora for Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs) to create and sustain inclusive Early Learning and Care (ELC) settings in Ireland. LINC+ was developed to support graduates of the LINC Level 6 Programme in their role as INclusion CO-ordinators (INCOs), promoting an inclusive culture, practice and pedagogy in settings. Models of CPD that provide opportunities for ECTs to network, disseminate best practice and reflect together are considered among the most effective (Peleman et al., 2018). For INCOs who already possess a working knowledge of the ELC sector and how to implement inclusive practices, CoPs may be particularly effective in bolstering and extending existing knowledge, practices and values. Guskey's (2002) framework for evaluating CPD underpinned the research. Data were collected from eight LINC+ participants via online surveys and focus groups on their experiences and motivations in developing and engaging in CoPs and the contributions made through peer learning to the enhancement of inclusive practice. Ethical approval and participant consent were obtained. Peer support, sharing practical examples, ideas and knowledge related to inclusion, and developing a sense of belonging were identified as key outcomes of participating in CoPs with fellow INCOs. The findings contribute to an understanding at policy and practice levels regarding the impact of professional learning and CoPs on cultivating best practice for the enhancement of inclusion in the early years.

Inclusion, professional learning, communities of practice, educators' perspectives, leadership

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B25: Digital Tools as Aids for The Inclusion of Multicultural Children in Kindergarten

Presenters
Svitlana Holovchuk, NLA University College, Norway

All authors
Svitlana Holovchuk, NLA University College, Norway

The research aim of the project is to highlight how digital tools can be used as aids for the inclusion of multicultural children in kindergarten. The study is focused on the previous research conducted over the last three years related to digital tools in kindergarten (Gjesdal, Eikhaug & Holovchuk, 2023; Boumová, Havigerová & Stránská, 2024) and cultural diversity in early childhood (Thorshaug, 2022; Schram and Bergsland, 2022; Zhang, 2024). The foundation of the theoretical and conceptual framework is The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), theories of The Perceived Competence Scale for Children by Harter (1982) and Children's Well-Being by Homel & Burns (1989). The study's proposed research paradigm is a phenomenological approach, which highlights the experiences of kindergarten staff related to using digital tools in kindergarten. The focus group interview is the data collection method. The study will be conducted according to the Norwegian Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. The project will be reported to the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research. Focus group interview participation is anonymous and voluntary. Informed consent will be requested. The preliminary findings are divided into two approaches: Professional Digital Competences (knowledge and competencies related to various digital tools, digital judgment, digital ethics), and Multicultural Competencies (knowledge about different cultures; values and attitudes; collaboration with parents). The project hopefully can be a contribution to the improvement of Early Childhood Education and Care practice and show new perspectives related to the inclusion of multicultural children in kindergarten.

digital tools, inclusion, multicultural children, multicultural competencies, kindergarten

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B26: Collaborative development of a multilingual STEM dictionary and virtual therapy tools for Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Mignon Botes, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

All authors
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Andri Schoonen, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
Liztie Prinsloo, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

In South Africa's multilingual ECE landscape, the lack of linguistically and culturally relevant literacy and Science resources poses challenges for teachers and speech-language therapists. This study explores how ECE teacher education and speech-language therapy students collaboratively develop a multilingual STEM dictionary and virtual therapy tools to support early literacy and Science education. Research on multilingual education (Nomlomo, 2019) and digital speech-language intervention (Benz et al., 2022) highlights the importance of accessible, culturally responsive materials in ECE. Grounded in a Scholarship for Teaching and learning framework, which emphasises reflective, interdisciplinary learning (Rowland and Myatt, 2014); Sociocultural Learning Theory, which highlights social interaction in language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978); and Constructivist Theories, which stress play and exploration in cognitive development (Piaget, 1950), the study guides the creation of multilingual STEM-resources and digital speech-language therapy tools. This study follows a participatory action research paradigm (Wood, 2020), using Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) as its methodology to foster collaborative knowledge creation, critical reflection, and iterative development of multilingual STEM and speech-language support resources. Ethical considerations align with the EECERA Ethical Code, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and equitable power-sharing (Bertram et al., 2024). Preliminary findings suggest interdisciplinary collaboration enhances students' pedagogical knowledge, fosters awareness of linguistic diversity, and equips them with practical strategies for their practice. This study contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by promoting inclusive, multilingual teaching and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by improving educational access. It underscores the value of student-led research in shaping equitable and contextually relevant ECE practices.

multilingual STEM education, speech-language therapy, teacher education, action research, early literacy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B27: A Study of Maternal Involvement, Family Environmental Diversity and Social Competence of Young Children in Different Ethnic Groups-Secondary Data Research from Kids in Taiwan: National Longitudinal Study of Child Development and Care (KIT)

Presenters
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Chia-Yen Hsieh, National Pingtung University, Taiwan
Yi-Wen Tsai, National Pingtung University, Taiwan
Chiu-Hsia Huang, National Pingtung University, Taiwan

This study examines the differential effects of maternal involvement and family environmental diversity on the social competence of young children across different ethnic groups, using secondary data from the Kids in Taiwan-National Longitudinal Study of Child Development and Care (KIT) Prior studies highlight the roles of maternal involvement and diverse home environments in children's social competence (Lambrecht et al., 2019; Sajedi et al., 2020), yet few explore these across ethnic groups in Taiwan. Local research links maternal background to parenting and children's social outcomes (Lin, 2006; Huang, 2015). Guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the study

integrates cultural dimensions to analyze ethnic variations. Using data from 2,164 36-month-old children, families were grouped by maternal involvement levels using cluster analysis. A two-factor multivariate analysis was conducted across Taiwanese, Chinese, Southeast Asian, and Indigenous mothers. In addition to strict data anonymization, the study adhered to ethical protocols established by the KIT project, including informed consent at initial data collection and approval by a university IRB. . Results showed maternal involvement and diversity influenced social competence differently by ethnicity. For Taiwanese mothers, both factors enhanced independence, proactivity, sociability, and obedience. For Chinese mothers, involvement mainly increased obedience, while diversity fostered independence and proactivity. For Southeast Asian mothers, diversity improved proactivity and sociability. Indigenous mothers showed no significant effects. The findings underscore the need for culturally responsive parenting programs and policies addressing ethnic-specific needs to support children's social development effectively.

maternal involvement, family environmental diversity, social competence, ethnic differences, ecological systems theory

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B28: Experience of the numerosity in infancy and childhood

Presenters
Atsushi Asakawa, Ehime Univerisity, Japan

All authors
Atsushi Asakawa, Ehime Univerisity, Japan

The purpose of this study is to clarify the content of the numerosity environment and activities for infants and young children in a childcare setting. The development of numerosity concepts begins in infancy and childhood. Nursery and preschool teachers prepare environments and activities to support the development of numerosity concepts in infancy and childhood. (Sakakibara, 2002; 2006) Based on Vygotsky's theory, it is thought that the role of more capable others, such as adults and older children, is extremely important in the acquisition of knowledge by young children (e.g. Rogoff, 2003). We conducted a questionnaire survey on the numerical activities and environment of infants and young children in Japan, targeting 57 nursery teachers. The responses to the questionnaire were anonymous, and the purpose of the study, the method of storing the collected data, and the fact that there would be no disadvantage to not responding were clearly stated on the face sheet, and consent was obtained. In the 0-2 year old class, nursery teachers did not provide many activities involving the concept of numerosity for infants. On the other hand, in the 3- to 5-year-old class, children participated in a wide variety of numerical activities, from formal activities such as reading numbers, to activities rooted in everyday life such as checking the number of absences for the day. Japanese nursery teachers do not explicitly instruct young children about numerosity, but rather provide indirect opportunities to come into contact with it through play, everyday activities, and the environment.

numerosity, activity, environment, infancy, young children

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B29: Longitudinal Study of the Development of Drawing in young Children.

Presenters
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The purpose of this study is to clarify the drawing process from a sensory-motor act to the act of drawing a picture as a representation of something. The emergence of drawing as a symbol-producing act in early childhood has been studied in the field of developmental psychology, including the analysis of drawing techniques by collecting pictures (Kellogg, 1969) and observation of drawing scenes between mothers and children (Yamagata, 1997). Drawing emerges as a sensory-motor act in the first years of life and becomes a symbol-producing act with physical and cognitive development. Drawing development has been regarded exclusively as individual development, and the development of drawing techniques has been clarified (e.g. Luquet, 1927; Kellogg, 1969). Twenty-two Japanese children (7 boys and 15 girls) and 4 nursery teachers participated in the study for 12 months, starting when the children were in their first year of age. The researcher took observation records of drawing scenes and photographed all the children's drawings. We explained the procedure of the study to the principal of the nursery school as well as children and got permission for our investigations beforehand. The results revealed that children move from the non-speaking stage to the stage of producing pictures as symbols through a transitional stage. This change was influenced by drawing with others. This study shows the importance of the human environment in expressive activities, by showing the influence of the children's friends and teachers on the development of drawing.

one-year-olds, representational drawing, developmental process, longitudinal study, observations in nursery

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B30: The Anti-Bias Lens: A New Tool for Assessing Educational Practices in Diverse ECE Classrooms

Presenters
Geisa Bragança, Thurgau University of Teacher Education, Switzerland

All authors
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This study aims to validate a newly developed tool for assessing teachers' educational practices toward diversity in early childhood education (ECE) classrooms. Anti-Bias approach is widely used in educational practice and has been researched mainly by qualitative approaches (Bullok, 1996; Farago, 2017; Nguyen, 2022; Gaias et al., 2022). However, there is a lack of validated questionnaires that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bias education. Grounded in the Anti-Bias Approach and its four core goals, the instrument comprises four dimensions: Identity,Diversity, Justice, and Activism. It measures key elements such as learning environment arrangement, teacher-child interactions, collaboration with parents, teamwork within educational settings, and teachers' self-efficacy.The conceptual framework also integrates social learning theory (Bandura) and critical pedagogy (Freire) to highlight educators' roles in fostering inclusive education. A quantitative, psychometric approach was used. The 36-item questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale and was completed by 200 educators in Switzerland and Germany. Data analysis includes descriptive analyses, item analyses and confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). Teachers provided informed consent, participation was voluntary, and data was anonymized. The study's findings will be presented along with their practical implications. The newly developed tool can be used for the evaluation of teaching practices towards diversity in early childhood education.

pedagogical practices, diversity, anti-bias-approach, validation, ECE

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B31: Outdoor Play Activities: Using Recycled Tyres to Facilitate Child Development among Preschool Children.

Presenters

Nana Yaa Nyarko, University of Ghana, Ghana

All authors

Nana Yaa Nyarko, University of Ghana, Ghana
Diane Fleischer-Djoleto, University of Ghana, Ghana

This study aims to find out how teachers used old tyres as loose equipment to facilitate play activities and development. Studies have shown that play is influenced by the equipment available to children. Johnson, Christie and Wardle (2005) argue that the design of the play area, play equipment (loose parts or fixed), accessibility, and adult supervision facilitates child play and development (Maxwell, Mitchell and Evans, 2008). Nicholson (1967) argues for the concept of "loose parts" as fostering creativity, play, and community involvement and links loose parts directly to the degree of inventiveness. These loose parts can be made of synthetic or natural materials. A qualitative study design was adopted. Study location was the University of Ghana Child Study Center. Forty-five children between the ages of 2 and 4 and their caregivers (8) were observed during their play times over ten weeks. A video recorder and notebook were used to document observations. Car Tyres were part of the loose outdoor play equipment at the center. Participants were assured the right to confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation (Robson, 2009). Permission granted allowed researchers to use the Center's video data on the children during their outdoor play time for the 10-weeks. These were It was observed that children engaged more in unstructured play, which was spontaneous, child-directed and dramatic in nature than games with rules. Encouraging unstructured play through the use of loose parts is key to the development and wellbeing of young children.

outdoor play, recycled tyres, play activities, child development, loose parts

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B32: The movement characteristics of children in four Tag situations in kindergarten

Presenters
Shunichi Tazuke, Doshisha University, Japan

All authors
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Rintaro Hamamura, Master's program student at Doshisha University, Japan

The present study aimed to assess the movement characteristics of children in play situation due to the following four situations; “Tail Tag”, “Ground Tag”, “Switch Tag” and “Color Tag”. Although there are studies on the probabilistic model for the recognition of player roles in tag games (Moreno et al., 2016: 63-75), the movement characteristics based on the differences in the types of “Tag” is non-existent. In this study, seven children wore bibs equipped with wearable position-tracking sensors that did not restrict their movement and focused on chase and escape movements during tag games. The location data was collected using an Ultra-Wide Band system. From the data, the distance traveled, speed, and acceleration of the children during “Tag” were calculated. All data of the children between four situations were compared using a one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). Informed consent was negotiated with the children and parents, the written consents were submitted. Pseudonyms have replaced the names of participants. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. The results showed that the acceleration of the "ground tag" was the highest than the other three tags (5% level of significance). The "large standard deviation" of acceleration indicates "stop-and-go movement," suggesting that children move in chase and escape based on observational communication with others. This study suggests that ground tags are effective in assessing and promoting the ability to chase and escape without colliding.

movement characteristics, Tag situation, children in kindergarten, wearable location tracking sensor

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B33: Employee Retention in ECE: The Role of Personality and Professional Interests

Presenters
Susann Reimers-Schleif, Technical University Munich, Germany

All authors
Susann Reimers-Schleif, Technical University Munich, Germany

This poster explores the link between workforce characteristics, employee satisfaction, and childcare quality. RQ: How do personality traits and vocational interests affect employee satisfaction in childcare? How does Person-Job-Fit contribute to staff retention and childcare quality? It builds on Person-Job-Fit-Theory (Carless, 2005): employees who align with their job roles experience greater satisfaction. Previous research (Holland, 1997) highlights the role of professional interests in career satisfaction. Studies on employee retention in ECE support the hypothesis: high job commitment improves childcare outcomes. Person-Job-Fit-Theory (Kristof-Brown, 2005), emphasizing alignment between job demands and individual characteristics.Embeddedness-Theory (Mitchell, 2002), which explains how Persona-Job-Fit improves retention. Self-Determination-Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000), exploring intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Quantitative study: Survey-based-analysis: 532 professionals (150 childcare providers, 185 teachers, 197 IT employees).Comparative analysis of personality traits/vocational interests across professions. Big-Five-Inventory (BFI)AIST-R (Bergmann and Eder, 2005)Job-satisfaction-survey (Riechmann and Stahl, 2013) tailored to ECE-settings. provided informed consent, ensuring anonymity.adhered to GDPR compliance/EECERA Ethical Code (2024). Personality/Interests * Satisfaction: Extraversion and social vocational interests positively correlate with satisfaction, neuroticism negatively impacts employee retention. Person-Job-Fit and Commitment: A strong Person-Job-Fit leads to commitment, directly influencing childcare quality and staff stability. Leadership: Supportive and transformational leadership significantly enhances retention and satisfaction. Digitalization: Integration of IT-solutions in administrative processes can reduce workload, improving employee well-being and quality in childcare . Hiring: prioritize professionals with strong social and enterprising interests. Development: Training be tailored to individual personality strengths.Leadership: adopt engagement strategies that strengthen job-embeddedness. Policy: Structural reforms in employment models can improve workforce stability and childcare quality.

ECE workforce, person-job-fit, retention, job satisfaction, childcare quality

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B34: Examining the relationship between group size and practitioner-child Interactions in infant and toddler classes in Japanese ECEC settings

Presenters
Sachiko Nozawa, University of Tokyo, Japan

All authors
Sachiko Nozawa, University of Tokyo, Japan

This study aims to examine, within the Japanese context, how structural quality factors—such as group size in classes for children aged 0 to 2 and practitioners' years of experience—affect process quality, particularly interactions between practitioners and children. In Japan, the demand for childcare for children under the age of three has been rapidly increasing with approximately 60% of one- and two-year-olds attending early childhood education and care (ECEC). However, few studies have examined the actual quality of ECEC provided to this age group. Within the ECEC quality framework, process quality is recognized as essential for child development, and structural quality has been shown to influence it. To explore this relationship, a quantitative research design using a questionnaire survey was employed. The study involved 504 children aged 0 to 2 (from classes not designated as requiring support for special needs) and practitioners from 36 ECEC centers across Japan. These centers were located in municipalities selected to reflect regional diversity and a balance between urban and suburban areas. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Findings indicate that smaller group sizes and more experienced practitioners are positively associated with higher-quality interactions. In larger classes, organizing children into

smaller groups appears to improve practitioner-child interactions. Currently, Japan has no national standard for group size, and some centers accommodate large numbers of children aged 0–2. This study highlights the need to reconsider group size regulations to ensure developmentally supportive interactions in ECEC.

process quality, structural quality, children under the age of three, practitioner-child interactions, group size

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B35: Understanding the Play that Children Like: Focusing on Free Play Time

Presenters
Yungeui Yoo, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea

All authors
Yungeui Yoo, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea
BoKyoung Cho, Soonchunhyang University, South Korea
MiSun Lee, Goodmorning childcare center, South Korea

The purpose of this study is to understand and explore the meaning of the favorite play of children in the play experience during free play time in early childhood education institutions. Studies on children's free play (YunJi et al., 2023; YoungMi et al., 2022) focus on adults or videos, limiting children's perspectives. This study explores their favorite play through in-depth interviews. Free play is a spontaneous activity driven by children's inner motivation, fostering cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic, and physical development (ChanOk et al., 2020). It also enables independent play, allowing children to express interests and learn through experience (OkSeung, 2002). Thus, exploring its meaning and implementation in early childhood education is essential. The study involved 81 five-year-olds from A daycare and B kindergarten in Korea. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using the constant comparative method. Before data collection, written consent was obtained from legal representatives, and infants were informed of their right to withdraw. Interviews were conducted individually in a private space for 10 to 30 minutes. To ensure comfort, the researcher built Children enjoyed play they could control and that reflected their interests, allowing autonomy and self-expression. They also valued elements that made play more fun, like ample toys, space, and flexible rules. Teachers should support children's free play and autonomy. Enhancing play enjoyment requires a rich environment and participatory class management.

early childhood education institutions, free play, understanding children's play, facilitating children's play, in-depth interviews

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B36: Quality for all – the ECEC owner's role in the development of inclusive ECEC

Presenters
Ann Kristin Larsen, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway
Charlotte Johannessen, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway
Magritt Lundestad, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway

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In Norway, ECEC owners hold legal responsibility for institutional quality. A key objective is to reduce social inequalities and promote inclusive practices. This study explores: How do owners perceive their role in contributing to reducing social differences and developing inclusive practices in ECEC institutions? Research shows varying and

often insufficient quality in Norwegian ECEC institutions (Bjørnestad et al., 2020; Bjørnestad & Os, 2018). High quality is especially critical for children needing support to overcome social disparities. Many owners emphasize equal opportunities (Larsen and Slåtten, 2025), though their involvement in quality improvement and staff development differs widely (Børhaug, 2021; Larsen, 2023; Lundestad, 2023). We apply leadership theories to understand the owner's role: distributed leadership (Spillane, 2012), democratic leadership (Woods, 2005), and governance perspectives (Døving, Elstad and Storvik, 2019). Using a sociocultural and phenomenological approach, we draw on two qualitative studies: semi-structured individual interviews with 7 owners (Larsen and Slåtten, 2025), and group interviews with 12 owners (Johannesen et al., 2025). Participants gave informed consent, and data were handled confidentially according to research ethics standards. Active owner involvement in competence development enhances pedagogical quality, fosters inclusion, and promotes equity in children's learning. A question is whether standardizing practices through assessment tools may restrict professional pedagogical freedom.

ECEC owner, leadership, quality, social inclusion, inclusive practice, quality

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B37: An emergent paradigm of transforming morning circle into children's council: challenges and implications.

Presenters
Georgia Gessiou, Independent Researcher, Greece

All authors
Georgia Gessiou, Independent Researcher, Greece

This study explores the transformation of morning circles into children's councils in a Greek private suburban kindergarten. It aims to examine how young children (ages 4-6) actively engage in decision-making processes,co-construct meaning through participation, and challenge traditional teacher-centered education models. The study seeks to highlight the implications of such a transformation for pedagogical practices, school routines and the broader education system. Previous research on participatory pedagogies in early childhood education (Corsaro, 2018; Clark, 2005) underscores the importance of children's voices in shaping educational experiences. This work extends such discussions by examining children's councils within the Greek educational context. Grounded in sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 2003), the study adopts participatory pedagogical lens (Rinaldi, 2021), viewing education as a co-constructed process. It considers how institutional structures and adult expectations influence children's agency and participation. Following a qualitative, ethnographic approach, data collection included participant observations, children recordings, and teacher reflections over one academic year in two preschool groups. Narrative analysis was employed to interpret children's interactions and negotiations. The study adheres to ethical guidelines for research with children, ensuring informed consent from parents, confidentiality,and respect for children's voices and autonomy. Findings indicate that while children actively shape the council's structure, institutional constraints and traditional hierarchies challenge its full implementation. The council functioned as a dynamic space for rethinking relationships,roles and pedagogical routines. The study suggests that embedding children's councils requires systemic shifts in pedagogical approaches, teacher training and policy adaptations to support meaningful participation.

children's council, early years, emergent curriculum, sociology of childhood, participation

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B38: Ensuring children's voices are heard in research: Exploring preschool children's perceptions of gender stereotypes and norms

Presenters
Catherine Kilburn, University of Hull, United Kingdom

All authors
Catherine Kilburn, University of Hull, United Kingdom

This research project focused on exploring young children's lived experiences of gender, focusing on the role that peers play in the development of gender stereotypes and norms. Once children engage with their peers in preschool settings, their interactions play a role in shaping their perceptions of gender (Hedges, 2015). Historically, research focusing on the experiences of young children has relied on reports from adults (Smith, 2011). By recognising children as active participants in their own lives, their capacity to engage in research is recognised (Clark et al., 2014). The theoretical position taken draws on feminist research principles that seek to amplify hidden voices and to explore the lives of marginalised groups (Bailey, 2012). This research uses a social constructivist framework and employs a qualitative methodology. The participants were regarded as capable of reflecting on their lived experiences. The methods utilised include video-recorded observations and video-stimulated discussions with the participants. 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 and ongoing assent. The methods used within this project enabled young children to reflect on their lived experiences. In particular, the use of video-stimulated conversations enabled preschool-aged children to reflect on the impact of gender on their play. Young children are experts within their own lives, and through careful consideration and adaptation of traditional data collection methods, they can be enabled to have their voices heard in research.

participatory research, preschool child, voice, agency, qualitative

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B39: Health and safety of under-3-year-old children in Japanese nurseries : Focusing on differences in perspectives between practitioners and managers

Presenters
Hiroko Inokuma, Komazawa Women's Junior College, Japan

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Hiroko Inokuma, Komazawa Women's Junior College, Japan
Junko Minowa, Musashino University, Japan

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perspectives of practitioners and managers regarding health and safety policies for children under three years of age in Japanese nurseries and to clarify any differences between them. Hisaka and Nagase (2020) investigated childcare facility staff's health concepts, and Tanaka et al. (2020) examined practitioners' concerns about safety, but no large-scale survey on childcare health and safety has been conducted in Japan. A questionnaire was developed based on the 'Guidelines for Accident Prevention in Educational and Childcare Facilities' (2016) and the 'Childcare Guidelines for Childcare Facilities' (2018), which serve as guidelines for health and safety in childcare in Japan. This study was conducted based on social constructivism. In 2024, survey forms were sent to childcare facilities nationwide, and valid responses were obtained from 2,727 practitioners and 970 managers. Qualitative analysis methods were used for analysis. The purpose and content of the research was explained to participants in advance and only those who agreed were asked to complete the survey. These were approved by the university ethics committee. There was no significant difference in awareness between practitioners and managers regarding basic safety measures such as children's health records. However, practitioners felt that they lacked understanding of special measures such as child safeguarding. This study can contribute to the development of policies for training and guidelines on safety for childcare workers and managers. These are expected to contribute to improving the quality of childcare in Japan.

under age three, quality, safety, safeguard, Japan

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B40: Implementing of play therapy in the school setting: Review

Presenters
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Lenka Sokolová, Institute of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

The purpose of this research is to conduct a systematic review the application of the Child Centred Play Therapy (CCPT), including the Child Teacher Relationship Training (CTRT) program, in the school settings. There have been four meta-analyses conducted in the last decade and all have been focused on CCPT, with only one focusing on the school setting (Ray, 2015). The results point to the effectiveness of CCPT for the children with problem behaviour, but do not mention the CTRT model and its effect on educators and child-teacher relationship. The theoretical framework of CCPT is based on a person-centred approach, and emphasizes the centrality of relationships in enabling a child to use their resources and process challenging experiences. In the school setting, this positive relationship between a child and a teacher can impact both. By conducting a statistical descriptive bibliometric analysis on the CTRT method, we illustrate the patterns of how the method is used in schools worldwide and the cultural limitations of adaptation in the Slovak context (Perianes-Rodriguez et al., 2016). The research project has been approved by the Ethics Committee of FSES CU. It adhered to the Helsinki Declaration and Personal Data Protection in line with GDPR. Our findings suggest that research on the effectiveness of CTRT is scarce. Implementing CTRT in schools may provide opportunities to facilitate teacher-child relationship and children develop strategies for integrating into the school community. The findings suggest implications for the use of the play therapy in schools to support building of safe and inclusive environment.

play therapy, relationship, school environment, bibliometric analysis, inclusion

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B41: The pathway from grandparental caregiving in the early years to child socioemotional outcomes in middle childhood: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)

Presenters
Angeliki Kallitsoglou, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

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We examined the pathway from grandparental caregiving at 3yrs to child socio-emotional outcomes at 7yrs through maternal mental-wellbeing and parenting quality at 3yrs in n = 1495 biological mothers from the MCS. Only one prior cross-sectional study examined pathways from grandparental support to child outcomes using broad conceptualisation of grandparenting and maternal wellbeing (Morita et al., 2019). We extended previous research by using longitudinal data and focusing on practical childcare (time spent in the care of grandparents) and specific dimensions of maternal wellbeing. The family stress (FS) theory (Hill, 1949) emphasises that limited access to resources can lead to FS which can inadvertently impact parenting capacity and lead to poor child outcomes. We applied the FS framework to examine if access to grandparental childcare support in the early years is linked to fewer behaviour and emotional difficulties in primary school through its effect on maternal mental-wellbeing and parenting quality. Structural equation modelling. The MCS dataset is publicly available through

https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/ No statistically significant direct or indirect effects: Time spent in grandparental childcare at 3yrs was not significantly associated with improved maternal mental wellbeing, nor did it predict improved child outcomes at 7yrs via improved maternal -mental-wellbeing or higher parenting quality. Expand Formal Childcare Access: provide families affordable, high-quality childcare to reduce overdependence on informal care like grandparents. Formal childcare should be the primary, reliable option.Integrate Parental Wellbeing Services: Childcare programmes could incorporate wraparound services, such as parental mental health support alongside caregiving assistance.

grandparenting, social and emotional outcomes, maternal mental health and wellbeing, mother–child relationship, social support

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B42: Perception of Happiness in the School Environment among 6-7 Year Old Children

Presenters
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Zlatica Zacharová, Faculty of Education, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

The aim of this paper is to show how children aged 6 to 7 years change their perceptions of reasons for happiness in the school environment. The paper was inspired by positive education and a modification of the original PERMA model (Seligman, 2014) presented by Kern (2022) under the name PERMAH model, which includes the added element of health in addition to the original elements: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaningfulness and achievement. According to researches, happiness scores decrease with the age of students (Mertoğlu, 2020). Therefore, this paper focused on children's first experiences with school. Aligned with previous research by Andresen et al. (2018), interviews were conducted with children to explore their subjective views on happiness. Specifically on what makes them happy in the school environment. Eighteen 6 and 7 years children participated in the qualitative research and were interviewed at the beginning of their schooling and at the end of their first year. Between the two measurements, a storytelling activity was conducted with the children, focusing on the PERMAH model and promoting a positive explanatory style. A consent form and information sheet was provided to all parents of children. All activities were voluntary, children and their parents could withdraw their participation at any time. All data are anonymised to protect children's identities. The results suggest that the reasons for happiness in the school environment change from learning to peer relationships. Talking about and learning about emotions promotes the development of positive classroom relationships and increases subjective perceived happiness.

happiness, PERMAH Model, first year at school, storytelling, subjective view

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B43: INVESTIGATING AFFORDANCES OF PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Presenters
Merve Gemici Koşar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye

All authors
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Özkan Sapsağlam, Yıldız Technical University, Türkiye

This research aims to explore how objects, materials, playmates, and organized environmental elements afford and shape play in indoor early childhood classrooms. It examines the types of play that emerge and how these elements contribute to play experiences within the framework of Affordance Theory Play is indicator and facilitator of development holistically (James, Christie and Yawkey, 1999). Actions like play, doesn't occur spontaneously, it is affected by all the conditions in which it occurs (Chemero, 2003). There is a gap how specific environmental affordances influence play experiences in indoor early childhood classrooms. The Affordance Theory (Gibson, 1979), which has an environmental approach, argues that as soon as we interact with the environment, our behaviors and thoughts bear traces of all the elements that contribute to the environment. This research was conducted as the case study which is one of the qualitative research methods. The sample of the study consists of 20 children aged 5 years. During 33 days, data were collected by non-participant observation at play time. Piaget/Parten Play Observation Record Form was used to record the data. Content analysis method was used in the evaluation of the data. Before observation, family approval was obtained. In consequence of observation, total of 1518 different play behavior were demonstrated during play time. A total of 588 play material was used in plays. While the plays occur in learning centers, different centers were visited 70 times during the 33 play sessions. Materials, educational environment, the development of the playmates are an element that affords the children's play should be considered holistically

early childhood, play, play materials, affordance

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B44: Parental Decision-Making on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Enrollment in a Hungarian Sample

Presenters
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Georgina Csordás, Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, Hungary
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The aim of this study is to explore the connections between maternal characteristics, family structure, attitudes toward nursery enrollment, and its timing firstly in the Hungarian context. International literature on parental decisions highlights financial factors (Meyers and Jordan, 2006), supply-demand principles (Fuchs and Peucker, 2006), family and child-related traits (Burghard and Klutzniok, 2016), structural attributes (Fuchs-Rechlin et al., 2014; Alt et al., 2016), and parental expectations (Burghardt, 2017). Our starting point was the assertion that nursery enrollment timing and process may impact children's socio-emotional development (Belsky, 2001). We conducted an online survey with 452 mothers of 0-3-year-olds, assessing socio-economic status, childcare habits, family structure, nursery enrollment circumstances, maternal attitudes, expectations, and other influencing factors. We examined their relationships with enrollment timing, maternal hopes and concerns. The study received ethical approval, data collection was anonymous, ensuring data security via a double coding system per the Hungarian research and EECERA (2024) ethical guidelines. Results show a significant gap between parents' ideal and actual nursery adaptation start time, with mostly preferring earlier enrollment. Maternal SES correlates with enrollment timing. Past risk-related events (in the context of pregnancy, childbirth, hospital stays) influence the preferred age for enrollment and the difference between ideal and actual start time. These factors are also linked to mother-focused concerns and child-focused hopes. We found strong correlations between risk-related events and parental concerns and hopes. However, no connection was found between mothers’ own nursery experiences, external childcare support, and adaptation. Findings emphasize the need for prevention and early family support to optimize nursery enrollment.

child care, enrollment, decisions, expectations, mothers

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

B45: Exploring the relationship between educators' perception of the inclusion of children with special needs in ECE and the children's behavorial problems

Presenters
Clara Soulez, Université de Montréal, Canada
Chantale Breault, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

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Anne-Claire Gaudet, Université de Montréal, Canada
Chantale Breault, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

This research aims to explore the relationship between the inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood education (ECE) settings, as perceived by their educators and the children's internalized and externalized behavioral problems. Previous studies identified a relationship between educators' perception of inclusion and the child's social competence and level of difficulties (Soulez et al., 2023; Blazer, 2017). This study is based on the importance of inclusion in ECE for children with special needs to promote their development (Rafferty et al., 2003). Educators' perceptions appear to be a frequent means of evaluating inclusion and its factors (Nilholm and Göransson, 2017). Using a retrospective research paradigm, data were extracted from clinical archives for 375 children with special needs in Montreal. Educators' perceptions were assessed by the question: "In your opinion, does the child benefit from ECE?". Childrens' internalized and externalized behavior problems were drawn from the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation (SCBE) (LaFrenière and Dumas, 1995) and the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) (Achenbach and Rescorla, 2000). The analysis was conducted using a logistic regression. Although this research is based on secondary data, an authorization was obtained from the ethics committee and hospital authorities and participation was anonymized. Preliminary results showed that when added to the logistic regression model, behavioral problems did not predict the positive perception of educators, at the same level of social competence. This suggests that even with behavioral problems, inclusion is viewed positively when the child have a good social competence, making it an ideal intervention target.

inclusion, early childhood education, educators' perception, special needs, behavioral problems

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B46: How public education can protect minority identities

Presenters
Hiroaki Sono, J.F.Oberlin University, Japan

Japanese indigenous peoples have been forced to assimilate with the Japanese for many years. We believe that public education is necessary to protect the identity of indigenous peoples, not assimilation, which is their right. Therefore, our goal is to identify ways to protect the identity of indigenous peoples and provide equal public education to citizens. This study compares Japan and Europe's public education in protecting minority identities, including infants. Using critical constructivism and learner-centered theory (Freire, 1970; Bunken, p.12, l.5), it analyzes laws, curricula, and ethnic school cases Research is being conducted on how to pass on language and culture. Using critical constructivism and learner-centered theory (Freire, 1970; Bunken, p.12, l.5), it analyzes laws, curricula, and ethnic school cases Research is being conducted on how to pass on language and culture - We respect the rights of Indigenous peoples to determine and control their own educational content, methods and systems. Working in a positivist paradigm, using a qualitative methodology, data is gathered using document analysis and content analysis of national policies and curriculum. Research participants were provided with sufficient information about the study's purpose, methods, expected results, and rights, and their voluntary consent was obtained.

Personal and cultural information will be handled with the utmost care and anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured. From the data we question what should be considered "traditional culture" and "multicultural". It is proposed that, as times change, culture also changes. It is difficult to draw the line as to what should be included in educational content as traditional culture and multiculture. This research is an important research that contributes to the creation of a better society by approaching the problems connected to modern society from the background of past history from an educational perspective.

indigenous education, cultural inheritance, multicultural symbiosis, historical awareness, identity

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B47: Primary Education Teachers' Self-efficacy towards Inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders into Physical Education Classes.

Presenters
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This research aimed to assess primary teachers' self-efficacy, toward inclusive PE lessons, focusing on the inclusion of students diagnosed with ASD. Previous research shows mixed findings on whether experience with students with ASD affects teachers' self-efficacy in inclusive PE (Taliaferro et al., 2011; Selickaite et al., 2019). Levels of self-efficacy to include students with autism do not differ between PE teachers with and without experience (Bundová and Nemček, 2024). A total of 130 primary education teachers with a mean age of 41,6 ±11.2 years participated in the study. 82 primary education teachers had experience with the inclusion of students with ASD in their PE classes, and 47 teachers were not experienced. Research data were collected utilizing the PESEISD-A version 8.2 questionnaire (Taliaferro et al., 2011). For the self-efficacy scale, participants were asked to rate on a 10-point scale their degree of confidence in their ability to perform each of ten tasks. To determine statistical significant difference btw. two groups we used Mann-Whitney U test. The study followed the ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Education (No. 4/2024), with participants informed of the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. We can conclude that primary education teachers with experience have significantly higher overall self-efficacy U= 1326, (p= 0.003), to include children with ASD into the PE classes. The present research indicates that primary teachers' experience significantly affect their self-efficacy toward including students with ASD in PE classes.The research was supported by grants UK/1198/2025 and VEGA 1/0694/24

inclusion, primary education teachers, self-efficacy, physical education, children with autism.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B48: The educational map "Córdoba, through Children's eyes" as an educational and inclusive resource to know and value the city.

Presenters
Elena González-Alfaya, University of Cordoba, Spain

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Rosario Merida-Serrano, University of Cordoba, Spain
María Ángeles Olivares-García, University of Cordoba, Spain
Laura Carmona, University of Cordoba, Spain

The aim of the research is to know and evaluate the impact of the Educational Map made by and for children in the discovery and appreciation of the city. This research is framed within research carried out on Cordoba (Spain) as an educating city (Olivares, et al., 2019; Carmona, Olivares and González, 2025). Research focused on educating cities (Cadei, Deluigi and Pourtois, 2016) and on children's participation in city life (Balconi, 2017) insist on the potential of cities as places to promote education for democratic citizenship. The methodology used is qualitative and the methods used are the analysis of the children´s drawings and interviews with ECEC teachers. The analysis of the drawings produced by the application of the 'drawing-elicitation self-driven interview' strategy was done in collaboration with the children, allowing for a free dialogue about the city and use of the map. So children's competence was The most relevant finding is: The use of the educational map allows children to actively participate in the city as it includes various forms of expression and participation which is crucial for all children including students with educational needs, those who are refugees or migrants or those who are in a vulnerable situation. Schools and city administrations that enhance the use of the educational map are promoting children's right to active participation.

children's rights, qualitative research, children's voices, drawing-interview, professional development

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B49: "To Body" Inclusion in Norwegian Kindergartens

Presenters
Ida Pape-Pedersen, Nord University, Norway
Susanne Bjur, Nord University, Norway

All authors
Ida Pape-Pedersen, Nord University, Norway
Susanne Bjur, Nord University, Norway

This poster focuses on how kindergarten teachers use the body according to inclusion, asking: How do kindergarten teachers work with their bodily professional knowledge as they embody inclusion in kindergarten? All children should have access to the community in the kindergarten and a sense of belonging (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). The theoretical framework of this study is phenomenological, leaning on Maurice Merleau-Pontys's (1994) phenomenology of perception. This is a qualitative study, using video observation and video-stimulated recall. The study is phenomenologically founded, moving towards a performative/ post-qualitative research paradigm, with an ethnographic methodological design. Involving three to five kindergartens, selected through voluntary participation. Research that involves children needs extra consideration. Even if their guardians agree to let their children be a part of the research, children have the right to decide for themselves. In each case, the researcher must be aware of the embodied signals This is an ongoing study, but we see the contours of how the kindergarten teacher's body plays an important (but still overlooked) role in the professional work with inclusion in kindergarten practice. This is about how to body inclusion in kindergarten. The way the body is woven together with space and materiality, and how gazes, facial expressions, floors, and bodies are woven together in practices that include/exclude.

embodied inclusion, video-stimulated recall, phenomenology of perception, bodily professional knowledge, kindergarten teacher profession.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B50: Exploring Preservice Teacher's Journey of a 'Movement' Project with Infants

Presenters
Jeesun Jung, Ohio University, United States

All authors
Jeesun Jung, Ohio University, United States

This study explores how preservice teachers (PST) practice and reflect on a 'movement' project with infants over three months, what challenges they face, and what they learn about through the process. Despite limited research on project work in EC teacher education, existing studies have shown that project work helps preservice teachers understand how child engagement can be fostered through project work and the importance of working as a team (Donegan-Ritter, Zan, and Pattee, 2023). The study is based on experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) that PST learns through a cycle of inquiry through experience-reflection-conceptualization-experimentation and teacher identity theory (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004), that PST identities evolve as they practice, reflect, and face challenges through the project. This qualitative case study is framed within constructivism. Over three months, two PSTs and six infants participated. Data sources include daily observation, individual teacher interviews (three times each), videorecording of teacher practice, ongoing project, planning meetings, journals. Consent forms were provided to and negotiated with all participating teachers and the parents of the infants. Pseudonyms were used. The participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. The findings show that PSTs gain a deeper understanding of the distinct nature of infant learning and that projects with infants require flexibility in teaching, open-mindedness, trust building, reflection, improvisation, and in-depth interpretation of the infant mind. The findings imply that project work can be implemented as a pedagogical instrument for infant teacher preparation.

project approach, infant, preservice teacher, teacher education, reflection

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

B51: Listening to young children's voices; Reflections, Impact and implications for inclusion

Presenters
Dawn Jones, University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

All authors
Dawn Jones, University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom
Selena Hall, University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

The research considers how reflection upon the voices of reception children has demonstrated the importance of careful listening and the implications upon the meaningful inclusion of what they have to say. From such respectful relationships, the ability of pedagogues to hear and thus respond well has highlighted the grave need for time within educational practice. The work builds upon a project entitled "What I really think about sitting straight, golden time and reward charts": Gathering 4-year-olds views on behaviourist pedagogy in reception (Jones et al., 2023). The theoretical framework draws upon the 'pedagogy of listening' which is embedded within the Reggio Emilia approach (Rinaldi, 2006) also embodying Clark's (2020) 'slow pedagogy'. During the analysis phase, 26 reception children's personal narratives were collated into personalised scrapbooks. During this process researchers engaged in reflective thinking using both the mosaic approach and qualitative interpretations. Taking the child's reflections, carefully considering what it was they said enabled a considered approach from both researchers and the school, in how to address difficult stories, thus, ensuring that children were listened too, and their story was relate Emerging findings realise that the collective narratives of children are supporting the research team to be informed of children's thoughts and viewpoints on 'what it is like to be in this space' (Clarke, 2017: 10) with direct implications for inclusive practice. Young children's thoughts clearly highlight the need for educators to reflect upon current behaviourist pedagogical strategies to address inclusivity and self-perceptions.

reflective pedagogy, child's voice, time, inclusion.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A

13:30 – 14:50, Tuesday 26th August 2025

Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava

Symposium Set A1 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G103, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

TEACHER COMPETENCE IN IDENTIFYING AND DELIVERING SEND

Chaired by Eva Staffans, Åbo Akademi University and Karlstad University, Finland

The role of special education in prechool teacher education in Norway - a document analysis

Presenters
Synne Skarsaune, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway
Stine Elisabeth Vik, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

All authors
Synne Skarsaune, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway
Stine Elisabeth Vik, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

The aim of this ongoing study is to understand how special education topics are reflected in the Framework Plan for Preschool Teacher Education, course descriptions from the 11 providers of preschool teacher education, and political governance documents. What aims and current discourses are evident in the field of inclusion and special education in these documents? Results from TALIS Starting Strong (2018) show that preschool teachers seek more competence in special education. Newly graduated preschool teachers report receiving little to no training in this area during their education (Hanssen and Olsen, 2022) The documents in this study will be analyzed using discourse analytic strategies. These approaches show how language functions as a social practice and how knowledge and subject positions are constituted through discourse (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). The analysis will focus on dominant/hegemonic discourses (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). The method used is document analysis (Morgan, 2022) and a thematic analysis of the documents, focusing on discourses that occur in the material (Fairclough, 1992). The study does not involve any person-sensitive data. Still, consideration has been made to ensure a fair representation of the literature. Few preschool education providers offer substantial training in special education, often only briefly covering the topic. We hope this study will provide a deeper understanding of the role of special education in teacher training. This study serves as an initial step in exploring how to embed inclusive policies and practices, beginning with the need to strengthen the role of special education in preschool teacher training.

special education, inclusion, preschool teacher education, policy documents, discourse analysis,

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Facilitators and Barriers to Special Education Teachers' Working Conditions in Finnish Early Childhood Education

Presenters

Eva Staffans, Åbo Akademi University and Karlstad University, Finland

All authors

Eva Staffans, Åbo Akademi University and Karlstad University, Finland

The aim is to explore conditions that enable and constrain itinerant special education teachers (SET) work in providing support for children with SEN in Finnish ECEC. Children with SEN have a right to support immediately when a need is detected (EDUFI, 2022). Legal conditions (law, core curriculum), external conditions (area of responsibility, children's SEN, collaboration, consultation) and internal conditions (expectations, assumptions) affect the way SETs can work (Curran et al., 2017; Magnússon et al., 2018). To add to the understanding of work conditions affecting SETs work, two theories are combined: frame factor theory (Lundgren, 1972) and the system of professions (Abbot, 1988). This research is viewed through teachers' perspectives. Data was collected via questionnaires (N=33; 215) and group interviews (N=14; 10), using an explanatory sequential design with qualitative dominance, recognizing benefits of quantitative data (Creswell, 2009; Johnson et al., 2007). Participation was voluntary, informed and consensual and the main ethical concerns for the study were to guarantee confidentiality for the respondents and in the long run children with SEN, since Swedish ECEC is a small community in Finland. Specific features and aspects that would allow for the recognition of participants or settings are excluded (Bertram et al., 2025; TENK, 2012). Main findings indicate that collaboration, supportive leaders and environment, and autonomy and flexibility function as facilitators and inhibiting conditions are a diminished work role, insufficient resources and nonengaged personnel. The results illuminate challenges, possibilities and issues that needs to be addressed in the Swedish context in Finland.

special education teacher, support, system of professions, frame factor theory, collaboration

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Early Identification and Intervention for Students At Risk to Present Learning Disabilities: Cypriot Preschool Teachers' and Parents' Perceptions

Presenters

Paraskevi Neophytou, Independent Researcher, Cyprus

All authors

Paraskevi Neophytou, Independent Researcher, Cyprus

This study explores Cypriot preschool teachers' and parents' perceptions and attitudes toward the value and contribution of the developed educational assessment instrument for the early identification and intervention for students at risk to present learning disabilities. International literature emphasizes early screening as vital to inclusive education (Padeliadu and Antoniou, 2008; Taylor et al., 2000). Cyprus lacks such structured approaches. This study responds to that gap and builds on literature supporting early intervention to prevent long-term academic difficulties. Guided by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the study considers how social and environmental contexts influence learning. The framework of inclusive education also supports early assessment as a tool for equity and access (Ware, 2005). A qualitative case study was conducted in a private preschool with 10 teachers and 27 mothers of children aged 3–6. Data were gathered through interviews and observations and analyzed using thematic content analysis, with triangulation and member checking to ensure validity. The study adhered to EECERA's Ethical Code (2024), including informed consent, confidentiality, and prior ethical approval. Teachers valued early assessment but lacked training. Parents appreciated the tool unless results suggested difficulties, often fearing stigma. Both preferred descriptive over numerical reporting. Collaboration between teachers and parents was important but inconsistent. Findings support integrating early screening in teacher training and developing national policy guidelines. Strengthening

parent-teacher communication and ensuring access to user-friendly assessment tools can enhance inclusive practices and early support.

early intervention, learning disabilities, preschool education, teacher training, parent's perceptions, Cyprus

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set A2 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G104, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

EXPLORING TODDLER'S WELLBEING, SOCIALITY AND INTERACTIONS

Chaired by Karen Williams, University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Children's Wellbeing at School: A Qualitative Study with Kindergartners

Presenters
Büşra Gündeş Orman, İstanbul Aydın University, Türkiye

All authors
Büşra Gündeş Orman, İstanbul Aydın University, Türkiye

This study explores children's wellbeing at school from their perspectives, focusing on school conditions, relationships, self-fulfillment opportunities, and health dimensions. Children's wellbeing is a multidimensional concept shaped by their environment, including family, school, and community (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; Mashford-Scott et al., 2012). Existing studies emphasize the importance of school as a space for children's development and participation (Ben-Arieh et al., 2009; Van Petegem et al., 2008), yet research directly incorporating children's voices remains limited. The study is grounded in the social-ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) and the school wellbeing model (Konu and Rimpelä, 2002), conceptualizing wellbeing as influenced by school conditions (having), social relationships (loving), self-actualization (being), and health. A qualitative, interpretative phenomenological approach was adopted. Semi-structured interviews and children's drawings about school were used with 15 children (60-72 months) from two public schools in Istanbul.Thematic analysis identified patterns in children's narratives and visual expressions. The study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving children (Graham et al., 2013). Informed consent was obtained from parents, and child-friendly assent procedures were implemented. Findings indicate that children associate school with positive emotions, particularly enjoying unstructured activities like play and drawing. While children generally perceive their relationships with teachers and peers positively, they also report occasional conflicts. Their ideal school vision includes more autonomy and fewer restrictions. The study highlights the need for increased child participation in decision-making, more play opportunities, and policies that monitor and enhance children's wellbeing. Schools should foster inclusive environments that acknowledge children's agency in shaping their school experiences.

School wellbeing, qualitative study, early childhood education, children's perspective

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Teacher-Child Interactions in 3-Year-Old Preschool: Promoting Equity and Quality in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Sarah Young, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Patricia Eadie, The University of Melbourne, Australia

All authors

Sarah Young, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Patricia Eadie, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Penny Levickis, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Hannah Bryson, The University of Melbourne, Australia

The study examines program and teacher characteristics associated with quality teacher-child interactions in 3- and 4-year-old preschool programs in services participating in the Australian Educational and Developmental Gains in Early Childhood (EDGE) Study. The EDGE study is investigating the impact of two years of universal provision of preschool on children's outcomes. Teacher-child interactions have been demonstrated to be an important component of high-quality preschool. However, the quality of interactions is not equally distributed across socio-economic or geographic areas (Blau, 2021; Cloney, 2016). Sociocultural perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978) and bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2007) provide frameworks for understanding features of quality preschool. This quantitative study collected data across three years in preschool rooms in Victoria (N=298). Interaction quality was measured using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS): an observational measure of teacher-child interactions supporting children's learning (Pianta, 2008). Service and teacher characteristics were included in analyses. Informed consent was obtained from participants. All data were de-identified during processing and analysis, with only aggregate results presented in the findings.
The analysis showed significant differences on CLASS scores between services with the highest compared to lowest National Quality Standard ratings and services in the least and most disadvantaged areas. System level supports to services in implementing quality improvement programs (e.g., professional learning and coaching) should be prioritised with a focus on educational programs and practices. Further analyses to be presented will include teacher chara

Preschool, process quality, teacher-child interactions, structural quality, quantitative

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Toddler sociality in ECEC: Observation and imitation as interaction

Presenters
Bryndis Gunnarsdottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Bryndis Gunnarsdottir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Hrönn Pálmadóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Amanda Bateman, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

This study explores how toddlers in an Icelandic ECEC setting use embodied strategies – gaze and imitation – to show their willingness to enter play with peers, highlighting their sociality. Examining toddler participation in play through embodied interactions has given us insights into the competent ways toddlers engage with each other (Løkken, 2010; Engdahl, 2021; Ylikörkkö and Puroila, 2023) and their status as 'aspirant participants' (Monaco and Pontevorvo, 2010). The study uses an ethnomethodological (Garfinkel, 1967) framing to explore toddler sociality, and the conceptual framework of the sociology of childhood, situating toddlers as competent social actors. Through an inductive ethnomethodological paradigm, video data was collected in an ECEC setting in Iceland, transcribed, and analysed using a multimodal conversation analysis approach. Ethical approval was gained through the University of Waikato, New Zealand, and the University of Iceland, including informed consent from relevant gatekeepers and assent/dissent from participating toddlers. The findings demonstrate that toddlers observe and imitate peers to signal their willingness to join an ongoing participation framework. While their attempts may not always be acknowledged by peers, we argue that through these attempts, toddlers situate themselves as 'aspirant participators' in peer interactions, rather than passive bystanders or onlookers. The study underscores the

importance of recognising toddlers' sociality and calls for greater awareness among ECEC educators to ensure that these subtle, yet meaningful interactions are acknowledged and supported. By recognising toddlers' embodied participation with their peers, educators can foster more inclusive peer interactions, ultimately enhancing toddlers' social experiences in ECEC settings.

Toddlers, embodied interactions, toddler sociality, multimodal conversation analysis, participation frameworks, play

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set A3 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G113, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

DEVELOPING STRUCTURAL QUALITY IN ECEC

Chaired by Bart Declercq, Centre for Experiential Education - KU Leuven University, Belgium

Associations between structural quality aspects and children's wellbeing and involvement in ECEC-settings (0-3 years) in Flanders (Belgium)

Presenters
Bart Declercq, Centre for Experiential Education - KU Leuven University, Belgium

All authors
Bart Declercq, Centre for Experiential Education - KU Leuven University, Belgium
Karla Van Leeuwen, KU Leuven, Belgium
Jochen Devlieghere, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium
Michel Vandenbroeck, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

This study is part of Measuring and Monitoring Quality (MeMoQ), capturing pedagogical quality in ECEC (0-3 years) and examining associations with structural quality characteristics. This research builds on European literature reviews (Unicef, 2008; OESO, 2015, 2021; European Commission, 2012), the developed pedagogical framework (MeMoQ, 2015), SICS (EECERA 2007, 2012), MeMoQ-baseline (EECERA, 2017, 2024). Pedagogical quality is defined in the MeMoQ-framework en operationalized by measuring children's experiences, the level of 'emotional' and 'educational support' (CLASS, La Paro, 2012, 2014), group-socialization (Slot, 2023) 'learning environment' and 'cooperation with parents and respect for diversity in society' (MemoQ, 2016). Children's experiences are measured with Leuven Scales for Wellbeing and Involvement (Laevers et al., 2005). Surveys on structural characteristics and parents views completed data collection. Half-day observations in 304 units (103 home based, 201 centre bases settings) are executed by 7 trained observers. In total 1215 observation cycles, accounting for 6071 individual observations of children's wellbeing and involvement were conducted and aggregated to group-level. Participants were informed and participated by mutual consent. Ethical guidelines of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity were followed. Results are processed anonymously. Overall, wellbeing is high whereas involvement is moderate. Results significantly improved compared to the baseline-study (2016). Group-size, group-composition, home language and age have an impact on children's experiences. Pedagogical quality for 0-3y is defined by structural characteristics and process quality, but also involves children's experiences. Results are used for supporting ECEC settings (eg. group-composition) and informing policy on structural characteristics that impact on children's experiences (eg. group-size).

assessment, home and setting-based ECEC (0-3y), involvement policy, research, wellbeing

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Development of a Quality Enhancement Tool in Norwegian ECEC: Experiences from a Practice-Research Partnership

Presenters
Pia Elisabeth Dedichen Paulsrud, Espira Group Norway, Norway
Mari Fagerheim, Espira Group Norway, Norway

All authors
Pia Elisabeth Dedichen Paulsrud, Espira Group Norway, Norway
Mari Fagerheim, Espira Group Norway, Norway

This presentation explores experiences from a ten-year development project, where more than 100 Norwegian ECEC institutions have contributed to design and refine a quality development tool. In recent years, a research team has collaborated with 10 of the ECECs to refine and expand the tool. Our focus is the experiences gained from the development and the research-practice partnership. Previous studies have documented variations in ECEC quality in Norway (OECD, 2015). This project addresses these challenges by exploring how collaboration between practitioners and researchers can contribute to quality enhancement and innovative knowledge creation. The project is grounded in a social constructivist perspective (Burr, 2015), emphasizing how meaning and knowledge are co-created through interaction between practitioners and researchers. Following a qualitative and participatory paradigm we have conducted focus groups with ECEC teachers, followed by thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022). In addition, we have used observations and reflective discussions, related to the collaborative process, as the basis for our experiential knowledge. The project adheres to ethical guidelines for participatory research, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and respectful collaboration between all participants. Our experiences highlight how long-term development and close cooperation between the ECEC sector and researchers can foster mutual learning and innovation. The project represents a pioneering approach to bridging research and practice. The main finding is that new and innovative methods for quality development emerge at the intersection of research and practice. The study offers insights into how sustained partnerships can enhance professional development and strengthen the relevance of research in practice.

ECEC quality, participiation, quality development, research-practice partnership, collaborative learning

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Association between process and structural quality in toddler classrooms: evidence from Chile.

Presenters
Felipe Godoy, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile

All authors
Felipe Godoy, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile
Marigen Narea, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Chile

This study analyses the quality of interactions between pedagogical teams and toddlers, and how such interactions associate with structural quality variables in Chilean nurseries. Despite numerous studies on structural and process quality —and their relationship— in preschool, less attention has been paid to the toddler stage (Guedes et al., 2020). This gap is even greater in Global South contexts, including Chile and Latin America. Mainstream early childhood education (ECE) policy links quality to better child outcomes (OECD, 2018). ECE quality comprises structural features like ratios and group sizes (Thomason and La Paro, 2009), and process features addressing

children's interactions with teachers, peers and materials (Slot et al., 2015). This study evaluated 50 urban toddler classrooms in Chile's Metropolitan Region using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (La Paro et al., 2012), questionnaires, and checklists to measure process and structural quality. Non-hierarchical k-means clustering identified process quality patterns, with ANOVA correlating these clusters to structural indicators. All data are treated confidentially; names and personal information remain undisclosed for any purpose. Teachers voluntarily provided informed consent. Findings show classrooms exhibited moderate process quality, clustering into three groups based on CLASS scores. Significant differences between high and low scoring clusters were found only in classroom resources, not in group sizes or adult-to-children ratios. The absence of substantial structural quality differences between classrooms with varying process quality is understandable given Chile's strict regulations on group sizes and ratios. Process quality differences highlight the need to strengthen efforts ensuring all children access education meeting minimum quality standards.

structural quality, process quality, toddlers, CLASS, Chile

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A4 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G114, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

PEACE, BELONGING AND INCLUSION

Chaired by Barbora Loudová Stralczynská, Charles University Prague, Czechia

Pedagogies of Peace – the experiences and perspectives of Early Years Educators in peacebuilding across two divided societies: Northern Ireland and Israel.

Presenters
Jill Magennis, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

All authors
Jill Magennis, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom
James Nelson, Queen’s University Belfast, United Kingdom
Karen Winter, Queen’s University Belfast, United Kingdom

This study explores the experiences of early years educators in peacebuilding in Northern Ireland and Israel. It examines the level of understanding of peace amongst professionals, and how they perceive their role in fostering peace in the early years classroom. This research identifies the support needs of professionals in promoting respect for diversity, providing insights into how they can be better supported in their role. Although there is significant research on peacebuilding in education, few studies address educators' understanding of peace and their role in divided societies. This study fills this gap by focusing on educators' specific experiences and support needs. This research incorporates Mac Ginty’s (2014) idea of ‘everyday peacebuilding,’ emphasising grassroots efforts and Bajaj’s (2018) contextualised peace education, recognising diverse teaching environments. It also aligns with Cremin and Bevington’s (2017) focus on participatory, relevant learning driven by committed and inspirational educators. A qualitative design was employed, using semi-structured interviews to gain in-depth insights into educators’ experiences. Data was collected from 30 settings in Northern Ireland (15 from Controlled, Maintained and Integrated schools) and in Israel (15 from Jewish religious, Jewish secular, Arab and Bilingual kindergartens). Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality and cultural sensitivity, were addressed in partnership with Queen's University Belfast (Ethical Scrutiny and Approval of Research Proposals) and the Ministry of Education in Israel. Emerging findings suggest that educators in both contexts recognise the importance of relational peacebuilding, with varying roles. Structural and individual levels are evident. Preliminary findings include integrating peacebuilding practices into early childhood curricula and tailored professional development.

peacebuilding, education, divided-societies, diversity, conflict

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The tension between inclusion and belonging in Finnish early childhood education discussions

Presenters
Elina Viljamaa, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Oulu, Finland

All authors
Elina Viljamaa, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Oulu, Finland
Päivi Pihlaja, School of Applied Educational Science and Teacher Education, Philosophical Faculty, University of Eastern Finland, Finland
Elina Fonsén, Faculty of Education, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The study focuses on the tension between inclusion and belonging, as a part of larger research project in the context of Finnish early childhood education [ECE]. As a kind of miniature societies ECE settings play a significant role in strengthening inclusive education; however, studies also show that they can enable exclusion and discrimination (e.g. Emilson and Eek-Karlsson, 2021; Johansson and Puroila, 2021). Our presentation focus on this dilemma. Our theoretical framework is based on Yuval-Davis's theory of belonging (2011) and Kovač's and Vaala's (2021) theoretical analysis of the relationship between inclusion and belonging. The study is conducted within a narrative research paradigm (e.g. Bruner, 1990). Our research material consists of ten focus group discussions. The participants represent parents and politicians, ECE leaders, teachers and special teachers, selected by an open call. The analysis (in process) is conducted through narrative analysis (Frank, 2012; Riessman, 2008). An information sheet was given to participants and voluntariness was emphasized. Each participant gave his or her written consent. Pseudonym transcriptions have been used as research material. As researchers, we will reflect our power and responsibility when producing knowledge of narratives constructed in focus group discussions. By bringing different narratives into dialog together we draw a multivocal picture of how tendencies to categorize and regulate closeness and distance between people (as a part of belonging) can sometimes obstruct inclusion and inclusive ECE. Our findings show the importance of understanding deeper inclusion and suggest studying it more also via the phenomena of belonging.

belonging, politics of belonging, focus group discussion, narrative approach, narrative analysis

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The impact of changes to Ireland's compulsory quality planning tool on early learning and care services' focus on inclusive practice.

Presenters
Jane Heffernan, DCEDIY, Ireland

All authors
Jane Heffernan, DCEDIY, Ireland
Eimear Carron, Department of Children, Disability and Equality., Ireland
Fiona Murphy, Department of Children, Disability and Equality., Ireland

This research aims to establish whether an explicit reference to inclusion in compulsory quality planning tools and processes, results in an increased focus on inclusive practice in documented actions. The compulsory quality

planning tools introduced as part of the core funding model aim “to drive additional levels of quality over and above the basic requirements stipulated through regulations and existing contracts…” (DCEDIY, 2021: 64). Research has indicated the benefits of standardised planning tools (Kvilhaugsvik, et al., 2024) and how their structure impacts upon quality of planning processes (Harrison, et al., 2019) Siolta, Ireland’s National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006), is the theoretical framework underpinning this research. This research takes a qualitative approach focusing on a document analysis of the quality planning tools submitted by 100 early learning and care services, across 2 programme years. The analysis investigates the presence of key words related to inclusive practice and a thematic analysis of related concepts is conducted. Privacy statements and data process agreements are in place. Quality tool selection is randomised, and all data has been anonymised, any reference to individual children or services has been removed. This research is on-going, emerging finding indicate a shift in focus toward inclusive practice, further analysis will determine the validity of this. The findings will impact upon and inform future iterations of Ireland’s compulsory quality planning tool.

quality, planning, inclusive practice, ELC, Ireland

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A5 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G115, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) PEN GREEN APPROACH TO PRACTITIONER RESEARCH

Chaired by Joanne Benford, Pen Green Centre, United Kingdom

Transforming Practice through Practitioner Research

Presenters
Joanne Benford, Pen Green Centre, United Kingdom

All authors
Joanne Benford, Pen Green Centre, United Kingdom

The aim of this work is to influence and develop early childhood praxis through the processes of reflection, dialogue and understanding pedagogy and andragogy. The study focusses on practitioner-students’ developing knowledge of theory and being active in research (Benford et al., 2023). Influence comes from the work of Holman (1987), and effective ways to avoid epistemological injustice and contribute to the creation of transformational learning and practice wisdom (Klein and Bloom, 1995) with young children as primary beneficiaries. Pascal & Bertram notion of Praxeology; 'phronesis (reflection) praxis (action), Power (politics) and Values (ethics) (2012: 48) are used to ensure links are made directly to and about practice. Working within an interpretivist paradigm, the study is both ethnographic and phenomenological. Journalling and reflection are the main methods adopted. Case Studies are used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach. Consent, Assent, do no harm and right to withdraw - drawing on the EECERA code of ethics to ensure an ethical stance throughout - signed consent forms and regular check in with participants It has been possible to demonstrate how practitioner research has impacted the internalisation of knowledge to inform practice and develop praxeological approaches (Pascal and Bertram, 2012; Benford et al., 2023). Expectations are high for each Practitioner-Student with tutor support to formulate and engage actively in the research process in their quest for evolution. To further develop our approach to Practitioner Research to inform practice and demonstrate how this type of qualitative research can be as rigorous and impactful as other more quantifiable approaches.

praxis, inclusion, practitioner research, collaboration

Is the child at the heart of the current education system.

Presenters
Holly Bowman, Pen Green Centre, United Kingdom

All authors
Holly Bowman, Pen Green Centre, United Kingdom

This research explores the place of the child, teachers and leaders within the current education system and the influence of social policy. It looks at theories of agency and curriculum (Wyse, 2019) and complexity theory (Stacey, 2002) to understand this further. In addition the role of practice wisdom (Klein and Bloom, 1995). Dewey (1990) captures the essence of the child's heart along with Bandura's (2017) work on the importance of self-efficacy. It also explores the role of play (Bruce, 2018) and child autonomy (Malaguzzi, 1994) It is an Interpretivist phenomenological study. Data collection includes classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and focus groups to understand lived experiences. It follows the requirements of BERA and EECERA code of ethics as well as member checking (McNiff, 2006) and power (French and Raven, 1959) Strong leadership is invaluable, however balancing government mandate with personal values is conflicting the leaders and teachers. Teachers have self-doubt and the child is getting lost in a complex system influenced by coercive Isomorphism (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983). Play is also getting squeezed and children are not showing their full potential. Areas to consider for future practice include strengthening support systems in school for leaders and teachers so that they can feel more emotionally contained. Schools need to get back to child centred approaches to learning and value play as part of their curriculum design and delivery. Lastly schools need to challenge inappropriate government mandates and be empowered to advocate for change as well as feel able to challenge inappropriate practice.

practitioner research, *containment*. *policy*, *curriculum*, *leadership*

An exploration of the experiences of Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage One teachers in understanding and supporting children's behaviour.

Presenters
Michelle Loake, Pen Green Centre, United Kingdom

All authors
Michelle Loake, Pen Green Centre, United Kingdom

This research explored the experiences of four UK based teachers in understanding and supporting children's behaviour within Early Years and Key Stage 1. This study reflected on the positionality of behaviour within school contexts, contemplating behavioural and relational theories, including historical and present perspectives (Dweck, 1986; Skinner, 1954; Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007). It considered the regulatory standards within the Early Years and Education sectors, and training and guidance within the workforce. This study considers the wellbeing and involvement of children (Laevers, 2000) in relation to approaches for positive behaviour management. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory is considered in knowing children well, in order to provide effective and informed support. Situated within an interpretivist paradigm (Capper, 2019), my methodology utilised phenomenological case study, with semi-structured interviews and participant's reflections used as data collection methods. Aligning to the EECERA ethical code (Bertram et al., 2024), I was respectful of the experiences of the teachers involved, utilising member-checking to ensure my interpretations accurately reflected their meaning and maintained a high standard of professional integrity throughout. I adhered to the principles of 'do no harm' (BERA, 2024) but ultimately aimed to 'do some good' (Clark, 2022). My emerging findings presented some differences in the experiences of teachers, however initial themes consist of some disconnect between teachers' personal values and the ethos and expectations within their schools; and time afforded to understanding behaviour effectively.

Implications are to support practitioners to reflect on the impact of behaviour management systems in relation to self-esteem and learning potential.

wellbeing, relationships, understanding, reflection, development

Symposium Set A6 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G117, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

GENDERED PLAY NARRATIVES

Chaired by Catherine Kilburn, University of Hull, United Kingdom

"I'm a boy and I want to play with boys" Children's identification of who can play based on gender.

Presenters
Catherine Kilburn, University of Hull, United Kingdom

All authors
Catherine Kilburn, University of Hull, United Kingdom

This research project examines the role that preschool children play in reinforcing gender stereotypes and norms through play. The increase in gender-segregated play that is observed in preschool rooms has been identified and discussed in literature by a range of researchers (Martin et al., 2013; Børve and Børve, 2017). Additionally, reasons for the increase in gender-segregated play have been theorised (Bussey and Bandura, 1999; Zahrai, 2015). However, these studies have traditionally focused on adult views and interpretations of children's experiences. The theoretical framework for this study draws on Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model, as well as general theories of gender development including social cognitive theory and gender schema theory. This research is situated within a social constructivist paradigm and utilised a qualitative methodology. The methods used include video-recorded observations of the children, video-stimulated conversations with the children and a picture task. Fifty children aged 3-4 years participated. 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. The participants shared reasons why they engaged in gender-segregated play and the dichotomy they faced when the expectations of other children challenged their personal wishes. Many practitioners consider the rise in gender-segregated play as a typical aspect of child development; this research highlights the significant influence of a child's peers in perpetuating gender-segregation and the effects this has on young children's experiences.

preschool children, agency, gender norms, peer interaction, gender-policing

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Gender stereotyping in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Urban area of China: A Case study

Presenters
Shengnan Li, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

All authors
Shengnan Li, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

This study examines how institutional mechanisms, pedagogical practices, and teacher-student interactions contribute to gender stereotyping in early childhood education in urban China. This research builds upon previous studies examining gender stereotyping in early childhood settings (Chen, 2017; Li et al., 2012), particularly studies highlighting institutional reinforcement of gendered expectations in educational contexts (Xu et al., 2018). While research on gender in Chinese ECE remains limited, this study extends work by Hu (2015) and Qian et al. (2016) that identified traditional gender role expectations in educational materials and teacher-student interactions in Chinese kindergartens. The study is grounded in theories of gender as a social construct, recognizing its fluidity and intersectionality (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Connell, 1995; Lorber, 1994). It applies Social Learning Theory (Bandura & Walters, 1963) to analyze gendered behavior acquisition and Connell's (2009) gender order theory to contextualize institutional influences. This interpretive-constructivist study employs a qualitative case study approach. Data collection included 12-week non-participant observations using event sampling techniques and semi-structured interviews with 19 teachers in an urban Chinese kindergarten. Analysis combined Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010) to examine macro-level patterns and micro-level linguistic features. The study adheres to EECERA (2024) and University of Bristol ethical codes, with parental consent and child-friendly assent procedures. Findings indicate gender segregation in routines, differentiated teaching, and gendered language use contribute to stereotype persistence. Teachers' training, gender-inclusive pedagogies, and institutional reforms to mitigate gender bias in ECE and foster equitable learning environments.

urban China, gender stereotypes, early childhood education, social learning theory, gender and sexuality

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Differences in Physical Activity Intensity Among Preschoolers

Presenters
Byungho Lee, Duksung Women's University, South Korea

All authors
Byungho Lee, Duksung Women's University, South Korea
Heewon Heo, Duksung Women's University, South Korea

This study investigates gender- and age-based differences in physical activity intensity among preschool children. The primary objective is to analyze how these factors influence variations in sedentary, light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity levels. Prior research shows preschoolers often spend most of their time sedentary and that boys are more physically active than girls. However, age-related patterns show inconsistent results (Schmutz et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2009; Trost et al., 2002). Guided by developmental theory emphasizing early physical activity in child development and curriculum guidelines highlighting age-appropriate active play (Bohart et al., 2015; U.S. HHS, 2018), we conceptualized children’s activity by intensity category using established preschool accelerometer cutpoints. We conducted a cross-sectional study of 50 children (ages 3–5) from one preschool in Seoul. Accelerometers recorded activity for five days, and intensity levels were classified using preschool-specific thresholds (Pate et al., 2006). Nonparametric tests (Kruskal–Wallis, Mann–Whitney) compared activity by gender and age. Ethical approval was obtained from a university Institutional Review Board, and informed parental consent was secured. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was assured. The preliminary findings indicate that boys exhibited significantly higher levels of light, moderate, and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity than girls, who spent more time in sedentary behavior. Age differences were also observed, with five-year-olds showing more sedentary behavior than younger counterparts. These findings underscore the necessity for early childhood education programs to integrate structured physical activity opportunities. Educators and policymakers should consider gender and age disparities when designing curricula to promote active play and counteract excessive sedentary behavior.

preschool physical activity, gender differences, age-related activity, sedentary behavior, accelerometer measurement.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

This work was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) through the convergence R&D over Science and Technology Arts Programs under Project Number RS-2022-NR067603.

Symposium Set A7 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G118, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

IMPLEMENTING INCLUSION IN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION: FRAMEWORKS FOR ACCESS, ASSESSMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Chaired by Susan Irvine, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Access to Community Day-care for Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities from Parents' and Professionals' Perspectives

Presenters
Angeliki Kallitsoglou, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

All authors
Angeliki Kallitsoglou, University of Exeter, United Kingdom
Cristina Motoca, Alton Community Playschool, United Kingdom
Rebecca Georgis, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

Identify practices to allow children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) access community day-care. Despite the importance of accessible day-care and early intervention for children with SEND and their families, challenges persist in the local community's ability to provide adequate support to them. Reports from the UK Early Years Alliance show that one in three early years nurseries struggle to accommodate children with emerging SEND (Early Years Alliance, 2022). The family stress model (Masarik and Conger, 2017) and the principles of co-production and community engagement research informed the study design. Five mothers with children with SEND, three professionals from a community day-care setting and a senior community SEND/early years leader participated in one-hour consultation interviews analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Key ethical considerations included managing power imbalances between researcher-participants. This was handled by ensuring voluntary and informed participation, and maintaining confidentiality. Sensitivity discussing day-care experiences was ensured through clear communication of study aims at the outset, anonymised data handling, and participant feedback opportunities. Mothers found the process of identifying community day-care stressful. Systemic barriers included challenges working with professionals, poor communication across services, and lack of effective signposting to community-services. A welcoming environment, tailored support, visible child progress, and support extending to home were some of the features of an inclusive setting. Improving access to community day-care for children with SEND requires to enhance inclusivity in nurseries and playgroups, clearer guidance and support from local authorities and healthcare professionals, and strengthening community support networks.

early childhood education and care, special educational needs and/or disability, community day-care, maternal experiences, co-production

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exploration of Correlations Among Variables Related to Role, Content, and Structure in Special Educational Group Supervision in Preschool: Special Needs Educators' Perceptions and Experiences

Presenters
Veronica Semelius Granevald, Dalarna University, Sweden

All authors
Veronica Semelius Granevald, Dalarna University, Sweden

This study aims to increase knowledge about the role of special needs educators (SNEs) in supervising preschool educators in their work to promote inclusive learning environments for all children. This is achieved by examining relationships between SNEs' perceptions and experiences of their supervisory role, content and structure of this supervision as well as the role of contextual factors for this. Previous research shows that SNEs shape their own roles through expectations from other professionals in the environment (Göransson et al., 2019; Klang et al., 2017), which may result in variability in how SNEs' role is applied in practice. The study utilized Antonovsky's (1987/2005) theory of salutogenesis and sense of coherence (i.e., comprehensibility, manageability, meaningfulness) as its theoretical framework, emphasizing health and wellbeing, which is vital in special educational group supervision (SEGS). This study used a cross-sectional study design, and a purposive stratified random sampling method was employed. A total of 42 special needs educators from 25 municipalities in Sweden voluntarily participated in a web-based questionnaire. The participants provided informed consent and received assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, in accordance with EECERA's ethical code (Bertram et al., 2025). The findings from correlational analyses and Wilcoxon rank tests indicate that SNEs' perceptions and experiences of their supervisory role and the content and structure of SEGS may be contingent on contextual factors and SNEs' supervisory competence. Understanding SNEs' perceptions and experiences can inform future special education practices, enhancing supervision structures and participant wellbeing, ultimately improving support quality for children and educators in preschools.

special needs educators, group supervision, supervisory role, preschool, inclusive work

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

So, what is it then; Special Need, SEMH, both or none? An assessment framework to value their interplay

Presenters
Alicia Blanco-Bayo, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

All authors
Alicia Blanco-Bayo, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom
Maria Reraki, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

This paper aims to explore how SEMH difficulties are assessed in early childhood, to examine how these are distinguished from SEND and developmental needs, and to propose more effective, relationally-informed assessment approaches (Stanbridge and Mercer, 2022). Previous research often overlooks the over-reliance on SEND labels and ignores the possibility that some SEMH-related behaviours reflect typical developmental needs (Lindsay, Wedell and Dockrell, 2020). This paper builds on existing literature by critically reviewing assessment models to address this gap. Early Years Practitioners (EYPs) need a framework that recognises relational influences within assessments. It critiques existing assessment tools, SEND and SEMH literature, policy, and practice to challenge current assessement processes and proposes a relational approach (Reynolds and Kamphaus, 2015; Ruby, 2021) An interactionist paradigm underpins a narrative literature review methodology. Literature on the three assessment models was selected for relevance to SEMH, SEND, and assessment practices in UK-based EC settings (0–7 years). The literature on the Power Threat Meaning Framework (PTMF), Behaviour Assessment System for Children (BASC)

and Early Years Boxal profile (EYBP) assessment tools, was selected to consider the diverse relational contexts of children 0-7 to ensure unbiased identification of SEMH difficulties, SEND, or developmental needs. The main finding is that some SEMH assessments often misidentify needs. The paper suggests that adopting relational assessment processes can help distinguish SEMH difficulties, SEND, and developmental needs, whilst considering all EC experiences. It advocates for relational assessment approaches and clearer guidance within policy to improve identification practices and reduce SEND and SEMH misdiagnosis in EC (Walton and Darkes-Sutcliffe, 2023).

SEND, SEMH, relational pedagogy, bonds, assessment model.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A8 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G127, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY (ECEFS): EQUITY, INCLUSION, WELLBEING

Chaired by June O'Sullivan, United Kingdom

A theoretical model of climate anxiety and coping in early childhood

Presenters
Jane Spiteri, University of Malta, Malta

All authors
Jane Spiteri, University of Malta, Malta

As research on climate anxiety rapidly progresses, with focuses on its prevalence, causes, and ways to channel distress into positive action, increasing attention is being paid to how young children experience emotional responses that could develop into anxiety (Clayton et al., 2023; OHCHR, 2023). Building on Hickman et al.'s work (2021) on climate emotions in children, this paper focuses on early childhood, an area where the manifestation of climate anxiety (Clayton, 2020) remain unclear. Drawing from developmental psychology (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), and bio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006), this model supports a systemic understanding of climate anxiety in children that considers both relational and developmental aspects. Furthermore, coping theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) and hope theory (Snyder, 2002) are integrated to conceptualise children's adaptive and maladaptive responses. Grounded in a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, it recognises that meaning-making is shaped by sociocultural contexts, developmental stages, and emotional relationships. It employs theoretical synthesis within a conceptual model-building approach, systematically reviewing and integrating literature to formulate an interdisciplinary framework that explains climate anxiety and coping in early childhood. Ethical considerations include ensuring accuracy, inclusivity, and wellbeing, while avoiding increased climate anxiety and guaranteeing policy recommendations empower young children. Climate change can cause existential anxiety and other emotional responses, prompting cognitive and behavioural coping strategies that range from proactive climate engagement to maladaptive behaviours impacting wellbeing and daily functioning. This theoretical paper aims to inform educators and policymakers about the importance of addressing climate anxiety early.

climate anxiety, climate change, early childhood, mental health, adaptivity

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exploring Early Childhood Educators' Understanding of Social Sustainability in England

Presenters

June O'Sullivan, United Kingdom
Tanya Williams, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

All authors

June O'Sullivan, United Kingdom
Tanya Williams, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

To better understand this, we are exploring what a group of ECEC educators in England understand by social sustainability and how they translate this into practice. Education for sustainability is considered the great hope for a sustainable future. However, there appears to be discrepancies about how confident ECEC educators describe and implement the three pillars of sustainability, in particular the social equity pillar (Maidou et al., 2019). .This study is framed by theories of education for sustainability that focus on weaving social justice through the three interconnected sustainability pillars (Santone, 2019). Education for sustainability must integrate socio-cultural and socio-political dimensions to be comprehensive and effective (Venkataraman, 2009). A lack of understanding of the social pillar of sustainability can limit educators' capacity to implement a social justice-focused pedagogy and curriculum, as well as their willingness to confront oppressive social and economic factors that perpetuate poverty and environmental harm (Boldermo and Ødegaard, 2019). The research is framed within a pragmatic paradigm using praxeological action research. Data were collected using questionnaires and focus groups from 60 ECEC educators selected using convenience sampling. The EECERA Ethical Code (2024) was used to consider consent, confidentiality, recognition of risk of selection bias and unintentional researcher influence. Preliminary findings are expected to reveal some gaps in understanding about social sustainability. The study suggests a need to enhance social sustainability as both a separate and interconnected pillar of education for sustainability as a driver of social justice with the goal of social change through ECEC pedagogies and practice.

education for sustainability, social sustainability, social justice, pedagogy, practice

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Inclusion-oriented educational practices for sustainability: first findings from the field

Presenters

Francesca Rota, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

All authors

Francesca Rota, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

The contribution focuses on sustainability education practices that promote inclusion emerging from research, conducted within MUSA project, which involved early childhood educational services of the Municipality of Milan. Education for sustainability is often understood in a compartmentalised way (Eizenberg and Jabareen, 2017), whereas how environmental, economic and social aspects are interconnected highlights the importance of understanding sustainability as a holistic concept (Riva, 2018). In accordance with the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015) and studies related to ECEfS (Davis et al., 2024), it is crucial to promote education that is sensitive to human rights, gender equality, peace and appreciation of diversity. The research is conducted within a qualitative ecological paradigm (Mortari, 2020; 2007), using a participatory method (Ang et al., 2015). All services in Milan were invited to participate and were free to join the research. Data were collected through a questionnaire with open-ended questions, completed by 47 services, and through workshops with 39 early childhood teachers, and were analysed through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Consent form and information sheet were provided to all participants, who could withdraw at any time. A point of attention was that the collected documentation did not portray children's faces and did not contain sensitive data. The collected data show several educational practices, among those recognised by the services as sustainable practices, that promote inclusive education. The research

opens the discussion around sustainability practices that can be implemented daily to orient education for sustainability not only to the environmental and economic dimensions but also to the social one.

ECEfS, social sustainability, inclusion, participatory research, early childhood teachers

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A9 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G210, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

ADULT AND CHILD PERSPECTIVE AND ATTITUDES TO INCLUSION

Chaired by Claudia Wirts, Leipzig University, Germany

Exploring Inclusive Practices from the Perspectives of Young Children

Presenters
Sophie Brinsmead, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, United Kingdom

All authors
Sophie Brinsmead, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, United Kingdom
Kyriaki Messiou, Southampton Education School, University of Southampton, United Kingdom
Nicole Harris, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, United Kingdom
Brettany Hartwell, Department of Psychology, University of Southampton, United Kingdom

This study aimed to explore the perspectives and voices of children attending an Early Years setting to understand what inclusion means to young children, and to investigate what adults can do to support inclusion, based on children's views. The inclusion of young children within education has been considered in numerous policy documents (e.g., UN CRC, 1989). The literature frequently excludes those below 5-years-old (Lundy et al., 2024) and there is a lack of understanding about what inclusive practices may be for our youngest children. The study was informed by conceptualisations of inclusion (Ainscow, 1999) and models of participation (e.g., Lundy, 2007; Shier, 2001). The research was underpinned by a qualitative methodology, employing a Mosaic approach (Clark, 2007; Clark and Moss, 2017). Creative techniques were used to support individual interviews in one Early Years (EY) setting with 8 children aged 2 to 3 years. The lead researcher held an enhanced security check, which supported the safeguarding of children. Children's assent was monitored through observing and recording their non-verbal communication, in addition to formal consent forms. The data remained anonymous using pseudonyms throughout. Reflexive thematic analysis resulted in four themes: engaging with interests, creating connections with others, exploring activities to develop group identity, and fostering fairness and justice. These captured ways that children felt included. The study highlights the ability of young children to share their views, and offers suggestions of how these may be elicited, as well as developing inclusive practices.

early years, inclusion, children's views, Mosaic approach

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Attitudes towards inclusion in daycare centres in Germany

Presenters
Claudia Wirts, Leipzig University, Germany
Laura Schlechte, Leipzig University, Germany

All authors

Claudia Wirts, Leipzig University, Germany
Laura Schlechte, Leipzig University, Germany

The submitted paper deals with the question of what attitudes towards inclusion can be found in teams at day-care centres (DCC) and what influences the willingness to accept children with disabilities. The joint care of children with and without disabilities does not have a long tradition in Germany (Prengel, 2014), even if studies indicate that inclusive educational contexts offer better learning conditions (Wertfein et al., 2015, Wocken, 2007) and correlations between personal contact and inclusive attitudes are proven (Dias and Cadime, 2016; Kißgen et al., 2019). Inclusive education can be framed both as an ideal, a value horizon of a political and social commitment, and as a very concrete activity consisting of the implementation of good practices (Booth and Ainscow, 1998), a social task to "design legitimate, permeable boundaries" (Kronauer, 2013). Current data from Bavaria (2024) and Saxony (2025) was collected using an online questionnaire for daycare centre managers (population: all DCC). Qualitative and quantitative data was collected from N=927 centres in Bavaria (Saxony: ongoing study). No personal data is collected; the online-surveys are conducted in compliance with the GDPR; participation is voluntary. Factors influencing the willingness of DCC-teams to accept children with disabilities are primarily resources, followed by special educational expertise, but non-inclusive DCC mostly don't have staff with specific qualifications (76.6%). Attitudes towards inclusion are significantly influenced by personal contact experience ($t(918)=10.19$, $p<.001$). The results will be used to shed light on factors influencing the implementation of inclusion and what framework conditions they consider necessary for this.

Inclusion, ressources for inclusion, ECEC, attitudes towards inclusion, framework conditions

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Beliefs and intentions about the importance of Teacher-Child Interactions: Implications for Inclusive Education

Presenters
Nana Yaa Nyarko, University of Ghana, Ghana

All authors
Nana Yaa Nyarko, University of Ghana, Ghana

This study examines in-service pre-school teachers’ self-reported beliefs and intentions about the importance of teacher-child interactions. Teachers in pre-schools are expected to help children transition from the home to the school environment. Quality learning for children involves stimulating activities guided by attentive and engaging teachers (Conn-Powers, 2013). Experiences and attachments formed in the early years have long lasting effects on their later development. As the role of teacher-child interactions is critical to children's experiences, teachers' prior experiences could inform their practice (Decker and Rimm-Kaufman, 2008) . Utilizing the Social Cognitive theory by Banduara (1986) the study tries to explain teachers' behavior based on influences from the environment through their prior experiences. A cross sectional survey with a quantitative approach was employed. 200 in-service pre-school teachers participating in a certificated national capacity building training in the Greater Accra region of Ghana were sampledconveniently sampled. They responded to a self-report questionnaire on their beliefs and intentions. After ethical clearance, officials of the training helped identify teachers who taught crèche to kindergarten children. Informed consent was then obtained from the teachers before a date was scheduled for data collection. Participants were informed of their rights to voluntarily consent or decline to participate, and to withdraw participation at any time. Participants were assured of minimal risks. Results showed that teachers’ reported intentions were more sensitive and involved in nature. However, their beliefs score on items involving inappropriate enforcement was high. Teachers' sensitivity can ensure they practice inclusivity however, awareness of the impact of their own beliefs is recommended.

pre-school teachers, beliefs, intentions, teacher-child interactions

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set A10 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G211, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

PEER GROUP AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN 2-YEAR-OLDS

Chaired by Julia Manning-Morton, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

'Holding the Baby': Embodied Intersubjectivity in work with 0–3-year-olds.

Presenters
Julia Manning-Morton, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

All authors
Julia Manning-Morton, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

This research explored physical interactions that impact 0-3-year-olds lived experience in early years settings in the UK. Tobin (1997) noted the 'disappearing body' in ECCE and physical interactions have been recently researched by Burke and Duncan (2015), Svinth (2018), and Laurin et al. (2021). But discussion of physical caregiving has diminished in ECEC in the UK, which impacts most strongly on 0-3-year-olds who spend much time engaged in physical care events. The intersectionality of different perspectives on the body-self within a conceptual framework of embodiment (Ellingson, 2017) and intersubjectivity (Trevarthen, 2001) was used. Moving away from a reductionist perspective of developmental psychology to complexity thinking, to foreground connectedness between people, and people and things. This was a qualitative study using co-operative inquiry and participatory research methods of Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (Strathie et al., 2011) and Work Discussion (Reason and Bradbury, 2006). Data was assembled through both a thematic and diffractive frame (Barad, 2007). Consent to video was gained from children's parents and educators. On-going consent was sought from the children through close attention to their responses, using 'ethical radar' (Skanfors, 2009). Data show that educators and young children are in constant communication using physical cues and touch in subtle ways. The research identified a continuum of touch, from affective to controlling, which relate to educators' intentions, their reading of children's cues and are influenced by the more-than-human. Educators notice children's physical cues in detail through reflection on micro-moments of physical interaction; strengthening relationship through linking internal and external worlds of themselves and the child.

Babies, care, interactions, touch, reflection

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Verbal interaction in terms of social norms: Observations of a classroom of two-year-olds in a Japanese childcare centre

Presenters
Machiko Tsujitani, Ochanomizu University, Japan

All authors
Machiko Tsujitani, Ochanomizu University, Japan

This study investigated how children approximately two years of age, in the early stage of verbal interaction, used words related to social norms, such as norms around possession, prohibition, and customary practices. Children

begin enforcing social norms around the age of three, exhibiting behaviours such as imperative protests (e.g. Schmidt et al., 2019). Although children approximately two years of age offer verbal protests related to social norms (Tsujitani, 2024), research on long-term changes in verbal interactions is limited and the topic remains understudied. Drawing on developmental psychology, this study focused beyond age-specific developmental abilities, emphasising verbal interactions within contexts. The study's perspective centred on children's participation, defining social norms based on children's perceptions rather than reflecting adult perceptions. Observations of children in the one-year-old class were conducted at a Japanese childcare centre from June 2023 to March 2025. Interactions were recorded as episodes, and instances of children's verbal expressions related to social norms were analysed. Informed consent was obtained from educators and parents; confidentiality was ensured by anonymising names. Approval was obtained from the relevant research ethics committee. In the one-year-old class, analysis focused primarily on expressions of possession. In the two-year-old class, analysis focused primarily on prohibitions, requests, and references to norms; tattling on other people was observed. Verbal protests by children gained persuasiveness; results also demonstrated development in the children's beliefs about who was responsible for enforcing norms. Future research should investigate contexts that create norms that children encounter, including contexts related to educators' thoughts and cultural backgrounds.

social norms, verbal interaction, two-year-old children, observation, childcare centre

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Collective agency in infancy: Peer-led wellbeing and social development in early childhood settings

Presenters
Matthew Stapleton, Centre Support, Australia

All authors
Matthew Stapleton, Centre Support, Australia
Benjamin Bradley, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Jane Selby, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Infants' social wellbeing is traditionally framed within a one-to-one infant-adult relationship and linked to the quality of caregiver bonds. This study examines collective agency in infants, exploring how peer interactions contribute to wellbeing in early childhood settings. It challenges the assumption that adult presence is always necessary for emotional regulation, demonstrating how infants actively co-construct social experiences within groups.
Building on Babies in Groups (Bradley et al., 2024), this study extends research on peer-driven social development. It integrates Bion's (1961) work group theory, which conceptualises groups as self-organising systems and aligns with Darwinian models of social survival and adaptation (Bradley, 2020), positioning infants as active agents in development. Bradley (2020) demonstrated that infants are predisposed to form social bonds and cooperate. We use Bion's (1961) theory to provide insight into how infants regulate emotions, problem-solve, and establish leadership within peer groups. This study applies these theories to infant-led wellbeing. A qualitative ethnographic approach using thick description and language shadowing was employed in an Australian early childhood setting. Observations captured naturally occurring interactions among infants aged 7–15 months. Ethical approval was obtained, ensuring confidentiality, parental consent, and minimal researcher intrusion. Infants self-organise into peer groups, engaging in problem-solving, emotional regulation, and leadership. They develop social cohesion through humour, reciprocity, and mutual responsiveness, often resolving distress without adult intervention. This study challenges individualised models of infant wellbeing and calls for policies that support peer-driven interactions. Educators should be trained to facilitate group-based wellbeing, recognising collective agency as an aspect of infant social development.

collective agency, infant peer interactions, social wellbeing, emotional regulation

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set A11 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G215, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

RE-IMAGINING THE AIMS AND PURPOSES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMES

Chaired by Nancy Barbour, Kent State University, United States

Opening Up Innovative, Authentic Space for Questioning Early Childhood Practices

Presenters
Nancy Barbour, Kent State University, United States
Nancy File, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, United States

All authors
Nancy Barbour, Kent State University, United States
Nancy File, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, United States
Andrew Stremmel, South Dakota State University, United States

This paper builds on our use of dialogues in creating a historical perspective of ECE (File, Barbour, and Stremmel, 2024). We paired experts to engage dialogically around aspects of ECE practice and examine how they made use of the opportunity to interact directly, a departure from typical academic writing and a documentation of " lived history." Dialogue is an innovative approach to building knowledge and understanding. It provides a first-person perspective, while offering resonance with others' views and the possibility of reconstruction of viewpoints (Bohm, 1996). It sustains momentum, resonance, and understanding and becomes transformational (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). We chose fourteen senior ECE professionals, pairing by similar interests. We provided four questions to begin the dialogue, asking them to take turns via email answering, then addressing their partner's responses. We identified seven major topical areas to explore: infant/toddler; ECE systems; family engagement; play; curriculum; diversity, equity, children's rights. Researchers did not participate in the dialogues. Participants were presented with the project prospectus and agreed to participate with the option to end participation at any time. They knew that anonymity was not guaranteed and agreed to this process. Profound shifts across all dialogues were in recognizing and responding to diversity among children and families. Senior professionals had lived through the civil rights era, but there was limited awareness in research and practice about diversity. Practical application focuses on professional preparation. Using a different historical lens, students see past, present, and future practice as tools for ensuring change that enriches the field and speaks to the current context.

dialogue, history, innovation, perspectives, practice

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Person-Formation in Preschool: Teacher-Child Interaction in Educational Practice

Presenters
Ann-Charlott Wank, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

All authors
Ann-Charlott Wank, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This presentation explores how person-formation is understood and applied in preschool practice. By analyzing a teaching activity, it highlights how teachers integrate person-formation, interact with children, and respond to children's needs. The Swedish preschool curriculum takes a holistic view of learning, integrating play, social

interaction, and knowledge development. Teachers uphold a social-pedagogical tradition while incorporating knowledge-focused teaching (Klaar and Wank, 2022). Recent shifts toward a 'school-preparatory' approach emphasize cognitive learning, particularly in language, mathematics, and science (Sylva et al., 2020). However, preschool teaching still balances academic and social objectives, with play and learning intertwined (Vallberg Roth, 2014). This study adopts a pragmatic research perspective, emphasizing three key educational functions: qualification, socialization, and person-formation (Biesta, 2009; 2020). Person-formation encompasses identity development, subjectification (independent thinking and action), and autonomy. While prior research has mainly focused on the first two aspects, this presentation highlights person-formation. The analysis draws on twenty hours video observations of verbal and physical interactions between children and teachers. Using a qualitative approach, the study examines how person-formation emerges in preschool practice, highlighting its dynamicity. The study follows the Swedish Research Council's (2024) guidelines, ensuring informed consent from parents and teachers. Given preschool's cultural sensitivity, children's ongoing assent was gathered. Findings show that preschool teachers support person-formation by:

- Encouraging reflection on social norms and emotions.
- Promoting problem-solving and self-expression.
- Providing choices to foster autonomy.

The results highlight the importance of a responsive, child-centered approach. By fostering reflection, exploration, and autonomy, preschool teachers support person-formation.

preschool education, teaching, functions of education, person-formation, teacher-child interactions

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Building Strong Foundations in Early Learning: a review of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme in Ireland

Presenters
Glenda Walsh, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

All authors
Glenda Walsh, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

This presentation draws on a comprehensive review of the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme in Ireland to determine what is working well and what enhancements are required to ensure improved outcomes for all young children and their families within the context of Ireland. Existing evidence consistently reveals that high quality early childhood positively impacts children's outcomes (OECD, 2018) and goes some way to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers (Melhuish and Gardiner, 2021). The review adopts a children's rights theoretical framework, recognising the inherent right of all children to achieve their full potential (UNCRC, 1989). A children's rights informed approach (Lundy, 2007), involving a Children's, Parents' and Educators' Advisory Group (CPEAG) and a Designated Listener, guided the research design. Data collection was multi-source (surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, playful conversations) and multi-perspective in design, incorporating input from children, parents, educators, providers, stakeholders, and hard-to-reach groups. Throughout the study, participation was entirely voluntary, with informed, written consent obtained from all participants. For young children, assent was negotiated moment-to-moment, through attunement, respect and responsiveness. Data was securely stored, adhering to GDPR regulations, and accessible only to the research team. The ECCE programme proved to be highly beneficial for children and their families yet key priorities emerged for improving holistic and equitable outcomes: Enhanced intensity, greater flexibility and improved adult-child ratios; a professionalised workforce; quality professional development and further targeted support for the disadvantaged. Structural, process, and systemic factors all contribute to achieving better outcomes in Early Childhood.

early learning, Ireland, children's rights, *priorities*, *outcomes*

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set A12 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G222, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

TEACHER COMPETENCIES AND PERSPECTIVES ON DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Chaired by Louise Kilbane, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

Factors influencing the support of preschool children's digital competence in kindergarten and at home: case of Estonia

Presenters
Kaire Kollom, Tallinn University, Estonia
Elyna Heinmäe, Tallinn University, Estonia

All authors
Kaire Kollom, Tallinn University, Estonia
Elyna Heinmäe, Tallinn University, Estonia

What are practices of parents and kindergarten teachers in supporting the digital competence of children? Which sub-fields of digital competence are most supported by parents and kindergarten teachers? What factors influence the practices of parents and kindergarten teachers in supporting a child's digital competence? Previous studies emphasize that preschool children develop digital competence through guided digital activities in kindergarten and at home. Collaboration between parents and teachers is essential, but challenges like adult digital skill gaps and limited curriculum integration persist. (Su and Yang, 2024; Undheim, 2021; Kumpulainen and Gillen, 2017; Marsh, 2016). Preschool children's digital competence develops through guided interactions (Vygotsky, 1978), play-based digital exploration (Marsh et al., 2016), and family and educational environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The conceptual framework is the Estonian Learner's Digital Competence Model, based on DigComp. We present the results of a survey study. Data was collected from parents (n=695) and kindergarten teachers (n=479) via online questionnaire. In the data analysis, we used inferential statistics. Ethical concerns included ensuring informed consent, protecting participants's privacy and respecting differences in parenting and teaching practices. We overcame them by using clear consent processes, voluntary participation and anonymizing data. Different factors (age, education, financial background, etc.) influence the practices of parents and kindergarten teachers in supporting the child's digital competence. The results of the study make it possible to plan activities that would reduce inequality and empower the digital competence of all children. The study provides a comprehensive overview of the implementation of all areas of the learner's digital competence model.

supporting digital competence, parents, kindergarten teachers, preschool

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Exploring Early Childhood Educators' Perspectives on AI: Potential, Challenges, and Inclusion in Practice

Presenters
Natalie Lombardi Calleja, University of Malta, Malta
Charmaine Bonello, University of Malta, Malta

All authors
Natalie Lombardi Calleja, University of Malta, Malta
Charmaine Bonello, University of Malta, Malta

This study examines how early childhood educators in Malta perceive and integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into their daily practice, focusing on inclusive approaches, and benefits and challenges associated with AI integration in the early years setting. AI's increasing use in education raises questions about its impact on pedagogical and accessibility for diverse learners. Early childhood educators are significant in shaping foundational learning experiences and their perspectives on AI application are crucial in comprehending its potential and limitations. This study adopts elements from the Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra and Koehler, 2006) to explore how early years educators are bridging the relationship between pedagogy, curriculum and AI in their classroom reality. Using semi-structured interviews, this qualitative study investigates early childhood educators' perceptions and application of AI and explores whether they feel prepared in leveraging AI to support equity and inclusion while enabling child-centred practices. Ethical approval was sought from University of Malta. All participants were informed that no personal information will appear in the results or any published material. Key findings reveal that while educators acknowledge AI's potential in aiding them with preparation, while also enhancing children's learning and offering possibilities to support children with diverse needs, significant challenges persist. These include internet filter restrictions at school and room for more informative sessions on integrating AI effectively in the early years. As such, this study concludes with recommendations that aim to maximise the potential of AI integration in the early years in relation to child-centred practices and inclusion.

artificial intelligence; early childhood education; inclusion; AI potential; AI challenges

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Teaching practices involving digital technology use in ECE: a systematic review

Presenters
Olga Boksjö, Mälardalen University, Sweden

All authors
Olga Boksjö, Mälardalen University, Sweden
Anna Ehrlin, Mälardalen University, Sweden

This study aimed to conduct a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed empirical studies on ECE teaching practices involving digital technology. Teachers' crucial role in integrating digital technologies in ECE is well-known (Plowman and Stephen, 2013). However, researchers point out a lack of knowledge about how technologies make a difference to teachers' practices (Bourbour, 2020) . The review, conducted as a configurative synthesis (Gough et al., 2017), was driven by the concept of teaching with digital technology. Thus, the main inclusion criteria required studies to involve teachers and children as active participants, using digital technology 'in situ' for a specific didactic purpose. Studies that only included teachers' interviews or attitudes, or where technology was not used for teaching purposes, were excluded. Thirty-seven articles from 2014-2024 were identified through the Web of Science, Scopus, and Eric. The review followed PRISMA guidelines (Moher et al., 2015) ensuring that ethical considerations are integrated into the research design of each study. Preliminary findings show teachers mainly used digital technology in curriculum areas like mathematics, literacy, science, art, and play. Studies focusing on digital technology as a content area of its own were underrepresented. Teaching activities that include children's own digital production, as well as inquiry projects where teachers act as co-learners, appear to both increase children's agency and meaning-making, and develop their digital competence. We argue that teachers' role in using digital technologies in ECE settings can not only be seen in enhancing children's learning or play but also in preparing children for future digital challenges.

systematic review, ECE teaching practice, digital technology, curriculum, digital competence

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A13 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G231, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

COLLABORATION, CO-DESIGN AND ADVOCACY WITH FAMILIES

Chaired by Daniela Foerch, Florida International University, United States

Project WeFEEL: Creating Advocates in Underserved Populations

Presenters
Daniela Foerch, Florida International University, United States
Andrea Adelman, Florida International University, United States

All authors
Daniela Foerch, Florida International University, United States
Andrea Adelman, Florida International University, United States

The WeFEEL family advocacy project empowers underserved populations to navigate the education system and apply evidence-based practices to advocate for their children. Our research cultivates emotional intelligence, language literacy, and community engagement by equipping families and educators with strategies for resilience and integrating male role models for inclusivity. Emphasizing agency and advocacy, the WeFEEL approach creates equitable growth opportunities, bridging theory and practice through the work of Mayer and Salovey (1997), Brackett (2014), and Vigil and Lopez (2020). This study is grounded in Emotional Intelligence (EI) theory, which emphasizes self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills in personal and professional growth (Goleman, 1995), and Advocacy Theory, which underscores empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills to support underserved children and families (Freire, 1970). Integrating these theories, the EI/Advocacy framework enhances participants' ability to address socio-emotional and systemic challenges faced by underserved children. This mixed-method design utilizes a coaching model in combination with survey data, which is analyzed through content analysis and descriptive statistics. IRB approval was obtained to ensure ethical standards. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks through informed consent. De-identifying data maintained confidentiality. Preliminary results indicate the WeFEEL EI/Advocacy approach had a positive impact on increasing knowledge, self-efficacy with the application, and movement towards advocacy. The implications extend to the families and the community: providing research-based practices helps to empower underserved communities, creating individuals who advocate for themselves and those around them, therefore positively changing educational and personal outcomes.

family advocacy, emotional intelligence, navigating the educational system, community engagement, participatory action research

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Parents perceptions of participation in preschool

Presenters
Lilly Augustine, Jönköping University, Sweden

All authors
Lilly Augustine, Jönköping University, Sweden
Charlotte Ohman, PhD student, Sweden

This study aims to examine parents' perceptions about participation in Swedish preschool. Swedish preschools shall welcome children and families based on their circumstances facilitating equity. This statutory task supports every child's development and learning, contributing to societal growth (Persson & Tallberg Broman, 2017). Parental involvement varies based on contextual prerequisites in preschool settings (Yngvesson et al., 2022). The theoretical framework draws on theories of contextualized participation (Imms et al., 2017) and role alignment and shifts in communication opportunities (Goffman, 1979). Parents' participation is seen as being part of a community with decision-making opportunities, identified through the Five A's of participation (Simeonsson et al., 2001). Interviewing parents, qualitatively analysing data deductively using content analysis, based on our theoretical framework. The study adheres to EECERA's ethical code (2024) with informed consent obtained from all participants. Data is pseudonymized and stored according to GDPR guidelines, with participants able to withdraw at any time. Parental participation depends on the contexts availability, accessibility, accommodation, affordability, and acceptability. The contexts defines possible participational levels and sets bounderies for parental participation through roles and dynamics between parents, preschool children, and staff. Key themes include contextual prerequisites, facilitators and barriers, the role of the environment, and parental perspectives. Preschools can enhance parental participation by improving contexts based on the 5As. Effective communication strategies can better align parents' roles and expectations with those of preschool staff. Time for conversation, dialogue, and relationship-building.

context, equity, parents, participation, preschool

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Co-designing research within a collaborative partnership: Long distance education for the inclusion of young children

Presenters
Susan Danby, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Lennie Barblett, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Edith Cowan University, Australia
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Amanda Clark, Isolated Children and Parents' Association, Australia
Annette Boyle, Isolated Children and Parents' Association, Australia
Sonya Shelley, Isolated Children and Parents' Association, Australia

This study sought to explore how a research centre collaboratived effectively with key stakeholders in a co-design inclusive research process. The partnership emerged when the stakeholders, parents of rural and remote young children undertaking distance education online, approached researchers because of concerns about the effects of screen time on their young child's development, learning and wellbeing. Community and university research partnerships involve stakeholders coming together to address complex social problems or concerns, built on

strategies to ensure a balance of power relationship and trust (Boyle et al., 2011). This study draws on stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) to recognise that ethical practices benefit all stakeholders and not just a few. Mixed method tools were co-designed with stakeholders across three phases. First, a state-wide survey sent to all distance education families (200 families); second, focus groups with family/home tutors (50 participants); third, interviews with executive committee members of the distance education partner organisation (6 participants). All participants gave informed consent and a co-design methodology addresses potential power imbalances in working with stakeholders. Key aspects of the partnership and co-design processes were discussed. Stakeholders reported varying levels of educational support and often poorly designed online lessons for young learners. Findings revealed a lack of guidance on suitable online early childhood digital pedagogy. Co-developed research processes that investigate online teaching and learning issues for distance education families have significant policy and implementation implications, shaping future inclusive educational practices.

researcher-community partnership, co-design research, distance education, digital learning, early childhood

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A14 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G242, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

USING THE MOSAIC APPROACH TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S VOICE

Chaired by Emilia Restiglian, University of Padova, Italy

Exploring multiple expressions of the children for democratic-participatory practice

Presenters
Mari Mori, Kobe Shinwa University, Japan

All authors
Mari Mori, Kobe Shinwa University, Japan
Tomohiro Uemura, Tama Art University, Japan
Hisanobu Fujita, Tokyo Seitoku University, Japan
Akiko Gunji, Gunma University, Japan

The exploratory study aims to identify how the multiple expressions of the children: narratives, art-activities, and pedagogical documentation through the project of peace at a nursery school in Japan contribute adults to rethink the children's participation in ECEC practice.. The study builds on Reggio Emilia Approach in which participatory democracy is a central value (Moss, 2014; Cagliali, et. al, 2016). Moreover, the notion of Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2005), aesthetic dimensions (Vecchi, 2010), and pedagogical documentation (Clark, Carlsen, and Mori, 2024) are embedded. The theoretical and conceptual framework draws on discourses about pedagogy of listening (Rinaldi, 2021), the hundred languages of children (Malaguzzi, 1996), and UNCRC (1989). The study was guided by qualitative and social constructivist paradigm, and inquiry based, including the collection of photography, video-taped discussion, arts-and-crafts, and pedagogical documentation of 5-year-olds regarding peace were interpreted and qualitatively sought out for the themes and distinct characteristics. We follow the EECERA ethical guidelines and the national protocol in Japan including written and verbal informed consent from the children, their families and setting. The collection of children's multiple expressions has opened up for listening to the children, and to recognize they have the voices for making the world better as citizen in society and the world. Moreover, the pedagogical documentation was utilized as to review, reflect, and rethink the process of practice, and children's ways of thinking. The study raises the need for further inquiries for the image of the child and democratic participatory ECEC practice.

participation, images of the child, pedagogy of listening, pedagogical documentation, children as citizen.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The Good Teacher from Children's Perspective

Presenters
Emilia Restiglian, University of Padova, Italy
Denise Corrà, University of Padova, Italy

All authors
Emilia Restiglian, University of Padova, Italy
Denise Corrà, University of Padova, Italy

The research explores the characteristics that define a good teacher from the children's perspectives. It employs the Mosaic Approach (MA) and involves all five-year-old children in a preschool setting, using drawings, photographs and semi-structured conversations prompted by guiding questions. In recent years, the MA has been used to explore children's views on early childhood education (Koçyiğit, 2014). Notably, some studies have investigated children's quality standpoints about their teachers (Harcourt and Mazzoni, 2012) and how preschool educators' gender shapes their roles (Rentzou, 2023). The research is informed by the Reggio Emilia Approach (Edwards et al., 1993) and the MA (Clark and Moss, 2014). Central to this framework is the value placed on documentation and children's active, participatory role in the learning process. The research adopts an interpretative paradigm and follows a qualitative methodology (Cohen et al., 2011). Photographs, drawings, and excerpts from interviews/discussions were coded, with a codebook guiding the overall data analysis. Inspired by Rentzou (2023), a participatory consent form was developed to address ethical concerns regarding children's right to freely express their views (UNCRC, 1989, Article 12). The form presents the four elements of the MA and allows children to choose how they wish to participate. As previously identified by Harcourt and Mazzoni (2012) teacher quality is linked to respectful relationships. Similarly, this research shows that children value kind teachers who do not scold and who are caring. These insights can inform everyday teaching practices. Discussions with educators and comparisons with university programs will be undertaken to promote meaningful changes.

Mosaic approach, Reggio Emilia approach, preschool, good teacher, documentation

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Adapting the Mosaic Approach in Early Childhood Education: Pedagogical Practices Across Diverse Cultural Contexts

Presenters
Jie Gao, IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society, United Kingdom
Minyi Li, Beijing Normal University, China

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This paper discusses the opportunities and challenges of adapting the Mosaic Approach to 'listen to' (Clark and Moss, 2011) young children's voices within different cultural contexts. The discussion builds on empirical studies that implemented the Mosaic Approach with young children in diverse educational settings (Rogers and Boyd, 2020).

Findings are discussed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1992) and sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) to understand how children, ECE practitioners and researchers construct and negotiate meanings during the research process, which was designed to be participatory, reciprocal, dialogic, transformative and sensitive to children's agency as well as the contexts of the settings. Taking the social constructivist and interactionist perspectives, we analysed four ECE practitioners' reflective journals, a two-hour reflective session recording and around 40 children's multimodal creations across two different settings to explore how the Mosaic Approach empower children and ECE practitioners within diverse cultural contexts. Confidentiality and anonymity were safeguarded. Power dynamics were carefully negotiated to promote inclusivity and equity. Children's ongoing assents were assured through continuous checking-in by practitioners. Our findings suggest that the Mosaic Approach can serve as an inclusive methodology that empowers children and practitioners in diverse cultural settings. However, it is important to recognise the cultural and socio-political contexts within which research is taking place, with consideration given to potential ideological tensions, methodological complexities, and ethical considerations for adapting the Mosaic Approach. This study contributes to the ongoing development and application of the Mosaic Approach as an inclusive pedagogical method across diverse cultural contexts.

Mosaic approach, Children's Voice, Cross-cultural Study, Inclusive Pedagogy, Sociocultural contexts

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set A15 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G243, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

SUPPORTING CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

Chaired by Helen Awhinawhi, The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Ireland, Ireland

Summer Programmes for Mitigating Educational Slide Among Immigrant Children in Ireland

Presenters
Helen Awhinawhi, The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Ireland, Ireland

All authors
Helen Awhinawhi, The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Ireland, Ireland

To examine whether a specially designed summer programme in the Irish Midlands, incorporating targeted literacy and numeracy instruction alongside cultural inclusion activities, can mitigate educational slide among immigrant children and enhance social integration. Summer learning loss is known to disproportionately affect children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Cooper et al., 1996). Immigrant learners face additional barriers related to language proficiency and exposure to local curricula (McBrien, 2005; Devine, 2011). Evidence shows that culturally responsive and inclusive practices can significantly improve language development and overall school readiness (Kim and Quinn, 2013). Drawing on sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), the programme emphasised collaborative learning environments and the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). A mixed-methods approach gathered quantitative literacy and numeracy data from 30 immigrant primary school students (selected by language proficiency and socioeconomic status), while semi-structured interviews offered nuanced insights on language use, cultural inclusion, and learning experiences. Ethical approval was obtained through the lead organisation's review board, following international guidelines (e.g., the Declaration of Helsinki) (Carlson et al., 2004). Preliminary analyses reveal significant improvements in reading fluency, numeracy skills, and peer engagement among participants. These findings suggest that well-structured summer interventions can effectively mitigate academic regression and foster greater social integration. Scaling such programmes across diverse regions could help narrow achievement gaps for Ireland's immigrant student population, inform future education policy, and guide broader

interventions aimed at supporting immigrant learners. This research aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations, 2015).

immigrant children, educational slide, summer learning loss, cultural integration, academic intervention

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Quality Transaction: Challenges and Changing Process of Immigrant Mothers in Raising Children with Developmental Delays

Presenters
Chin-hsieh Lu, National Taipei University of Education, Taiwan

All authors
Chin-hsieh Lu, National Taipei University of Education, Taiwan
Kim Cuong Tran Ngoc, National Taipei University of Education, Taiwan

This study investigated the challenges and changing processes of immigrant mothers in raising children with developmental delays in Taiwan and examined the family-based supporting strategies from the transactional model of development. It was found that bridging mothers' cultural and linguistic gaps improved their transactions with children and fostered the development of their children with developmental delays (Kersh et al., 2006; Mas et al., 2019; Rickards et al., 2009) The form and function of transactional process in parent-child dyads are vary dramatically with family context and culture (Bornstein, 2009; Sameroff, 2009). This was a one-year family- based action research. Two immigrant Vietnamese mothers and their families were invited to participated in this study. There were three phases of this action research: family needs assessing, supporting service tailoring, and strategies modifying based on family feedbacks. The data were collected from semi-structured individual interviews, observation records, family needs and child development assessing scale and related documents and were analyzed qualitatively. The participants were fully informed. The interpretations of the results were examined and revised based on participants' feedbacks. Findings indicate that the immigrant mothers have limited awareness of developmental delays, faces language barriers in communicating with early intervention professionals, and relied on traditional remedies due to cultural influences. By offering the family-based supports, the mothers' parenting strategies and the patterns and quality of mother-child transactions were significantly shift from a helpless care-giver to a strategic teacher. Suggestions regarding to culture responsive family-based intervention for immigrant mothers will be provided for educators and policy makers.

immigrant mother, developmental delays, family-based intervention, action research, culture responsive

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN ECE CONTEXTS: A SCOPING REVIEW

Presenters
Imran Caglayan, Department of Early Childhood Education, Bursa Uludag University, Bursa, Türkiye

All authors
Imran Caglayan, Department of Early Childhood Education, Bursa Uludag University, Bursa, Türkiye

This study aims to enhance understanding of practices supporting the inclusion of immigrant children in early childhood education classrooms and the barriers to their effective implementation by reviewing existing literature. Previous research emphasizes the critical role of inclusive education in fostering academic and social success for

immigrant children (Garvis and Luukkainen, 2023; Rad et al., 2022). However, a gap persists in understanding the practical application of these strategies in ECE for immigrant children, as no research has systematically mapped how inclusive pedagogies are conceptualized and implemented in this context. Theoretical frameworks include culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002) and critical social theory (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), which explore how cultural, linguistic, and behavioral differences shape education, addressing inequalities in teaching practices. This study is grounded in a constructivist paradigm and employs a scoping review methodology (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). Searches were conducted in ERIC, SCOPUS, and Google Scholar using key terms such as "inclusive education AND immigrant children"and "culturally diverse classroom AND early childhood."Studies published between 2015 and 2025 were included. Twenty-three studies met the criteria and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The reviewed studies adhere to the EECERA ethical code (Bertram et al., 2016). Findings reveal that effective inclusive practices are characterized by differentiated instruction, teacher, family and community engagement, and collaborative peer learning, while barriers include inadequate teacher training, institutional constraints, language challenges, cultural biases, and resource limitations. This study highlights the need for increased teacher training on inclusive practices and culturally responsive teaching in ECE settings.

inclusive education, early childhood education, immigrant children, refugee children, diverse classrooms

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A16 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G244, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING SIG 1: NAVIGATING OUTDOOR PEDAGOGIES: TEACHER PRACTICES, INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES, AND EVOLVING CONTEXTS

Chaired by Mehmet Mart, Necmettin Erbakan University, Türkiye

Beyond the Classroom: Preschool Teachers' Perspectives on Outdoor Activities

Presenters
Mehmet Mart, Necmettin Erbakan University, Türkiye

All authors
Mehmet Mart, Necmettin Erbakan University, Türkiye

This research aims to evaluate the outdoor practices of preschool teachers. There are featuring importance of outdoor activities, and there some recent research, which bases this research in terms of the need of MoNE (2024) on the use of outdoor activities as well as need for further practice of preschool teachers (Mart, 2025; Sevimli-Celik and Canaslan-Akyar, 2023). Outdoor learning plays a crucial role in early childhood education, extending beyond traditional classroom settings to include diverse environments such as school gardens, parks, and natural spaces (Maynard and Waters, 2007).Outdoor environments provide rich sensory experiences that foster children's cognitive, social, and physical development (Bilton, 2010). Teachers' experiences in implementing outdoor activities are shaped by various factors, including institutional support, pedagogical beliefs, and environmental conditions (Waite, 2011).Additionally, experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) emphasizes the importance of active engagement, reinforcing the idea that outdoor learning enhances children's problem-solving skills and creativity. This qualitative study adopts a case study approach to explore preschool teachers' outdoor activity experiences. The sample consists of three preschool teachers selected through simple random sampling (Oppenheim, 1992). Data were collected via semi-structured interviews and teacher journals as well as shared daily plans. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis with NVivo software. The ethical approval from Necmettin Erbakan University were gathered.All participants were informed and gave consent at the beginning of research. The preliminary analysis underline the different use of outdoors across teachers although they are following same curriculum. This research reveals how to approach teachers in terms of supporting them for policy makers.

outdoor activities, teachers, experiences, preschool, practice

Outdoor Play and Learning SIG - "The best thing for children is to be in nature!" A nationwide survey of daycare managers in Germany

Presenters
Andy Schieler, University of Applied Sciences Koblenz (IBEB), Germany

All authors
Andy Schieler, University of Applied Sciences Koblenz (IBEB), Germany

Many children, especially from socio-economically disadvantaged families, lack access to nature (Bratman et al., 2019). Kitas have a great opportunity for inclusion by granting all children their unwritten right to nature. We thus focus on the status quo of outdoor pedagogy in Kitas. There is ample evidence of how beneficial outdoor experiences are for children's development (Raith and Lude 2015; Sella et al., 2023). However, there is hardly any data on the status quo of the outdoor pedagogy in Kitas. This study is based on the evolutionary Biophilia Theory (Wilson, 1984), the Stress Reduction Theory (Ulrich et al., 1991) and the Attention Restauration Theory (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989), suggesting a variety of potentials of nature for human kind. The study was conducted within a quantitative research paradigm (Little, 2013). Questionnaires were filled out online by 2.659 daycare managers in German Kitas. The analyses consisted of descriptive and inferential statistics. No personal data was collected, the answering was voluntary and participants could interrupt any time. Results show for example that 75% of respondents state that they do not visit a natural area on a daily basis, although 78% of respondents affirm that children prefer nature to daycare rooms. Most respondents need more staff (71%) or the will of the educators (54%) to take their children out into nature more often. The study contributes to increasing the focus on the potentials and needs of outdoor pedagogy in the social, political, scientific, and professional practice contexts – in the inclusive sense of all children.

early childhood education, outdoor pedagogy, inclusion, daycare managers, Kita

Preschool teachers' perceptions regarding the educational role of the preschool yard during the COVID-19 Crisis

Presenters
Michaella Kadury-Slezak, The Academic College Levinsky-Wingate, Israel

All authors
Michaella Kadury-Slezak, The Academic College Levinsky-Wingate, Israel
Dina Mizrachi, The Academic College Levinsky-Wingate, Israel
Clodie Tal, Hemdat Academy, The Academic College Levinsky-Wingate, Israel

The aim of this study is to examine preschool teachers' perceptions regarding the educational role of the preschool yard during the COVID-19 crisis. Preschool yards offer educational opportunities for children to play and learn, allowing them to develop awareness and knowledge about diverse scientific topics (Zamani, 2016). This study is based also on Bronfenbrenner's (1986) bioecological theory of development, stating that development of the child is a product of complex interactions between the children and their immediate environment. This is a qualitative interpretive study. Participants in the study are ten preschool teachers, working with children aged 3 to 6 years. Semi structured interviews were performed during March and April 2021. Participants rights were respected as they were informed of the goals of the study before giving consent to participate. Their identities remained confidential by using pseudonyms in reports of the findings. Preschool teachers perceive the preschool yard as a place that facilitates social interaction and their role in the yard as social mediators. They also, perceive the yard as a place that

enables learning. During Covid-19 crisis, preschool teachers perceived the yard as a safe place for children's play and other activities. Due to Covid-19, indoor activities were transferred to the yard and children and staff spent most of the day outdoors. Nevertheless, activities seemed to have been transferred outdoors without changing the nature of teaching-learning processes. We recommend to guide the preschool teachers how to take advantage of unplanned opportunities embedded in the outdoor activities in the preschool yard.

outdoor activities, yard, preschool teachers' perceptions, Covid-19 crisis, outdoor curriculum

Symposium Set A17 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G246, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

DEVELOPING INCLUSION AT LOCAL AND SYSTEM LEVEL

Chaired by Tabea Schlimbach, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Germany

Cross-sectoral collaboration for inclusive ECEC? Local strategies at the crossroads of Early Education and migration policies in Germany and Sweden

Presenters
Tabea Schlimbach, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Germany

All authors
Tabea Schlimbach, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Germany
Antonia Scholz, Deutsches Jugendinstitut/ German Youth Institute, Germany

We address cross-sectoral collaboration at the crossroads of early childhood education and care (ECEC) and integration policies in today‘s superdiverse societies, aiming to investigate how local steering strategies can help to foster equal participation of children from migrant families in ECEC. Migrant children remain underrepresented in ECEC (EACEA, 2025). Local governance has been shown to play a key role in promoting access (Repo et al., 2020). By comparing two immigrant societies, this study deepens our understanding of the potential of inclusive ECEC governance. We draw on policy-integration theory to underline the role of cross-sectoral collaboration of stakeholders from different policy fields (Tosun and Lang, 2017). We also refer to the concept of ‚competent ECEC systems‘ (Urban, 2015) which highlights the relevance of reciprocal relations between individual actors and institutions. Following an explorative approach, we conduct and compare case studies of four German and Swedish municipalities based on qualitative interviews (appr. 8 per municipality) with stakeholders from local ECEC and integration authorities. Participants have been provided with extensive information on the study, on data use and data protection in an informed constent. Results are fully anonymised. Preliminary findings suggest that while the two contries pursue similar aims regarding integration issues in ECEC, their strategies differ due to specific steering structures and sectoral logics. These divergences are deepened on local level in the face of unique constellations. The analysis looks into the nature of cross-sectoral cooperation in favour of competent systems that, in turn, can promote migrant children's participation in ECEC.

early childhood education, migration, cross-sectoral collaboration, governance, integrated policies

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Promoting social cohesion through diversity and inclusion in early childhood services

Presenters
Melissa Dierckx, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

All authors
Melissa Dierckx, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

This multiple case study examines the pivotal role of diversity in fostering social cohesion within early childhood services. Recently, early childhood services are coined as places to foster social cohesion (OECD, 2017). Despite the consensus about the expectations for early childhood services to foster social cohesion, insights into what social cohesion may mean in context of diversity is limited (Dierckx, Vandenbroeck and Devlieghere, 2022). Drawing on frameworks such as the Social Cohesion Radar (Dragolov et al., 2016), interculturalism (Loobuyck, 2012), and proportionate universalism (Marmot, 2010), the study explores how inclusive practices, and meaningful interactions can strengthen social cohesion. The study used a qualitative research approach, including semi-structured interviews (N=28) using the critical incident technique and (non-)participatory observations (N=40). A specific ethical protocol was applied and approved by the Ethical Commission of Psychology and Educational Sciences (reference: 2021/176 Melissa Dierckx). Participants all gave (verbal) informed consent and were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. The study advocates for proportionate universalism as a guiding framework to balance universal accessibility with tailored support, ensuring equity. By integrating MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) as a model for multi-layered support, practitioners can enhance culturally responsive practices and create spaces for dialogue and connection. By valuing diversity and fostering mutual respect and belonging, early childhood services can become drivers of inclusive and cohesive communities. These insights encourage reflection on how policies and practices, supported by MTSS strategies, can advance equity and inclusion within a broader societal commitment to diversity and social cohesion.

social cohesion, diversity, early childhood services, interculturalism, proportionate universalism

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Inclusion in Irish Early Education Settings - Insights from Education Inspection

Presenters
Maresa Duignan, Ministry of Education and Youth, Ireland
Sandra Hora, Early Years Inspector, Ireland
Joanne Roe, Ministry of Education and Youth, Ireland

All authors
Maresa Duignan, Ministry of Education and Youth, Ireland
Sandra Hora, Early Years Inspector, Ireland
Joanne Roe, Ministry of Education and Youth, Ireland

This paper provide insights into the range and nature of inclusive practice with children aged from 3-6 years in state funded early education settings including early learning and care (ELC) and primary schools. The research is part of a suite of research on inclusive education conducted by the Irish Education Inspectorate. The principles of Universal Design for Learning (Meyer et al., 2014). Universal Design for Learning: Theory and Practice. CAST Professional Publishing), provides the theoretical framework for the research. Textual analysis of a sample of Early Years Education Inspections conducted according to the Guide to Early Years Education Inspection 2025 provides data. The ethical conduct of this work was subject to review and informed by the Inspectorate Code of Practice. Data is aggregated and anonymized and illustrated through composite exemplars. The landscape of provision and practice in ECEC has transformed dramatically since 2010 with increased state investment including targeted subsidies and support for the development of inclusive early education. This research demonstrates that despite good engagement by educators and providers with a range of supports for inclusion, and very good enrolment of children at risk of educational disadvantage in ECEC, multi-layered challenges persist including, workforce development,

enhancing partnership with parents and providing cohesive transitional arrangements across ECEC and Primary school. The report concludes with a series of recommendations for improvement in practice that are aimed at optimizing the lived experiences of inclusive practice for children in ECEC. It also identifies national policy actions that will support this ambition.

inclusion, participation, evaluation, capacity, partnership

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A18 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G308, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

EXPLORING AI AND UNPLUGGED DIGITAL TOYS IN ECEC (PAIR)

Chaired by Gabriel Kappeler, University of Teacher Education Vaud (HEP Vaud), Lausanne, Switzerland

AI and Apps in Early Childhood. The role of the family

Presenters
Paola Zoroaster, University of Padova, Italy

All authors
Paola Zoroaster, University of Padova, Italy
Juliana Elisa Raffaghelli, University of Padova, Italy

This research is part of a project that aims to map datafication and platformization in the early years of life. Analyzing the educational quality and privacy protection of apps for children was considered fundamental for the project. Children are constantly exposed to technology, especially when using digital applications (Rocha and Nunes, 2020). Some scholars have focused on the problem of data extraction and monetization, with the pervasive use of applications even in the domestic sphere (Barassi, 2020; Pangrazio and Mavoa, 2023). According to several studies, parents' digital exposure and decisions on children's digital footprint are crucial (Jibb et al., 2022; Pimienta et al., 2023; Raffaghelli, 2022). The research follows a postpositivist approach (Petter and Gallivan, 2004), which is useful for understanding phenomena through data collection, categorization, and analysis. Data were collected on 30 apps, and the applications were evaluated according to different categories using a systematic database. Data analysis was based on quantitative processing through descriptive and inferential statistics. Empirical validation was carried out using inter-rater agreement, and a reliability analysis was introduced in the results. The results highlighted some critical issues regarding the use of technological consumption within families and a disparity between the evaluations of the apps carried out by the general population and those carried out by expert educators. The research highlights the need for parents to be more vigilant when choosing apps for their children, considering learning value, clarity of information, security and ethical use of data.

apps, early childhood, education, data privacy, quality

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Analyzing Convergent Play with Unplugged Digital Tools in Early Childhood Education: Developing and Validating a Taxonomy

Presenters
Gabriel Kappeler, University of Teacher Education Vaud (HEP Vaud), Lausanne, Switzerland

All authors
Gabriel Kappeler, University of Teacher Education Vaud (HEP Vaud), Lausanne, Switzerland
Jérémie Passeraub, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

This study develops and validates a taxonomy for analyzing convergent play with unplugged digital tools in early childhood education (ages 4-8 in Switzerland). It examines how children engage with these tools in pretend play, fostering digital literacy through play. Prior studies (Edwards et al., 2020; Vogt and Hollenstein, 2021) examined how digital transformation influences early childhood play. Building on Hutt et al.'s (1989) work on play phases, this research refines a framework to understand how children integrate unplugged digital tools into play. The study is based on convergent play (Edwards et al., 2020), which examines interactions between traditional and digital materials. The taxonomy builds on Hutt et al.'s (1989) play behavior categories, extending them to problem-solving, knowledge acquisition, and innovation. Using a qualitative approach, video data were collected from six Swiss early childhood classrooms (May 2022–April 2023). Twenty-two play scenarios (M=54 min) were analyzed using a coding framework based on Hutt et al.'s taxonomy. Intercoder reliability was measured with Cohen's Kappa. Ethical approval was obtained per university and education department standards. Informed consent from educators and parents ensured confidentiality, data protection, and adherence to ethical codes. The validated taxonomy provides insight into children's evolving use of unplugged digital tools in play, highlighting key learning moments. These tools foster engagement, problem-solving, and early digital literacy. This taxonomy helps understand how children integrate unplugged digital tools into play-based learning. While initially exploring these tools, they quickly adopt them in pretend play, acting as if they already know how to use them.

pretend play, unplugged digital, convergent play, exploration, digital education.

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set A19 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G309, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR AND TEACHER EMPATHY (PAIR)

Chaired by Diarmuid Creedon, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Ireland

Primary Teachers' Exposure to Physical Aggression: Report of a Survey of INTO members

Presenters
Diarmuid Creedon, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Ireland
Máirín Ní Chéileachair, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Ireland

All authors
Diarmuid Creedon, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Ireland
Máirín Ní Chéileachair, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Ireland

This study examined primary teachers' experiences of physical aggression, its prevalence, impacts, and support gaps, and recommends policy changes. The report aligns with McMahon et al. (2014) extending the discourse on teacher-directed aggression by focusing on the Irish primary school context, including early primary teachers working with children aged 4–6. Teachers operate at the centre of systems that extend beyond delivering educational outcomes to include supporting the social, emotional, and behavioral development of pupils (McMahon et al., 2014). Schools, as mirrors of society, reflect the challenges of pupils behavioral dysregulation and unmet therapeutic needs. This report highlights the gap between policy and practice, showing that teachers are often left without the training, or supports to manage aggression in schools. This lack of support undermines inclusive education, as evidenced by the experiences shared in the report. The study used a mixed-methods approach with concurrent triangulation.

Quantitative data from a structured survey of 3,000 INTO members, including early years teachers, identified patterns of physical aggression. Qualitative insights from open-ended responses were analysed using grounded theory principles. This provided an understanding of teachers' experiences and informed recommendations to enhance systemic supports. Informed consent was gained from all participants. The study revealed physical aggression against primary school teachers in Ireland is alarmingly prevalent, particularly in special schools and schools with special classes. Education authorities must provide training and supports to address teacher safety and behaviour management, ensuring inclusive education for all pupils and teachers.

reform, inclusive education, support, teachers, behaviour

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Striking the right balance of cognitive and affective empathy in gen Z early childhood teachers

Presenters
Charyna Ayu Rizkyanti, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia

All authors
Charyna Ayu Rizkyanti, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia
Syifa Mufiedatussalam, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia

This study examines the levels of affective and cognitive empathy among Gen Z early childhood (EC) teachers in Indonesia. Research indicates that two dimensions of empathy play distinct yet complementary roles in educational settings. While cognitive empathy enables teachers to recognize and interpret students' emotions through cues like facial expressions, affective empathy drives them to respond with compassion, offering comfort and support (Batson, 2009; Weisz et al., 2020; Aldrup et al., 2022). Although this is a preliminary study, it provides empirical evidence of how empathy dimensions develop, further, the impact of its unbalanced, as the discussion of Gen Z in Indonesia is getting intense. This study is utilized Martin Hoffman's empathy theory (1980), which conceptualizes empathy as multidimensional, and Nel Noddings' care theory (1995), which emphasizes the role of empathy in fostering nurturing relationships in education. Employing a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2015), the Basic Teacher Empathy Scale (Rizkyanti et al., 2022) were distributed and involved 131 Gen Z EC teachers (aged 18–25). Descriptive statistics and t-tests were conducted to analyze the data. A consent form and information sheet were provided to all participants, including to use Pseudonyms. The opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time is allowed. Findings revealed that cognitive empathy levels were higher than affective empathy, with work experience showing a significant positive correlation with cognitive empathy in Gen Z teachers. These results highlight the need to develop programs that strengthen Gen Z affective empathy, ensuring a balanced approach that fosters a more holistic and supportive learning environment.

empathy, affective, cognitive, gen Z teachers, early childhood

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set A20 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G315, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES FOR SUPPORTING POWER SENSITIVE RESEARCH

Chaired by Sharon Colilles, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

Developing a power-sensitive intersectional lens to examine the complex post migration lived experiences of refugee children in ECEC.

Presenters
Donna Gaywood, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

All authors
Donna Gaywood, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

This presentation shares the complex intersectional theoretical lens which was developed through a small-scale doctoral study as a powerful tool to interrogate both the seen and unseen aspects of refugee children experiences in ECEC This work is directly related to Gaywood et al. (2020) ethical approach and the Pedagogy of Welcome (Gaywood et al., 2024). Freire's (1970) emancipatory pedagogy provided the conceptualisation of power, whilst the children were presented as 'persons of self-rescue' (Kyriakides et al., 2018) The theoretical lens uses Said's (1978) work on Orientalism, Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory and Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory to create the intersectional theoretical frame. Personalised stories were created using drawing interviews with the children and their parents. Semi-structured interviews with key people and Tobin's (2016) polyvocal approach was used to gather data. A participatory approach was utilised An extended member checking model was developed to ensure rigour, accurate representation and trustworthiness. This included checking findings with the children, their mothers, academics who self-identified as 'Outsiders,' experienced practitioners and an adult with lived- experience as a child refugee Using three theories to create an intersectional lens provided a robust, power sensitive lens to examine the lived experiences of refugee children. The intersectional aspect enabled invisible aspects of the children's lives to be seen, and the complexities examined more rigorously This theoretical approach offers other researchers a unique way to frame further research and takes into account the ethical, power sensitive and complex aspects of researching with refugee children.

intersectional theoretical lens, refugee children's lives, power sensitive research, ECEC, forced migration

A theoretic model of ethnic identity formation to demonstrate the interplay between mediation, participation and identity formation.

Presenters
Sharon Colilles, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

All authors
Sharon Colilles, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

This presentation shares a theoretic model which was developed in a small scale-doctoral study as a powerful lens for examining complexities in participation, interaction, and children's verbal and nonverbal modes of communication in ECEC. This work directly relates to Freire's (1970) association with empowerment, development of self-efficacy in naming one's worlds, and dynamics between power and agency, and its influence on practitioners' dispositions in shaping learner identity (Foucault, 1991). The theoretic lens uses Rodriguez et al.'s (2002) model of identity formation, Tajfel's (1979) emphasis on group membership in social identity theory, and Butler and Markman's (2016) play pedagogy theorisation to extend ideas associated with socialisation and the development of an ethnic identity. Socio dramatic play episodes were used as a culturally responsive participatory method between children and practitioners for interpretation (Pascal and Bertram, 2009) of children's shared 'funds of knowledge' (Barron, 2014). Schedules and participant journaling supported rigour and trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). Member checking ensured a sense of relevancy and transparency (Ortlip, 2008) regarding what was going on in the research process. Insider outsider contentions relating to positionality are key considerations in research (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Three theories are used to extend ideas associated with socialisation and development of an ethnic identity, evidenced are intersectional contexts within the child's situated environment that serve to influence conceptions of self. Practitioner cultural knowledge, power and voice are key for researching raced identity as children's desire to interact can be swayed by dominant norms created in community groups.

theoretical model, ethnic identity development, power in pedagogic actions, participation, ECEC

Using Diffractive Analysis to disentangle the sensitivities of newly arrived children's play heterotopias in supporting connectedness.

Presenters
Alison Tobin, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

All authors
Alison Tobin, Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

This presentation details how a Diffractive Analysis Framework (Tobin, 2024) values the entanglements and sensitivities of newly arrived children's play heterotopias in affording connectedness. This research draws upon the work of Haraway (1992, 1997) and Barad (2007), alongside making meaning of migratory experiences through play (Kirova, 2010). The theoretical framework reflects social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and a Foucauldian lens of heterotopian spaces (Foucault, 1966), knowledge and power (Foucault, 1977). The methodology is qualitative and interpretivist and uses a multiple case study analysis (Yin, 2018). The data is collected through observations and semi structured interviews. Ethical understanding and consideration are given to protect participants in relation to advocacy, wellbeing, vulnerability and power relations, using the EECERA ethical code (Bertram et al., 2024). Diffractive Analysis enhances the ethicality of the study as it demands sensitivity to the meaning of the data and makes personal ethical values visible throughout the research. The use of Diffractive Analysis illuminates the sensitivities and nuances of the data and has provided meaning to the construct and importance of a play heterotopia for the connectedness of newly arrived children. It educes not only what the participants DO but also HOW and WHY they do what they do. Diffractive Analysis provides a unique methodological research innovation that has the potential to inform practice. If applied in early years settings, alongside the conventional means of reflective practice, it could provide another dimension to child observations and further teacher Continual Professional Development to support quality, inclusive early education and learning.

early years education, play heterotopia, inclusion, newly arrived children, diffractive analysis

Symposium Set A21 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G319, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) ENHANCING ECEC ACCESSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FROM SOCIETALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUND

Chaired by Arianna Lazzari, University of Bologna, Italy

EU and national policy landscape

Presenters
Arianna Lazzari, University of Bologna, Italy

All authors
Arianna Lazzari, University of Bologna, Italy

In many EU countries, ECEC operates under a split system whereby 0-3 services are often conceptualized as "childcare" thus overlooking educational aspects, while 3-6 institutions are often labeled as "preschool" emphasizing school readiness at the expense of broader social functions and inclusion. Research shows that split systems are associated to increased inequalities in ECEC access especially for younger children and from families from societally

disadvantaged background (Eurydice, 2025). Italy's reform toward an integrated system 0-6 aims to mitigate socio-economic, cultural, and geographical disparities in access to high-quality ECEC, which were reinforced by the former split system. Aligning with EU Council's Recommendations for high-quality ECEC systems (2019) and Child Guarantee (2021), enhancing access to quality provision for societally disadvantaged children and families has emerged as a central objective of ongoing national reforms. Such reforms include various pilot programs aimed at reaching out to vulnerable families and tailoring ECEC to local community needs (Dierckx et al., 2024). This presentation will focus on participatory action-research (PAC) carried out in multifunctional early childhood centers coordinated by Save the Children in Italy. Coherently with PAC approach, practitioners, parents and children were not involved as "research subjects" but as co-researchers and experts on their own lives. Research findings delve into key success factors and obstacles experienced by participants in enhancing parent's participation and local capacity building by co-designing innovative pedagogical practice. Empowering families to express their perspectives is essential for addressing diversity, informing inclusive programs and enhancing professionals' engagement in policy advocacy and decision-making processes.

participatory action research, accessibility, multifunctional centres, outreaching vulnerable families, social inclusion

Participatory action-research pathways sustaining practitioners' professional development within Save the Children's multifuctional centres.

Presenters
Lucia Balduzzi, Department of Education Studies, Bologna University, Italy

All authors
Lucia Balduzzi, Department of Education Studies, Bologna University, Italy

The presentation focuses on participatory action-research (PAC) pathways carried out within the project "Il buon inizio", coordinated by Save the Children Italy, establishing integrated and multi-functional early childhood centres in areas densely populated by low-income and marginalised families. The early years set the foundations for children's development and learning trajectories in life and early inequalities can put children on divergent paths (OECD, 2025). High quality, accessible and inclusive ECEC provision can create more equitable educational opportunities, thus contributing to reduce inequalities (Lazzari and Vandenbroeck, 2014). Aligning with EU Council's Recommendations for high-quality ECEC systems (2019) and Child Guarantee (2021), enhancing access to quality provision for societally disadvantaged children and families has emerged as a central objective of pilot programs aimed to reach out to vulnerable families by tailoring ECEC to local community needs (Dierckx et al., 2024). A PAC approach including focus groups, reciprocal observations and collective reflection was adopted for promoting the continuing professional development of practitioners working in multifunctional centers coordinated by Save the Children in Italy. Practitioners were engaged as co-researchers in data collection and analysis processes leading to the co-design and implementation of innovative pedagogical practices. Research findings will illustrate the experimental initiatives piloted by early childhood educators and preschool teachers to enhance parent's participation with a focus on reaching out to societally disadvantaged families. The participatory evaluation of strength and weaknesses of such experimental initiatives shed light on systemic factors enabling – or rather hindering – their long-term impact in reducing inequalities in access to high quality ECEC.

PAC, CPD, outreaching vulnerable families, social inclusion

Participatory action-research pathways sustaining practitioners' professional development within Centres for Children and Families in Modena Municipality.

Presenters
Emanuela Pettinari, Department of Education Studies, Bologna University, Italy

All authors
Emanuela Pettinari, Department of Education Studies, Bologna University, Italy

The presentation focuses on a participatory action-research (PAC) pathway carried out in Centers for Children and Families (CCFs), which are flexible ECEC services complementing childcare and preschool provision for children aged 0-6 (Hoshi-Watanabe et al., 2015). In the context of the recent reform on the 0-6 integrated ECEC system in Italy, CCFs were given a prominent position as flexible services integrating care, education and parental support (Bove, 2015; DiGiandomenico, 2015). This research focuses on Municipal (CCFs) in the City of Modena, which is currently reassessing ECEC services in response to new regulatory framework and social changes. A key concern is how to better engage the most vulnerable families who could benefit from these services (EU Council Recommendations 2019; 2021). A PAC approach including focus groups, reciprocal observations and collective reflection was adopted for promoting the continuing professional development of practitioners working in municipal CCF in Modena. Educators were engaged as co-researchers in data collection and analysis processes leading to the co-design and implementation of innovative pedagogical practices for reaching out to societally disadvantaged families, currently under-represented in Modena municipal CCFs. Research findings will illustrate the experimental initiatives piloted by CCFs' educators to enhance parent's participation, with a focus on families at risk of social exclusion. Research has also shown that it is important to give families agency and the opportunity to express themselves in order to understand how to respond to their diverse needs in a proactive way.

participatory action research, continuing professional development, centres for children and families, outreaching vulnerable families, social inclusion

Symposium Set A22 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G320, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) THE CRITICAL ROLE OF ADULTS IN OBSERVING, ENCOURAGING, AND SUPPORTING A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT. HOW CAN PLAY ACTIVITY HELP?

Chaired by Milda Bredikyte, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

When do children begin to play?

Presenters
Milda Bredikyte, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

All authors
Milda Bredikyte, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

This paper aims to analyse the first steps into the play of a young toddler in a home setting. There is a renewed interest in play in contemporary society and a growing body of research highlighting its ability to facilitate learning experiences for young children. Play is essential to a child's wellbeing and promotes the development of social, physical, and executive functions (Colliver et al., 2022; White et al., 2021; Yogman et al., 2018; Santer and Griffiths, 2007; Singer et al., 2006). According to the cultural-historical school of thought, proper play begins around the age of three. The period before this is called preparatory play, which is often underestimated. To paraphrase Vygotsky (1987), for a professional teacher, it is essential to observe a child's play as it begins to take shape and use appropriate strategies to support it. The research used a qualitative case study design. This study will analyse the first steps of the preparatory play. Video observations from the child's home environment are analyzed. This study was conducted according to the guidelines of the EECERA Ethical Code (2024). Parents provided informed consent for their child, and approved the publication of the results. Analysis of the video footage reveals the independent actions of a 10- to 16-month-old child, who demonstrates a deliberate effort to replicate adult activities and name

them with one-syllable words. The adult's role is to notice the first trials and support them without taking over the child's initiative or imposing their own planned activities.

cultural-historical theory of play, toddler, preparatory play, child's initiative, pedagogical sensitivity

Moving Beyond Egocentricity: A Pretend Play-Based Intervention for Toddlers

Presenters
Giedre Sujetaite Volungeviciene, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

All authors
Giedre Sujetaite Volungeviciene, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

Study aimed to analyze how pretend play interventions help children aged 1 to 3 engage in social behaviors and transition from egocentric actions during play. The role of pretend play in social-emotional development remains a topic of debate (Lillard et al., 2013). Recent studies on Playworld and the development of self-regulation have been integrated to enhance the professionalism of ECE pedagogues (Hakkarainen et al., 2015; Colliver and Veraksa, 2021). For pretend play to effectively foster social skills, children have to share a co-constructed interactional framework (Björk-Willen, 2022). To clear the pedagogical strategies that help toddlers learn prosocial skills, the cultural-historical theoretical background is selected. This research involved a qualitative case study design. Over three months, various Playworld sessions were conducted with a kindergarten group of toddlers. A microanalysis of ethnographic digital visual data captured changes in both adult and child behavior. Adult participants provided informed consent in accordance with university ethical processes; children could withdraw at any time and were aware of the camera recordings. The main findings emphasize an active adult participation in pretend play and the modeling of dramatic relationships among the characters involved. It is essential to employ playful strategies that evoke emotional regulation waves, model social flexibility versus egocentricity and promote positive solutions in real-world contexts. The case study demonstrated that a Playworld for toddlers can serve as a space for co-constructing prosocial interactions. An ECE framework that combines emotional storytelling, dramatic pretend play characters and prosocial conflict resolutions for everyday situations can be highly beneficial.

egocentricity, social behavior in toddlers, pretend play, playworlds, emotional regulation

The link between the quality of teachers' relationships and toddlers' executive functions

Presenters
Agne Brandisauskiene, Education Research Institute, Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

All authors
Agne Brandisauskiene, Education Research Institute, Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Ausra Daugirdiene, Education Research Institute, Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Jurate Cesnaviciene, Teacher Training Institute, Education Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

This study aims to clarify, what are the links between teacher relationships and toddlers' executive functions. There is a clear link between cognitive and social and emotional development in young children (Cattan et al., 2022). A child's self-regulation starts to develop from infancy and is more or less established by the age of 4-5 years. It develops from gradual, sensitive external support towards internal control (Jusienė, 2014). The study is based on a cultural-historical theory approach, which emphasises the role of social relationships and the environment in child development. A child's interaction with the environment is the source of their development, which contributes to the formation of higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1994; 1996). This study was based on a quantitative research methodology and used the following instruments: STRS and CHEXI. 4 ECEC teachers (women) described the quality

of their relationships with 64 toddlers (26 girls and 38 boys) and assessed their executive functions. This study was conducted according to the guidelines of the EECERA Ethical Code (2024) and approved (protocol number: SA-EK-25-57). All written consents were obtained from teachers and parents. The results confirmed the links between the quality of teachers' relationships and children's executive functions. Teachers develop emotionally closer relationships with children who have higher levels of working memory and better impulse control. Teachers tended to have more contentious interactions with boys compared to girls, and this difference was statistically significant. The findings support the theoretical assumption of a connection between a child's immediate environment and the development of higher mental functions.

teacher, relationship, toddlers, executive functions

Symposium Set A23 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G329, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN EARLY YEARS: PERSPECTIVES FROM AUSTRIA

Chaired by Simone Breit, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Austria

New to Inclusive Education – Competent in Inclusive Education? Subjective Perceptions of Graduates of a Continuing Education Program

Presenters
Simone Breit, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Austria

All authors
Simone Breit, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Austria
Barbara Riegler, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Austria

This study examines how novice Inclusive Early Childhood Educators (IECE) experience their transition into professional practice. It explores how they assess their ability to apply competencies acquired during their studies to meet the demands of inclusive education. Previous research highlights the importance of professionalization in inclusive education (Egert, 2015; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017; UNESCO, 2021). Initial research findings suggest that the university program adequately prepares graduates for their roles and that by the end of program, they feel competent at different levels of action (Breit and Hofer-Rybar, 2025). The study is based on Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al.'s (2014) competence model, which encompasses knowledge, skills, and attitudes across four levels of action: child/group, parents, team/institution and cooperation partners. This qualitative research project, embedded in an interpretative paradigm, involved interviewing seven IECE five months after they assumed their roles. Semi-structured interviews (Helfferich, 2022) were conducted, focusing on the transfer of university education into practice. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2022). Participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study after being informed about its purpose. They consented to data storage and processing in compliance with ethical guidelines. Findings indicate that the program equips IECE with essential resources for inclusive pedagogical practice, particularly in relation to the four action levels. However, some gaps in knowledge and skills persist, especially in working with children and establishing effective cooperation. Recommendations are derived to enhance the professionalization process and better prepare IECE for the challenges of inclusive education.

inclusive early childhood education, professionalization, teacher education, university programme, competence development

Exploring the Phenomenology of Care in Educational Contexts: Conceptual and Ethical Dimensions

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

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

The study investigates the phenomenology of care in educational contexts. Its primary aim is to precisely define and examine key concepts such as inclusion, integration, segregation, and exclusion through a phenomenological approach, and to systematically assess their impact on educational processes and ethical practices. Building on contemporary educational ethics (Noddings; Wiesner, 2025) and philosophical approaches (Husserl, Heidegger, Kant), this work extends existing research discourses, also through the development of judgment capacities. Previous studies (Wiesner and Breit, 2024) on inclusive education and moral action theory form the theoretical foundation. The conceptual framework is based on structural phenomenology and a detailed analysis of word and concept configurations through Wittgenstein's memorable images. In particular, the distinction between ἔθος and ἦθος is employed to illuminate the inner and outer dimensions of care as an ethical practice. The investigation integrates humanities paradigms with qualitative, phenomenological methods. It employs detailed descriptions, visually supported configurations of memorable imagery, and connections to attachment theory to establish a methodologically robust approach. Ethical considerations in this study focus on ensuring scholarly integrity and transparency in the analysis of existing literature. All sources are accurately cited, and the analysis adheres to established ethical guidelines, including EECERA Ethical Code. Findings indicate that a nuanced conceptualization of care substantially supports integrative educational processes. Clearly defined terms not only enhance inclusion and diversity but also reduce the risk of unreflective segregation and exclusion. The discussion emphasizes that ethically grounded conceptual clarity paves the way for an empathetic and just educational environment, offering critical impulses for future empirical research.

care, inclusion, integration, segregation, exclusion

Transitions and Pedagogical Care: Transition Conversations Between Early Childhood and Primary Education as a Contribution to a Caring Culture

Presenters
Kerstin Angelika Zechner, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Austria

All authors
Kerstin Angelika Zechner, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Austria

This study examines transition conversations between kindergarten and primary school in Lower Austria, focusing on pedagogical responsibility and care culture to support children's participation. This study builds on research on transition conversations, emphasizing pedagogical responsibility and care culture as key to inclusion. Grounded in inclusive education, diversity-sensitive pedagogy, and caring culture, transitions are seen as normative events (Beelmann, 2013), requiring attention. Following a constructivist paradigm, the study assumes knowledge is socially constructed. A qualitative design explored meanings and practices in transition conversations.
Expert interviews (Kaiser, 2021; Helfferich, 2022) were conducted with representatives from the Education Directorate of Lower Austria and Department of Kindergartens, selected via purposive sampling. Interviews were conducted digitally, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), identifying themes related to responsibility, care, and inclusion. The study follows the EECERA Ethical Code (Bertram et al., 2024). Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained. Participants could withdraw at any time. To ensure anonymity, identifying information was removed, pseudonyms were used and Data were stored securely, ensuring confidentiality. Transition conversations promote information exchange, decision-making, and planning among parents, kindergarten staff, and school staff. The study emphasizes

a resource-oriented view of the child, caring attitude, and interdisciplinary collaboration. However, resource constraints, political dependencies, and structural barriers hinder inclusion. These conversations foster a culture of care, though full inclusivity remains a work in progress. Institutionalizing transition conversations ensures inclusion. Structured collaboration, training, and policy support foster a caring culture.

transition conversations, pedagogical care, inclusive education, early childhood to primary education, caring culture

Symposium Set A24 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G362, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

PARTICIPATION, ROUTINES AND PARENTING THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CHILD (PAIR)

Chaired by Özlem Dönmez, Trakya University, Türkiye

Two Perspectives, One Journey: Parenting through the Eyes of Parents and Children

Presenters
Özlem Dönmez, Trakya University, Türkiye

All authors
Özlem Dönmez, Trakya University, Türkiye
Bahar Dağ, Trakya University, Türkiye

This study aims to examine the relationship between parental attitudes and child-family interactions. Studies generally focus on parent-child interactions from the eyes of parents however triangulation in the child-family interactions (Acar et al., 2021) and child's assessments are necessary to better understand this relationship (Hein et al., 2020). This study depends on Vygotsky's Socio-cultural, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems, and Bandura's Social Learning Theories. Mixed method is used in the study. The study group will consist of a total of 200 volunteer and easy-accessible participants, 100 children aged 36-72 months and 100 parents in Edirne, Türkiye. The data will be collected via "Demographic Information Form" and "Semi-structured Interview Form", "Parental Attitude Scale" (Karabulut et al., 2008) and "Child-Family Interaction Scale" (Dönmez and Ural, 2025). In the quantitative dimension, parental attitudes from the perspective of children and parents will be examined with the relational screening model, while the qualitative dimension will be tried to be explained in depth. After the normality test, the relationship between parental attitudes and child-family interactions will be examined with Pearson correlation coefficient. Intergroup comparisons for gender, education status, age will be analyzed with One-Way ANOVA and Independent Groups t-test. Qualitative data will be analyzed with descriptive and content analysis. Ethical committee, MoNE permission, parental and verbal child consents are taken. It is thought that the findings of the study will give an insight to make connections between parental attitudes and child-family interactions. The findings of the study will contribute to the relevant literature and parents to build stronger relationships with their children.

parenting, parental attitudes, child-family interactions, family education, preschool

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Children's Perspectives on Participation in Early Childhood Education: Limitations, Possibilities and the Freedom of Play

Presenters
Kristin Rostad Gangstad, Volda University College, Norway

All authors
Kristin Rostad Gangstad, Volda University College, Norway

This study aims to examine children's perspectives on participation in early childhood education. Research has shown a need for further exploration about children's participation in ECE settings (Correia et al., 2023; Ree, 2020). While teacher's perspectives have been emphasized, fewer studies have focused on children as informants (Correia et al., 2019) Children's participation lacks its own theoretical framework; spanning various disciplines and drawing from different theories and models (Correia et al., 2023). This study is grounded in theories of democracy and agency. The research is conducted within a qualitative and phenomenological paradigm. Ten children (ages 5-6) in a multicultural ECE context were interviewed using a loosely structured interview guide. Consent was obtained from guardians through an information and consent form, and children were verbally informed and asked if they wished to participate. They could withdraw from the study at any time, and attention was paid to the children's cues during the interviews. Audio recordings were securely stored in a password-protected database, and informants were assigned fictitious names in the transcriptions. Preliminary findings indicate that the children experience opportunities to participate in some structured activities but mostly operate within staff-established guidelines and boundaries. One arena emerges as less affected by staff regulations: free play. This study underscores the significance of valuing children's perspectives in both research and pedagogical work in ECE, and encourages discussion on how educators can make children's opportunities for participation more explicit while also protecting play.

children's participation, children's perspectives, democracy, agency, play

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set A25 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 13:30 – 14:50 | Room G366, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

ISSUES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH

Chaired by Viktor Johansson, Nord University, Norway

Differentiating factors of health-supporting habits in preschool children

Presenters
Judit Finánc, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA-MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
Melinda Csima, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA-MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
Ágnes Tóth-Szerecz, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Siences; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
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The aim of our study was to explore the health-supporting habits among preschool children and identify their differentiating factors. Previous studies have shown that the development of health-related habits in early childhood is of paramount importance for later health outcomes (Bánfai-Csonka et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2024).
The behavioural patterns, routines, and regulations imparted and enforced by surrounding adults serve as fundamental determinants in shaping these habits (Csima et al., 2018). During habit formation, appropriate support is important, which helps maintain motivation (Gardner and Rebar, 2019). Our quantitative, cross-sectional study explored the health-related habits of 3-6 year-old children based on parental responses (n=598), using convenience sampling in Hungary. In addition to sociodemographic characteristics, we examined children's habit system using a self-designed, 30-item questionnaire. The research was carried out in alignment with the EECERA Ethical Code for Early Childhood Researchers (Bertram et al., 2024). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their anonymity was ensured. Our results show that routine actions are better integrated into older children's habit systems, most notably in the area of eating-related independence ($p<0.05$). Regarding gender differences, girls have a more developed habit system in several areas, especially in hygiene ($p<0.05$). Children of more educated parents outperform their peers, mainly in habits that require a higher degree of cooperation and awareness ($p<0.05$). Our findings confirm that by the time children enter kindergarten, certain fundamental hygiene habits have already been established, while habits that require more practice take longer to develop.

health-supporting habits, preschool children, habit formation, daily routine, parent

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

How an integrated Health Visiting review for three-year-olds and their caregivers can support all children to be "ready to learn"

Presenters
Victoria Morgan, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom

All authors
Victoria Morgan, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom
Melanie Farman, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom
Adrienne McKie, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom

The project aimed to evaluate an integrated visit for all three-year-olds in Blackpool (UK) exploring the contribution it makes to supporting school readiness. Building on research indicating the need for school readiness to be integrated into a broader early childhood system (Britto, 2012), supporting parents with holistic guidance to help children thrive at school, Blackpool Better Start Partnership introduced an additional "school readiness visit" for three-year-olds within Health Visiting Service enhancement. This research used an improvement science approach (Bartman et al., 2018) and considered Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), emphasising multiple layers of environment influencing child's development. The study followed a mix methods approach drawing on thematic framework analysis of feedback workshops with 13 health visitors, content and descriptive statistical analysis of online surveys completed by 13 parents, and descriptive analysis of service monitoring data from 2018 to 2024. Participants were provided with information and consent procedures, including right to withdraw at any time. Service level data is aggregated and anonymised prior to analysis. Pseudonyms are used in dissemination of qualitative data responses. This evaluation demonstrates the utility and feasibility of an integrated visit for three-year-olds as a population-level intervention bringing together public health, caregivers and early educators

promoting school readiness. This research provides evidence for inclusion of an integrated visit focused on school readiness as part of health visiting practice.

school readiness, health visiting, integration, child development, shared understandings

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Integrated Care in Early Learning: Evaluation of a place-based Community Nurse Program

Presenters
Penny Levickis, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Lisa Murray, The University of Melbourne, Australia

All authors
Penny Levickis, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Lisa Murray, The University of Melbourne, Australia

To evaluate the implementation and impact of a place-based Community Nurse Program embedded within an early learning setting in a regional Australian community experiencing pervasive intergenerational disadvantage. Early learning settings offer unique opportunities to improve child developmental and health outcomes, particularly for developmentally vulnerable children, through cross-sector collaboration (Noble, 2020). While research shows benefits of integrating nurses in schools, similar studies in early learning settings are lacking, despite their potential developmental impacts (de Buhr, 2020). This study is underpinned by the 'networked' model of Ecological Systems Theory, recognising that a child's development is influenced by interconnected systems (Neal, 2013), and Developmental Cascades, whereby early experiences and interventions can have cumulative effects on later outcomes (Oakes, 2019). This mixed-methods case study, guided by the RE-AIM framework, evaluates the program's reach, effectiveness, impact, implementation factors, and sustainability. Currently, baseline data is being collected via participant surveys, child assessments, centre room observations, participant interviews, and administrative data. Informed consent is obtained from all adult participants and verbal assent from children during assessments. To maintain confidentiality and protect privacy, all data are de-identified during processing and analysis. This presentation will report preliminary descriptive results from baseline surveys and interviews, describing family and staff perceptions of the program, barriers and facilitators to early program implementation, and child referrals and attendance at referral services. Findings will provide evidence for the feasibility and impact of integrated early childhood workforces and inform future policy and practice to support children's health and development in the first five years of life.

place-based; disadvantage; early learning; health; community nurse

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B

15:40 – 17:00, Tuesday 26th August 2025

Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava

Symposium Set B1 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G103, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BIAS (PAIR)

Chaired by Çağla Banko Bal, Yeditepe University, Türkiye

A Fair Start: Exploring Parental Views on Anti-Bias Education

Presenters
Çağla Banko Bal, Yeditepe University, Türkiye

All authors
Çağla Banko Bal, Yeditepe University, Türkiye
İrem Altunok-Çal, Ministry of Education, Türkiye
Berrin Akman, Hacettepe University, Türkiye

This study examines parents' perceptions and behaviors regarding differences and anti-bias education. Research shows that children learn prejudice not from human diversity but from observing prejudiced behaviors (Derman-Sparks and Edwards, 2010). Since parents significantly influence their children's attitudes through their views about others (Aboud and Boyle, 1996), their own biases are closely linked to their children's biases (Subar and Rozenman, 2021). Anti-bias education plays a crucial role in fostering inclusive attitudes by creating a community that embraces differences in culture, race, language, ability, learning styles, ethnicity, family structure, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, and socioeconomic status (Derman-Sparks and Edwards, 2019). This research follows an interpretivist approach, employing a qualitative case study design. Convenience sampling was used to select 30 parents of children aged 36-72 months. Data were collected through interviews and analyzed using content analysis. Informed consent was obtained, and pseudonyms ensured participant anonymity. Findings indicate that parents define being unbiased as having no judgment and view anti-bias education as ensuring equal opportunities. They primarily perceive differences among children through developmental and cognitive factors, with some considering them positively and others as challenges. Parents address discrimination by fostering acceptance, communication, and empathy. While they acknowledge the importance of anti-bias education, their approaches to diversity and discrimination vary. Encouraging open discussions and inclusive practices can enhance parents' and children's understanding of diversity. Strengthening collaboration between families and schools will help create a more equitable and supportive environment for all children.

anti-bias education, parents, preschoolers, diversity, differences

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Situated inequality between children in ECEC everyday practices

Presenters
Emma Koitto, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

All authors
Emma Koitto, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Eija Salonen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Niina Rutanen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Mari Vuorisalo, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Eija Sevón, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

This study examines young children's situated inequality in early childhood education by exploring the tensions in participation observed in pedagogical activities. Children's right to express themselves and be heard is affirmed in the UNCRC (§12–13), forming the legal basis of the concept of participation. However, research shows that participation in ECEC remains unequal between the children despite legal and curricular frameworks and their binding nature (Correia et al., 2019; Kirby, 2020). This study examines the youngest children's participation through the lens of situated inequality (Højholt and Røn Larsen, 2021), highlighting how daily interactions are inherently conflictual as participants with diverse backgrounds negotiate goals and contradictions in specific situations (Højholt and Røn Larsen, 2021; Røn Larsen and Stanek, 2024). Politics of everyday life in ECEC emerge from tensions, shaping children's positions and participation opportunities differently across various situations. Ethnographic observational data (anonymized) from two groups of children under three was analyzed using reflective thematic analysis. The ethical focus of this study was to ensure the voluntary participation of children under three-year-olds by ethical listening like observing their nonverbal interaction, such as facial expressions and gestures, and responding to their initiatives towards researcher. Data collection was discontinued whenever signs of discomfort emerged, and their consent was renegotiated when the situation had changed. Preliminary findings indicate that adults shape children's positions, differentiating their opportunities to negotiate daily practices. The study informs how inequality is constructed inwithin the situational culture of ECEC and could be hampered by reconsidering the institutional practices and attitude towards the youngest.

situated inequality, equality, everyday practices, participation, young children

Symposium Set B2 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G104, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

INCREASING THE TEACHING OF SUSTAINABILITY IN EARLY YEARS PRACTICE (PAIR)

Chaired by Ursula Stenger, University of Cologne, Germany

How to teach inner transformations for more sustainability?

Presenters
Ursula Stenger, University of Cologne, Germany
Oktay Bilgi, Alanus University of Arts and Social Science, Germany
Miriam Eble, University of Cologne, Germany

All authors
Ursula Stenger, University of Cologne, Germany
Oktay Bilgi, Alanus University of Arts and Social Science, Germany
Miriam Eble, University of Cologne, Germany

This study explores how inner transformations—changes in attitudes and mindsets—can be conceptualized and taught to promote sustainability in early childhood education and care. While sustainability knowledge and practices are well-researched, knowledge-behavoior gap exists. The study investigates how to bridge this gap through sustainable education, e.g. through play- nature- and place- based education (Davis and Elliott 2024; Nxumalo, 2019) . Posthumanist studies (Malone et al., 2017) and marginalized indigenous knowledge (Tan, 2022), which deal with world relations and psychological insights into changing attitudes and mindsets (Ives, 2020), are integrated. The

research emphasises the role of storytelling, as developed by Haraway (2016), in connecting scientific facts, emotional concerns and ethical issues. Phenomenological (Stenger, 2025) and (post)-qualitative methods (Murris, 2021) were used to analyse the group discussions with students and teachers as well as the portfolios in order to carefully examine personal experiences and perspectives on change processes, conflicts and ethical dilemmas (Boström, 2018).. Ethical considerations focus on the power relations between teachers and students in group discussions. Open, even critical statements and constructive alternatives are addressed as contributions to a culture of collaborative research. Initial results show four relevant aspects for internal and external transformations: knowledge, practical experience, ethical reflection and emotional aspects. The study provides an overview and examples that show that storytelling in ESD encourages students to engage personally with environmental crises, develop a deeper connection to sustainability and identify with relevant values. Ultimately, the study contributes to developing educational frameworks that support individuals in making meaningful changes toward a more sustainable future.

inner transformation, sustainability, posthumanist research

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Empowering Global Educators: AI-Powered Sustainability Lesson Planning App to Bridge Gaps in Sustainability Literacy in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Ka Lee Carrie Ho, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

All authors
Ka Lee Carrie Ho, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

This research reports the internal testing results of an innovative Ai-powered Lesson Planning Generator, which was designed to addresses challenges such as unfamiliarity with certain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or a lack of pedagogical resources by providing a structured platform that simplifies lesson design and integrates sustainability concepts across diverse languages and educational contexts (Tilbury, 2011). Lasen et al. (2017) find teachers face curriculum constraints when conveying Sustainability Education as priorities go to literacy and numeracy. Alam (2025) encourages for integrating sustainability in education by aligning different educational factors with technological advancements. Utilising a combined framework of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987) and Transformative Sustainable Education (Sterling, 2001) enriches the analysis of the Ai-generated lesson plans by emphasising learning as a mediated process influenced by tools and social contexts. The case study involved 30 international in-service teachers in the one-month internal testing. They generated 51 lesson plans using sustainable resources and examples to convey pre-scheduled topics that are culturally and contextually relevant in local early year context. The University Research Ethics Panel approved the empirical research and participants consented through the app before generating the lesson plans. Content analysis findings provided 100% agreement on the usefulness and effectiveness of the app in reducing preparation time, learning new SDGs, and having specific and useful resources. Future iterations aim to reduce VPN processing time and expand the resources database to better meet educator needs. By focusing on the synergy between technology and pedagogy, this study contributes to advancing sustainability education globally.

sustainability literacy, early year education, generative-AI, educational app, lesson planning

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B3 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G113, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

LOVE AND CARE IN ECEC

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

Who cares? Resisting the 'othering' of young children's experiences, meanings, and understandings of care.

Presenters
Rebecca Cozens, University of Sunderland, United Kingdom

All authors
Rebecca Cozens, University of Sunderland, United Kingdom

This presentation reflects on what young children express about their experiences of care-giving and -receiving as part of ongoing PhD research exploring how young children, parents and practitioners make meaning about their own and each other's agency, interests and needs in caring relationships. Although care is central in children's lives, children's perspectives often remain 'othered' with their role in care marginalized (Crivello and Espinoza-Revollo, 2018). Additionally, children are typically viewed as passive recipients of care, failing to acknowledge their agency within care (Langford and White, 2019). Hence, a language of 'needs' has been resisted (Langford, 2020). Bringing together 'feminist ethic of care' (Noddings, 2010; Sevenhuijsen, 1998; Tronto, 2013) and 'social reproduction theory' (Ferguson, 2019; Fraser, 2019; Vogel, 2013), Rosen's (2019) Critical Feminist Ethic of Care was adopted as the theoretical framework. A qualitative multiple case study design implementing the Mosaic Approach (Clark, 2005; Clark and Moss, 2011) was used to co-construct children's perspectives, meanings and understandings about care-giving and -receiving. The Adapted Tavistock Observation Method was used to remain close to the children's lived experiences (Elfer, 2006; Rustin, 2012). To gain children's consent, an 'informing story' (Mayne and Howitt, 2021) was created. Children's expressions of agency with their actions and reactions signalling withdrawal were listened to. Initial findings suggest children's agency in care is not routinely acknowledged. It seems the simplistic binary of being either needy-or-agentic leaves children abandoned in theory, entrenching their experience as 'other'. Listening to children's experiences, meanings and understandings allows for making ECEC care relationships more inclusive for children.

care, ethics of care, agency, needs, othering

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Reconceptualizing Care: A Phenomenognostic Inquiry into World-Formation, Emotion, and Empathy

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

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

The study reexamines the complex phenomenon of care using a phenomenognostic approach (Brentano, 1874). It investigates how emotional, cognitive, and intentional processes interact to facilitate diverse forms of empathy, focusing on emotional development (Wiesner, 2025). Building on traditional phenomenological approaches (Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger) and studies on emotional processes (Crittenden, Lewis), the work critically extends existing knowledge. It synthesizes these strands to contextualize previously underexplored aspects of care and empathy within an interdisciplinary framework. The theoretical foundation is provided by Planck's Three Worlds Theory, referred to as Weltbilden (1929), complemented by phenomenognostic perspectives linking emotional acts, cognitive styles, and world-attunements. This framework enables a nuanced analysis of the dimensions of care. A text-based phenomenological approach, interpreted as "frozen dialogues" (Wittgenstein), is applied to written materials conceptualized as fixed interactions. Thought style structures (Fleck) are explored to unfold implicit experiential patterns, allowing for a hermeneutic-phenomenological analysis of embodied meaning. Ethical

considerations were addressed by applying transparent, traceable criteria for the selection of texts and ensuring that all sources are properly cited and represented with academic care. The investigation demonstrates that care is a multifaceted, intentional act where cognitive evaluations and affective appraisals are inseparable. It reveals that the dynamics of world-formation and emotional intensity are central to both empathy and care, indicating that traditional emotion models require expansion to capture these interdependencies. The findings offer insights for educational and interactional concepts. In summary, these findings underscore the necessity of refining current theoretical models to better address care complexity in early childhood education.

Care, Empathy, World-Formation (Weltbilden), Emotional Development, Dynamic-Structural Phenomenology

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

"There is something special between us": A case study where cariño is the loving relationship within assessment.

Presenters
Alicia Blanco-Bayo, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

All authors
Alicia Blanco-Bayo, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

This paper explores the impact of standardised assessments in Early Childhood Education and Care ECEC, examining how cariño and emotional competence can offer alternative relational approaches within formative assessment practices. It explores research on assessment (Moss et al., 2016; Bradbury, 2020) and cariño as relational pedagogy (Ortiz-Ocaña, 2013). Cariño, a Spanish term for spontaneous, affectionate loving bonds, appears as a key component in formative assessment, suggesting its role in deepening emotional connections, impacting emotional competence, and supporting relational approaches to observational assessment in ECEC. The theoretical framework focuses on relational pedagogy (González-Zambrano, 2015) and emotional competence (Saarni, 1999), with cariño playing a central role. It creates the foundations of the CASEC assessment model which incorporates cariño at the centre, valuing emotional connections and supporting children's overall development in the process. It adopts a constructivist paradigm, using the 'sentidora' methodology, which values emotional engagement during the subjective interpretation of the data (Hesse-Biber, 2012). A case study approach incorporates qualitative methods-interviews, focus groups, and video diaries to explore emotional dynamics during assessment. Ethical considerations included obtaining digital consent, ensuring privacy, and complying with GDPR. Participants' wellbeing was monitored, with data securely stored. Validity and reliability were ensured through member checking (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). The findings suggest that cariño, when present in observational assessments, challenges standardised practices and promotes the spontaneous development of emotional competence skills such as empathy, positively impacting children's overall development. Incorporating cariño into assessment practices can reshape policies, emphasising emotional competence and relationship-building, challenging standardised methods in ECEC assessment.

observational assessment, relational pedagogy, cariño, emotional competence

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set B4 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G114, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY INFLUENCES ON ECE DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Kay Aaronricks, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

Reflecting on heritage education: children's participation in mapping heritage

Presenters
Ludovica Sebastiano, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy

All authors
Ludovica Sebastiano, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy

The contribution explores how heritage education can encourage the participation of children, considered as social and cultural actors (Melton et al., 2014), in heritage research, identification, meaning-making, and thus in safeguarding practices. Understood as a participatory process, heritage education focuses on the relationship between subjects and heritage and the co-construction of knowledge around it (Del Gobbo et al., 2018; Copeland, 2012). However, children's perspectives and experiences of heritage remain underrepresented (Ginzarly, 2021; Smith, 2013). The study combines a critical approach to heritage, as a cultural and social process, produced by people (Harrison, 2013; Smith, 2006), with a relational understanding of children as actors (Esser, 2016) to encompass their voices on everyday heritage (Mosler, 2019). The qualitative research (Flick, 2014) was conducted in an Italian urban area in collaboration with socio-cultural associations. Around 30 children (aged 6–11) participated in neighborhood mapping workshops (Powell, 2010) to explore heritage. Data (participant observation, maps, group discussion) are analysed with the documentary method (Bohnsack, 2010). Before data collection, parents signed consent and audio release forms. An informed consent was verbally negotiated with children, including their right to renegotiate participation and to withdraw from the project. Particular attention was given to data treated in GDPR Art. 9. First findings show that use of the mapping tool fostered children to deep heritage's concept, broadening it and highlighting its multi-vocality (Smith, 2006). In a future-oriented perspective, children's participation calls for a reflection on how heritage can represent a tool for cultural changes, bridging its past-present-future and local-global dimensions.

heritage education, non-formal education, children's voices, mapping, documentary method

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The politics of emplaced knowledges: Teachers Negotiating Discourses

Presenters
Tahmina Shayan, Capilano University, Canada

All authors
Tahmina Shayan, Capilano University, Canada

This study explores how multiple demands—including parental expectations, state and national standards, the discourses of NAEYC, DAP, and teachers' culturally embedded practices—interact with a school's stated commitment to Reggio Emilia-inspired practice. How teachers make sense of and negotiate these competing discourses in their daily practices? What gets included in the curriculum—and why? Researchers argue that teachers in the US are accountable to legislation, regulations, accreditation, and standards (Moss, 2019; Tobin et al., 2009). Teachers' beliefs about their practice are shaped by both formal education and cultural experiences (Saracho, 2012; Walter and Lippard, 2017). Foucault's (1972) discourses analysis theory demonstrate how power and knowledge's relationship in the curriculum is entangled with teachers' practices and subjectivities. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with ten teachers, two program directors, and twenty parents. Thematic analysis and open coding were used to identify key themes. Consent forms were distributed, and participation was voluntary. The findings reveal that teachers often experience tension when discourses conflict—for example, between regulatory standards and Reggio-inspired pedagogy. These tensions lead to ongoing negotiation, with certain discourses enacted at specific times based on

context and power dynamics. Teachers often face pressure from parents and authority figures. This study highlights the need for ongoing critical reflection and professional development to help educators deconstruct dominant narratives and make informed pedagogical decisions. Teachers must be supported in navigating these complexities to uphold meaningful, context-responsive practices in early childhood education.

teachers' subjectivity, discourse analysis, Foucault, cultural practices, Reggio Emilia inspiration

'It takes a village to raise a child': A community approach to creating a nurturing environment for optimal child care and development

Presenters
Lesley Wood, North-West University, South Africa

All authors
Sandra Bruwer, North-West University, South Africa
Lesley Wood, North-West University, South Africa
Benita Taylor , North-West University, South Africa

The research question guiding the study was "how can ECCE stakeholders collaborate to develop guidelines for initiating and sustaining an ECCE hub?" to improve collaboration for regulatory compliance, quality, advocacy and networking in a currently very fragmented sector. Systemic challenges in South Africa's ECCE sector (Giese et al., 2022; Moses, 2021; Wood & Neethling, 2024), highlight the need for sustainable partnerships at local level to improve the quality of the services delivered. The social compact model of the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2024) aligns with the idea of multi-stakeholder partnerships. However, there is a lack of a framework to guide such collaboration at local level. Critical action learning (CAL) (Hauser et al., 2023) and systems thinking (Jackson, 2019) enabled us to think critically about the data. A transformative paradigm guided the participatory action learning and action research design. Eight ECCE stakeholders formed an action learning group and used a future creating workshop to identify the barriers to collaboration, imagine an ideal scenario and develop action plans towards making the ideal a reality. The Belmont principles (USA, 1979) were adhered to via informed consent, data confidentiality and right to withdraw at any time. The critique phase identified challenges to collaboration, including isolation, competition, communication issues, administrative problems and language barriers. Building on this knowledge, action plans for initiating and sustaining local ECCE hubs were collaboratively developed. By creating guidelines for establishing ECCE hubs, local stakeholders can foster a collaborative and integrated approach to promote the sector's development.

early childhood care and education (ECCE), collaboration, stakeholders, critical action learning (CAL), framework

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.
Chairing opportunities

Symposium Set B5 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G115, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) SIG RETHINKING PLAY: CO-RESEARCH WITH ECE-TEACHERS ON PLAY(ING TOGETHER)

Chaired by Annerieke Boland, IPABO University of applied sciences Amsterdam, Netherlands

Listening to Young Voices: A Collaborative Case Study on friendship, inclusion, and bullying in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Eva Dierickx, AP University of Applied Sciences and Arts Antwerp, Teacher Education, Belgium

All authors
Eva Dierickx, AP University of Applied Sciences and Arts Antwerp, Teacher Education, Belgium
Marijke Van Buggenhout, Vrije universiteit Brussel, Belgium

In this study we explore the methodology of a collaborative case study (CCS) to understand how young children experience friendship, inclusion, and bullying, using a children's rights-based framework. Previous studies highlight the need for holistic approaches to studying children's friendships, bullying, and exclusion, emphasizing the importance of children's voices (Khalfaoui et al., 2023). Understanding how children, researchers and teachers perceive these issues is crucial for research and interventions (Rosen et al., 2023). This study is grounded in the new sociology of childhood (James and Prout, 2015), recognizing children as experts on their lives, and Lundy's (2007) model of participation, focusing on space, voice, audience, and influence to ensure children's right to be heard. We used playful methods to overcome the limitations of traditional research, offering familiar and developmentally appropriate ways for children to express themselves (Rinaldi, 2021). Inspired by the Mosaic approach, data collection included storytelling, collaging and role-play. A key innovation is the close collaboration between educators, children, and researchers, throughout the researchproces. By bridging academic and practice-based expertise, the study enhances children's engagement and comfort (Lyndon, 2019) and challenges hegemonic research traditions. We followed the EECERA ethical code for ECresearchers, and will present additional ongoing reflections on power dynamics and negotiating consent between children's and parents' participation choices. This study highlights the importance of ethical engagement, playful and power-sensitive research practices in creating environments where young children feel comfortable sharing their stories. CCS's are a promising model for playful, participatory, rights-conscious EC research, prioritizing children's voices and integrating practitioner and academic knowledge.

collaborative casestudy, participatory, bullying, friendship, voice

Play guidance through video-coaching

Presenters
Ilse Aerden, UCLL, Belgium

All authors
Ilse Aerden, UCLL, Belgium

The study aims to understand how video-coaching can help teachers support children in (role) play. Play has an important role in children's development (Havard Center on the Developing Child, s.d.; Siray-Blatchford, 2009). Particularly, mature role-play provides unique practice opportunities for self-regulations, language and social development (Leong and Bodrova, 2012). The potential of play-based learning is still underused, but requires great professionalism from teachers (Van Oers, 2020). Teacher interventions can be limiting or supporting (Fisher, 2016). Play guidance uses the three-step model 'explore, connect, enrich' (De Haan, 2012) and to observe play quality, Involvement (Laevers, 2019) and ProPels (Leong and Bodrova, 2012) are used. Ten school-related coaches are trained to support teachers on the floor through video-coaching (based on Bracke et al., 2018). School teams collaborate to discuss videos and play coaches reflect in professional learning communities. Evaluation of professionalisation (by external organisation) is based on Practical Programme Evaluation (Chen, 2014). The schools provide informed consent forms to parents and children can pull out at any time. Teachers retain ownership of the videos. Confidentiality and respect are stressed. Although video-coaching initially creates barriers, it helps teachers look at play with a more positive and nuanced perspective and to see special educational needs better. School-based play coaches find that teachers are increasingly aware of the value of playing along. They make more effort to connect, making enrichment a better fit. School-based play coaches find that teachers are increasingly aware of the value of playing along. They make more effort to connect, making enrichment a better fit.

video-coaching, play, guidence, connecting professionalisation

Supporting object-oriented play in early childhood: Developing tools with ECE practitioners for better understanding and guidance.

Presenters
Annerieke Boland, IPABO University of applied sciences Amsterdam, Netherlands

All authors
Annerieke Boland, IPABO University of applied sciences Amsterdam, Netherlands
Elizabeth Wynberg, IPABO University of applied sciences Amsterdam, Netherlands

This study aimed to enhance understanding, observation, and guidance of object-oriented play (OOP) by ECE practitioners. Young children explore objects to discover their properties and affordances (Bjorklund & Gardiner, 2011). OOP has broad developmental value (Authors, in press), yet professionals often lack the knowledge and tools to observe, understand, and guide it (Whitebread et al., 2019). Authors (2021) synthesized a theoretical framework for development and learning in OOP, based on Piagetian and Vygotskian paradigms and evolutionary anthropology (Pellegrini, 2013; Tomasello, 1999; 2019). Cross-sectional research (Authors, submitted) identified different foci in OOP, including tool functions and object organization. Repetition and object combinations increase in complexity. In this educational design research, authors developed prototypes of information cards and an observational tool, based on Authors (2021, submitted), to provide knowledge about OOP, define behavioral dimensions, and suggest guidance strategies. Researchers and ECEC practitioners collaborated through iterative cycles to test, evaluate, and refine the prototypes. Data, including interviews and recorded meetings, were coded in Atlas.ti, using criteria for successful implementation (McKenney and Reeves, 2018): (1) added value, (2) clarity, (3) compatibility, and (4) tolerance of the prototypes. Data were thematically analysed. To respect autonomy, participants and children were asked for their consent. To ensure all practitioners' voices were valued, an open dialogue was fostered. The information cards helped practitioners recognize OOP's importance. By applying the observation tool, they deepened connections with children and enriched interactions The resulting tools support children's OOP and development in ECE. Training is essential for successful implementation.

object-oriented play, observation of play, guidance of play, educational design research, implementation

Symposium Set B6 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G117, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

DISCUSSION OF ETHICS IN ECEC

Chaired by Gunnar Magnus Eidsvåg, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Digital Judgment in Early Childhood Education: An Ethical Exploration of Norway's Framework Plan

Presenters
Gunnar Magnus Eidsvåg, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

All authors
Gunnar Magnus Eidsvåg, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

This study explores how the concept of digital judgment in Norway's Framework Plan for Early Childhood Education and Care (Ministry of Education, 2017) can be ethically applied, focusing on the ethical implications of digital technology in early childhood settings. It builds on existing literature related to digital technology in early childhood education and ethical theory (Brantzæg, 2014; Bergsjø et al., 2020), with particular emphasis on the ethics of care (Noddings, 2013; Eidsvåg, 2021). These frameworks guide how ethical judgment can shape digital practices. Incorporating the ethics of care, the paper broadens the perspective on judgment in early childhood education and utilizes ethical theories such as the rational actor (Nafstad, 1996), impartial observer (Darwall, 2018), and dialog free from dominance (Habermas, 1990). The article employs a qualitative research approach, using theoretical analysis to interpret key concepts in the curriculum. Methods include literature review and analysis of ethical frameworks related to digital practices. The research does not involve participants. It follows ethical principles in analyzing digital judgment, focusing on care ethics to ensure responsible and fair interpretation. In conclusion, the research finds that digital judgment, informed by ethical frameworks, provides a strong foundation for guiding digital practices in early childhood education. It highlights the importance of incorporating care ethics into judgment and outlines how key ethical theories can improve practice. The study has significant implications for practice and policy, offering insights on how educators can apply ethical judgment in digital technology use and suggesting the integration of care ethics into guidelines for digital practices.

digital judgment, ethics, care, Framework Plan, digital practices

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

To follow preschool children's learning processes - ethical and educational perspectives

Presenters
Monica Ehrström, Mälardalen University, Sweden

All authors
Monica Ehrström, Mälardalen University, Sweden
Pernilla Sundqvist, Mälardalen University, Sweden

This study examines preschool educators' reasoning about paying attention to preschool children's learning processes, focusing on which strategies emerge when preschool educators reflect on their teaching to pay attention to each child's learning processes, from ethical and educational perspectives. The ambiguity surrounding both the educational mission and the care mission in preschool and the dilemma it can cause for educators, have been highlighted by previous research (Melasalmi et al., 2022; Van Laere and Vandenbroeck, 2018; Rothuizen, 2022). The theoretical framework consists of Nel Nodding's (2012) Ethics of Care. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative paradigm carried out as an action research project. Five preschool educators from two work teams participated. Data was conducted through group discussions grounded in video recordings of the participants' actions. The research project has been approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr 2024-01435-01) and follows the Swedish Research Council's guidelines, ensuring confidentiality and informed consent. Ethical considerations have been discussed throughout the project. Four strategies emerged when preschool educators reflected on their actions to support children's participation in teaching activities; Continuity, Artefacts, Children's influence and Making it fun, all of which are carried out for both ethical and educational reasons. The results show that educators pay attention to children's emotional needs in order to meet and support their cognitive needs. The study shows that preschool educators can challenge each child to learn as far as possible based on their own conditions, by meeting children's emotional needs and cognitive needs intertwined.

preschool educators, attention, strategies, education, ethics

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Situations of ethical difficulty in early childhood professional practice in New Zealand: Results from the 3rd follow-up study of teachers' use of ethical codes of practice.

Presenters
Carmen Dalli, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

All authors
Carmen Dalli, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Sue Cherrington, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
Judith Loveridge, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

We report on 2025 survey data on how early childhood (EC) teachers in New Zealand use ethical codes of practice and how they understand EC professionalism. The survey gathered examples of situations of ethical difficulties adding to a database collected at ten-year intervals since 1995 (Dalli and Mitchell, 1995; Dalli, 2008; Dalli and Cherrington, 2009; Cherrington and Dalli, 2017) and enabling an analysis of similarities and differences across the time periods. This includes how the NZ EC workforce understands EC professionalism. We draw on notions of EC practice as relational work and conceptualise professionalism as complex and embedded in a critical ecology of the profession (Dalli, 2010). We sent an anonymous online Qualtrics questionnaire to a random stratified sample of 900 EC centres with a request that the respondent be a qualified early childhood teacher, and (to ensure random selection) that they had the next birthday in the centre. Survey questions included closed and open-ended questions. We analysed the data using descriptive statistics and thematic coding of open-ended text. Consent was obtained from EC employer-organisations. Respondents' informed consent was implied through voluntary participation in the survey. Results are aggregated to protect anonymity. Respondents reported shifts and similarities in the types of ethically difficult situations. Trends in the findings reflect changes in the practice and policy contexts of the EC profession in NZ. Teachers would benefit from greater focus on complex situations within their professional learning opportunities. Policy settings need strengthening to protect high quality ethical practice.

ethical difficulties, professionalism, New Zealand, ethical codes, complex practice

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B7 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G118, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

GOVERNMENT POLICY APPROACHES TO INCLUSIVE ECE

Chaired by Ailbhe Booth, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland

A misalignment with the vision and intention of the EYLF

Presenters
Tammy Williams, Southern Cross University, Australia

All authors
Tammy Williams, Southern Cross University, Australia

This study presents findings from a study that interrogated the dominant systems of knowledge in early childhood education and care (ECEC). In Australia, the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was intended to be flexible and non-prescriptive, but neoliberal discourses have affected its interpretation (Grieshaber and Graham, 2017; Sims, 2017). This study used a post-structural framework, drawing on Foucault's concepts of governmentality,

power/knowledge, and subject formation (Foucault, 1982; 1991; Foucault and Gordon, 1980) to investigate what constitutes legitimate knowledge in ECEC. A qualitative methodology was used to collect data from 32 interviews from early childhood professionals. A discourse analysis was used to interpret dominant systems of professional knowledge across two Long Day Care Services in Australia. Participants in the study were deidentified, informed and voluntary. The ethics committee from the University of Newcastle approved the study. The EYLF is understood by directors, educational leaders, teachers and educators in a way that prioritises the learning outcomes, silencing the foundational principles and practices of the framework. An incomplete understanding about the EYLF is in tension with the vision and intention of the EYLF. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) asserts that every child is entitled to an education that builds a strong foundation for lifelong learning, nurtures their potential, and honours their family, cultural background, identity, and language (Australian Government Department of Education, 2022). Improving professionals' comprehensive knowledges and understanding of the Principles and Practices of the EYLF is essential to upholding children's right to high-quality early childhood education and care.

policy, curriculum, child rights, quality

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Economic Impacts on Early Childhood Education:A Situation Analysis of Türkiye

Presenters
Büşra Gündeş Orman, İstanbul Aydın University, Türkiye

All authors
Büşra Gündeş Orman, İstanbul Aydın University, Türkiye
Gülden Uyanık, Marmara University, Türkiye

This study analyzes poverty in Türkiye and its multifaceted impacts on early childhood education (ECE),highlighting how inequalities and challenges faced by vulnerable groups affect access to quality education and wellbeing. Child poverty is increasing and is linked to inequalities in healthcare and education (OECD, 2024; Ministry of Industry and Technology, 2022). ECE is vital for disadvantaged regions and can alleviate poverty's effects (Kadan et al., 2023). While schools are seen as protective environments, their effectiveness is limited,with a lack of research on how structural vulnerabilities affect ECE sector (Muderrisoglu et al., 2013). The study is based on Structural Vulnerability Theory (Lu et al., 1999), which examines how economic,social,and policy structures create systemic inequalities.This theory explores how policies and institutional practices reinforce or alleviate vulnerabilities among children. A document-based situation analysis is used referencing TÜİK Statistics, UNICEF Türkiye Reports, OECD Reports and policy documents from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Family and Social Services. The study uses publicly available data and policy documents,ensuring ethical compliance and maintaining objectivity and transparency. Structural vulnerabilities stem from unequal resource distribution,inadequate support for refugee children,and institutional barriers that limit access for girls, children with special needs, and those in rural areas. Issues like early marriage,child labor, and healthcare disparities create significant obstacles to accessing ECE. These challenges emphasize the need to protect vulnerable children,ensure equitable education,improve housing, strengthen families, alleviate poverty, and enhance quality of life. Additionally, the privatization of public services exacerbates class distinctions, limiting opportunities for at-risk children (Erbil, 2023). The study calls for integrated policies to address vulnerabilities, promote educational equity, and enhance collaboration for resilient educational environments.

child poverty, educational inequality, early childhood education, structural vulnerability, situational analysis

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

From Policy to Practice: Rethinking Inclusion and Quality in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Vanessa Macchia, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy
Stefania Torri, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy

All authors
Vanessa Macchia, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy
Stefania Torri, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy

Pensare IN Grande, an Italian study on inclusive education in the early years 0-6, addresses systemic inequalities in access, quality and inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care to promote equity and diversity in education. Existing literature highlights persistent inequalities with only 27% of disadvantaged children accessing ECEC (Council of Europe, 2022). Conversely, the significance of early intervention as a form of investment (Moteiunajte, 2021) with the potential to yield positive socio-economic outcomes has been underscored (Nores et al., 2024). The research employs a multifaceted approach, drawing upon sustainability competencies (GreenComp, 2022), and key democratic dimensions (Council of Europe, 2018), developing pedagogies that are both culturally responsive and equity-driven. A mixed-methods approach is employed, integrating a Likert-scale survey and qualitative open-ended responses. The IECE Environment Self-Reflection Tool (Björck-Åkesson et al., 2017) has been adapted to assess inclusivity across multiple dimensions, with data from 215 Italian educators having been collected to date.
The study is conducted in accordance with ethical research standards, including informed consent, anonymity and voluntary participation of early childhood educators. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Preliminary findings indicate strong social inclusion and a positive attitude towards diversity but reveal challenges such as limited personalised support, insufficient professional training, and infrastructural barriers. The study suggests policy interventions, including increased investment in teacher training, improved accessibility infrastructure, and cross-sectoral collaboration in education, health, and social services to create inclusive learning environments.

early childhood equity, inclusive education, diversity, teacher training and inclusion, accessibility in ECEC

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B8 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G127, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN TRANSITION TO SCHOOL: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Chaired by Sue Dockett, Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education, Australia

Transition to School in Iceland: Exploring 25 Years of Research, Policy and Practice

Presenters
Sara Ólafsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Björn Rúnar Egilsson, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Sara Ólafsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Björn Rúnar Egilsson, University of Iceland, Iceland

The aim of this study is to explore research, policy and practice on transition to school in Iceland for the past 25 years. In Iceland, the transition from preschool to primary school began attracting attention within education research shortly after the turn of the 21st century, with Jóhanna Einarsdóttir‘s (2003) pioneering work. The

transition studies have explored pedagogical and organisational continuity and change between educational levels, considering the views of children, parents, and educators. Literature review was conducted to analyse existing transition research. Key theories, findings, and knowledge gaps were identified. The positionality of the authors was considered to ensure a balanced perspective. The authors acknowledge their potential biases and have taken steps to mitigate them by including diverse viewpoints on transition from the literature. While empirical understandings of transition have been advanced during the past quarter century, transition practices in preschools and primary schools have largely remained the same throughout the period as have challenges to further collaboration between the two levels. The traditions, cultures, and practices of each school level in Iceland seem to have been resistant to change. Educational policies on children's school transitions should be based on new research, with municipal-level support systems in place. Transition programs should be informed by research and developed collaboratively with educators, ensuring regular evaluation. Greater collaboration between educators and after school care staff is needed to align educational approaches. Transition processes should consider children's and parents' perspectives, needs, and experiences.

Iceland, ECE policy and practice, transition, preschool, primary school, 21st century research

Critical Review of Research And Policy on Transitions to School from 2000-2024 in Mexico: A Systematic Literature Review

Presenters
Angel Garcia, University of Hull, United Kingdom

All authors
Angel Garcia, University of Hull, United Kingdom

This study focused on synthesising the international literature focused on investigating the school transition in early years in Mexico to identify key trends, challenges and advancements over the last 25 years. Research suggests that a challenging transition, can lead to academic struggles, social isolation, and negative school attitudes (Balduzzi et al. 2019; Correia and Marquez-Pinto 2016). Notably, previous research reveals a scarcity of research around the Mexican school transition (Aquino-Davila et al., 2021; Urbina-Garcia and Kyriacou (2018). This study was framed by Bronfenbrenner's Model and recent international models around schoolification (Perry and Dockett, 2022). Following the PRISMA principles, we conducted a systematic review of the Mexican literature around the transition to school published over the first quarter of the 21st Century. Although this is a review of existing literature, efforts have been made to ethically present a diverse range of sources to ensure fair representation in the research. Mexican transition research seems to be confined to limited and isolated studies, and no large-scale and longitudinal studies. This limits our knowledge and understanding of the transition. Mexico's severe social inequalities, make this transition more challenging for rural and indigenous populations. The effectiveness of government policies is overshadowed by a constant shift in educational policies every time a new president leads the country. Transition policies are needed urgently. We argue that holistic transition policies and programs, collaborative school-family partnerships, targeted support for vulnerable groups and more research are urgently needed in Mexico. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Mexico's transition, preschool transition, primary school, literature review, Mexican policies, transition programmes

The Way Forward: Key principles for future research, policy, and practice in transition to school

Presenters
Bob Perry, Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education, Australia
Sue Dockett, Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education, Australia

All authors
Bob Perry, Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education, Australia
Sue Dockett, Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education, Australia

Based on 39 national critical reviews, what are key principles for future research, policy, and practice in transition to school? Research, policy, and practice in transition to school from 2000-2024 in 39 countries have been analysed and critiqued to formulate key principles for the future, based on this extensive previous work. This presentation provides a synthesis of these critiques. Many frameworks underpin effective transitions to school, including Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (2006) bio-ecological, van Gennep's (1960) rite of passage, schoolification, readyfication (Moss, 2013), and belonging (Sumsion and Wong, 2011). National reviews were undertaken by >90 researchers, with each concluding in key principles for research, policy, and practice. This presentation synthesises these key principles. All materials used for this presentation have been published previously and reviewed by researchers from each country, who have had opportunities to review the presentation contents. Key principles identified for future research, policy, and practice in transition to school include: critique of readiness and related concepts; responsiveness to diversity; promoting professional learning and collaboration; recognition of wellbeing and belonging; participation from multiple stakeholders; and planning and evaluation. Transition to school is a critical process in the lives of children, families, educators, and communities. This is exemplified through the national reviews and key principles developed in this project. The impact of international testing, school readiness, and schoolification/readyfication regimes, has many jurisdictions questioning their transition to school policies and practice. The key principles in this presentation synthesise worldwide knowledge about what is important for effective transitions to school for all.

transition to primary school, international, research, policy, practice, future directions

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set B9 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G210, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

CREATIVITY AND LEARNING IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Chaired by Katherine Gulliver, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

Exploring humor and creativity of preschoolers.

Presenters
Eleni Loizou, University of Cyprus, Cyprus
Neophyta Mavrommati, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

All authors
Eleni Loizou, University of Cyprus, Cyprus
Neophyta Mavrommati, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

The present research aims to investigate children's humor and creativity; and explore their connection to the Theory of Absurd and Empowerment Theory. Incongruity; violation of rules and expectations, is a common definition of children's humor; (McGee, 1989; Brown, 1993; Bergen, 2009) and is associated with creative thinking; incongruity, divergent thinking, originality (Klein, 1992; Loizou and Loizou, 2022). The Theory of Absurd and Empowerment describes the way children appreciate and produce humor through a socio-cognitive perspective (Loizou, 2005) as seen in different contexts (Loizou, 2011; Loizou and Kyriakou, 2016). This is a case study of 5 preschoolers. Semi structured interviews and focus groups were developed after children watched 3 episodes of the cartoon Booba. Data involved verbal reactions, and artifacts; funny drawings and constructions. Data analysis employed the two

theories and elements of the Torrance test of creativity (Torrance, 2006). Consent forms and the right to withdraw were used along with pseudonyms of participants. In being ethical and relatable to children's needs, materials and actions included cartoons, drawings and constructions. The study has shown that children express humor through incongruity: appearance, color, actions and violation: rules, expectations, violence and funny gestures. This is in line with the two theories. Also, children's drawings and constructions were characterized by fluency, flexibility and elaboration. Humor and creativity are highly related. Appropriate stimuli like humorous cartoons enhance children's ability to produce, appreciate humor and develop their cognitive and creative thinking.

preschoolers, humor, creativity, drawings, cartoon

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The role of an early childhood education teacher in enhancing children's creativity during creative play

Presenters
Evi Loizou, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

All authors
Evi Loizou, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

The aim is to describe how an early childhood teacher's involvement during creative play (CP) supported children's creativity. Researchers recognize the importance of adults' involvement in children's play as it can facilitate learning and development, especially in CP, as emphasized in both creativity and the arts (Beghetto and Kaufman, 2007; Eckhoff, 2008; Richards, 2014), acknowledging the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). CP connects play with creativity and the arts and provides children with the context to develop their creativity (Szekely, 2015). It's defined 'as a flow of actions', were teachers and children 'in the context of the arts', participate 'in the process of creation and creativity' (Loizou and Loizou, 2022:3-4). The participants were 16 4–6-year-olds and a preschool teacher. Data was collected through video recordings from two play centers ('Bakery', 'Toy Factory') and the teacher's reflective journal. Data was analyzed using the inductive approach of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) drawing on creativity themes and subthemes. Parents' consent for children's participation and their anonymity were ensured, along with a withdrawal option at any time. Findings emphasized teacher's participation during CP as a co-player, through role-playing (e.g. "witch"). She posed questions (e.g. "What else?"), provided suggestions (e.g. "Maybe you could..") and made indications (e.g. "Oh, the house is falling..") to support children's creative efforts; fluency of ideas, elaboration, or problem solving. Teacher's participation during children's CP, provide children strategies to employ (e.g. plan, transform), while operating within their Zone of Proximal Creative Development.

creativity, creative play, arts, play, role of the teacher

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

River of Hope: a child-led enquiry into place identity, inclusion and climate change through arts-based learning

Presenters
Katherine Gulliver, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

All authors
Katherine Gulliver, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom
Kathrin Paal, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

This project evaluates the Thames Festival Trust's "River of Hope"programme, examining how arts-based learning connects children aged 7-8 with local rivers to foster discussions around place identity, inclusion and climate change through participatory methods. This study extends research by Pramling Samuelsson et al. (2019), and Caiman and Lundegård (2014) on early environmental experiences, recognising children's agency in sustainability matters whilst addressing Reid and Scott's (2006) challenge to empower those with less privileged influence. Drawing from the Mosaic approach (Clark, 2017), the research employs strength-based perspectives that validate multiple forms of expression and emphasise connections between artistic practice, environmental consciousness and place identity. Within a constructivist paradigm, this participatory and innovative research approach uses video diaries, guided tours, photography, journals and arts-based activities, with children deciding how to document and disseminate findings. Children's agency is prioritised through consent games and reflection activities, enabling informed consent and recognising their autonomy in how experiences are shared. Findings reveal children developed enhanced environmental connections, critical thinking skills and creative expression through experiential learning. The programme fostered collaboration amongst peers whilst offering novel artistic approaches using natural materials, transforming children's relationship with their local riverscapes. The project demonstrates how arts-based approaches can elevate the profile of creativity across curricula whilst developing children's environmental stewardship. This integrated model offers schools practical strategies for enriching cultural experiences and meaningful engagement with sustainability amongst diverse learner communities.

place-based learning, arts-based education, child-led research, child agency, environmental stewardship

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B10 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G211, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Chaired by Kari Anne Joergensen-Vittersoe, OsloMet Universtiy, Norway

Will children become environmental stewards by identifying what they dislike about their public spaces?

Presenters
June O'Sullivan, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

All authors
June O'Sullivan, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

To better understand young children's roles as environmental stewards, we invited 20 children aged 3 and 4years attending 4 London nurseries to photograph what they defined as “dislike” within walking distance of their nurseries. Seeking and listening to children's perspectives is important if we are to help them participate and voice their opinions, recognise problems and search for information and solutions about sustainability including making changes in their local environment, their communities and even globally (Pramling Samuelsson and Kaga,2008; Wolff et al., 2020). The research is shaped by the theories of education for sustainability and the importance of children as agentic global citizens (UNESCO, 2021). The research is framed within a participative praxeological paradigm (Pascal et al., 2012). using a qualitative, child-centred approach. The children were provided with digital cameras and spent an hour leading a walk around their neighbourhood photographing things they disliked. On return to nursery they discussed their choices using the photos as prompts in semi-structured interviews. Photographs were coded for content and themes using an open coding approach. The study will operate within EECERA Ethical Code (2024) paying attention to the rights of the children as researchers. . The study suggests a need to recognise children's roles as a drivers of environmental stewardship and their ability to visualise their views and concerns of their local neighbourhoods. Preliminary findings are expected to reveal gaps in local environmental and educational policy

makers' understanding of children's rights and views which we will address using a range of communication approaches.

education for sustainability, environmental stewards, photographs, visualising, global citizens

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Changing urban landscapes, changing childhoods

Presenters
Kari Anne Joergensen-Vittersoe, OsloMet Universtiy, Norway
Barbara Marie Sageidet, University of Stavanger, Norway

All authors
Kari Anne Joergensen-Vittersoe, OsloMet Universtiy, Norway
Barbara Marie Sageidet, University of Stavanger, Norway

This study will explore changes in urban development, and their relations to changes in children's access to green and blue landscapes. Empirically we draw on examples from two Norwegian cityscapes. These cover changes in the inner city of Oslo and from the development of various areas in the city of Stavanger. The study connects to research addressing consequences for children growing up in increasingly dense built urban landscapes (Sageidet, 2025). During the geological period of the Anthropocene, human activity has profoundly influenced the upper Earth's layers, especially in urban areas. Theory includes Ricoeur's critical hermeneutic (Ricoeur, 2010), within a paradigm seeing 'children as eco-citizens'(Heggen et.al ,2019), and the UN development goal 10, Reduced inequalities, 11, Sustainable cities and communities (United Nations, 2015), and UN Children's rights, paragraph 12 and 31, 'Respect for children's views', and 'Children's right to rest, play, culture and art' (United Nations, 1989). Demographic and geographic changes will be documented and analysed, by using narratives about/and historical texts, photos, and historical and temporary city-plans, including historic chronology and historic geography. Photographs and narratives will be selected without sensitive personal content. The study will reveal how city development, constitute differences in biodiversity, access to green and blue areas, and possibilities for children to create own places. The timeline from 1980 until today mark substantial differences regarding access to places for play and nature experiences. The contemporary parts figure out how children can be included in city planning as active citizens. This study reveals potentials to further develop urban landscapes to improve biodiversity, sustainability, and childhoods.

childhood, urban landscapes, biodiversity, sustainability, geography

The development of human-nature connection in the formative, early years: a review

Presenters
Charlotte Whitham, GCRI-Czech Academy of Sciences, Czechia

All authors
Charlotte Whitham, GCRI-Czech Academy of Sciences, Czechia

While the benefits of human-nature connection (HNC) are well-known, how it develops in the early years (EYs), remains unclear. Exploring existing literature, this research aims to outline the EYs factors important for HNC development. Research links childhood HNC to nature experiences (e.g. outdoor play (Chawla and Derr, 2012)), and parental influence (e.g. Passmore et al., 2021). While useful, most research focuses on older children, with limited evidence from the EYs. Our conceptual framework draws on multiple perspectives: The diverse meanings of HNC and associated values (e.g. Ives et al., 2018); the psychological antecedents of HNC in adults (Lengieza and Swim, 2021);

and finally, Beery et al.'s (2020) rich review of expert knowledge on early HNC development. A scoping review informed the conceptual framework, which structured the systematic review of published papers, identifying empirically-supported EYs factors for HNC development. While we included a diversity of perspectives in this review, care has been taken to ensure any biases are critically assessed, ethical standards of cited literature is considered and all literature has been accurately referenced. EYs factors associated with HNC development were evaluated alongside psychological developmental milestones and antecedents relevant to the EYs. This is framed within the diversity of HNC-related values and interpretations. Empirical evidence gaps for particular factors are highlighted. Childhood HNC supports lifelong pro-environmental values, helping future generations to face environmental crises. Our findings highlight EYs factors responsible for encouraging HNC and so inform sustainability-related practice and policy supporting just, equitable opportunities for all children to connect with nature.

human-nature connection, *environmental education*, *pro-environmental values*, *nature contact*, *developmental psychology*

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B11 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G215, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

OBSERVATIONS AND RECORDINGS AS REFLECTIVE TOOLS

Chaired by Anne-Erita Berta, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

Does Seeing Matter? Exploring Pre-Service teachers' beliefs about using self-video as a tool for reflection in the study of their practice

Presenters
Lynn Navin, University of Missouri St. Louis, United States
Susan Catapano, University of North Carolina Wilmington, United States

All authors
Lynn Navin, University of Missouri St. Louis, United States
Susan Catapano, University of North Carolina Wilmington, United States

This multi-year study aimed to evaluate pre-service teachers' beliefs about using self-video as a tool for reflection in the study of their practice Early research on reflection and teacher education is seen in the writings of Adler (1991), Bengtsson (1995), and Rodgers (2002). Research from Sherin (2004; 2007), Sherin and van Es (2005; 2008), Tripp and Rich (2011; 2012), and Navin (2018) examine the use of self-video as a tool for reflective thought. The theoretical framework for this study draws upon the classic reflection theories of Dewey (1938), Schon (1983), and van Manen (1997). This study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm. A semester evaluation was given to students in two ECE practicum courses each year over a five-year period. A content analysis (Mayring, 2019) of evaluation responses was conducted. The semester evaluation was a course assignment for every student. Identifying data was removed, and data was presented in aggregate form. Pre-service teachers find value in using self-video tape reflection after initial feelings of uncomfortableness in using the technology and viewing themselves teaching. These findings explain the value of self-video reflection in pre-service teachers' study of their practice. Using video to view pre-service teaching is beneficial for supervising student teachers in both traditional and alternative programs with candidates not in the near geographical area.

reflection, self-video, teacher preparation, technology, Supervision

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Listen and learn - ECEC teacher students as learning agents

Presenters
Anita Helseth, Norway Inland University, Norway

All authors
Christine Seehuus, Norway Inland University, Norway
Anita Helseth, Norway Inland University, Norway
Jon Anders Græsli, Norway Inland University, Norway

This study focuses on ECEC teacher students as learning actors. It aims to provide ECEC teacher students with opportunities for reflection and discussion about the knowledge they use when interacting with children This study builds upon research on ECEC teaching as a profession, which emphasises the need for teachers to have a reflective and knowledge-based approach to their work (Skarstein and Skarstein, 2020; Skalstad and Munkebye, 2021; Zakaria 2020; Wallerstedt et al., 2022; Pollarolo et al., 2022; Carlsen and Clark 2022; Sanderud et al., 2021) The study is grounded in ECEC teaching as a complex profession, requiring a balance between short-term and long-term learning horizons. The framework emphasizes the importance of systematic exploration, interest-building, and motivation for lifelong learning Pilot project with a qualitative approach: 1. Audio recordings of students. 2. Student transcriptions 3. Professional reflection on the roles, conversation types, question levels, and responses from themselves and the children. 4. In-depth interviews Consent for audio recordings was obtained from students and parents of children participating. Data was anonymised and stored in an encrypted file system. Preliminary findings suggest that participants who listened to recordings of their interactions with children and analysed the quality of these interactions became more aware of the types of questions they asked. Additionally, they recognised the importance of further supporting children's exploration and learning processes. The study highlights the importance of integrating practical experience with reflection in ECEC teacher education. It advocates for ongoing professional development to help teachers enhance and improve interactions with children.

listen, learn, agency, interaction, scaffolding

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Participant Observation as a Professional Ethos for Early Childhood Education Staff

Presenters
Anne-Erita Berta, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

All authors
Anne-Erita Berta, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

Participant observation as a working method for ECEC staff to enhance quality Scholars highlight the importance of observation and documentation in ECEC (e.g. Birkeland, 2020; Buøen et al., 2021; Hedegaard, 2019). The anthropological research method of participant observation offers possibilities beyond P.O. usually applied in ECEC centres. This paper suggest an in-depth, holistic application to participant observation by ECEC staff, similar to that which anthropologists apply during fieldwork. Quality in education as defined by policies (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017), research investigating quality in ECEC (Melhuish et al., 2015; OECD, 2021) and antropological definitions of participant observation (Hviding & Berg, 2014; Sommer et al., 2010; Stoller, 1989) make out the conceptual framework and theoretical ground for discussion. Through a government funded competence strategy programme ECEC teachers were introduced to an anthropological approach to participant observation as a

methodology, together with the university teacher they tested and developed ways to implement the methodology in their daily work at ECEC centres. The data for the paper is based on conversations with 7 ECEC teachers testing the programs. All participants gave their informed consent. Findings suggest that participant observation make ECEC staff take more active part in children's activities. Staff develop reflective skills, becoming more aware of their responsibilities and possibilities to assist children in the creation of an inclusive kindergarten environment. ECEC staff applying participant observation develop their analytical skills and increase empathy. Introducing an anthropological approach to participant observation in ECEC may increase quality in ECEC centres.

participant observation, quality in education, teacher role, documentation, law on kindergartens, applied anthropology

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B12 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G222, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

PLAY AND LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Maria Figueiredo, CI&DEI and School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal

Impact of a Life Skills Program on Children's Social Problem-Solving Skills

Presenters
Tülay İlhan İyi, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Türkiye

All authors
Tülay İlhan İyi, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Türkiye
Aysel Esen Çoban, Hacettepe University, Türkiye

In this study, a culture-specific life skills program was developed d based on a need-analysis, and its effect on children's social problem-solving behavior was examined. Research shows that life skills programs play an important role in shaping young children's cognitive, social and emotional development (Gunning et al., 2020; Jiang, 2022; Lee et al., 2024; Robison et al., 2020) and children who participate in life skill programs are more likely to exhibit social problem-solving skills (Forneris et al., 2007; Sandy & Boardman, 2000). Social skills are developed through engaging in social interactions and gaining experience in various social situations (Bandura, 1977; Goleman, 1995). Therefore, the developed program ensures active participation from children by incorporating play, small-groupwork, and role-playing-activities. Embedded design, a mixed methods design, was used in the study. Purposive sampling used to select 71 children aged 60-72 months, 36 in the experimental group and 35 in the control group. Data were collected through quantitative instruments, family interviews (with 26 parents) and child reflections (with 36 children) and analyzed using paired samples t-test and content analysis. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and pseudonyms ensured participant anonymity. The results showed that problem solving, communication, interpersonal relationship skills and social problem solving improved significantly in the experimental group and effects of the program were permanent after 7 weeks. Parent interviews and child reflections also showed that the children achieved the learning outcomes of the program. Developing and implementing life skills programs can have a broad positive impact on children.

life skills program, culture-specific, problem solving, communication, interpersonal skills, social problem solving

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Play and Algorithmic Thinking in Early Childhood Education: Studies from Practice

Presenters
Maria Figueiredo, CI&DEI and School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal

All authors
Maria Figueiredo, CI&DEI and School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal
Valter Alves, CISeD and School of Technology and Management, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal
Diana Gomes, School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal
Deolinda Amaral, School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal

Two studies were conducted on Portuguese preschools, exploring the potential of play as a context for developing algorithmic thinking (AT). The case of introducing AT in preschool opened the opportunity to study the connection between play and content knowledge since AT is connected to curricular areas of preschool (Bers et al., 2019; Figueiredo et al., 2021). The relationship between content knowledge and play in Early Childhood Education has been complex (Figueiredo, 2022; Pramling et al., 2019). Teachers tend to undervalue their content knowledge even though they use it to add depth to children's learning during play and for organizing play environments (Oppermann et al., 2016; Figueiredo et al., 2020). Taking a qualitative, practitioner research approach (Pascal and Bertram, 2018), one study looked at free-play situations and the other at guided play using a deck of cards. The free and guided play are understood as part of a continuum of play (Zosh et al., 2018). Two preschools and 45 children participated. Observation was the main data collection method. Children were asked for assent and could withdraw anytime, and parents provided consent. In both studies, children used and explored different dimensions of AT in their activities and were able to discuss concepts involved in AT. The results organize the children's experiences and actions under five categories: sequence, cycle, condition, step, and creation. The results are discussed with the literature on AT and play, concluding that free and guided play need to be highlighted in the discussion of concepts like AT in ECE.

algorithmic thinking, play, guided play, free play, content knowledge

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Problem-solving

Presenters
Lisa Lunde, Norway Inland University, Norway

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Cato Tandberg, Norway Inland University, Norway

The study examines problem-solving skills in early childhood education, highlighting how kindergarten teachers can nurture creativity and divergent thinking. The research emphasizes early childhood development, the role of play in learning, and the importance of problem-solving skills (Salmon 2016; Salmon and Barrera 2021; Stavholm et al., 2022; Immordino-Yang et al., 2019; Yogman et a.,l 2018; Lunde and Brodal 2022; Sirois et al. 2008; Christie 2022). The study explores creative problem-solving, divergent thinking, and the balance of play and learning in kindergarten, referencing research by Evans et al. (2021), Liljedahl and Cai (2021), Schulz and Bonawitz (2007), and Hammer (2012), among others. Kindergarten teacher education students completed practical tasks during their internships, including reflective notes from themselves and supervising teachers, group reflections, and semi-structured interviews. Data was collected from 32 students working with children aged 0-5 years, focusing on object boxes and knot-tying activities. The study received approval from SIKT (no. 474916), the Norwegian Agency for

Shared Services in Education and Research. Students provided both written and verbal consent for use of texts and interviews. The kindergartens and children involved were anonymized in the students' texts, making them untraceable. Students and practice teachers were surprised by young children's problem-solving skills, particularly toddlers.Younger children demonstrated more patience and a greater willingness to explore various strategies than older ones, challenging preconceived notions about their capabilities and offering insights into different problem-solving approaches across ages. Reevaluating young children's problem-solving abilities and adapting teaching strategies to foster curiosity and divergent thinking, while improving teacher education to support these skills.

problem-solving, creative/divergent thinking, curiosity,

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B13 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G231, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT (PAIR)

Chaired by Eija Sevón, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

A Parental Involvement Approach to the Waldorf Child Study: The Case of Cixin Waldorf Kindergarten

Presenters
Shangiy Lin, University of Taipei, Taiwan

All authors
Shangiy Lin, University of Taipei, Taiwan

Examining cases from Cixin Waldorf Kindergarten (Taiwan) through 'Parenting Intervention', this study explores Child Study, a key method in Waldorf education for understanding individual children. This study uses 'Template Analysis Style' to create a 'Parental Involvement Analysis Template' from three sources. It then analyzes child study theory and methodology with this template, shows data-template connections, and validates findings with a case study.1)Breiner, H.,etc (Ed.). (2016). Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8. National Academies Press (US). 2) The Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education. (Ed.). (2019). Parent Education Core Curriculum Framework. 3) Chou, L. T.(Ed.)(2016). Empowering Families: A Handbook for Leaders of Parenting Education Programmes. As previously stated, and concerning the following sources: 1)Chang, F. F. (2021). Advanced exploration of qualitative research methods: looking at the world through a different lens.2)Chen, X.-M. (2002). Qualitative research in social sciences. Wu-Nan Book. This study examines Child Study and school doctor conferences, highlighting active parental involvement. Analyzing 21 meetings due to scarce historical data, the research adhered to strict confidentiality protocols following informed consent. Relevant family information in the case study documents used for this research was concealed, in addition to obtaining consent. The study identifies four key enablers and four key barriers to effective Child Studies. It then offers specific recommendations for adjustments based on these findings. Characterized by historical and contemporary influences, Taiwanese parenting features varied parental values. Given the critical role of parent-child relationships, individualized support that considers diverse family dynamics is crucial.

Waldorf Child Study, parenting intervention, document analysis, executive function, emotion regulation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Examining Factorial Validity and Cross-Cultural Similarity of the Short-Cocaring Relationship Questionnaire for Assessing Family-Professional Partnerships in Early Care and Education

Presenters

Eija Sevón, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

All authors

Eija Sevón, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Merja Koivula, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Eija Räikkönen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Dahyung Ryu, Ohio State University, United States
Sarah Lang, Ohio State University, United States

This study validated a short form of the Cocaring Relationship Questionnaire (S-CRQ), and examined cross-cultural differences in the structure and components of cocaring partnerships. Family-professional partnerships in early care and education (ECE) are important for wellbeing of children, families, and teachers (e.g., Jeon et al., 2021; Lang et al., 2017). Therefore, we need validated measures to assess the quality of these partnerships. The conceptual orientation of cocaring identifies how guardians and ECE professionals coordinate care for young children, accentuating the behaviors that support or undermine each partner in caring for the child (Lang et al., 2016; Lang et al., 2017). A cross-cultural paradigm was applied to accomplish a quantitative, comparative study. By utilizing survey data of 293 Finnish parents with children in ECE and 90 U.S. parents in infant and toddler classrooms, exploratory structural equation modeling was conducted. Research ethics guidelines of both countries were rigorously followed. Informed consents were obtained and the participants' right to anonymity and confidentiality were acknowledged. Our analyses produced a 3-factor model with strong psychometric properties, supporting discriminant validity and showing similar factor means across the countries. Support was also found for concurrent and discriminant validity of S-CRQ to the parent-child relationship scale. Findings suggest that a 3-factor model may provide a psychometrically strong way of assessing cocaring relationships across cultures. This has implications for research using the S-CRQ and enhancing understanding of the essential elements within family-ECE partnerships. Measuring family-ECE partnerships is of central importance to many institutions wishing to improve these partnerships.

cocaring, exploratory structural equation modeling, family-ECE partnerships, measurement invariance, cross-cultural comparison

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set B14 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G242, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

THE RISKS AND VALUE OF FREE PLAY

Chaired by Beyza Hamamcı, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye

The Implementation and Challenges of Inclusive Education in Gross Motor Activities in Taiwan Kindergartens

Presenters

Chao-Ming Lee, National Chengchi University, Taiwan

All authors

Chao-Ming Lee, National Chengchi University, Taiwan

The research aimed to understand the curriculum-planning and practical strategies used by ECE teachers during gross motor activities from all types of children. On this issue, many studies had mentioned the benefits of gross motor activities for children with/ without special needs (Martin, 2013; Ben Sansi et al., 2021).
This study was based on the Montessori and Froebel teaching methods, as well as the CRPD (2006). Under the implementation of gross motor development, child-centered approach, and early intervention principles, this

analyzed the educational philosophy and guided play strategies for planning and teaching for teachers (Moghaddaszadeh and Belcastro, 2021). This study employed a qualitative research paradigm, using focus group methodology to collect data. Six kindergarten teachers participated in the study, engaging in eight regular interviews between Septemer 2024 and June 2025. All participants were provided with and confirmed the consent form, information sheet, and interview records. Pseudonyms have replaced the names of participants and documents. Participants could voluntarily withdraw from the research at any time. The main findings included: 1. The goals for the curriculum are mostly planned based on the abilities of typical children, and teachers mark the indicators of IEPs individually for children with special needs; 2. Teachers consciously arrange various gross motor activities, striving to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate and enjoy together. Teachers should use their professional expertise to encourage and guide all children to participate, in order to promote their development. Due to the diversity of special needs children, teachers should continue their professional development.

gross-motor activity, guided play, participation, IEP, CRPD

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exploring the Development of Self-Regulated Learning in Young Children through Free Play

Presenters
ChingWen Huang, Cardinal Tien Junior College of Healthcare and Management, Taiwan
Mei Wen Lai, Cardinal Tien Junior College of Healthcare and Management, Taiwan

All authors
ChingWen Huang, Cardinal Tien Junior College of Healthcare and Management, Taiwan
Mei Wen Lai, Cardinal Tien Junior College of Healthcare and Management, Taiwan

This study focuses on self-regulated learning in young children, aiming to explore the pedagogical practices of a preschool teacher in fostering children's ability to become competent self-regulated learners through a play-based curriculum in learning centers. Research highlights that young children develop self-regulation, goal-setting, and reflective thinking, essential for self-regulated learning. Play fosters flexible thinking and sustained attention, while teacher support significantly influences the development of these abilities (Bronson, 2000; Whitebread et al., 2009; Burman et al., 2015; Bryce and Whitebread, 2012; Weisberg and Zosh, 2018). This study is grounded in the theory of self-regulated learning (SRL) as proposed in the works of Schunk and Zimmerman (1996) and Pintrich (2000), along with Hidi and Renninger's (2006) Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. The study adopts a qualitative case study approach and, through purposive sampling, selects a public preschool teacher with over 30 years of experience and multiple national teaching awards. Conducted over two and a half years in a mixed-age (4–6) classroom of 30 children and two teachers, data were collected through participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. Informed consent was obtained and reaffirmed from participating teachers and parents, who signed forms. Pseudonyms were used to protect identities. The process of self-regulated learning in young children, developed from a play-based curriculum in learning centers, involves seven spiral stages: free exploration, spontaneous selection, self-planning, autonomous action, evaluation and monitoring, strategy adjustment, and reflective improvement. It builds a comprehensive understanding of self-regulated learning in young children.

self-regulated learning, self-regulated learning process, play-based curriculum, learning centers, teacher-guided strategies for self-regulated learning in young children

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Childcare practitioners' attitudes toward injuries caused by playground equipment in Japanese ECEC settings: Safely satisfying children's desire for "scaryfunny"

Presenters
Hiroko Inokuma, Komazawa Women's Junior College, Japan

All authors
Hiroko Inokuma, Komazawa Women's Junior College, Japan

The aim of this study is to investigate the attitudes and emotions of practitioners when children are injured while playing on playground equipment in Japanese ECEC, and to clarify what practitioners should do to enable children to play safely, even when there are risks involved. Tsujitani (2021) revealed that risky play is prohibited in Japanese ECEC facilities, while Brussoni et al. (2012) pointed out that excessive restrictions on children's risky outdoor play may hinder their development. Injuries sustained by the children surveyed were classified based on the definition provided by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2015), and the play that caused the injuries was classified based on Sandseter's (2007) theory. This study was conducted based on social constructivism. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with approximately 20 childcare practitioners involved in children's injuries that occurred on playground equipment at ECEC facilities in Japan in 2024, and the data were analyzed using qualitative analysis methods. Interviews were conducted with participants who had agreed to a prior explanation of the purpose and content of the study and who had no concerns about re-traumatization. Results were anonymized. The study was approved by the university's ethics review committee. Most practitioners regretted the children's injuries. Although they understood the importance of risky play, they reduced risky play that could result in injury. The findings highlight the actions practitioners should take to ensure children play more safely, contributing to the improvement of play in ECEC and the prevention of child injuries.

risky play, playground equipment, injury, safety, Japan

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B15 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G243, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

WORKFORCE RETENTION AND JOB SATISFACTION

Chaired by Hà Phạm-Đào, Doctoral researcher, Finland

Temporary Work in Early Childhood Education: Exposing Limits of Permanent Employment in Germany

Presenters
Nina Weimann-Sandig, University of Appplied Sciences for Social Work, Education and Nursing, Germany

All authors
Nina Weimann-Sandig, University of Appplied Sciences for Social Work, Education and Nursing, Germany

This paper examines how temporary work in ECEC highlights flaws in Germany's permanent employment system, focusing on its impact on education quality, employee conditions, institutional stability, and systemic weaknesses driving reliance on temporary roles. This paper, part of the Bekit project (launched September 2024), analyzes employment trends and alternatives in Early Childhood Education. Building on the TeKit pilot study, it addresses part-time work and workload challenges among educators. The study uses professionalization theories to examine how temporary work impacts educators' roles, stability, and interactions with children. It highlights the link between stable conditions and ECEC quality, drawing on Bekit and TeKit findings about systemic pressures like workload and part-time preferences. This study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, using qualitative methods to examine how temporary employment affects professional practices, institutional stability, and service quality in ECEC. Data includes expert interviews with agency executives, municipal leaders, and childcare managers, alongside problem-

centered interviews with temporary workers and focus group workshops with providers, agencies, policymakers, and unions. This study follows strict ethical standards, including informed consent, data anonymization, and compliance with data protection regulations. Findings show temporary workers value flexibility and variety, appealing to younger graduates. Permanent staff and managers are ambivalent, appreciating staff shortage relief but feeling undervalued compared to temporary workers.The discussion highlights incentives to make permanent roles attractive while balancing flexibility, stability, and quality. The study calls for policies to reduce reliance on temporary employment by making permanent roles more attractive through better conditions, career growth, and fair pay.

temporary employment, *early childhood education*, *workforce stability, professional identity*, *care quality*

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Novice Early Childhood Education and Care Teacher's Job Satisfaction: Does it Depend on their Work Engagement?

Presenters
Hà Phạm-Đào, Doctoral researcher, Finland

All authors
Hà Phạm-Đào, Doctoral researcher, Finland
Elina Koivusalo, Doctoral researcher, Finland
Eija Räikkönen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Maarit Alasuutari, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The study aims to clarify the understudied linkage between work engagement and different dimensions of job satisfaction among novice Finnish ECEC teachers for much-needed improvement of ECEC teachers' work conditions, wellbeing and retention. Extant literature among non-ECEC teachers shows work engagement closely links with job satisfaction (Mazzetti et al., 2023). However, ECEC teachers' work engagement has been poorly investigated (Lipscomb et al., 2022), while studies on their job satisfaction often focus on the overall positive appraisal of their job instead of its multiple facets (Jeon and Wells, 2018) and its relationships with various work conditions and professional commitment. Based on the conceptualization by Schaufeli et al. (2002), Judge et al., (2017) and Jeon and Wells (2018), the study analyses their relationships in consideration of theories such as Job Demand-Resources (Bakker et al., 2023), Self-Determination (Ryan and Deci, 2020), and social cognitive career (Lent and Brown, 2006). Regression analyses with Mplus (Muthén and Muthén, 1998–2024) were conducted on web-based survey data collected from novice Finnish ECEC teachers (N = 337) in February 2024. Ethically, consent for anonymous and voluntary participation was obtained from informed participants at the beginning of the survey and pseudonymized data analyses were ensured. The findings show novice ECEC teachers' work engagement is related to all job satisfaction aspects, i.e., work conditions, on-going support, and most significantly their professional fulfilment. The study's implications are to improve ECEC teacher's job satisfaction, thus indirectly their professional retention, novice ECEC teacher's work engagement should be systematically supported.

job satisfaction, work engagement, early childhood education and care, regression analyses, Finland

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Personnel Management in Childcare: Challenges and Strategies for Employee Retention

Presenters
Susann Reimers-Schleif, Technical University Munich, Germany

All authors
Susann Reimers-Schleif, Technical University Munich, Germany

This study explores how workforce management strategies influence employee retention and childcare quality. RQ: What leadership and HR strategies enhance staff retention in childcare centers?How do digitalization and workplace conditions impact job satisfaction and care quality? Research on staff retention in early childhood education (Curbow et al., 2002) emphasizes the role of job satisfaction in childcare quality. Studies on leadership in ECE settings (Aubrey, 2011) and digitalization in HR-management (Petry and Jäger, 2018) provide the theoretical foundation for this study. Person-Job-Fit-Theory (Edwards, 1991) explaining how aligning job demands with personality and interests impacts satisfaction.Transformational-Leadership-Theory (Bass and Avolio, 1990) emphasizing the role of leadership in employee motivation and retention.HR-Digitalization-Framework (Petry and Jäger, 2018) analyzing the effects of IT solutions on efficiency in ECE. Qualitative research using an interpretivist approach. Expert interviews with 18 childcare managers/caregivers.Thematic analysis of retention strategies, leadership styles, and digitalization impact. Semi-structured interviews focusing on employee satisfaction and retention.Content analysis of managerial insights on improving work conditions in childcare. Informed consent and anonymity ensured.Ethical approval followed the EECERA Ethical Code (2024) .GDPR compliance maintained for data protection. Retention-Strategies: Leadership engagement and flexible work models enhance retention.Digitalization: IT solutions improve administrative efficiency and reduce workload.Workplace-Challenges: High emotional and physical strain require better support systems.Childcare-Quality: Staff satisfaction directly impacts childcare outcomes. Leadership-Training: specialized training in ECE workforce retention.Technology-Integration: Digital tools streamline administration enhancing efficiency.Workplace-Wellbeing: Addressing burnout through support programs.Policy Recommendations: Increased funding and structural reforms for sustainable workforce development

retention, ECE-workforce, childcare digitalization, ECE leadership strategies, childcare quality

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set B16 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G244, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) EXPLORING INTERSEXUALITY: A CHILD-CENTERED APPROACH

Chaired by Tim Rohrmann, HAWK University of Applied Sciences Hildesheim, Germany

Translating gender – Linguistic and ethical challenges in research on intersex children

Presenters
Tim Rohrmann, HAWK University of Applied Sciences Hildesheim, Germany
Halah Elkarif, Cairo University, Egypt

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Tim Rohrmann, HAWK University of Applied Sciences Hildesheim, Germany
Halah Elkarif, Cairo University, Egypt
Barbora Loudová Stralczynská, Charles University Prague, Czechia
Konstantina Rentzou, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece
Shaaista Moosa, University of KwaZulu - Natal School of Education, South Africa

This study examines linguistic and ethical challenges encountered in a cross-cultural research project on intersexuality in ECE and explores how these challenges were navigated in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Previous research has addressed methodological complexities in cross-cultural studies (Broesch et al., 2020;

Liamputtong, 2008). This study investigates complexities of researching intersexuality in ECE across diverse cultural settings. A picture book on intersexuality was used as subject for a multilingual research process grounded in self-reflection and intercultural awareness (Akpovo et al., 2018; Brody et al., 2021). Researchers from several countries collaborated in translating a picture book on intersexuality into five languages and preparing a cross-cultural research project. Document analysis and reflexive multilingual group discussions were used to identify challenges within cultural and legal contexts. Ethical approvals in five countries revealed complexities arising from national, cultural, and legal differences in language and conceptualizations of sex/gender in ECE. Researchers adhered to the EECERA ethical code while critically reflecting on their experiences and the methodological decisions made to manage these challenges. Three key aspects are analyzed: linguistic challenges, ethical dilemmas, and methodological choices. The results highlight how gender is embedded in language and culture, also evident in ethical approval processes. Findings are analyzed through the lens of social, cultural, and religious assumptions and prejudices, and legal frameworks governing intersexuality and gender in ECE across countries. This study underscores the role of continuous reflexivity in refining research methodologies and offers insights into the sensitivities surrounding intersexuality in ECE, contributing to culturally and linguistically informed practices in cross-cultural settings.

intersex, language, gender, ethical approval, cross-cultural research

Children's responses to a picture book on intersexuality: a cross-cultural perspective from Germany, Japan, and South Africa

Presenters
Halah Elkarif, Cairo University, Egypt
Tim Rohrmann, HAWK University of Applied Sciences, Hildesheim, Germany
Kozue Matsuda, Musashino University, Japan

All authors
Halah Elkarif, Cairo University, Egypt
Tim Rohrmann, HAWK University of Applied Sciences, Hildesheim, Germany
Kozue Matsuda, Musashino University, Japan
Shaaista Moosa, University of KwaZulu-Natal School of Education, South Africa

Drawing on data from Germany, Japan, and South Africa as part of a broader cross-cultural project, this study explores how children engage with Jill is Different, a picture book on intersexuality, through interactive read-alouds. Recognizing that picture books expand children's experiences (Mathuvi, 2012), this research contributes to the limited empirical literature on children's responses to picture books (Wang et al., 2021). Grounded in reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978), which emphasizes the reader's active role in constructing meaning, the study investigates how children aged 4 to 8 interact with the book's themes. The book was presented by ECE educators in varied educational settings across the three countries. Researchers observed children's reactions, questions, responses to prompts, and discussions during the sessions. Ethical approvals were obtained in all participating countries, following national, legal, and cultural guidelines on addressing intersexuality in ECE. Key ethical considerations included children's consent to attend the reading sessions, the right to withdraw without consequence, and ensuring anonymity of all responses. Findings reveal that children engaged with the book with curiosity, openness, and active participation, yet sometimes struggled to comprehend the concept of intersexuality. The study (1) highlights interactive read-alouds as an effective method for exploring children's voices in ECE and (2) underscores picture books as a powerful pedagogical tool for engaging children in discussions on diversity, gender, and intersexuality. A key implication is the need to equip ECE educators with the essential knowledge, strategies, and methods to foster meaningful conversations with young children, creating more inclusive and responsive learning environments.

Intersexuality, children's responses, interactive read-alouds, picture books, cross-cultural research

Cross-cultural differences in perceptions of intersexuality: perspectives of early childhood educators

Presenters
Barbora Loudová Stralczynská, Charles University Prague, Czechia
Kozue Matsuda, Musashino University, Japan

All authors
Konstantina Rentzou, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece
Eva Koželuhová, University of Western Bohemia, Czechia
Barbora Loudová Stralczynská, Charles University Prague, Czechia
Kozue Matsuda, Musashino University, Japan

This study explores how early childhood educators in Japan, Greece and the Czech Republic perceive intersexuality and how their beliefs shape pedagogical practice. It examines educators' responses to intersex-inclusive materials and the socio-cultural and institutional factors influencing their perspectives. Research on intersexuality (Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Dreger, 1998) highlights the need for informed pedagogy, while studies on teacher beliefs (Skelton, 2012) emphasise their role in shaping inclusive practices. Extending these discussions, this study explores early childhood educators' perspectives on intersexuality within the ECE context. Grounded in social constructivist (Cole et al., 1978) and queer theory (Butler, 1990), the study examines how normative gender assumptions influence educators. Ajzen's (2001) theory of planned behaviour informs the analysis of how beliefs impact pedagogical engagement. This study employs a mixed-methods approach as part of the international Jill is Different project. Participants include ECE educators. Data collection involves questionnaires, with pre- and post-intervention surveys assessing educators' perspectives on intersexuality as presented in the children's book Jill is Different. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) is conducted using MAXQDA software to identify key themes and data patterns. Following the EECERA Ethical Code (2024), all participants provide informed consent. Data is pseudonymized, ensuring confidentiality, with institutional ethical approval in all countries. Preliminary findings suggest varied educator reactions to intersex-inclusive curricula. Institutional policies shape engagement. Different legal frameworks and cultural norms in the participating countries influence teachers' attitudes and behaviour on the topic. Findings highlight the need for professional training on intersex inclusivity in ECE, informing policy and curriculum development.

teacher beliefs, intersexuality, early childhood education, cross-cultural comparison, inclusive pedagogy

Symposium Set B17 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G246, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN OF TRAVELLER, IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE FAMILIES

Chaired by Ahmet Simsar, Sharjah Education Academy, United Arab Emirates

Refugee children's occupational perceptions: A grounded theory study

Presenters
Ahmet Simsar, Sharjah Education Academy, United Arab Emirates
Mehmet Mart, Necmettin Erbakan University, Türkiye
Ayse Duran Yilmaz, Adiyaman University, Türkiye

All authors

Ahmet Simsar, Sharjah Education Academy, United Arab Emirates
Mehmet Mart, Necmettin Erbakan University, Türkiye
Ayse Duran Yilmaz, Adiyaman University, Türkiye

This study examines how refugee children occupational perceptions shape in Türkiye. Several studies have explored children's occupational perceptions in early childhood. However, refugee children often face issues such as nutrition, health, and trauma. A major challenge they face is delay or interruption of their education (Heldal et al., 2021). Refugee children face challenges in health, education, and culture, which can lead to adaptation and psychological issues (Arıcıoğlu and Avcı, 2021; UNICEF, 2024). Bandura's social learning theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory are the key frameworks for this study. Grounded theory, rooted in Straussiana constructivism and pragmatism, has been used to examine research aim (Charmaz, 2014). Interviews with three stakeholders (teachers, refugee children and refugee parents) and children' drawings were used in the study as data. All participants were informed about the research and the process, and consent forms were obtained. To ensure anonymity, participants were labeled like T1, C2, and P3 etc., in the findings. The study revealed that doctor, teacher, and policeman were the most commonly mentioned future careers by stakeholders. Stakeholders also had differing views on professions like nurses, laborers, and programmers. A connection was found between children's career aspirations and the support from teachers and parents. Grounded theory analysis indicated that refugee children's career perceptions are shaped by the views of those around them. More research is needed to explore factors influencing children's career aspirations using the proposed model. Structural barriers, like education systems, policies, and unequal access, should also be studied to assess their impact on career paths.

grounded theory, refugee children, occupation, stakeholders, reflections

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Sense of Belonging in ECEC Services: Results from an Action Research in Bergamo Municipality

Presenters
Paolo Bertuletti, Bergamo University, Italy
Ester Guerini, Bergamo University, Italy

All authors
Paolo Bertuletti, Bergamo University, Italy
Ester Guerini, Bergamo University, Italy

The aim of this empirical study is to explore how educational settings and practices promote children's sense of belonging, focusing particularly on children from migrant backgrounds. This work is based on recent studies, especially from Nordic countries, exploring the sense of belonging in EC, understood not only as an "existential" matter but also a collective right and thus a "political question" (Johansson et al., 2024: 5), shaped by "material relations" within educational settings and play materials (Juutinen et al., 2023: 882-885). It draws upon the theoretical construct of 'belonging,' already explored in psychology, from an emotional perspective (Allen et al., 2022), and sociology, through the lens of 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Qualitative methods (focus groups with educators, observations, video recordings) and a participatory approach were adopted. Twelve educators will be interviewed, and thirty children (aged 24–36 months) from two ECEC facilities run by Bergamo Municipality (Italy) observed and occasionally recorded. Data will undergo thematic analysis. All participating families signed a consent form with an information sheet. The cameras' function was explained to the children. Where children showed unease, video recordings were stopped. Results will be anonymized. Emerging findings concern: snack/lunchtime as a moment of mutual recognition but also implicit cultural stigmatization, and overlooked dynamics limiting integration of children from disadvantaged linguistic-cultural backgrounds. Educators involved in this research may be supported in developing strategies to foster inclusion and acceptance among

children from multicultural contexts. Findings may also guide other practitioners and policymakers in shaping ECEC services.

sense of belonging, migratory background, education settings and practice, material relations, qualitative research.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Let us in, hear our voices; an exploration of barriers to access and participation in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes for the Traveller population

Presenters
Emma Ferris, SETU, Ireland

All authors
Emma Ferris, SETU, Ireland
Lillian Byrne, SETU, Ireland
Susan Flynn, SETU, Ireland
Seamus Dillon, SETU, Ireland

The aim of the research is to identify and explore barriers to access and participation in preschool programmes for Traveller families. The only substantial published research on the topic is Baker (2021), who suggested that poor accommodation, homelessness, poor health and the experience of widespread prejudice and discrimination combine to create a particular set of circumstances that mitigate against Traveller children participating fully in education (Baker, 2021: 75). This research is going to build on Baker's (2021) study, by compiling a detailed list of barriers to access and participation in preschool programmes and also exploring why the these issues mitigate against Traveller children participating fully in preschool programmes. The theoretical framework is transformative research and draws on theories of historical and cultural trauma (Subica and link, 2023). This research is qualitative and has been conducted using equity-centred, transformative research (Venkateswaran et al., 2023: 1). A gatekeeper organisation and five cultural advisors were recruited to provide a cultural lens and to support engagement with the community. Creative elicitation and semi-structured interviews with 10 Traveller mothers and 10 Traveller champions, constitute the study's research methods. The key ethical considerations in this research are the low literacy levels within the community, potentially impacting informed consent and the historical marginalisation and discrimination towards the Traveller community in Ireland. Data collection phase begins in May 2025. This research will provide an evidence base for increased cultural sensitivity in the provision of early education in Ireland.

preschool programmes, ethnic minority, community, education, equality

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B18 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G308, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

PRE-SERVICE STUDENTS: MATHS, INCLUSION AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING (PAIR)

Chaired by Natália Meireles Santos da Costa, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

Exploring Early Childhood Studies students' beliefs about mathematics

Presenters
Leanne Gray, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

All authors

Leanne Gray, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom
Jennifer Sau, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

To explore Early Childhood Students' beliefs about the teaching of mathematics and the reasons behind these beliefs. Aubrey and Durmaz (2012) highlight that early years educators bring their own values and beliefs into their practice. However, the pedagogical beliefs and attitude towards mathematics of early years educators is an understudied area (Anders and Rossbach, 2015). Building on a smaller scale study in one university (Gray and Harris, 2023), this study widens participation to universities across the UK and focuses on exploring the reasons behind students' beliefs about the teaching of mathematics. The theoretical framework for this study draws upon Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1979). Conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018), this study involved questionnaires followed by semi-structured interviews. Informed consent was sought prior to the questionnaire and at the start of each interview, with the opportunity to withdraw from the study given. Pseudonyms replaced participant names. Online questionnaires revealed that participants were less confident in teaching mathematics and found teaching mathematics less enjoyable than nearly all other areas of the early years curriculum. In interviews, participants revealed that one key reason for this was negative mathematical experiences in their own childhood or own schooling, particularly around compulsory mathematics examinations at school.

Through awareness and understanding of these negative mathematical experiences, training for early childhood educators can be adapted to build confidence and enjoyment in mathematics. Participants suggested a more playful and dynamic approach to mathemati

teaching mathematics, practitioners' views, early childhood students, prior experiences, beliefs

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

This research was funded by a British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant.

Exploring preservice teachers' knowledge and experiences with digital storytelling to promote inclusion, empathy, and diversity in early childhood education

Presenters
Eleni Katsiada, University of West Attica, Greece

All authors
Maria Hatzigianni, University of West Attica, Greece
Eleni Katsiada, University of West Attica, Greece
Nekatarios Moumoutzis, Technical University of Crete, Greece
Paulina Marchlik, University of Warsaw, Poland
Olga Wyslowska, University of Warsaw, Poland
Lea-Joelina Fleck, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Germany
Patricie Jurasova, Pelican school, Czechia
Marios Christoulakis, Technical University of Crete, Greece
Kamila Wichrowska, University of Warsaw, Poland
Iris Thimm-Netenjakob, Gutenberg University of Mainz, Germany

This study examines preservice teachers' knowledge and experiences regarding the use of digital storytelling (DST) as a pedagogical tool to foster inclusion, empathy, and diversity in early childhood education across four countries: Greece, Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic. Research has demonstrated that DST can enhance student engagement, promote critical thinking, and cultivate empathy (Robin, 2008; Sadik, 2008). By providing a platform for creative expression and personal storytelling, DST facilitates deeper connections with learning materials. Moreover, it amplifies diverse voices and perspectives, making it a valuable tool for addressing social justice issues in education (Lambert, 2013). Freire's critical pedagogy provides a framework for this study. Understanding DST as a tool for empowerment, social justice, and giving voice to marginalized communities (Giroux, 2010). DST can serve as a means

of critical reflection, helping preservice teachers and children challenge dominant narratives and promote equity. This exploratory study adopts an interpretative paradigm, utilizing an online questionnaire with both open- and closed-ended questions. A total of 278 preservice teachers from the four participating countries completed the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using statistical and thematic approaches. Ethical approvals were obtained from all participating universities, and informed consent was secured prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. Preliminary findings indicate that preservice teachers recognize the potential of DST in promoting diversity, amplifying marginalized voices, and fostering intercultural competence. However, their knowledge and practical experiences with DST remain limited. Institutional support, digital resources, and inclusive policies are key to maximising DST's effectiveness in early childhood education.

digital storytelling, diversity, empathy, inclusion, preservice teachers

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B19 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G309, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES AND INCLUSIVE HOME LEARNING PRACTICES

Chaired by Georga Dowling, Maynooth University, Ireland

Parental involvement of co-parents in preschool

Presenters
Shana Van De Wiele, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

All authors
Shana Van De Wiele, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

This research project explores how co-parents experience parental involvement in kindergarten in relation to shared parenting and the development, school career and wellbeing of their children. Previous research highlights the importance of parental involvement in preschool for children's academic journey (Wilder, 2014), wellbeing (McKay et al., 2003), and development (Epstein, 1995), especially in mixed family structures Vandenbroeck (2019). However, it remains unclear how co-parents specifically experience this involvement. Parental involvement is often defined as a multifaceted concept encompassing a wide range of parental practices, emphasizing its importance for the upbringing and development of the child (Borgonovi and Montt, 2012). Notably, parents rarely have a voice in the conceptualization of this concept, despite being key stakeholders in this process (Devlieghere et al., 2020). The study included a literature review and 15 semi-structured interviews with co-parents (9 women, 6 men, 3 from a progressive school), recruited via an information letter, social media, and snowball sampling. This study adheres to the ethical protocol of Ghent University, where informed consent is used. This study critiques the technocratic view of parental involvement, showing how the 'good parenting' model overlooks context, excludes parents, and fragments responsibility. It advocates a pedagogical partnership based on dialogue, collaboration, and shared responsibility for the child's wellbeing. This approach better addresses the challenges of diverse family structures. This study identifies barriers and facilitators of parental involvement among co-parents in kindergarten, with the aim of developing school policies that consider the diversity and needs of parents.

preschool, parental involvement, co-parenting, qualitative, partnership

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Exploring Inclusive Home Learning Practices in Early Years Settings: Enhancing Engagement and Support for Families from Diverse Backgrounds

Presenters
Saudaa Nadat, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

All authors
Saudaa Nadat, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom
Konstantinos Skordas, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

Our research study aims to review our current home learning provision and understand how to further develop practice to ensure that our offer is inclusive and continues to meet the diverse needs of families across different socio-economic backgrounds. Evidence suggests that the quality of interactions between a parent and child has the most positive impact on child's development regardless the parent's vocation (Sylva et al., 2004). Phase one of our study provides evidence that high-quality pedagogical conversations encourage parents to actively participate in their children's learning and engage with home learning (Lin et al., 2019). This presents an opportunity to understand how home learning can be used to bridge the learning gap between children from affluent backgrounds and those from areas of deprivation, furthermore ensuring that children from disadvantaged backgrounds continue to access high quality Early Years Education (Goodall, 2017) and ensuring that parental barriers to engaging in home learning is identified and mitigated (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011). The research is framed within an interpretivism paradigm (Bryman, 2015), using action research as methodology. Our data collection methods include parent and teachers questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observations on home learning practices within 10 focus settings (Denscombe, 2017). Consent forms were provided to both teachers and parents with the option of opting out (BERA, 2018). Early findings suggest that pedagogical conversations effectively offer an inclusive home learning provision to families, ensuring that diverse range of needs are met through a differentiated approach. Findings inform policy and practice in enhancing parental engagement in Early Years.

home learning, inclusive, socio-economic backgrounds, diverse pedagogical conversations

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

'It's always been like that here' – On the socio-historical dimension in parents' perspec-tives on arranging childcare in East Germany

Presenters
Christoph Kairies, Hildesheim University, Germany

All authors
Christoph Kairies, Hildesheim University, Germany

The presentation focuses on how parents who experienced German reunification as children in East Germany, relate to and produce the GDR and East Germany in their perspective on arranging childcare. It aims to reconstruct the parents' perspectives and to make visible aspects that have been neglected so far. Studys on parents who experienced German reunification as children in East Germany show the importance of these experiences of transformation (Ahbe and Gries, 2006) and that there are still differences between West and East Germany in the context of family life (Diabaté et al., 2015; Konietzka and Kreyenfeld, 2015; Gerlach, 2017) and childcare (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2022; Markert, 2021; Guglhör-Rudan et al., 2022). Family is conceptualised as a conjunctive experience space (Bohnsack, 2017; Hermes, 2017; Przyborski, 2024). In this framework the doing family approach (Jurczyk, 2014; 2020) is used to describe the family childcare practices in everyday life. The theoretical basis is a praxeological sociology of knowledge (Bohnsack, 2017; Hermes, 2017). The data was collected using guided

individual and couple interviews (Nohl, 2017; Wimbauer and Motakev, 2017). The interviews were analysed qualitatively and reconstructively using the documentary method (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014). The parents were informed about the research process, their rights and data protection by signing a form. The parents' perspectives were not jugded normatively. The presentation demonstrates that the parental ideas and (childhood) experiences invoked in the context described are of legitimising and orienting significance in the creation of contemporary care arrangements. The findings are relevant for the constitution of inequality (Baader and Bollig, 2019) and understanding of the diversity of parents perspectives and social background.

GDR, parents, family, care, education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set B20 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G315, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

EXPLORING INCLUSION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ECEC (PAIR)

Chaired by Duygu Yalman Polatlar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye

Exploring Inclusion through an Anti-Bias Lens: Perspectives from Preschool Teachers, Families, and Children

Presenters
Duygu Yalman Polatlar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye

All authors
Duygu Yalman Polatlar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye
Elif Löklü, Zübeyde Hanım Anaokulu, Türkiye
Hacernur Yeşilaltun, Bayrampaşa Anaokulu, Türkiye

Through an anti-bias storytelling intervention, this study explores how preschool teachers, families, and children aged 5–6 conceptualize inclusion. This study investigates the impact of such an intervention on the perceptions of inclusion among children, teachers, and families in early childhood settings. Anti-bias education and storytelling promote inclusivity (Derman-Sparks and Edwards, 2020; Paley, 1992), yet few studies explore how they shape children's own understandings of exclusion. This study fills that gap by foregrounding children's interpretive voices and perspectives on difference. Drawing on anti-bias education theory, and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), the study views learning as socially mediated, with stories serving as tools to co-construct empathy, identity, and belonging. We analyzed pre- and post-intervention interviews using a qualitative interpretivist approach and thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2019). Data were gathered over three weeks from 16 children, 10 teachers, and 10 parents in diverse preschool settings across Istanbul. Ethical procedures ensured informed consent, child assent, and developmentally appropriate data collection. Findings reveal increased empathy and inclusion awareness, with children referencing story characters to express inclusive behaviors. An unexpected finding was their spontaneous use of inclusive language beyond storytelling contexts. The study supports integrating anti-bias storytelling in early-year curricula, strengthening educator training, and engaging families. Future research could explore its cultural adaptability and long-term effects.

inclusion, anti-bias education, storytelling in early childhood, social sustainability, early learning communities

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Beyond Inclusion: Abolishing White Childhoods in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Presenters

Duha Ceylan, Vrije Universiteit Brussel/Ghent University, Belgium

All authors
Duha Ceylan, Vrije Universiteit Brussel/Ghent University, Belgium
Tuba Bircan, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

This study examines how whiteness and colonial logics shape early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. It poses the following research questions: How do ECEC policies regulate the belonging of racialised children? How do diversity and inclusion initiatives sustain whiteness? Drawing on the work of Burman (2008), Ahmed (2012), and Wekker (2016), this research critiques how ECEC enforces linguistic hierarchies (Blommaert, 2013), emotional discipline (Mecheril, 2018), and conditional belonging. It employs the Critical Race Theory (Ahmed, 2012), Decolonial Theory (Wynter, 2003), and Southern and Anticolonial Theories of ECEC (Pacini-Ketchabaw and Taylor, 2015; Abebe et al., 2022) to reject reformist inclusion models and explore ECEC beyond whiteness. It further integrates Speculative Imagination (Hartman, 2008; Stovall, 2018) as an abolitionist method to reimagine early education outside state control. Utilising a qualitative, abolitionist methodology, this study integrates 27 interviews with Syrian mothers, ethnographic observations of racialised families, and speculative fabulation (Hartman, 2008) to envision ECEC outside the framework of colonial governance. To protect participants from re-traumatisation, ethical considerations were addressed through informed consent, anonymisation, and composite storytelling. Findings reveal that ECEC functions as a racialised governance tool through mechanisms such as language policing, emotional expectations, and diversity policies that regulate rather than liberate. Inclusion is not a solution but a mechanism that sustains whiteness. Conversely, speculative imagination enables us to reimagine early education beyond state whiteness, linguistic hierarchies, and institutional care. Rather than reforming ECEC, it is imperative to abolish its colonial foundations and construct radical, decolonial alternatives.

whiteness in ECEC, coloniality of childhood

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set B21 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G319, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) PLAY AND MATHEMATICS IN NORWEGIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Chaired by Oliver Thiel, Queen Maud University College, Norway

"That's a bit unfair" How Norwegian five-year-olds use the stochastic concept "fairness" in free play

Presenters
Oliver Thiel, Queen Maud University College, Norway

All authors
Oliver Thiel, Queen Maud University College, Norway

This study examines how Norwegian five-year-olds understand and apply the concept of ‘fairness’ in stochastic situations that arise in children’s free play. The study is part of the project ‘Stochastics in Children’s Outdoor Play (SCOP)’ (Nikiforidou, et al., 2023), belonging to the project ‘Play and Mathematics in Early Childhood Education‘ conducted by the EECERA SIG Mathematics. As a theoretical framework, we use the ‘epistemological triangle’, a model that explains the role and nature of mathematical knowledge (Steinbring, 2006), and the Probabilistic Thinking Framework developed by Jones et al. (1999). We recorded over six hours of video observation data from a Norwegian ECEC institution and analysed the data qualitatively. The children's parents have given consent. More importantly, the children's permission was obtained in a way appropriate to their understanding and context.

Therefore, we were not just passive observers but tried to get to know the children and their environment respectfully and inclusively. On the other hand, it was important not to influence the children's activities with our ideas since we were interested in their natural, unfiltered behaviour, interactions and perspectives. The findings show that the children discuss and argue about unfairness when they experience that not all participants in the game have the same odds of winning. The study suggests that five-year-olds can apply elementary probability concepts in a way that reflects their beginning understanding of fairness as a stochastic concept. These findings emphasise the possibilities of working with basic stochastic concepts in early childhood to promote children's holistic development.

child development, fairness, free play, stochastics, early childhood mathematics education

Beyond Algorithms: The Role of Estimation in preschool Children's Computational Thinking – An Inclusive Research Approach

Presenters
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Elin Kirsti Lie Reikerås, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway
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Ida Kolsrud, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway
Sara Cecchetti, Bergamo University, Italy

This study explores whether estimation plays a role in preschool children's computational thinking (CT) during unplugged activities, adopting an inclusive research approach. It investigates how children engage in estimation as part of reasoning and whether existing CT frameworks sufficiently account for this process. CT has been extensively studied in digital contexts (Wing, 2006; Selby and Woollard, 2013; Aho, 2012; Grover and Pea, 2018) focusing on programming and algorithmic reasoning. Unplugged CT, which develops reasoning through physical, non-digital activities, has being identified as relevant in supporting learning (Chen et al., 2023). While Wing initially included estimation in CT, its role is largely unexamined in later models. This study employs Selby & Woollard's (2013) model to categorize CT processes, complemented by Grover and Pea's (2013) framework, which interprets estimation as part of pattern recognition and debugging. The study follows a qualitative, exploratory research paradigm and adopts an inclusive research approach. A co-researcher with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) contributed to both observation and analysis, offering insights that might have gone unnoticed. The study was conducted in two Norwegian preschools, each involving four children and one teacher. Observations and field notes were collected during unplugged CT activities. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent, anonymity for children, and meaningful participation of the co-researcher. Findings indicate that estimation plays a role as a CT

component, contributing to spatial reasoning, sequencing, and problem decomposition. This study suggests the value of unplugged activities in early childhood CT and highlights the relevance of inclusive research methodologies.

computational, thinking estimation, unplugged activities, early childhood education, inclusive research

Teacher Educators' Experiences with Co-Creation and Playful Approaches in Language, Text and Mathematics

Presenters
Elena Severina, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

All authors
Elena Severina, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway
Magni Hope Lossius, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway
Maria-Rosa Raphaela Doublet, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

This study examines Norwegian kindergarten teacher educators' experiences with co-creation and playful approaches in an interdisciplinary course, "Language, Text, and Mathematics". Previous research highlights the challenge of bridging theory and practice in kindergarten teacher education (e.g., Ertsås and Irgens, 2012; Moxnes, 2016), emphasising the need for alternative, co-creative teaching approaches. The study draws on co-creation theory (Røiseland and Lo, 2019), which highlights active participation and shared knowledge construction; graded theories of knowledge (Ertsås and Irgens, 2012), distinguishing different levels of theoretical engagement in professional learning; and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2009), underscoring the role of critical reflection in changing educators' perspectives. The educators developed a new teaching design based on EX-PED-LAB methodology (Ødegaard et al., 2022). EX-PED-LAB is a workshop-based methodology, facilitating collaborative knowledge development and innovative teaching practices. Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative approach, applying thematic analysis to observation journals and audio recordings from teacher educators' discussions following the educational workshops. Ethical considerations include informed consent and confidentiality. The study identifies three key findings. First, student participation increases through co-creation, where students' practical experiences were combined with theoretical perspectives. Second, kindergarten teacher educators' traditional role is challenged as they transition from knowledge transmitters to co-creators. Finally, a playful approach enables a dynamic exchange between theoretical and practical knowledge, potentially fostering transformative learning. This study contributes to discussions on integrating playful approaches in higher education, illustrating how co-creative teaching designs can bridge the gap between theory and practice in early childhood teacher education.

kindergarten teacher educators, playful learning, co-creation, and Language, text and mathematics

Symposium Set B22 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G320, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) BEYOND DOCUMENTATION: LEARNING STORIES AS A BRIDGE FOR LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Chaired by Lorraine Sands, University of Waikato, New Zealand

How effectively do learning stories enable children, in a cross-sector learning community, to grow an understanding of languages, cultures, and identities: A narrative inquiry

Presenters
Lorraine Sands, University of Waikato, New Zealand

All authors
Lorraine Sands, University of Waikato, New Zealand

This paper investigates ways a cross-sector, heterogeneous learning community shared thoughtfully written learning stories to deepen children's understanding of their languages, cultures, and identities. The study explored how this understanding enhanced children's views of themselves as curious, learners-in-action as they embraced cultural ways of knowing, being, and doing. This paper continues research on the role of culturally responsive learning and teaching as children's curious intent leads them into learning journeys that facilitate cross-cultural understanding in a NZ forest setting (NZ Journal of Educational Studies, 2022, 1-17). I draw on my PhD research on culturally responsive learning and teaching (Bishop et al. 2007; Berryman et al. 2018). The study considers the importance of dynamic, dispositional perspectives as a heterogeneous community's focus on children's lived experiences in nature tracks learning progress through sharing learning story narrative documentation to strengthen children's languages, cultures, and identities (Carr and Lee, 2019). The study uses narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2016) to explore alternative paradigms (Moss, 2018), including innovative re-conceptualising of connections with communities 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. As this heterogeneous learning community's responsive, reciprocal, and relational lived experiences were re-accessed through learning stories that tracked progress in dynamic, dispositionally-framed ways, children were able to strengthen culturally responsive learning. Learning Stories embedded in children's lived experiences enable communities to design meaningful learning environments that enable children to be agentic learners-in-action (Gunn and Gasson, 2017).

learning stories, learner identity, dispositions, narrative inquiry, culturally responsive relationships

How can the transformative practice of revisiting Learning Stories ignite deeper engagement, advocacy, and agency children, families, and teachers, reshaping the documentation journey into a dynamic, collaborative force for meaningful learning?

Presenters
Wendy Lee, Educational Leadership Project, New Zealand

All authors
Wendy Lee, Educational Leadership Project, New Zealand

This study explores how revisiting Learning Stories enhances children's learning identities, strengthens relationships, and deepens understanding for teachers, families, and children. It examines how meaningful documentation, responsive revisiting, and reflective dialogue foster more engaged, agentic learners. This research builds on formative assessment literature (Cowie, 2008; Cooks et al., 2016) and Learning Story narrative assessment (Carr, 2001; Carr and Lee, 2019). It is informed by studies on dispositions (Hargraves, 2014; Hedges, 2021), learning identities (Claxton & Carr, 2004), sociocultural learning (Vygotsky, 1978), relational pedagogy (Riddle and Hickey, 2024), and pedagogical documentation (Rinaldi, 2006). Framed by sociocultural theory (Rogoff, 2003) and narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), this study uses a dispositional lens (Carr and Lee, 2012) to examine learning trajectories. It draws on relational pedagogy (Noddings, 2012) and participatory learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This qualitative study employs action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000) within an interpretive paradigm. Data sources include teacher interviews, Learning Stories, revisiting dialogues, and reflective journals. Participants are ECE teachers, children and families engaged in pedagogical reflection. Ethical protocols ensured informed consent, and the right to withdraw. The study adheres to the EECERA Ethical Code (2024), respecting participants' voices, values, and privacy. Preliminary findings suggest revisiting Learning Stories fosters deeper engagement, strengthens children's learning identities, and enhances professional reflection. It promotes reciprocal relationships and shared understandings learning. This research highlights assessment that honours children's agency. Policy should support revisiting Learning Stories as a dynamic process, fostering reflection, deeper connections, and sustained dialogue.

learning stories, learner identity, dispositions, narrative inquiry, teacher dialogue

Weaving Stories of Place, Identity, and Belonging: Culturally Responsive Assessment in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Roberta Skeoch, Educational Leadership Project, New Zealand

All authors
Roberta Skeoch, Educational Leadership Project, New Zealand

This study explores how teachers use indigenous knowledge and traditional stories to connect children to their place, language, culture, and identities, fostering inclusion and belonging in diverse learning environments. Rameka (2018) emphasises the importance of incorporating Māori knowledge and narratives in the curriculum, highlighting how Māori perspectives enrich children's learning experiences and foster a sense of identity and belonging. Similarly, Rau et al. (2021) argue that integrating Māori stories and values into education supports culturally responsive teaching practices, enhancing engagement and wellbeing for Māori learners. This research integrates Sociocultural Theory (Vygotky, 1978), Māori Theories of Learning (Rameka, 2017) and Learning Stories (Carr and Lee) to emphasise social interaction, mana-enhancing practices, and narrative assessment in fostering identity and family engagement This study follows a qualitative paradigm, using semi-structured interviews to explore parents' and teachers' perspectives on learning stories and their impact (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Participants included a range of both parents and teachers, selected through purposive sampling to ensure a range of experiences and insights (Patton, 2015). Teachers and families gave informed consent and provided their permission for this research and could withdraw at any time. All learners gain cultural awareness, respect for diversity, and a deeper understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's bicultural heritage, while indigenous learners particularly benefit from a strengthened cultural identity and enhanced engagement.. This research highlights the importance of learning stories as a culturally responsive assessment approach that fosters family engagement, supports children's identities, and enhances mana within early childhood education.

learning stories, dispositions, narrative inquiry, indigenous knowledge systems, learner identity

Symposium Set B23 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G329, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

SUPPORTING MULTI-LINGUAL DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Christiane Schulte, University of Galway, Ireland

Enhancing Home Language Support in Irish Early Years Settings: Overcoming Barriers and Challenges

Presenters
Christiane Schulte, University of Galway, Ireland

All authors
Christiane Schulte, University of Galway, Ireland
Ute Walker, Massey University of New Zealand, New Zealand

The study examines cultural and linguistic diversity in early childhood education by analysing Aistear, Ireland's curriculum framework, and its provisions for home languages in Irish early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. It addresses the challenges of promoting multilingualism within predominantly English-speaking

environments. This study builds on research indicating that maintaining a child's home language fosters a sense of pride and belonging, reinforcing their cultural roots (Council of Europe, 1992). Additionally, Moloney (2021) emphasises that effective training for educators is crucial for implementing multilingual practices in early childhood settings. Given the limited literature available in the Irish context, this study highlights the gaps between curricular intentions and actual practices (Shohamy, 2006). The study is framed by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) and guided by the conceptual lens of language policy as a constructed process (Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech, 2021) in order to understand the socially situated complexities of translating Aistear provisions for home languages into local policy settings and practice. Through the use of surveys, interviews, and focus groups, this research examines the lived experiences of practitioners. The study adhered to informed consent and confidentiality principles, receiving ethics approval from the University. ECEC practitioners face complex curricular and regulatory demands to ensure child wellbeing, inclusion and development, prioritising English. A lack of training and resourcing, constrained their ability to support home language use in a sustained way. The findings stress the need for enhanced resources to aid practitioners in creating active learning environments for multilingual language development.

multilingualism, early childhood education, Aistear, home languages, inclusion

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

"When everyone feels understood..."Chances & Challenges of a Multilingual Early Childhood Education in the Border Region of Austria-Slovakia

Presenters
Christina Pernsteiner-Koller, PH Burgenland, Austria

All authors
Christina Pernsteiner-Koller, PH Burgenland, Austria

Families often move between educational systems and multilingualism is especially important in border regions. The research focused on the following questions:How is multilingual education implemented in a kindergarten and a primary school in the Austrian-Slovak border region? What stumbling blocks and success factors do educational professionals perceive? Flores et al. (2015) postulate that multilingual education can foster diversity and appreciation but there is also a risk that programs aggravate inequalities. Montanari and Panagiotopoulou (2019) critize that educational institutions generally do not take multilingualism into sufficient consideration. Code-Switching und Translanguaging are r Hansell and Björklund (2022) highlight the importance of everyday routines and play in regards of learning languages. Navracics (2022) emphasizes that a varity of approaches is helpful. Code-Switching and translanguaging are increasingly considered as helpful (Cahyani et al., 2018). These insights were the foundations for the empiricial study design. A content analysis of the implementation of the multilingual education in the participating institutions took place. Additionally, a virtual questionnaire with quantitative and qualitative questions was conducted. Three teachers from the kindergarten and two teachers from the primary school participated. Strategies to anonymize the data as well as protocolls regarding the secure virtual storage of the survey data were implemented. The project was funded by the EU-INTERREG program. Multilingual education has a high priority but teachers often face a lack of resources as well as conflicts regarding the precedence of one language. New insights into language learning (especially code switching) need to be implemented into the training. Transnational training models foster understanding of systems.

language learning, multilingual education, linguistic diversity, code-switching, translanguaging

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Developing an AI-powered Indigenous Speech System and Website to Support Young Children's Learning of Atayal Medicinal Knowledge and Language

Presenters
Ching-Ting Hsin, Department of Early Childhood Education, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan

All authors
Ching-Ting Hsin, Department of Early Childhood Education, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan
Di Tam Luu, Department of Early Childhood Education, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan
Po-Cheng Chan, Department of Computer Science and Information Engineering, National Central University, Taiwan
Bing-Jhih Huang, Department of Computer Science and Information Engineering, National Central University, Taiwan
You-Ting Lin, Department of Computer Science and Information Engineering, National Central University, Taiwan
Tenghui Wang, Department of Computer Science and Information Engineering, National Central University, Taiwan
Jia-Ching Wang, Department of Computer Science and Information Engineering, National Central University, Taiwan

This study aimed to develop an AI-powered Indigenous speech system and a website to support young children in conducting a STEM project investigating Atayal medicinal knowledge and language. Early exposure to Indigenous cultures and languages is crucial for their preservation (e.g., Glasgow, 2010). Research has shown that AI is effective in helping children learn languages (e.g., Huang et al., 2022). We used culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) to develop the website and the curriculum. Due to Atayal being a low-resource language, we built a high-quality bilingual corpus by collecting data from multiple sources and recording learning materials with two native speakers. The final dataset included 350,000 Atayal and 550,000 Chinese words, along with 44 hours of speech. This corpus was used to fine-tune VITS, Whisper, and mT5-small models to create a text-to-speech (TTS), automatic speech recognition (ASR), and translation system. We evaluated the system using mean opinion score (MOS), word error rate (WER), and bilingual evaluation understudy score (BLEU), all of which reached adequate scores. Participant authorization and consent were obtained, with the option to withdraw at any time. We used the system to develop a child-friendly website with translation and read-aloud features, enabling children to explore a project, present their results in Atayal, and interview Atayal-speaking elders. This study demonstrates how AI tools can support the preservation of Indigenous cultures and languages. We recommend governments worldwide invest in expanding such AI-driven systems to include more Indigenous languages and hold workshops to help teachers overcome technological hesitation.

AI speech model, early childhood, indigenous knowledge, language preservation, multicultural education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set B24 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G362, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) WELLBEING AND PRACTICE

Chaired by Wilma Robles-Melendez, Nova Southeastern University, United States

Practice-oriented knowledge about pedagogical wellbeing practices across institutional contexts in Denmark

Presenters
Anette Boye Koch, VIA University College, Denmark
Hanne Hede Joergensen, VIA University College, Denmark

All authors
Anette Boye Koch, VIA University College, Denmark
Hanne Hede Joergensen, VIA University College, Denmark

Scandinavian legislation agrees on the importance of ECEC and schools in terms of promoting all children' s wellbeing. Thus, the study explores, in an experimental and practice-oriented way: How do pedagogues understand and practice wellbeing across institutional contexts? Research and pedagogy are characterized by many contradictory understandings of the wellbeing concept (Molbæk et al., 2023). One consequence is obscurity in how to work with wellbeing. Another is non-explicit disagreements about goals and direction in interprofessional collaborations. The research draws upon 'the new paradigm of flourishing in education' (Kristjansson 2017; Wolbert 2021), and emphasizes a strength-based approach to children and youngsters. We refer to design-based research (Barab and Squire, 2004) and value interdisciplinarity between pedagogues and researchers in knowledge making processes within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). We perform different kinds of workshops, experiments and prototyping (Marcus, 2013; Schön, 1991) in collaboration with nine randomly selected pedagogues: 3 ECEC pedagogues, 3 special school pedagogues and 3 leisure-time pedagogues. All encounters with pedagogues depend on informed consent and voluntary participation. High ethical standards were applied as stated in the EECERA ethical code (2024). Pseudonyms are used. Findings point to play participation, resistance, expression, autonomy, community, and activity, as continuous cross-contextual flourishing markers. Pedagogical flourishing practices are found to take either the child or the community as a starting point, depending on the situation and with inclusion as a central value. The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development points to Quality Education and Reduced Inequalities, which calls for facilitation of flourishing for all children.

wellbeing, flourishing, practice-oriented research, cross-institutional knowledge, Nordic pedagogy

Social fields of resonance in caring for children in marginalised positions

Presenters
Lone Svinth, Aarhus University, Denmark
Anne Maj Nielsen, Aarhus University, Denmark

All authors
Lone Svinth, Aarhus University, Denmark
Anne Maj Nielsen, Aarhus University, Denmark

This qualitative study explores how the social fields of resonance influence polyadic care and the participation and wellbeing of children in marginalised positions. Drawing on insights from dyadic care research (Noddings, 1984; Tronto, 1994) we study how polyadic care can be theorised, investigated and practiced, and how it influences the everyday participation of children in marginalised positions. We integrate and discuss the conceptualization of four caring domains: self-care, other-care, we-care, and world-care (Winther-Lindqvist et al., 2025). We apply the concept of social fields of resonance as a social-psychological space (Hermann, 2023) for understanding polyadic care and the conditions under which the social field of resonance develops children's participation and wellbeing (Svinth, 2016). Body-phenomenology and cultural psychology provide the paradigmatic foundation for 33 days of qualitative observations and 11 semi-structured interviews with practitioners from 11 ECECs. Using a phenomenological hermeneutic approach, a thematic analysis is conducted (Braun and Clark, 2006). Informed consent was obtained from participating practitioners, and pseudonyms were applied to ensure anonymity (Zeni, 1998). We used ongoing assent where children's (non)verbal communications were considered (Bertram et al., 2024). The practitioner's caring awareness (Nielsen, 2025) of the social fields of resonance is identified as a core condition for polyadic care of children in marginalised positions. This awareness encompasses an understanding of both the affective quality and the pedagogical timing within a setting. Institutionalized care is primarily polyadic, and understanding the dynamics and social conditions of polyadic care is central to developing the participation and wellbeing of children in marginalised positions.

polyadic care, body-phenomenology, cultural psychology, equity, participation

The power of hope in immigrant children. Hope in times of conflict and challenges

Presenters
Wilma Robles-Melendez, Nova Southeastern University, United States

All authors
Wilma Robles-Melendez, Nova Southeastern University, United States
Wayne Driscoll, Nova Southeastern University, United States

Project aimed at uncovering the agentic role of hope in resilient response of immigrant children through story narratives and representations. Explored conceptualizations, contextual factors and experiences denoting influence of hope in children's wellbeing in the experience of immigration seen from the perspective of culturally responsive wellbeing praxis in early education. Relates to Impact of contextual realities on children's response to immigration challenges (Adair; Masten) and experiences revealing hope (Snyder; Freire) as agentic behavior (Rogoff; Corrigan and Schutte). Project expands findings from presenters' previous work deepening views about child immigrants. Conceptual framework inspired by hope (Snyder) as agentic factor influencing child-immigrants' resilient response (Masten) to lived experiences (Rogoff, 2003) and considerations for consciously culturally-responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings; Freire) supporting children's wellbeing. Follows stories as windows (Bishop, 1990) into immigrant experiences. Respond to paradigm of hope (Snyder) as agentic resilience factor using Bishop's stories as windows into sociocultural realities of child-immigrants (Vygotsky, Rogoff) and considerations for responsive pedagogy. Literary analysis of immigration stories uncovered child-immigrants' hope-agency inspiring resilience. Unstructured interviews with former child-immigrants offered voices on hope. All data thematically analyzed to identify experiences, factors, denoting hope impact on responses. Formulated working-framework supporting practices for hope-agency as dynamic resilience factor. Followed research ethics (EECERA 2024) permission, consent from participants obtained and confidentiality maintained. Results identified wellbeing influenced by hope as agency factor in resilient response to immigration challenges facing children. Analysis of data and immigrant voices from experiences showed hope as factor influencing resilient behaviors. Results evidence need for supporting hope-agency as dynamic resilience wellbeing factor.

immigrant childrenhope resiliencewellbeing responsive pedagogy

Symposium Set B25 | Tuesday 26th August 2025, 15:40 – 17:00 | Room G366, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

DEVELOPING CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE PRATITIONERS

Chaired by Donna Carolan, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland

Agency in Practice: Exploring the Agentic Educator in the updated Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (Government of Ireland [GoI], 2024)

Presenters
Donna Carolan, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland

All authors
Donna Carolan, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland
Lorraine Farrell, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland
Mary Daly, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland
Sharon Skehill, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Ireland

This presentation aims to examines the vision of educators as agentic, competent, confident and reflective in Ireland's updated Aistear curriculum framework. Aistear emphasises the professional role of educators, acknowledging how their knowledge, skills, and values guide their work. Relationships with babies, toddlers, young children, and their families, together with an understanding of diversity and inclusive learning environments, are fundamental to the educator's role (French et al., 2022; O'Toole et al., 2023; 2024). Theoretical concepts underpinning this presentation draw upon a rights-based approach (Lundy, 2007; UNCRC, 1989) and a socio-cultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1932; Bronfenbrenner, 1979), emphasising the influence of social and cultural contexts. Theories of professional identity and agency (Biesta, 2010; Priestley et al., 2012) are also incorporated. Consultations were conducted within a qualitative and quantitative paradigm through online questionnaires, focus groups and written submissions (NCCA, 2023; 2024). An interpretative lens (Braun and Clarke, 2022) supported data analysis to identify key messages pertaining to the role of the agentic educator. All data was collected and analysed according to NCCA's research strategy, with careful attention given to obtaining informed consent and assent. This presentation explores the importance of embedding the concept of the agentic educator in Aistear to reflect the professional status of the educator in practice. It considers how a focus on the agentic educator can lead to more effective and inclusive educational practices. Implications include educators fostering responsive relationships, nurturing care, and listening to the voices of babies, toddlers, and young children, ensuring the co-creation of a participatory and inclusive curriculum. Findings suggest ongoing professional development is essential.

agency, educator, diversity, relationships, inclusion

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Building foundations. Student teachers' Reflective Skills, Academic Emotions, and Pedagogical Preferences in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Majlinda Gjelaj, University of Prishtina, Albania

All authors
Majlinda Gjelaj, University of Prishtina, Albania
Arian Musliu, University of Prishtina, Albania
Rozafa Ferizi- Shala, University of Prishtina, Albania

This study aimed to investigate the development of reflective skills, academic emotions and attitudes toward teaching among students participating in pedagogical internships as part of an Early Childhood Education (ECE) teacher preparation program in Kosovo. Developing reflection, academic emotions and attitudes toward teaching and learning over teacher education programs has been extensively discussed in the literature (e.g., Allas et al., 2017; Beauchamp, 2015; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2010; Dewey, 1933; Leijen et al., 2014; Whitaker and Reimer, 2017; Kalimaposo et al. 2023; Frenzel et al., 2009). Control-Value Theory (CVT) framework has been instrumental in understanding the variety of emotions preservice teachers encounter during their initial teaching experiences (Pekrun, 2006). Modified Reflective Practice Questionnaire (RPQ) originally designed by Priddis and Rogers (2018) was used. The study used quantitative methodology using a questionnaire with 318 students from the last years of studies as part of their Early Childhood Education (ECE) teacher training programs. Students were asked to provide informed consent, and assured that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time without consequence. The analysis reveals some trends suggesting that longer internships may positively impact reflective skills, though not all differences were statistically significant. The duration of the internship did not substantially affect students' attitudes toward Play-Based Learning. The duration of the internship, did not have a significant impact on the students' emotional responses. This study informs teacher education programs about the importance of quality teaching practice and provides insights for refining policies related to practice teaching.

academic emotions, reflection skills, practice teaching, pedagogical approaches, teacher education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Tapping into the Memory Archive for Future Practice in Early Childhood

Presenters
Dina Al-Madhoun, McGill University, Canada

All authors
Dina Al-Madhoun, McGill University, Canada

This research study aims to re-open the necessary space for prospective ECE educators to critically reflect on their role in early childhood education, supporting the creation of educational environments conceived in the image of the child they hold. Research argues that childhood memories are salient in shaping a teacher's identity, allowing future educators to become "present to [them]selves" (Greene, 1978: 199) and envision their role and impact on students (Chang-Kredl et al., 2022). This reflective process entails prospective teachers consciously engaging in the "deliberate transformation of the self" (Strong-Wilson, 2017: 168). This study combines currere—a process that encourages teachers to take an autobiographical look at themselves (Pinar and Grumet, 1976; 2006)—with Reggio Emilia's philosophy to create a safe classroom environment that supports a constructive image of the child, echoing Malaguzzi's belief that the "image of the child" is where teaching begins (1994). This qualitative case study will involve five diverse prospective educators from an ECE class at a post-secondary institution in Montreal. Data will be collected through observations, interviews, and written reflection journals informed by currere. This study complies with the Research Ethics Board, ensuring ethical consent and more generally, inclusivity by recognizing historical and political influences on teacher participants' self-formation. Findings from this research will contribute to prospective educators' self-awareness and flexibility in teaching young children. Implications include transforming ECE training and equipping educators with purpose and emotional awareness to ensure children receive the compassionate, responsive teaching vital for their development.

currere, childhood memories, identity, diversity, pedagogy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C

08:30 – 09:50, Wednesday 27th August 2025

Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava

Symposium Set C1 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G103, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

MULTIPLE AND COMPLEX DISABILITIES AND INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

Chaired by Synne Skarsaune, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

Rethinking inclusion - on ideal and practice for children with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities

Presenters
Synne Skarsaune, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

All authors
Synne Skarsaune, University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education, Department of Early Childhood Education, Norway

This study aims to explore inclusion through the lives of children with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities (PIMD), suggesting a reconceptualisation. Inclusion is a right for all, stated in the CRPD (UN, 2006). Children with PIMD are at an increased risk of experiencing exclusion (Nind and Strnadova, 2020). The concept of inclusion appears complex and unresolved (Haegele and Maher, 2023). This study leans on Kittay (2019) and her view on people with PIMD as “hard cases” that can broaden our understanding of the human. By exploring inclusion through these lives, new understanding might emerge. The exploration starts with a state-of-the-art literature review (Grant and Booth, 2009) on inclusion. The findings are compared against practical ways of structuring welfare contexts (including kindergartens) for children with PIMD, in Norway. In meetings between ideal and practice tensions become apparant, giving way to a reconseptualisation. The study does not involve any person-sensitive data. Still, consideration has been made to ensure a fair representation of the literature. This study is an ethical choice to include voices often excluded (Skarsaune, 2023). This comes with the ethical responsibility to represent in reasonable ways. The findings demonstrate that inclusion can be understood as being in (physical placement), doing (participation) and feeling (belonging) community. Children with PIMD reveal diverse and complex ways of being that challenge inherent tensions in these understandings. These lead to exclusionary processes that can be resolved by incporporating embodied and dependent ways of being. Broadened understandings must be integrated into CRPD and governance documents.
disability, profound and multiple learning disabilities, diversity, embodied communication, dependency

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Exploring Participation: Engagement Patterns of Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care

Presenters
Janina Dott, Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, Germany

All authors

Janina Dott, Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, Germany
Ulla Licandro, Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, Germany

This study explores the participation of children with disabilities in inclusive early childhood education and care (ECEC) by analyzing their engagement and interactions. Studies suggest that children with disabilities show lower levels of engagement compared to their peers without disabilities, but with differences across activities and interaction partners (e.g., Coelho et al., 2019; Kemp et al., 2013). As findings vary, there is a need for further research. Participation is defined as “involvement in a life situation” (WHO, 2001: 10), which is a fundamental right for all children (UN, 1989, 2006). It is often measured through engagement (Imms et al., 2017). We adopted direct observations in natural settings. Twenty-four children (aged 3 to 6 years) were observed using the Individual Child Engagement Record – Revised (Kishida et al., 2008). Engagement type, interaction frequency, and partners were coded across four activities: free play, outdoor play, circle time, and meal time, using momentary-time-sampling. The project, including informed consent by parents and teachers, was approved by an ethics committee. Children’s wellbeing was prioritized and observations could be paused if they showed any signs of unwillingness to participate. Preliminary results indicate that children with disabilities show higher engagement in unstructured than in structured activities, particularly during free and outdoor play. Circle time saw high levels of passive or nonengagement. While children spent approximately a third of their time in interactions, some did not interact at all in certain activities. These findings emphasize the need to tailor inclusive ECEC environments to foster greater participation for all children.

participation, engagement, inclusion, interactions, children with disabilities

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Opportunities for physical activity in schools through the lens of children with multiple and complex disabilities

Presenters
Katherine Gulliver, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

All authors
Katherine Gulliver, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom
Rachel Knight-Lozano, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom
Kathrin Paal, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

This paper focusses on the experiences of two children age 5 years-old with complex disabilities, as part of a larger, novel interdisciplinary study exploring children, families and staff perceptions of how children with complex disabilities participate in physical activity within school. Children with disabilities are typically less physically active than their peers without disabilities, despite wide health benefits (Gibson et al, 2021). Additionally, young children with disabilities are less represented in studies about their lives, due to cognitive difficulties, pre-verbal language and concerns from researchers about ethical considerations (Harcourt and Einarsdottir, 2011; Aldridge, 2007) . A critical realist lens of disability acknowledges the complex interplay of physical, medical, psychological and social, economical and cultural factors (Bhaskar and Danermark, 2006). An interpretivist research design inspired by the Mosaic approach (Clark, 2017), recognises young children as capable of participating in research. A range of qualitative data were capture through action cameras, observations and interviews with adults.
Informed consent was obtained from parents and school staff. A continual, reflexive assent process for each child was used throughout the study, recorded in ethics logs, and researchers worked closely with staff to understand children's body language (Cocks, 2006; Fargas-Malet et al., 2010). Findings reveal the range of school-based activities and exercises perceived to support children's health and wellbeing. The study demonstrates several benefits and challenges to physical activity participation for children with complex disabilities in school. Recognition of children’s

views, inequalities in experiences and implications for increasing activity participation to promote health and wellbeing are discussed.

children's views, disability, physical activity, education, participatory

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C2 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G104, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

THE IMPACT OF ACCESING OR NOT ACCESSING PRESCHOOL PROVISION

Chaired by Marius Mader, University of Wuppertal, Germany

The utility of 'the private' for professional relationships

Presenters
Marius Mader, University of Wuppertal, Germany

All authors
Marius Mader, University of Wuppertal, Germany

Daycare centers can be regarded as professionally shaped spaces as well as spaces in which relationships are established in daily practices that include intimacy, personal bonds and by this can be marked as private. Current research predominantly thematizes interactions between parents and pedagogues in the context of a professional perspective considering private dimensions as part of hazy social relationships (Cloos and Karner, 2010; May, 2018). Beyond this, based on a comparative study (Mader, 2024) the paper asks for systematic ties between professional and private dimensions and by that for the utility of the private for professional relationships between parents and pedagogues. Previous research refers to relational private aspects and shows that parent-professional-interactions not only are structured by role-positions between professionals as experts and parents as clients. (Becker-Lenz, 2014; Betz et al., 2019). Parents are focused as users of social services (Schaarschuch, 1998; Dunkel and Weihrich, 2018) and important actors (re)producing organizational cultures (Klatetzki, 2004; Mensching, 2018). Dimensions of 'the private' are differentiated according to a sociology of the private (Hahn and Koppetsch, 2011). Data consists of problem focused, narrative interviews with parents (Nohl, 2017). Basis is a praxeological, qualitative-reconstructive approach according to the documentary method (Bohnsack, 2017; 2018). Ethical principles of confidentiality, anonymization, justice and respect have been applied. All participants provided informed consent. The study shows that dimensions of 'the private' gain systematic and strategic relevance within pedagogical relationships for professionals as well as for parents. New perspectives on the relevance of intimacy and emotions regarding the co-creation of relationships and opportunities for gaining parental and professional agency.

relationships, private, parents, professionals, organizational culture

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

The quest for childcare: the impact of not having childcare

Presenters
Jochen Devlieghere, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

All authors

Jochen Devlieghere, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

The research explores the impact of limited access to high-quality childcare on children and their families, particularly focusing on families in vulnerable situations. It investigates how the lack of childcare availability influences parents and highlights systemic issues within the childcare system in Flanders. The study builds on knowledge that high-quality childcare positively affects children's overall development (Black et al., 2017). It acknowledges prior findings that children in vulnerable situations benefit significantly from childcare but have limited access to it. (Heckman, 2011). The research operates within a framework that considers socio-economic inequalities, gender roles, and systemic barriers in childcare access. It examines how these factors intersect to influence developmental opportunities for children and socio-economic outcomes for families. The study adopts a mixed method approach, using a quantitative survey, deepened by qualitative interview with parents to uncover their lifeworld perspective on the issue at stake. Participants signed an informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and were informed that participation at the study would not influence their request for childcare. The research reveals that families in vulnerable situations, particularly women, bear a disproportionate burden due to the lack of access to childcare. Gender segregation is apparent, as women are more likely to be impacted, which threatens gender equality and undermines the economic, pedagogical, and social benefits of childcare. The findings underscore the need for systemic changes in childcare policy to ensure accessibility for families in vulnerable situations. This includes addressing gender inequalities and enhancing the social and economic functions of childcare to support t
children, parents, childcare, gender

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Preliminary Evidence of 3-Year-Old Preschool's Impact on Child Developmental Outcomes: Educational and Developmental Gains in Early Childhood (EDGE) Study Insights

Presenters
Penny Levickis, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Patricia Eadie, The University of Melbourne, Australia

All authors
Penny Levickis, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Patricia Eadie, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Hannah Bryson, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Jon Quach, The University of Melbourne, Australia

This paper reports preliminary findings from the Australian Educational and Developmental Gains in Early Childhood (EDGE) Study on the benefits of funded 3-year-old preschool to children's language and achievement outcomes. High-quality preschool programs can benefit children's academic and language outcomes (Rankin, 2022). However, limited evidence exists on the impact of two-year universal preschool at scale (Eadie, 2023). The EDGE Study is investigating these impacts on children's outcomes. The study considers the multiple levels of influence on children's development according to Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006), focussing on preschool factors primarily within the microsystem. This quantitative cohort study examined associations between preschool quality factors (e.g., funded hours, teacher-child interaction quality, teacher qualifications) and children's academic and language outcomes at the end of 3-year-old preschool. Logistic regressions were used to analyse associations. Child outcomes were categorised as those who scored >1 standard deviation above the mean and those who did not. Informed consent was obtained from adult participants and children provided verbal assent for assessments. Data were de-identified for analysis to ensure confidentiality. Children (n=780) with access to 10-15 hours of funded preschool were four times more likely to score high on Understanding Directions, than those with fewer hours. Higher teacher-child interaction quality was associated with higher scores across all language subtests. The study

provides evidence that hours and quality of 3-year-old funded preschool programs are associated with children's language skills. These results support policies expanding access to high-quality preschool. Ongoing research within the EDGE Study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits.

preschool, quality, universal, language, academic

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C3 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G113, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN'S PRIVACY (PAIR)

Chaired by Sylvia Christine Almeida, Monash University, Australia

Pushing boundaries: an ethnographic account of privacy amongst children in preschool

Presenters
Josefin Forsberg Koel, Department of Child- and Youth Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden

All authors
Josefin Forsberg Koel, Department of Child- and Youth Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden

Privacy is prescribed by law worldwide (Solove, 2008), as in Swedish preschool policy (Lpfö 18, 2018). However, privacy is an ambiguous concept due to its subjective and contextual nature. The aim of this PhD-project is to gain knowledge about privacy starting from children's everyday lives in preschool. Although children's privacy is a controversial subject (McKinney, 1998), research indicates that privacy is important to children even at young ages (Skånfors, 2019). However, social status, living conditions and development leads children to experience privacy different than adults (Laufer and Wolfe, 1977). By unifying preschool research with social psychology and privacy theory, privacy is understood as a dialectic process of social accessibility via boundary-regulation, territorial behavior and personal space (Altman, 1975; Goffman, 1961; Wolfe, 1978). Analysis builds on qualitative data from an ethnographic fieldwork in preschool, including participant observations and interviews with children, teachers and parents. Conducting ethnography raises issues beyond policy-ethics (see Swedish ethics review authority), regarding field relations, representation, and of course; privacy. Nevertheless, being close to- and part of children's boundaries enables deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Results show that children value and incorporate their private identities into the preschool. Homesickness, balancing seclusion and participation, personal belongings and self-presentation are aspects that children engage in, but that conflicts with the institutional structure. This study problematizes what can be socially expected by preschool children, and how this corresponds with their rights and educational policy. Including children in the understanding of their privacy is a prerequisite for any (pedagogical) practice striving to respect the same.

privacy, ethnography, children's interactions, social accessibility, boundary-regulation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Data and Early Childhood. Reflections on privacy

Presenters
Monica Gottardo, University of Padova, Italy
Emilia Restiglian, University of Padova, Italy

All authors
Monica Gottardo, University of Padova, Italy

Emilia Restiglian, University of Padova, Italy

Our research presents the initial step in “mapping digital childhood data” by examining the discourses and specific strategies on platformization that early childhood education experts consider crucial to fostering awareness and reassessing professional and political influence. Social media and instant messaging are widely used in childhood culture to document and share with parents. Educators play a key role in challenging platform normalization and economic models favouring private interests over public education (Jacovkis et al., 2022; Mascheroni and Siibak, 2021). Teachers have diverse views on digital tools; some embrace them, while others feel overwhelmed by datafication and privacy concerns (Fontichiaro and Johnston, 2020; Raffaghelli, 2022). The Reggio Emilia approach highlights documentation’s role in making learning visible (Malaguzzi, 1998; Alaçam and Olgan, 2021). The research follows a constructivist approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), which builds knowledge by exploring the meanings that subjects construct while interacting within a specific historical-cultural context. Following a qualitative approach, interviews (Cohen et al., 2018) have been used to reconstruct practitioners' perspectives. We conducted a study based on 14 individual interviews with educators in Italy. Participation is voluntary, with informed consent ensuring anonymity. Data will be shared with participants. Findings reveal that balancing technological documentation and children's privacy is complex. Efforts aim to ensure children's internet access while protecting them from harm (Swist and Collin, 2017; Restiglian et al., 2023). Integrating sustainability and inclusion policies in early childhood fosters equitable digital practices. We will provide recommendations for improving digital literacy and professional development in early childhood education.

early childhood education, professionalism, documentation, platformization, datafication

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C4 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G114, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

POLICIES TO ENABLE ACCESS, EQUITY AND CO-EXISTENCE

Chaired by Ailbhe Booth, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland

Child-Led Visions of Coexistence: A Comparative Study in Algerian and Bangladeshi Contexts

Presenters
Farhana Yasmin, BRAC Institute of Educational Development, Bangladesh

All authors
Sarra Boukhari, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Justine Howard, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Farhana Yasmin, BRAC Institute of Educational Development, Bangladesh

This study explores how children in Algeria and Bangladesh conceptualise coexistence with refugee communities, examining how play shapes understandings of inclusion and belonging. Recent literature highlights that children’s experiences often mirror broader socio-political discourses, offering spaces for reimagining community and identity (Burman, 2020). In refugee-hosting contexts, education fosters belonging amid displacement (Dryden-Peterson, 2022). This study builds on these insights by examining how play becomes a site for negotiating cultural identities. Grounded in cultural identity theory, the study draws on Lustig and Koester’s (2010) view of identity as multifaceted, dynamic, and co-constructed through communication. From a sociocultural childhood perspective, identity is shaped through everyday interactions, and play becomes a space where children negotiate belonging and perform inclusion or exclusion in contextually meaningful ways. This study is guided by a constructivist epistemology, recognising knowledge as co-constructed through interaction. Using a qualitative, arts-based design, it engaged 40 children (20

per country), aged 5–7, through drawing, collage, and focus groups. These child-sensitive methods foreground participants' perspectives. Data were analysed using thematic analysis, integrating visual and verbal narratives to explore representations of inclusion and exclusion. Informed consent, child assent, and cultural sensitivities were upheld. Ethical approval was obtained, and activities were trauma-informed and contextually respectful. Play emerged as a key arena for negotiating belonging. Algerian children linked exclusion to racism and bullying, particularly around skin colour and religion. Bangladeshi children foregrounded communal spaces and nature as symbols of safety. Findings urge educators to harness children's inclusive impulses while addressing systemic inequities in refugee-hosting contexts.

refugees, host societies, inclusion, play, arts-based methodology

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Access and Equity in Early Childhood Education and Care in Kosovo: Challenges and Policy Pathways

Presenters
Arlinda Beka, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo

All authors
Arlinda Beka, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo

This study examines access and equity in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Kosovo, analyzing enrollment disparities, systemic barriers, and policy frameworks. It provides evidence-based recommendations to enhance public investment, financial support, and inclusive enrollment practices for a more equitable ECEC system. This study builds on international and regional research on ECEC equity (UNESCO, 2015; OECD, 2020), contributing to the discourse on access and inclusion by examining policy gaps and barriers in Kosovo affecting marginalized groups, such as low-income families and rural communities. Grounded in educational equity theories, it applies Coleman's perspective on social capital, emphasizing how family and community networks influence children's educational opportunities. Additionally, the 4As framework (availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability) is used to evaluate whether Kosovo's ECEC policies ensure equitable early learning opportunities. Situated within a social constructivist paradigm, this study adopts a comparative policy analysis methodology and a mixed-methods approach. Methods include policy document analysis, quantitative analysis of national enrollment and demographic data, and semi-structured interviews. Sample of 12 respondents was selected, including policymakers from the Ministry of Education, ECEC administrators, and early childhood educators. Ethical considerations include informed consent, confidentiality, and adherence to research ethics in stakeholder engagement. Findings highlight systemic barriers, including insufficient public ECEC infrastructure, socio-economic disparities, and exclusionary enrollment policies, which disproportionately affect disadvantaged children. The study calls for policy reforms to expand public ECEC services, introduce financial support for low-income families, and implement inclusive enrollment policies to ensure equal access to early education in Kosovo.

early childhood education and care (ECEC), equity and inclusion, policy analysis, Kosovo, access to education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Securing an Equal Start for All: promoting access and participation for Traveller and Roma children in Ireland

Presenters
Amy Anderson, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland

All authors

Amy Anderson, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland
Fiona Healy, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland
Ailbhe Booth, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland
Ciarán Madden, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland

This research assesses inclusion indicators in early education and care in Ireland, following the introduction of the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy in 2023 and Equal Start in 2024. Public investment in quality early childhood education and care is vital to reduce inequalities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (OECD, 2025). Equal Start is a model to promote equitable access and participation for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Allocation of Equal Start resources is informed by previous research to establish a statistical identification model and stakeholder engagement to develop an ethnic identifier. Equal Start is part of a funding model for early education and care, recommended in the report of an Expert Group, Partnership for the Public Good (2021). Equal Start reflects commitments in First 5: A whole of Government Strategy and the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy, to support Traveller and Roma children to meet their potential across the educational spectrum. Using administrative data, this research evaluates progress on indicators regarding Traveller and Roma children's access and participation. Information about data processing for research and statistical analysis was detailed in the privacy statement for the administrative system. No personal information was processed. Results are discussed in aggregate. Findings indicate that Equal Start's identification model is successful in channeling additional resources to services supporting higher numbers of Traveller and Roma children. This presentation will explore how increased state investment is promoting inclusive practice in the sector. The findings will be used to direct investment in additional supports for Traveller and Roma children.

inclusion, access, participation, quality, ethnic identifier

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C5 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G115, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) DIGITAL CHILDHOODS: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EVERYDAY DIGITAL PRACTICES IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Chaired by Susan Danby, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Weaving smartphones into mother-infant interactions at home: digital disruption or participatory possibilities?

Presenters
Philippa Amery, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

All authors
Philippa Amery, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Susan Danby, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

This study investigates how interaction and social participation are socially organised and accomplished between a mother and her three-month-old infant when a smartphone is used. Maternal smartphone use largely has been studied using quantitative methods such as social experiments, surveys, and self-reports, (Coyne et al., 2022). These methods preclude the capacity for detailed understandings of what is socially occurring during mothers' everyday smartphone use at home. Drawing on Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1984) and using fine-grained, sequential analysis (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997) of video-recorded interaction as it unfolds, we present a single-case analysis of

a video observation between a mother and her three-month-old infant. We collected 86 ethnographic video observations (Heath et al., 2010) as part of a larger qualitative exploratory study investigating three first-time mothers' everyday digital practices at home. Mothers were loaned a camera to self-record interactions with their baby if/or when digital technologies were used, as if no camera was there, at three-, six-, and nine-months post-partum. All participants gave informed consent. Mothers self-recording their interactions was an ethical decision. Mothers had autonomy of when, where and what they filmed, negotiating and adjusting filming according to their infant's needs. Features of mother-infant interaction with smartphones that display joint participation, and how mutual attention and responsivity is interactionally accomplished, are discussed. Early childhood educators play an important role in supporting parents to understand research that addresses families' everyday digital technology use. This research provides evidence-based knowledge for educators, families and policy makers of the social affordances of smartphones in everyday family life.

home contexts, video observations, mother-infant interaction, participation, smartphones

Multilingual identities and agency in children's digital reading practices

Presenters
Malin Nilsen, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

All authors
Malin Nilsen, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This study examines how a multilingual picture book app supports children's language and identity development in Swedish preschools. By exploring children's interactions and educators' perceptions, it highlights how digital tools bridge home and school languages, foster peer connections, and shape multilingual identities. Digital reading practices, especially in multilingual contexts, remain underexplored. However, research highlights that integrating children's home languages in the classroom fosters belonging, identity, and engagement, bridging home and school experiences (Little and Cheng, 2024; Miller Marsh et al., 2022). This study applies a sociology of childhood lens (James and Prout, 2015) to understand children's active engagement with digital books. The concepts of translanguaging (García and Li, 2014) and agency (Alanen, 2011) are used to examine how children navigate multiple languages. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 17 educators and video observations of 25 children (ages 1–5) in nine preschools. Thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2021) examined multilingual interactions, peer engagement, and educators' strategies. Informed consent was obtained from educators and parents, with verbal assent from children. Ethical considerations included voluntary participation, participant anonymity, and an inclusive research environment. Findings indicate that the app supports multilingual children's identity formation and peer connections. However, linguistic hierarchies persist, with children favoring English due to media influence and facing challenges with Arabic dialect variations. The study underscores the need for more inclusive digital literacy practices in preschools. The study highlights the need for multilingual digital resources in early childhood education, educator training in multilingual literacy, and a reassessment of monolingual language policies.

multilingualism, digital literacy, early childhood education, translanguaging, agency

Negotiating Digital Media Use: Preschool Children's Perspectives on Rules and Agency.

Presenters
Pernilla Lagerlof, Department of Education, Communication and Learning, Faculty of Education, Gothenburg University, Sweden

All authors

Pernilla Lagerlof, Department of Education, Communication and Learning, Faculty of Education, Gothenburg University, Sweden

This study investigates how preschool children in Sweden talk about digital media in relation to rules governing its use, aiming to understand what participants' utterances indicate about their alignments and secondary adaptations. In response to polarized societal debates on children's screen time (Säljö, 2022), the study seeks to provide nuanced insights into children's perspectives. Building on research that views digital technologies as socially shaped (Danby et al., 2018) and integrated into children's everyday lives (Edwards, 2023), this study explores how young children negotiate digital norms (Arnott and Yelland, 2021). A childhood sociological perspective (Corsaro, 2020) positions children as active participants shaping their social situations, while Goffman's (1961) concept of secondary adjustments informs the analysis of how they navigate institutional rules. Using Sociocultural Interaction Analysis (Wallerstedt et al., 2022), eleven hours of video data from eight visits to a Swedish preschool were examined. The researcher acted as a participant observer, and data were analysed to capture both verbal and non-verbal interactions. Ethical considerations included informed consent from guardians, pseudonyms for all participants, and respecting children's autonomy. The study followed ethical guidelines from the Swedish Research Council (2017) and was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. Findings reveal how children manage tensions between home and preschool rules, resist adult terminology, contribute to group identity, and challenge institutional rules. These insights emphasize children's agency in negotiating digital media use. The study advocates for educational practices that support children's voices, aligning with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989).

digital media use, children's perspective, Swedish preschool, children's agency, secondary adjustments

Symposium Set C6 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G117, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE QUALIFICATIONS, TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL AGENCY AND STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

Chaired by Gerd Sylvi Steinnes, Volda University College, Norway

Unpacking the enactment of kindergarten teachers' professional agency: Insights from vignette-based inquiry

Presenters
Chrysa Keung, Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

All authors
Chrysa Keung, Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

This study is part of a larger project investigating how kindergarten teachers perceive and enact their professional agency. By utilising written vignettes in semi-structured interviews with eight classroom and head teachers, the study explores their application and evaluates both the benefits and constraints. While text-based vignettes are commonly used in qualitative research, their integration into studies of teacher professionalism and development remains limited (Ghamrawi and Ghamrawi, 2024; Skilling and Stylianides,2020). The contextual scenarios presented in vignettes can offer a challenging perspective on autonomy in teaching and professional practice. Despite ongoing debates regarding the applicability of vignette responses to real-life actions, the insights gained from vignette data extend beyond mere case demonstration (Skilling and Stylianides, 2020). They uncover implicit knowledge and unexamined beliefs that significantly influence the decision-making process (Roefs et al., 2024). Employing a vignette-based inquiry approach, the data were analysed through the categorisation of participants' responses to the vignettes, with follow-up questions used to interpret the meanings behind their responses. This study received approval from the ethical research committee and consent from participants. The findings indicated that the designed vignettes reflect real-life situations relevant to teachers in their current roles. Teachers described their professional agency as constrained by micro-contextual influences. Although kindergarten teachers believed they

were engaging with professional agency, this support was dependent on collaboration among teachers and leadership from principals. The ability of kindergarten teachers to exercise agency appeared to be hindered by institutional norms and ideologies, with parents acting as external accountability mechanisms that reinforced these limitations.

professor agency, innovative approach, vignette-based inquiry, contextual scenarios, kindergartens

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Policy out of synch? Exploring Norwegian ECEC staff's assessment of central capacities for quality and inclusion

Presenters
Gerd Sylvi Steinnes, Volda University College, Norway

All authors
Gerd Sylvi Steinnes, Volda University College, Norway
Lise Vibeke Hannevig, University of SouthEast Norway, Norway
Elin Birgitte Ljunggren, Queen Maud University College, Norway

The focus on capacity building to raise quality in ECEC organizations is strong (OECD, 2021). In Norway, governance prioritize competence building through major competence reforms. However, little research explores how staff assess central capacities for producing high quality services. This study explores how staff in Norwegian ECEC assess their own competence and organizational staffing as prerequisite for ECEC quality. The study expands on previous research on capacity and quality in ECEC (Steinnes, 2014; Omdal and Roland, 2020). The analysis is informed by framework factor theory (Lundgren, 1972) and theories of organizational capacities (Morgan, 2006) which operationalize framework factors in the analysis. The study was conducted within an interpretive research paradigm, analyzing a quantitative dataset collected from 1100 Norwegian staff members in ECEC. The study is based on an anonymous, voluntary survey. The informants received information about the purpose of the study and gave their informed concent by participating. Data is stored securely. Ethical considerations are emphasized to ensure fair representation and avoid possible bias. The analysis suggests that the staff assess their competence as good, except for leadership competence among the preschool teachers. A majority assess the staff-capacity in terms of sick- leave, pedagogical staff norm and turnover as affecting their own pedagogical work. The problem of the lack of staff dominates the answers in the free text. Preliminary analyses suggest that policy in some degree does not answer the needs of the sector. On this background the strong policy focus om capacity building in terms of competence reforms must be discussed.

ECEC, capacity building, quality improvement, competence reforms, inclusion

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

School Age Childcare Qualifications Ireland

Presenters
Louise Kilbane, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

All authors
Louise Kilbane, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

This study explores the qualifications and training needs of Ireland’s School-Age Childcare (SAC) workforce. It seeks to identify current gaps, examine international best practices, and provide evidence-based recommendations for

developing a dedicated SAC qualification that supports professionalisation, enhances service quality, and upholds children's developmental rights. The research builds on SAC policy, workforce development, and international best practices. Highlighting the link between qualified professionals and developmental outcomes for children (Byrne, 2016). Comparative studies emphasise the success of Nordic countries in integrating SAC into educational frameworks (Ljusberg, 2018). The research adopts a socio-ecological framework, recognising that SAC policy is influenced by multiple factors: socioeconomic, political, and cultural elements (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The study employs comparative policy analysis to assess Ireland's SAC policies against international benchmarks. A social pedagogical perspective informs SAC as a developmental rather than a custodial service (Ljusberg, 2018). The study follows a constructivist paradigm, acknowledging that diverse stakeholder perspectives shape SAC policies and workforce development. The study ensures ethical integrity through consent, confidentiality, and GDPR-compliant, securely stored, anonymised data. Initial findings indicate Ireland's SAC policies have evolved incrementally, with significant milestones such as the 2018 regulations under the Child Care Act of 1991 and the 2020 National Quality Guidelines. International best practices emphasise staff training and integrated policy frameworks to ensure equitable SAC provision. The research underscores the critical role of workforce qualifications in enhancing SAC quality. Ireland can establish a more equitable and high-quality school-age care system by learning from international practices and investing in a well-qualified SAC workforce.

school-age care, qualifications, professionalisation, policy-intergration

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C7 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G118, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

THE IMPACT OF COVID ON INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGIES

Chaired by Maja Haals Brosnan, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland

Fostering resilience in post-pandemic ECEC practices: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Nordic countries?

Presenters
Jaana Juutinen, University of Oulu, Finland
Björn Rúnar Egilsson, University of Iceland, Iceland
Lilly Augustine, Jönköping University, Sweden
Anders Skriver Jensen, University College Copenhagen, Denmark

All authors
Jaana Juutinen, University of Oulu, Finland
Björn Rúnar Egilsson, University of Iceland, Iceland
Lars Yngve Rosell, University of Stavanger, Norway
Lilly Augustine, Jönköping University, Sweden
Anders Skriver Jensen, University College Copenhagen, Denmark

This study aims to identify critical aspects and success factors of Nordic ECEC practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. A review by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2021) highlighted concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on education, but it did not specifically address ECEC. Several studies have been conducted on the national level, but no Nordic syntheses exist. To understand the relationships between society and the structural and social aspects of pedagogical practices, this study draws upon the critical educational perspective of Didaktik (Klafki, 1998; Broström, 2022), and the concepts of social sustainability (Johansson and Rosell, 2021) and resilience (Benavot et al., 2024). The study is designed as a scoping review, based on the PRISMA process (Page et

al., 2021). Six international databases were searched, followed by a national search within each of the participating five Nordic countries. In total, 46 articles were analyzed. Ethical consideration has been given to ensure fair representation of literature from multiple sources across the participating countries. The study's emphasis on democracy and social sustainability, resonates with the ethic of respect (Bertram et al., 2025). Critical aspects and success factors regarding ECEC practices in the Nordic countries were identified at three interrelated levels: the structural, relational, and pedagogical levels. This study has shown that research exploring children's perspectives, and the perspectives of minority and vulnerable groups, is underrepresented in the Nordic COVID-19 ECEC literature. The inclusion of these perspectives seems important in relation to fostering resilience in a socially sustainable manner.

COVID-19, early childhood education and care, Nordic, resilience, social sustainability

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Rethinking Inclusion: The Educational Experiences of Immigrant Children and Families Amidst COVID-19's Systemic Exclusion

Presenters
Çağrı Peköz, Centro de Investigação em Estudos da Criança, Universidade do Minho, Portugal

All authors
Çağrı Peköz, Centro de Investigação em Estudos da Criança, Universidade do Minho, Portugal
Fernando Ilídio Ferreira, Centro de Investigação em Estudos da Criança, Universidade do Minho, Portugal

This study examines the educational experiences of immigrant children during COVID-19, highlighting how the crisis intensified existing inequalities and exposed the limitations of conventional inclusion policies.asdasd While prior studies on COVID-19 and education largely focused on remote learning challenges (Ortiz-López et al., 2023; Yıldız et al., 2022; Duran, 2021; Yıldırım, 2021), they often overlooked critical perspectives on inequality. In contrast, this study draws on critical pedagogy to examine educational inequities, highlighting how traditional structures failed marginalized children during the pandemic. Rooted in critical pedagogy (Apple, 2012; Freire, 1985; 2000; 2005), this study conceptualizes inclusion beyond access to education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2015), emphasizing power imbalances and the need for equitable participation in early childhood education. This study adopts a critical research paradigm, recognizing education as a site of power and inequality. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining survey data (2020), focus group discussions (2020), classroom observations in a culturally diverse preschool (ages 4–5; 2020-2023), and teacher-researcher reflections (2020-2024). Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately before being integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of immigrant children's educational experiences during COVID-19. Ethical approval ensured using informed consent, anonymity, and careful representation of marginalized voices. Findings reveal that COVID-19 did not create but exacerbated existing inequalities. Remote learning barriers and weakened post-pandemic inclusion efforts disproportionately affected immigrant children, exposing flaws in traditional inclusion models. The study calls for a shift from superficial inclusion policies to structurally transformative, culturally responsive practices that address systemic inequalities in early childhood education.

systemic exclusion, marginalized communities, COVID-19, educational inequalities, immigrant children

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Slow pedagogy and inclusive practice: learning from crisis to formulate new pedagogies

Presenters

Maja Haals Brosnan, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland

All authors

Maja Haals Brosnan, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland
Rhona Stallard, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland
Natasha O'Donnell, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland

We interrogate the implementation of slow pedagogy in Irish ECEC, and beyond, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and consider the alignment of slow pedagogy with inclusive practice. By analysing educators' lived experience, we contribute theoretically and empirically to the application of slow pedagogy in inclusive ECEC. We build on the concept of nurturing and slow pedagogy (Clark, 2022; French 2019), along with our own research documenting educators' perceptions of the pandemic's impact on ECEC. Recent literature published in support of the updating of the Irish ECEC curriculum framework presents slow relational pedagogy as pivotal to ECEC (French and McKenna, 2022). Core tenets of such pedagogy align with key priorities in inclusive education (Florian and Beaton, 2018; Cameron and Moss, 2020). Framed within a social-constructivist paradigm, a temporal-sequential design was used and consisted of four ways of semi-structured, online interviews at 3-month intervals in 2021-2022. 11 educators and managers from different settings were included through purpose sampling, based on years of experience and type/location of the setting (rural/urban, private/community). Institutional ethical approval was granted. A reflexive approach and a process of on-going consent helped negate the power dynamic of existing and new relationships. Educators intuitively slowed down to meet children's needs amidst a fast-paced plethora of ever-changing pandemic-required public health measures. This slowing pace facilitated deeper, more meaningful connections between children and educators, resulting in greater child agency and stronger relational practice that enabled more authentic inclusion. The formulation of a strong theoretical framework supports educators in implementing slow pedagogy post-Covid.

slow pedagogy, nurturing, agency, relational pedagogy, inclusive practice

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C8 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G127, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS FOR EQUITABLE EARLY EDUCATION - THE IMPACT OF SKILLED PROFESSIONALS

Chaired by Melanie Holztrattner, Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, Austira

How to Increase Teacher-Child Mathematical Activities in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)? An Intervention Study

Presenters

Hanna Maly-Motta, German Youth Institute, Germany

All authors

Hanna Maly-Motta, German Youth Institute, Germany
Anja Linberg, German Youth Institute, Germany
Simone Lehrl, University of Education Weingarten, Germany
Nadine Besser, University of Bamberg, Germany
Dorothea Dornheim, University of Bamberg, Germany

The aim of this study was to investigate whether a targeted mathematical training program for Early Childhood (EC) teachers enhances the integration of mathematical content into everyday teacher-child activities. While EC teachers' competencies in science and math are crucial for successful early childhood math education, the quality of stimulation in this area is often relatively low (Baron et al., 2024; Lehrl et al., 2016). Only a few studies indicate that targeted training can improve the integration of mathematical activities into daily routines (Cohrssen et al., 2016; Hundeland et al., 2020; Rudd et al., 2009). Based on the Structure-Process-Outcome model of ECEC quality development (Fukkink and Lont, 2007) applied to early mathematical education in ECEC this study compared the effects of a numeracy-focused training intervention with a general training aimed at improving overall process quality and a control group that received only an informational session. Fixed-effects regression was applied to analyze the effects, based on questionnaire data from 80 EC teachers in Bavarian daycares, gathered as part of an experimental multi-cohort pre-post follow-up design. Informed consent was obtained from all participants The results show that participation in the math-specific training led to a significantly greater increase in shared teacher-child numeracy activities from pre- to post-test compared to the control group ($\beta = .78$, $p < .001$) and the general training group ($\beta = .81$, $p = .002$). These findings highlight the importance of targeted mathematical training programs as a key component of quality management in ECEC.

teacher professional development, early numeracy competencies, mathematics/numeracy, early childhood education and care, intervention study

The Role of Activity Settings in Improving Global and Math-specific Teacher–Toddler Interactions

Presenters
Hanna Mary-Motta, German Youth Institute, Germany

All authors
Franka Baron, University of Bern, Switzerland
Anja Linberg, German Youth Institute, Germany
Dorothea Dornheim, University of Bamberg, Germany
Simone Lehrl, University of Education Weingarten, Germany

This project developed two teacher trainings (Lehrl et al., 2024) to enhance global and math-specific interactions with toddlers in early childcare. It examined whether the trainings improve interactions and whether effects vary by training type (math-focused vs. general) and activity setting (freeplay vs. structured activity). A promising approach to enhance interactions is providing training for teachers (Buøen et al., 2021), but what affects which facet of interaction remains unclear, especially with toddlers. Few studies have examined interaction domains and activity settings (Guedes et al., 2020), however, analyzing these reveals contextual factors affecting interaction quality. Ninety-five teachers were randomly assigned to three groups: math-focused intervention (n=30), general intervention (n=29), and control (n=30). Intervention groups received training in nine modules emphasizing everyday interactions. At pretest and posttest, global interactions were assessed with CLASS Toddler (LaParo et al., 2012) and math-specific interactions were rated by frequency. Activity settings were recorded for each cycle.
Repeated measures ANOVA was conducted in R. All participants gave written consent. They were able to skip questions or tasks and recall data use until the results were published. All data was pseudonymized. Regarding the frequency of math-specific interactions in free play, marginally significant small time*group effect can be noticed ($F(2, 75)=2.82$, $p=.07$, $\eta_p2=.03$). The post-hoc test with Bonferroni adjustment revealed a significant effect only for the math-focused intervention group ($p<.001$). Teachers' interaction potential, especially in learning support and math stimulation, often remains untapped (Burghardt et al., 2020). Identifying strategies for specific settings helps ensure best practices in ECEC are effectively applied.

intervention, teacher training, toddler classrooms, interactions, activity setting

Interaction Quality in ECEC and Equal Opportunities: The Role of Educators' Qualifications, Experience, and Reflection Processes

Presenters
Tanja Kniewasser, University of Graz, Austria
Mailina Barta, PEP University of Graz, Austria

All authors
Tanja Kniewasser, University of Graz, Austria
Mailina Barta, PEP University of Graz, Austria
Claudia Geissler, PEP University of Graz, Austria
Catherine Walter-Laager, University of Graz, Austria

How does the quality of interactions in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings contribute to equal opportunities for children under the age of three, and to what extent do educators' qualifications, professional experience, and reflection processes influence this relationship? Studies show educators' education, experience, and team meetings enhance interaction quality (Early et al., 2007; Manning et al., 2017; Pianta et al., 2016), positively impacting child development (Sylva et al., 2004), though Austrian research is scarce The Structure-Process Model (Roux and Tietze, 2007) and its extensions (Anders and Oppermann, 2024) differentiate structural factors (e.g., qualifications, team meetings) from process quality (e.g., interactions, emotional support), stressing competencies, team climate, and leadership. Data from 116 ECEC professionals across 29 Austrian settings were analyzed using the GrazIAS 0-3 tool (Walter-Laager et al., 2019), assessing relationships, wellbeing, and learning support and focuses on the performance of the individual professional. This dissertation project ensured informed consent, transparency, confidentiality, and participants' right to withdraw. Regression analysis identified team meeting frequency, years of service, and education level as key predictors of interaction quality and learning support. Frequent team meetings strongly boosted both (+1.292 points for relationships, +1.16 for learning support), with experience (+0.07 points per year) and education (+0.447 points for learning support) also significant (R^2 = .183 and .329). Policies should prioritize continuous training, higher qualifications, and regular team meetings, while valuing experience via mentorship and raising ECEC education in Austria to tertiary level with enhanced mentoring.

childs development, quality early childhood education, professionalism and pedagogue/educators role, years of service, team meetings

Symposium Set C9 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G210, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

CIRCLE TIME, LANGUAGE, POWER AND TEACHER TALK

Chaired by Ithel Jones, Florida State University, United States

The Hidden Dynamics of Circle Time: Investigating Preservice Early Childhood Teachers' Pedagogical Dilemmas

Presenters
Ayşenur Mumcuoğlu, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye

All authors
Ayşenur Mumcuoğlu, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye
Gökhan Öztürk, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye

The aim of this study is to explore experiences, perspectives, and suggestions of preservice early childhood teachers (ECT) regarding circle time (CT) during their activities in kindergartens. To achieve this, the study seeks to answer:

How do preservice ECT experience CT? How do preservice ECT perceive CT? What do preservice ECT suggest for improving practices? Previous studies (Suggs, 2019) underscore the importance of CT in fostering children's social, emotional, and cognitive growth. However, there is an ambiguity of structure and content of CT which can hinder the core essence of CT (Zhang and Quinn, 2018). Also, gaps in teacher preparation, particularly its application in diverse learning environments, have been noted in the literature (Koczela and Carver, 2023). So, grounding the theorethical framework of responsive teaching and routine-based practices (Hanson and Danyluk, 2022), this study aims to explore how preservice teachers apply CT in practice. Utilizing a case study design (Creswell, 2013) which is one of the qualitative research methods, data was collected with interviews, classroom observations and document analysis, within an interpretivist paradigm. Ethical considerations include obtaining consent, being sensitive during observations and observations, ensuring confidentiality and obtaining ethical approval from the university. Key findings indicate a discrepancy between preservice teachers' ideal CT conceptualization and their actual practices. The study also uncovers the challenges in classroom management, contributing to the difficulties in delivering high-quality CT. Also, implications for practice and policy include the need for a comprehensive inclusion of CT in teacher education curricula to implement CT in diverse classrooms.

circle time, preservice early childhood teachers, teacher trainings, child, kindergarten

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Interactions of Language and Power in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Desiree Fristedt, Linnaeus University, Sweden

All authors
Desiree Fristedt, Linnaeus University, Sweden

I have two research questions aimed at developing teaching practices for children’s critical literacy: 1) How can instruction promoting children’s critical literacy be designed, planned, and conducted? 2) What possibilities for developing writing skills does this instruction offer? Examples of critical literacy practice and research on young children are scarce (Vasquez, 2017). Most studies have been carried out in the USA, Australia, and Canada, why research from other parts of the world is called for (Rogers and O’Daniels, 2015). The Interdependent Framework for Critical Literacy Education (Janks, 2013) was used for planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. Data collection included audio-recordings of planning sessions with a teacher, and field notes and video-recordings of lessons (13 students). Interaction analysis was used to examine transcriptions from audio-recordings. Video-recordings and field notes were used for descriptions of the context. The study took place in a primary school in a suburb in a neighbourhood with mid socio-economic status. All teachers were invited for participation and the principal chose one to be part of the study. Instruction was offered to all children, including those who did not participate in the study ensuring all children received the education to which they were entitled. Consents were obtained from caregivers and continuously from children. Initial analyses indicate that the children developed awareness of their own writing, particularly in terms of vocabulary selection. Teacher-led discussions, with questions based on the framework, enhanced children’s ability to reflect over and deepen their understanding of the relation between language and power.

critical literacy, writing, literacy training, early childhood education, classroom interaction analysis

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Examining Teacher Talk in Preschool Classrooms

Presenters
Ithel Jones, Florida State University, United States

All authors
Ithel Jones, Florida State University, United States

This study examined teacher talk in preschool settings, focusing on the frequency and nature of teacher-initiated versus child-initiated conversations during free-choice center time. It also explored how teacher-child relationships and gender influenced these interactions to better understand what shapes equitable, high-quality classroom dialogue. Dialogic exchanges—open, reciprocal conversations—are more effective for learning than directive styles (Anderson and Phillips, 2017; Howe et al., 2019). This study builds on that foundation by investigating how such exchanges occur in preschool and what factors promote or hinder them. Typical classroom talk often follows an initiation-response-feedback pattern, limiting deeper engagement. In contrast, dialogic talk encourages reflection, language development, and social growth. Play-based preschool settings and strong teacher-child relationships are ideal conditions for such meaningful interactions. Using a quantitative, observational design, the study involved 61 preschoolers. Teacher-child relationships were measured by administering the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (Pianta, 1999). Trained observers recorded types of teacher talk—open/closed questions, elaborations, directives, and praise—during indoor free play. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from parents and teachers. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time and children were monitored for signs of dissent during the observations. Teachers engaged in a variety of talk types but more often directed them toward girls. Stronger teacher-child relationships were associated with more frequent child-initiated conversations, suggesting such bonds foster active engagement. These findings highlight the need for teachers to be mindful of gender equity and to build strong, responsive relationships that support all children in participating in rich classroom dialogue.

classroom-talk, preschool, teacher-child relationships, teacher-child interaction, teacher talk

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C10 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G211, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND PERSPECTIVES

Chaired by Joanne Lehrer, Université du Québec en Outaouais, Canada

Parent perspectives on daily life in Kindergarten: A cross-cultural comparison

Presenters
Joanne Lehrer, Université du Québec en Outaouais, Canada

All authors
Joanne Lehrer, Université du Québec en Outaouais, Canada
Victoria Chantseva, Université Sorbonne Paris-nord, France
Nancy Proulx, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

This visual ethnography project explored parent reactions to daily life in kindergarten in Quebec (Canada) and in France. International studies shed light on implicit values, and practices that are reflected by their absence in another culture (Brougère et al., 2008; Jacob and Ritchie, 2017; Tobin, 2016). Our study is framed by Bernstein's (1975) distinction between invisible and visible pedagogies, where invisible pedagogy involves encouraging children to learn in a spontaneous and self-directed way, and visible pedagogy involves targeted learning through explicit

teaching. Using Tobin's (2016) Video-Cued Multivocal Ethnographic Method, videos produced in eight kindergarten classes were shared with groups of parents to identify contrasting understandings of pedagogy, the roles of adults in school, and the values underpinning them (Adair and Kurban, 2019; Ritchie, 2020). Standard ethical procedures were adhered to (i.e., informed consent, ability to withdraw participation, confidential responses). Children's assent was obtained after sharing a picture book presenting the research project. Parents found that most classes in France (3/4) were less noisy than those in Quebec; that teachers in Quebec were more affectionate than in France; that French children were encouraged to conform and follow instructions, while practices in Quebec seemed more adapted to children, allowing them more 'freedom'; and that French kindergarten is focused on structured academic learning, while children in Quebec learn through play. While these findings seem to reflect larger societal values regarding children and education, implications concerning pre-service and in-service training, curriculum impositions, and policy will be discussed.

parents, preschool, kindergarten, international, visual ethnography

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Dialog Between Parents and Teachers in Co-Creating the Quality Criteria for ECEC Services Evaluation

Presenters
Tatiana Le-van, MCU, Russian Federation
Igor Shiian, MCU, Russian Federation

All authors
Tatiana Le-van, MCU, Russian Federation
Igor Shiian, MCU, Russian Federation
Anna Iakshina, MCU, Russian Federation
Irina Vorobeva, MCU, Russian Federation
Olga Shiyan, MCU, Russian Federation

Research aims to reveal the believes of teachers and parents about the criteria of a good kindergarten. Involvement of parents and teachers into kindergarten image is a common practice. But, decisions about reforms of education are often made without their participation. Researchers also pay attention to analyses of teachers', administrators', and parents' opinions concerning quality of education. That is important for agreement between researchers and practitioners in transition to renovated education curriculums (Philipsson and Garvice, 2019). The study was rooted in a structural process model of pedagogical quality in childcare facilities that has gained broad acceptance in early childhood education quality research (Tietze et al., 2021). Anonymous survey was carried out using standard toolkit of European Quality Seal international project (Tietze et al., 2021). The questionnaire was based on quality criteria of ECERS-R (Harms et al., 2017) and German Quality Catalogue (Tietze et al., 2018). Closed and open-ended questions described 52 criteria. Respondents answered what range of importance the characteristic seemed to be irrespective of the ECEC setting's specificity. There were 9 countries involved. The national study 478 preschool teachers and 3938 parents participated. Informed consent was gained from the participants. They could withdraw at any time. Consistency between parents and teachers on key positions (safety, environment, interaction) evidences the grounds for a productive dialogue. Significant differences in some important criteria point out that such a dialogue is crucially necessary. This dialogue should be mediated by experts who can adjust public opinion towards strengthening the significance of educational function of kindergarten.

parents, teachers, ECEC services, education quality, involvement

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Exploring routines of early learning across UK families - "A juggling act, really"

Presenters
Iulia Moisi, National Literacy Trust, United Kingdom

All authors
Iulia Moisi, National Literacy Trust, United Kingdom
Irene Picton, National Literacy Trust, United Kingdom

This research explores how UK parents engage in early learning and literacy activities with children aged 0–5, how this engagement has changed over the past five years, and and what can enable or hinder it. Building on decades of evidence around the importance of parental engagement in these activities (e.g., Sylva et al., 2004; Hayes et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2025), we explore recent trends and situate them within broader systemic challenges including COVID-19, rising costs-of-living, and an underfunded early years system (Hodges et al., 2024; National Literacy Trust, 2023). The theoretical framework of this study draws on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1994) and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Taber, 2025) to understand how interactions between family, community, and societal factors shape child development. The research is situated within a pragmatist-constructivist paradigm (Prawat, 2009). A mixed-methods approach combined national survey data (2019–2024, n≈2,000 per year) with qualitative insights from 17 semi-structured parent interviews conducted in 2025. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS Statistics and qualitative data was thematically analysed. Informed consent, confidentiality, and non-judgemental representation of parenting practices were central ethical concerns. Ethical integrity was maintained through a data protection approach aligned with GDPR, considerate question phrasing and repeat participant reassurance. Survey results show a decline in daily parent-child interactions (e.g., reading, chatting) over five years. Interviews reveal how families how families navigate emotional, economic, and digital pressures, yet remain committed to learning through daily life. Findings call for responsive, community-embedded support to facilitate parent-child engagement in early learning.

parental engagement, home learning environment, early learning and language development, early learning activities

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C11 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G215, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THREE COUNTRIES

Chaired by Deirdre Mc Grath, Technological University Dublin, Ireland

Supporting Children's Inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care Services through the Promotion of the Right to Participate. An Investigation in the City of Pescara (Italy) Inspired by Lundy's Model

Presenters
Elisa Maia, 'Leonardo da Vinci' Telematic University, Italy

All authors
Elisa Maia, 'Leonardo da Vinci' Telematic University, Italy

This research examines educational practices promoting child participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and their correlation with inclusive processes, ensuring that participation is accessible beyond just

articulate and literate children (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004). Previous studies have highlighted the benefits of participation for children, ECEC contexts, and society (Lansdown, 2005; Murray, 2019; Sinclair, 2004), emphasizing its role in developing citizenship skills crucial for building democratic and inclusive communities (Mortari, 2008). The study is based on Lundy's (2007) model of participation, which includes four key elements: space, voice, audience, and influence. Unlike the original model, this research investigates children's "voice" through play, viewed as their "resilient voice" (Savio, 2019; EECERA-SIG, 2017), adapting the model for the specific nature of ECEC services. Conducted in Pescara (Italy), the research follows a qualitative methodology (Trinchero, 2005) and includes three semi-structured interviews and one focus group with coordinators, educators, and teachers from ECEC services, along with non-participant observation in three ECEC settings. Data collection will start in April 2025, using forms to assess educational strategies promoting participation and inclusion. Ethical considerations include informed consent from educational staff and parents/guardians. Ethical considerations include informed consent from educational staff and parents/guardians. Data collection will begin in April 2025. The results will provide insights into child participation and inclusive education in Pescara's ECEC settings. The research will have implications for perspectives and knowledge on the promotion of participatory and inclusive processes of children in ECEC services, with a focus on valuing differences.

children's right to participate, ECEC services, didactic, inclusion, Lundy's model

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Educators' conceptualisation of childhood and participation practices: the pervasive link.

Presenters
Deirdre Mc Grath, Technological University Dublin, Ireland

All authors
Deirdre Mc Grath, Technological University Dublin, Ireland

This paper explores the question 'how is child participation conceptualised and practiced by educators in preschool settings in Ireland?' The link between educators' ideas and pedological practices of participation in early childhood settings is under researched (Murphy et al., 2022; Correia et al., 2020; Correia et al., 2019; Correia et al., 2017); however, some authors suggest a link between educators' construction of the child and participatory practices (Chicken and Tyrie, 2023; Waters-Davis and MacDonald, 2022). This research is underpinned by Leonard's framework of generagency (2016) and Shier's pathways to participation model (2001) which defines participation as the sharing of power and decision making. It draws on qualitative research evidence gathered from eight semi structured interviews with educators in three preschool settings in Ireland. Interview data was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Bruan and Clarke, 2021). A recruitment letter, an information sheet and a consent form were provided all educators to elicit their consent for participation and voluntary participation and the right to withdraw were emphasised to participants. Three distinct typologies of educator emerged from the data, involving different conceptualisations of children, different understandings of the role of educator, different priorities vis a vis child outcomes and different participation practices. Only a view of the child as competent led to the sharing of power and decision making with children. This suggests the importance of a view of the competent child for participation and the challenges of increasing child participation where educators do not hold this view.

participation, construction of childhood, children's rights, educator ideas, educator practices

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Exploring ethical inclusive participation of Young Children within Child Advisory Boards: A Case Study from Wales

Presenters
Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University, United Kingdom

All authors
Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Jacqui Lewis, University of the West of England, United Kingdom
Sarah Chicken, University of the West of England, United Kingdom
Patrizio De Rossi, University of the West of England, United Kingdom
Jane Waters-Davies, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, United Kingdom
Jennie Clement, Cardiff Metropolitain University, United Kingdom
Alison Murphy, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, United Kingdom
Jane Williams, Swansea University, United Kingdom

This presentation explores the ethical complexities of undertaking an inclusive Child Advisory Board with 5-to-7-year-olds for a large scale ESRC-funded research project in Wales, UK. Welsh policy emphasises children's rights (Murphy et al., 2022) and the importance of incorporating children's views into decision-making is well-documented but also problematised (Chicken and Tyrie, 2023), these considerations form the basis for our Child Advisory Board activities. We adopted a social constructionist stance (Berger and Luckman, 1991) and positioning children as capable, agentic meaning-makers (Malaguzzi, 1993). Principles of participatory research (Gaillard et al., 2018; Collins et al., 2020) and conditions for voice (Lundy, 2007) informed the CAB's implementation. Lundy's (2007) participatory model, underpinned by Article 12 of the UNCRC, provides a framework to ethically consider our responsibility to undertake inclusive research. Issues which are considered include, the host school (which faces multiple indices of deprivation and regulatory scrutiny) and engaging with children who traditionally might not be included, e.g. whose first language is not the school language. Ethical considerations included adhering to EECERA guidelines, relational ethics (Tracey, 2010), ensuring continual assent (Huser et al., 2022) through multi-modal approaches and an awareness of positions of power within research. Findings reveal the ethical complexity of working with a Child Advisory Board, highlighting the significance of 'space' (Lundy, 2007) and the tensions we found between leading creativity in child research and foregrounding the authentic voice of the child. These findings have implications for researchers using a participation framework in planning a CAB to foster voice and agency.

child advisory board, inclusion, research with children, child voice, participation

Symposium Set C12 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G222, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

SOCIO-DRAMA AND IMAGINATIVE PLAY PEDAGOGIES

Chaired by Merve GEMİCİ KOŞAR, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye

Using drama techniques during early childhood teachers' involvement in sociodramatic and imaginative play.

Presenters
Anthia Michaelides, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

All authors
Anthia Michaelides, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

This study examines the development of early childhood teachers' (ECTs) socio-dramatic and imaginary play skills through a drama professional development program (DPDP) zooming on the use of drama techniques during ECTs play involvement. To support children's play, teachers need to develop their own play skills (Loizou and Trawick-

Smith, 2022). Research suggests drama, as a means in supporting children's and teachers' play skills as they share common skills (Loizou & Michaelides, 2020). Teachers' involvement in children's play falls in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), since their involvement can enhance children's play (Bodrova,2008). Drama and improvisation fall within the ZPD (Graue et al., 2014) and PDPs use drama in developing teachers' skills (Lobman,2005). This study is part of a doctoral thesis. Thirteen in-service ECTs attended a 9-session DPDP, which aimed at developing sociodramatic play skills. Data included: drama and play literature, 4 videos of sociodramatic play with children and corresponding reflections, 2 semi-structured interviews pre and post the DPDP. Permissions were obtained by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and were given to all participants (teachers, children, staff), with the right to leave at any given time. All participants exemplified development of their pretend play skills (Role Enactment skill, Interactive Dialogue skill, Interactive Dialogue with Role Enactment skill) and use drama techniques, learned in the DPDP, to enhance children's play. This study supports ECTs in implementing play pedagogy and provides innovative and new suggestions for developing teachers' play skills, presenting a new ECTs Zone of Proximal Active Involvement.

drama-techniques, sociodramatic-play, scenario, role-enactment, involvement

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Students and Children Enriching Socio-Dramatic Play Together

Presenters
Iris Galili, Hemdat Academy, Israel

All authors
Iris Galili, Hemdat Academy, Israel

The research aim is to train student teachers to enhance the quality of children's play while actively involving them in the process. Teaching based on mutual activity between educators and children leads to the improvement of both play and learning (Tam, 2021). Smilansky & Shefatya (1990) emphasized the significant contribution of socio-dramatic play to children's development and the importance of teacher participation in play. This study was conducted as Action research performed by 70 undergraduate students in ECEC at a teachers' college, in Israel between the years 2018-2023. The study combined research and action: students filmed and analyzed children's free play, then reviewed the footage with them and discussed ways to enrich their play. Together, they planned and implemented improvements. In the next phase, the children played again, and the students repeated the process, gradually joining the play to intervene when needed. To protect the children's privacy, video recording was performed following the children's and their parents' consent and only children and students were allowed to observe videos of play. Students' and children's recursive joint observations and discussions on children's play led to more sophisticated socio-dramatic play and to heightened motivation to engage in the learning process. The students discovered the value of socio-dramatic play in kindergarten and how learning becomes meaningful when children are partners in decision-making and implementation.

socio-dramatic play, action research, pre-school children

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

The Playworld Approach as a Way of Increasing Play Experiences for Students in Early Childhood Teacher Education Programs

Presenters
Martina Tesikova, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

Anne-Erita Berta, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

All authors
Martina Tesikova, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway
Anne-Erita Berta, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

In this qualitative study, we implement the Playworld (PW) approach in educational settings within an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teacher education program at USN, Norway. The aim is to enhance students' understanding of their role as active participants in children's play and to explore student`s play experiences. Numerous studies emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to play in ECEC teacher education programs (e.g. Bøe et al., 2018). The PW approach is increasingly implemented in ECEC across various countries as a way of improving adult-child interaction in play (Hakkarainen et al., 2013). Furthermore, integrating PW practices into ECEC and schools may foster holistic learning for both children and teachers (e.g. Bjerknes et al., 2023; Fleer, 2015; Hakkarainen & Bredikyte, 2010). Data for this study were collected before, during and after implementing the PW approach in real-life play situations with children at the university campus. The data includes students' reflections, researchers' observations notes and two group interviews. The study follows to the Norwegian ethical guidelines for humanities and social sciences (NESH), with participants receiving information and providing informed consent. The results show that although ECEC students had theoretical knowledge of the adult's role in play, they expressed discomfort and held varying views on their active participation in children's play. We suggest that ECEC students need to build confidence through training to effectively facilitate children's play. Our findings support the implementation of PW approach as an effective pedagogical tool that bridges theoretical and practical learning related to play in ECEC teacher education.

play, playworld, ECEC teacher education, students' experiences

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C13 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G231, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

TEACHER WELLBEING 1

Chaired by Maresa Duignan, Ministry of Education, Ireland

Supporting Early Childhood Educators: The Impact of a Positive Intervention Program on burnout and wellbeing

Presenters
Evridiki Zachopoulou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors
Evridiki Zachopoulou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Eleni Nteli, Head of the Directorate of Early Childhood Education, Municipality of Kalamaria, Greece
Anastasia Vatou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Maria Tsitiridou - Evangelou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Vasilis Grammatikopoulos, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

This study examines the impact of an intervention program on early childhood education and care (ECEC) teachers' wellbeing and burnout across two countries. Given the increasing global concern regarding teacher shortages and wellbeing, the study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured intervention incorporating School-Wide

Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) and Positive Psychology principles. The global trend of teacher shortages has highlighted the necessity of supporting teacher wellbeing (OECD, 2019). Recent international initiatives have stressed the importance of evaluating teacher wellbeing to enhance workforce sustainability (European Commission et al., 2021; OECD, 2019). The intervention was grounded in the School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) framework and integrated principles from Positive Psychology, emphasizing the role of systemic support and strengths-based approaches in enhancing teacher wellbeing. A quasi-experimental design was implemented with 188 ECEC teachers from 53 ECEC settings in Greece and Cyprus. Data were collected using the Teachers' Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire and the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and analyzed through path analysis to identify direct and indirect intervention effects. Ethical approval was obtained, and participants provided informed consent. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout data collection and analysis. The intervention program positively influenced teacher wellbeing while reducing burnout, highlighting the effectiveness of SWPBS and Positive Psychology strategies in supporting educators. Findings emphasize the need for evidence-based interventions to sustain teacher wellbeing, informing policies for professional development and systemic support in ECEC settings.

teacher wellbeing, burnout, early childhood education, intervention program, school-wide positive behavior support

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

The Relationship Between Preservice Preschool Teachers' Social-Emotional Learning and Psychological Wellbeing

Presenters
Merve Tezel, Osmangazi Primary School, Türkiye

All authors
Merve Tezel, Osmangazi Primary School, Türkiye
Hande Arslan Çiftçi, Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye

The aim of this research is to explore the relationship between social-emotional learning (SEL)—Self-Awareness, Academic Self-Regulation, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making, and Relationship Skills—of preservice preschool teachers and their overall psychological wellbeing. Previous studies (Buchanan et al., 2009; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Jones and Doolittle, 2017) suggest that teachers with strong SEL skills are better equipped to manage stress, build positive relationships, and create emotionally supportive learning environments for children. As early childhood educators play a crucial role in supporting young children's social-emotional development, understanding how their own SEL skills relate to their wellbeing is essential for teacher preparation programs. This research is built on the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2017) framework and Ryff's (1989) model of psychological wellbeing as theoretical foundations. Relational survey design is employed, utilizing The Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010), which assesses respondents' self-perceived success in key life domains and the Social Emotional Learning Scale – Young Adult Form (Karacan-Özdemir and Büyükçolpan, 2021). Data collection is currently ongoing, with responses being gathered from preservice preschool teachers across universities in Istanbul, Türkiye. Correlation and regression analyses will be conducted. Ethical considerations include informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality. Regression analyses are expected to reveal that specific SEL dimensions act as significant predictors of psychological wellbeing of pre-service teachers. The findings will emphasize the importance of SEL-focused teacher education programs in preparing emotionally competent educators. Implications for policy and practice include revising teacher education curricula to incorporate explicit SEL training.

social-emotional learning, psychological wellbeing, preservice teachers, teacher education, early childhood education.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Changes in early childhood education: experienced ECEC teachers' narratives about work engagement

Presenters
Erja Rautamies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

All authors
Erja Rautamies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The study aims to identify critical changes in working life of ECEC teachers from the point of view of work engagement by examining experienced ECEC teachers' interviews. Research on ECEC teachers' work engagement has increased (e.g. Heilala et al., 2022; Libscomb et al., 2022) and revealed high turnover among ECEC teachers (Schaack et al., 2020). The main concept of the study is work engagement, which refers to coping, work wellbeing and 'strong identification with one's work' (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). Furthermore, changes in working life of ECEC teachers are examined. Narrative approach was applied throughout the research process (Riessman, 2008). This study utilized semi-structured interviews with 10 Finnish ECEC teachers with long work history. The data was analyzed by utilizing narrative analysis and inductive qualitative content analysis. This study follows the guidelines of the Finnish National Advisory Board on Research Ethics and stresses: respect for the dignity, free will, autonomy and privacy and informed consent of the participants (Josselson, 2017; Smythe & Murray, 2000). According to preliminary results, the following changes in working life were identified as critical for work engagement: the opportunity to focus on the core task; functioning work tools; a strong teacher identity; avoiding the threat of giant daycare centers and rush hour. The results will be reflected from the point of view of sustainability. The study results can be utilized in pre-service and in-service education of the ECEC teachers, and when making educational and political decisions related to early childhood education.

experienced ECEC teachers, work engagement, work wellbeing, work changes, narrative approach

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C14 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G242, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

THE VALUE OF MUSIC IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Dominika Weissová, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

TOY STORI 2 - Piano "wow"man: Special Thought On Real Instruments.

Presenters
Kei Kihara, Director of OikeAshita Nursery school, Japan

All authors
Kei Kihara, Director of OikeAshita Nursery school, Japan

This study is an antithesis to consumerism. For over 20 years, our preschool has fostered creativity and wellbeing by encouraging children to handcraft musical instruments—a creative alternative to consumption that allows them to grasp the essence of wellbeing through self-realization. "Children who learn practical things by hand […] so their lives are thereby enriched"(Rudolf Steiner, 1924) and creativity as a quality of though, it's an interactive, relational and social project. (Rinaldi, 2000), children think and make instruments of their desire, using a saw and hammer with friend by natural materials. " listening as welcoming and being open to differences." (Rinaldi, 2005). Children constantly generate new ideas. We carefully listened to the children's voices. This year, one girl wished to make a

piano, -a project that challenged both her and us. I'd like to share how we learned together through trial and error. The paradigm of ethical consumerism underpins this case study. Five-year-old children have spent six months making instruments instead of buying ready-made toys. Many graduated children continue to cherish their instruments. The study followed the EECERA Ethical Code. Consent and confirmation from parents and children were obtained from the beginning to the end. By engaging in seemingly insurmountable tasks, we aim to cultivate resilience. Working together also fosters co-agency. Completing instruments—and the satisfaction of playing them—offers tangible experiences of wellbeing. This study explores the importance of hands-on creation during childhood, and how such experiences can lead to lifelong wellbeing and lay the foundation for lifelong-learners to create sustainable societies.

hand-work, self-realization, co-agency, resilience, lifelong learners

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Music and interactive tools in supporting language and speech development: Kindergarten teachers' assessments, experiences and feedback

Presenters
Elyna Heinmäe, Tallinn University, Estonia
Kaire Kollom, Tallinn University, Estonia

All authors
Elyna Heinmäe, Tallinn University, Estonia
Kaire Kollom, Tallinn University, Estonia
Heddi Reinsalu, Tallinn University, Estonia
Kerstin Kööp, Tallinn University, Estonia

The study aimed to explore kindergarten teachers’ assessments, experiences, and feedback regarding the use of interactive learning tools (sound recording and playback devices) to support children’s language and speech development. From a child’s language and speech development perspective, face-to-face interaction and direct contact, where the child is an active communication partner, are essential (Tulviste & Tulviste, 2024). Technology-enhanced play, enables the child to participate in the learning process actively and increases their engagement in learning activities (Boumová et al., 2024; Krish, 2020). The study relies on Vygotsky's (1978) and Paugh's (2005) perspectives, which emphasise the value of play as an opportunity for exploration and learning. Children can actively use the language they are learning in play and participate as active communicators. We applied a mixed-method research approach and present the results of a quantitative online survey (n=87) and qualitative semi-structured interviews (n=12) with kindergarten teachers. We used inferential statistics in the data analysis.
Informed consent was obtained after explaining the survey's objectives, eligibility criteria, and voluntary participation. Data collection and storage system ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Teachers highlighted that playful activities (role-playing, dramatization, movement, riddles) support children’s language and speech development, and they view the learning environment as an essential resource to consider when planning and implementing language learning activities. Teachers require support from kindergarten leadership to participate in thematic training sessions and also seek assistance from colleagues. Also, expectation for music teachers to share their knowledge and skills on how to implement musical activities in the classroom.

music in language learning, learner motivation and engagement, kindergarten teachers, technology-enhanced play

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Does Tapping in Sync Reflect Cognitive Control? Links between Social Context, Beat Synchronization, and Executive Function

Presenters
Yunhee Kim, Duksung Women's University, South Korea
Doyeon Chae, Duksung Women's University, South Korea

All authors
Yunhee Kim, Duksung Women's University, South Korea
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Byungho Lee, Duksung Women's University, South Korea
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This study investigated how beat synchronization in preschoolers is influenced by context and linked to executive functions. Early rhythmic experiences not only enhance rhythmic skills but also promote cognitive development, including inhibitory control, self-regulation and executive function (Geist, 2012; Williams et al., 2023). Prior research highlights links between children's synchronization ability and auditory short-term memory, as well as improved inhibitory control (Carr et al., 2014; Frischen et al., 2019). The paradigmatic stance of this research is empirical. The study included 153 preschool children (M = 4.5 years, SD = 0.50; 77 girls, 76 boys) from South Korea. Children's beat synchronization was assessed using a sensor-equipped bongo drum, and executive function (EF) was measured using tasks that assessed inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. This study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB No. 2024-005-021-A). Only children whose parents provided informed consent and who voluntarily agreed to participate were included. Results indicate that synchronization performance at 150 bpm improved significantly in the social context. Notably, tapping performance at 50 bpm in the solo condition showedsignificant associations with EF, particularly inhibitory control, working memory, and overall EF scores. These findings suggest that beat synchronization under cognitively demanding, non-social conditions may serve as a sensitive behavioral marker of developing EF in early childhood. The results have implications for the use of rhythm-based tasks in assessing and supporting cognitive development in young children.

beat synchronization, executive function, inhibitory control, working memory, preschool children

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

This work was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) through the convergence R&D over Science and Technology Arts Programs under Project Number RS-2022-NR067603.

Symposium Set C15 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G243, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

YOUNG CHILDREN'S COMPASSION, PRO-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGENCY

Chaired by Kyunghwa Lee, University of Georgia, United States

The Effect of Positive Feedback in Building Prosocial Resources in Young Children: An Experimental Study

Presenters
Lotta Uusitalo, University of Helsinki, Finland

All authors
Katri Pardon, University of Helsinki, Finland
Arniika Kuusisto, University of Helsinki, Finland
Lotta Uusitalo, University of Helsinki, Finland

This study examined how positive feedback influences the prosocial decision-making of 5–7-year-old children, operationalized through the concepts of kindness and compassion. The study builds on our previous research (Pardon et al., 2023), in which children were taught prosocial skills in an inclusive ECEC setting. The study draws on positive psychology and the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001; 2011; 2013). A pragmatic methodological framework with mixed methods was applied. The experimental group (n=10) completed a coloring task followed by rich positive feedback. The control group (n=10) completed the same task but received minimal feedback. Afterward, a test battery (Pardon et al., 2023) was administered to both groups. Following the test, the control group was given praising feedback for their coloring task to ensure ethicality. Research permits were obtained from local authorities and the children's guardians. Participation was voluntary, and children could choose whether or not to participate. The ethical guidelines set by the Finnish National Board on Research (2023) were followed at all stages of the study. Quantitative measures revealed only slight differences between the groups. However, the explanations children provided for their choices (e.g., “A friend needs a building block from you that you also need yourself. What do you do?”) were more multifaceted and creative (e.g., “I could split the block”) in the experimental group. Our study serves as an encouraging pilot, demonstrating the potential impact of positive feedback. In particular, children with special needs should receive more specific, positive, and personalized feedback to build their resources.
5–7-year-old; kindness; compassion; positive feedback; positive emotions

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Understanding Compassion Satisfaction Among Preschool Teachers: The Role of Some Variables

Presenters
Ikbal Tuba Sahin Sak, Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, Türkiye
All authors

Ikbal Tuba Sahin Sak, Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, Türkiye
Ramazan Sak, Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, Türkiye
Nimet Demir Akın, Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, Türkiye

The aim of this study is to examine the compassion satisfaction of preschool teachers in terms of different variables. For this purpose, answers were sought to the following question: Do preschool teachers' compassion satisfaction differ significantly according to their age, gender, professional experience, education level, working status, the age group they work in, the type of institution, the sector in which the institution is located, the number of children in their classes and the status they work in? Wellbeing, self-care, mindfulness, burnout, and compassion satisfaction are all linked (Decker et al., 2015; Jarrad and Hammad, 2020; Papazoglou et al., 2019). Considering the relationship between compassion and different variables, teachers' role in helping children acquire compassion. Compassion satisfaction includes the satisfaction felt after exhibiting compassionate behaviors and the positive emotions that arise in the process (Sacco et al., 2015). Home and school contexts foster compassion. Teachers can inspire children to develop compassion. School and teacher services include teaching compassion in the classroom, modeling compassionate behavior, and teaching compassion via experience (Jazaieri, 2018). The sample of this survey consisted of 200 preschool teachers. The “Personal Information Form” and the “Compassion Satisfaction Scale” (Nas and Sak, 2021) were used for data collection. Volunteers signed a consent document before completing the scale. The study indicated high compassion satisfaction among preschool teachers. The compassion satisfaction of teachers differed significantly by education level and status they work in. Compassion-related education and awareness can be offered at various educational levels because teachers' educational levels affect their compassion satisfaction.

compassion, compassion satisfaction, preschool, teachers, quantitative research

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Korean Early Childhood Teachers' Perspectives on Children's Agency as Intra-active Emergence

Presenters
Jooeun Oh, Incheon National University, South Korea
Kyunghwa Lee, University of Georgia, United States
Minjung Lim, Kyungpook National University, South Korea
Eunae Son, Daegu National University of Education, South Korea

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Jooeun Oh, Incheon National University, South Korea
Kyunghwa Lee, University of Georgia, United States
Minjung Lim, Kyungpook National University, South Korea
Eunae Son, Daegu National University of Education, South Korea

This study explores Korean early childhood teachers' perceptions of "children's agency" to examine the dynamic interplay between traditional cultural values and global discourses and between cultural fusion and conflict. The Revised 2019 Nuri Curriculum marked a shift to child-centered, play-based learning in Korea (Jin et al., 2024). Influenced by the OECD Education 2030 Learning Framework emphasizing "student agency, student wellbeing and competencies" (OECD, 2018), this change unfolds within Korea's cultural landscape where traditional values and emerging international trends collide and merge (Kim, 2022; Lee, 2013). This study is set against this backdrop. We draw on Barad's (2007) notions of agency and intra-action, and Latour's (2005) actor-network theory. This is a photovoice study (O'Malley and Munsell, 2020; Wang and Burris, 1997), conducted with five teachers in Incheon, Korea, in February 2025. Per Institutional Review Board guidelines at the principal investigator's university, we used pseudonyms to protect participants' identities, and all identifiable features of children in photographs, including their faces, were obscured to ensure anonymity. Discussing their views on the definitions, characteristics, key components, influential factors, and cultural and institutional constraints of children's agency, these teachers described agency not as a predetermined, static trait within an individual child but as a dynamic potentiality emerging through the intra-action of the child and environments, including peer interactions, parenting, play materials, and teachers' pedagogical practices. The study provides insights into how a Western concept is interpreted and practiced in a non-Western context, and what is gained and lost in the process of adoption.

Korean early childhood education, children's agency, cultural beliefs and values, intra-action, photovoice

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C16 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G244, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FUTURE

Chaired by Kati Rintakorpi, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Multi-professional teamwork in ECEC - recognized benefits and challenges in practice

Presenters
Kati Rintakorpi, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland
Johanna Holmikari, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland

All authors
Kati Rintakorpi, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland
Johanna Holmikari, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland

This study explores multi-professional teamwork in Finnish early childhood education and care (ECEC), focusing on the collaboration between teachers, social pedagogues, and child carers to promote social sustainability. Previous discussions have primarily focused on the pedagogical role of teachers ECEC (Chydenius et al., 2023; Kangas et al., 2022; Koivusalo et al., 2024), but this research highlights the broader contributions of social pedagogy. Social pedagogy is an educational and care philosophy that promotes holistic development, social inclusion, and wellbeing (Nivala and Ryynänen, 2019). Using a constructivist paradigm and semi-structured thematic interviews, insights were gathered from 18 ECEC professionals, including directors, advisors, managers, special educators, teachers, social pedagogues, and child carers, who responded to an interview invitation distributed in a large metropolitan municipality. The interviews were conducted in small groups. Data analysis involved content analysis by researchers, AI-assisted support (ChatGPT), and researcher validation. Ethical considerations included obtaining research permits, informed consent, anonymization, and secure data storage. Preliminary findings reveal that while each professional group brings unique expertise, integrating these competencies remains challenging. Social pedagogues are crucial in bridging educational and social welfare aspects, yet their contributions are often undervalued due to inconsistent role definitions. Strengthening pedagogical leadership training for ECEC teachers and kindergarten managers is essential for optimizing team potential. The study emphasizes the need for clearer role definitions, improved leadership, and targeted training to enhance multi-professional collaboration. By fostering an inclusive and well-structured operational culture, Finnish ECEC can better utilize the diverse strengths of its workforce to ensure a socially sustainable future.

social pedagogy, multi-professional teamwork, social pedagogues, social sustainability

Enhancing the Development of Multiprofessional Competences in ECEC and Child Welfare Teams: case of Latvia and Lithuania

Presenters
ILze Ivanova, University of Latvia, Latvia

All authors
ILze Ivanova, University of Latvia, Latvia
Leta Dromantiene, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Giedre Kvieskiene, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Gunta Krage, University of Latvia, Latvia
Ilona Tandzegolskiene-Bielaglove, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Liga Aboltina, University of Latvia, Latvia

This presentation aims to explore key approaches to strengthening multiprofessional teamwork in ECEC and child welfare by fostering cummunicative,collaborative skills, inter professional learning, and role clarity. The article is based on previous studies of researchers on multiprofessional cooperation in kindergartens (Slavova, 2021; Fitzgerald and Theilheimer, 2013), (Neifachas, 2021; Ališauskienė and Miltenienė, 2018; Monkevičienė, 2023), reform ''School2030'' analysis in Latvia A Child-Centered Approach in ECEC refers to a pedagogical approach that puts the child at the centre of the educational process and calls for multiprofessional collaborative practices, contributing to the child's development (Peleman, B., Lazzari, A., et al, 2018). Constructivist paradigm, analysis of documents, semi-structured thematic interviews and quantitative survey were used to gather responses from 292 ECEC professionals : directors, advisors, managers, special educators, teachers, social pedagogues, child carers, who responded to invitation to participate from Latvia and Lithuania .Limesurvey tool was used in quantitative research. Data analysis involved content analysis by researchers, AI-assisted support (ChatGPT), SPSS. Approvals from the participants in surveys and interviews were obtained,they gave the consent of understanding the purpose of the study, how the results will be used and their rights. Anonymity and confidentiality of responses are protected by the organizers. Main results indicate essential competences for multiprofessional teams in case of Latvia and Lithuania such as: communication, collaboration, common decision-making, co-learning practices. The presentation

contributes to ongoing discussions on workforce development in ECEC and child welfare, emphasizing the importance of intentional efforts to build cohesive, competent, and child-centered teams.

multiprofessional competences, child welfare, multiprofessional team, cross-disciplinary learning, case-based problem-solving.

Social pedagogical approach in Estonian kindergartens

Presenters
Lehte Tuuling, Narva College of University of Tartu, Estonia
Katrin Saluvee, Narva College of University of Tartu, Estonia
Katrin Helendi, Narva College of University of Tartu, Estonia

All authors
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Katrin Helendi, Narva College of University of Tartu, Estonia

The research aims to clarify how legislative documents and scientific literature define the role of social pedagogy in kindergartens and to assess the current state and best practices of multi-professional teamwork based on surveys conducted among kindergarten staff and support specialists. Research in Finland and Germany emphasizes the importance of team heterogeneity and clear role distribution in ensuring children's wellbeing (Karila and Kupila, 2023; Oberhuemer et al., 2023). While the role of social pedagogues in Estonian early childhood institutions has been analyzed, a systematic approach to integrating them into kindergarten support structures is lacking (Leino, 2021). The study is based on the theoretical principles of social pedagogy, focusing on children's social and emotional wellbeing and the implementation of preventive measures in early childhood education (Leino, 2021). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is applied to explore how various levels (national regulations, educational institutions, families) influence social pedagogical practice (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A mixed-method approach was used. Data were collected through a review of legislation, a survey of ECE and support professionals (n=99), and semi-structured interviews (n=65). The study adheres to confidentiality principles. Given its focus on children's wellbeing, ensuring participant anonymity and following ethical guidelines is crucial for objective and reliable data processing.
There are significant obstacles to implementing multi-professional teamwork in Estonian kindergartens, including unclear roles, limited resources, and a lack of systematic collaboration. Additionally, the results can support the development of early childhood education policies and curricula to strengthen the role of social pedagogues and collaboration with other specialists.

social pedagogy, multi-professional teamwork, child wellbeing, early childhood education, educational policy

Symposium Set C17 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G246, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PAIR)

Chaired by Merja Koivula, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Professionals' narratives justificating pedagogies regarding children's peer relationships in early childhood education and care

Presenters
Merja Koivula, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Eija Sevón, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

All authors
Merja Koivula, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Eija Sevón, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The study explores how professionals narrate their role in supporting children's peer relationships in early childhood education and care (ECEC). Children's negotiation and building peer relationships occurs through dynamic processes in which social skills are learned (e.g., Kutnick and Colwell, 2024; Köngäs et al., 2022). The role of professionals is conceptualized as supporting peer relationships by 1) guiding children's behavior or 2) facilitating children's interactions and peer dynamics (Farmer et al., 2011). However, this role is constructed at the intersection of various pedagogical and situational factors that require exploration. This qualitative study follows a narrative paradigm. The data includes 30 thematic interviews with ECEC professionals. A narrative analysis strategy was used, focusing on the positioning of children and professionals (Deppermann, 2013). Informed consent was obtained from participants and their rights to anonymity and confidentiality were respected. Research ethics guidelines were carefully followed throughout the research. The findings show different positions of professionals and children. The types of narratives identified were: 1) narrative of children's social competence, 2) narrative of unintentional exclusion, and 3) narrative of an arduous child. The first narrative emphasized social inclusion achieved through children's good social competence. In the second narrative, professionals acknowledged the challenging ethical issues of exclusion but described various pedagogical means to regulate group composition and peer relationships that overlooked children's perspectives. In the third narrative, deficits in children's social skills were seen as a cause and justification for exclusion. The implications illustrate the prevalence of different and contradictory pedagogical justifications in supporting peer relationships in ECEC.

peer relationships, social competence, exclusion, support, pedagogy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

2YOs' SEL within peer interactions from the perspective of Bakhtin's dialogism

Presenters
Yuru (Sarah) Ji, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

All authors
Yuru (Sarah) Ji, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

The research aims to examine the nuanced dialogic processes between two-year-olds (2YOs) and their peers, and to investigate how 2YOs manifest context-based strategic orientations in their social and emotional learning. Rooted in the broader educational inquiry into the nature of learning and development (Wertsch, 1991), dialogic perspectives have been applied in early childhood education (ECE) to examine pedagogical dialogues (e.g., White et al., 2019) and young children's strategic utterances (e.g., Marjanovic-Shane and White, 2014; White and Janfab, 2023). This study draws on Bakhtin's dialogism to conceptualise 2YOs' SEL as dynamic and interactive. Genre (Bakhtin, 1987) is used to analyse how children show strategic orientations in peer interactions, and heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981; 1987) helps explore how varying peer compositions shape SEL. This study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, employing dialogic methodology (DM) and visual methods to capture children's living language and relational dynamics. These approaches frame 2YOs' SEL as contextually embedded (Cohen et al., 2018) and seek to generate data-grounded insights (Irene, 2014). DM ensures the authentic representation of 2YOs' voices, avoiding a monologic interpretation. Additionally, the dialogic analysis of tensions between voices provides a more nuanced understanding of children's perspectives. Preliminary findings underscore the importance of reconceptualizing 2YOs' SEL through a dialogic lens, highlighting the impact of peer inclusion on their social-emotional development. This study deepens the

understanding of 2YOs' social interactions at a micro level and offers insights for policy regarding peer groupings in ECE, emphasizing the significance of peer inclusion.

2YOs, social-emotional learning, peers, dialogic methodology, ECE practices

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C18 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G308, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER IDENTITY IN ECE (PAIR)

Chaired by Robert Osaďan, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Gender, Sexual and Relationships Diversity (GSRD) in the Early Years - exploring inclusive pedagogy through case study research in a Primary School setting

Presenters
Stacy Lister, University of Hull, United Kingdom

All authors
Stacy Lister, University of Hull, United Kingdom

The research question asked, "How is GSRD inclusion approached and interpreted by the early years provision, key adults and wider culture of one setting in England?" GSRD is under-researched in the early years with emerging themes of heteronormativity (Lewis, 2022), and requires staff training on LGBTQ+ families (Church et al., 2018) and sexuality (Grigoropoulos, 2024). Social Learning Theory suggested that GSRD may be taught through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978) or modelled behaviour (Bandura, 1977). Queer Theory proposed that heteronormativity may silence the experiences of queer children (Bond Stockton, 2009). The research identified the experiences of one school known to the researcher through an interpretivist constructivist philosophy (William, 2024). Through case study research (Yin, 2014), data collection involved online and document scrutiny, analysis of the early years classroom environment and wider setting, and interviewing one reception class teacher identified through convenience sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). Ethics included anonymity by redacting identifiable information, supporting the interviewee by signposting to support, effectively communicating 'right to withdraw' in information and consent letters, recruiting a participant over 18 years old, and considering authorship of online content (BERA, 2024); reflecting rigour and knowledge-sharing (EECERA, 2024). Findings suggested that LGBTQ training broadened staff knowledge by introducing inclusive pedagogy and policy into school culture, challenging heteronormativity (Church et al., 2018; Lewis, 2022). One implication is that a whole-school approach to GSRD can challenge heteronormativity and support families. This research provide an example of how staff training can develop the culture of early years education, contributing valuable knowledge to the research landscape.

inclusive, GSRD, LGBTQ, UK, diversity

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

How Normal is Normal? An Investigation into Gender Identity and Heteronormativity in Early Childhood Education in the Irish Context

Presenters
Tracy McElheron, Maynooth University, Ireland

All authors
Tracy McElheron, Maynooth University, Ireland

This research aimed to examine children's constructions of gender identities and the influence that heteronormative discourses may have on that process. Research has shown that ECEC is an area where young children explore aspects of gender, making important links between their emerging theories and the construction of their own identities (MacNaughton, 2000; Aina and Cameron, 2011; Warin and Adriany,2017). ECEC, however, is also somewhere where the compounding of gender stereotypes is commonplace (Adriany, 201;, Hellman, 2012). This study was located within the field of social-constructivism and was underpinned by Butler's concept of gender being performative in nature (1990). The study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). It involved a questionnaire completed by 61 participants, semi-structured interviews with 4 participants, and a reflective diary which captured the researcher's reflections as well as children's utterances and actions. A reflexive thematic approach was used to analyse data. A consent form and information sheet was given to all participants who were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Parental consent and children's assent was sought and monitored throughout. Names were anonymised. Heteronormative influences shaped pedagogical practices by the researcher. However, implementing a gender flexible pedagogy (Warin and Adriany, 2017) mitigated against heteronormative ascendency. Findings noted that engaging in reflective use of a gender flexible pedagogy can have a significant and positive impact on practice. Results of this study can provide valuable insights for developing educational and training programmes on gender equity for student ECEs.

gender, heteronormativity, reflexive pedagogy, identity, inclusion.

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C19 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G309, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

QUALITY AND INCLUSION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (PAIR)

Chaired by Courtney O'Grady, University of Alabama, United States

"We Don't Serve Kids Like Yours": Mapping the Exclusion of Young Children with Disabilities

Presenters
Courtney O'Grady, University of Alabama, United States

All authors
Courtney O'Grady, University of Alabama, United States

The primary aim of this study was to document and understand the experiences of families with children with a disability who experienced expulsion from an early childhood setting. The findings of this study align with previous work documenting the continued exclusion of multiply-marginalized children (ECTA, 2023). We utilized two guiding theoretical frameworks, Disability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit; Annamma et al., 2013), and Disabled Childhood Studies (Curran and Runswich-Cole, 2013). Operating from a qualitative research paradigm, methods included journey mapping and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was conducted through the lens of DisCrit theory (Annamma et. al, 2013), using In Vivo coding (Saldana, 2016). Research approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board. Parents signed consent forms and were given pseudonyms. Almost all children experienced expulsion because of a perceived inability for programs to 'meet their needs'. Mothers noted the profound impact these experiences had on them, describing having to leave their careers, pass up promotions, make financial sacrifices, and the exhausting nature of having to continuously fight for educational systems to dignify their children. These findings highlight the systemic injustices routinely faced by families with young children with disabilities.

By listening to the narratives that arise from the vantage point of those who have been historically marginalized (Connor, 2006), we can unpack the ways these mothers resisted dominant systems of power that segregated their children. We must all resolve to be held accountable for our role in ensuring that every child has access to early care that affirms their worth, belonging, and dignity.

disability, inclusion, access, expulsion

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Promoting a sensory pedagogy for all: a whole-class teaching approach to sensory provision

Presenters
Gillian Beck, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

All authors
Gillian Beck, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

This cross-professional research aimed to bridge the gap between Occupational therapy and Educational discourses by advancing research-based sensory teacher education in mainstream primary schools. While the role of Sensory Processing in pupils' cognition and learning (Ayres, 1972; Dunn, 1999) has permeated discourse and practice of SEN provision, research on the efficacy of evidence-based teacher education in this area has not been widely explored (Miller-Kuhaneck and Watling, 2018). Wenger's Community of practice (1998; 2011) provided a framework for a CPD model allowing teachers to identify, evaluate and adapt practice and build effective sensory classroom practice between all participants. An exploratory, multi-level, mixed methods approach was used to investigate and analyse the learning journey of teachers (teacher logs) and the influence of sensory CPD on pupils' collective and individual development using ANOVA to compare pupils standardised test results. Ethical consideration was given to ensure transparency relating to use and retention of teacher logs and parental and pupil permission for participation. Implementation of a sensory pedagogy enhanced teacher confidence in observing and meeting pupils' sensory needs, obtaining individual pupil voice and negotiating learning. A reduction in the use of SEN terms in favour of a shared sensory vocabulary demonstrated a model of inclusion rather than deficit. Quantitative data indicated significant, positive outcomes in Emotional wellbeing, literacy and IQ scores.
This cross-professional model of sensory teacher education should be advanced within HEI, ITE and CPD; creating sensory informed teaching communities who can create flexible, child-centred sensory supportive learning environments and disseminate this practice.

sensory, community of practice, teacher education, pupil voice, cross-disciplinary

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C20 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G315, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

IN SUPPORT OF OUTDOOR PEDAGOGIES

Chaired by Ana Sofia Lopes, Centro de Investigação em Didática e Tecnologia na Formação de Formadores, Departamento de Educação e Psicologia, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal, Portugal

Developing a framework to support babies and toddlers to engage with outdoor environments

Presenters
Jo Josephidou, The Open University, United Kingdom
Polly Bolshaw, Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom

All authors
Jo Josephidou, The Open University, United Kingdom
Polly Bolshaw, Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom
Nicola Kemp, Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom

Our presentation discusses the practical application of the concept of NENE (Nature Engaging, Nature Enhancing) pedagogy which aims to support young children's, practitioners', and environmental wellbeing. This concept is informed by findings from projects funded by The Froebel Trust. We present a draft framework (babyNENE) which aims to support the development of inclusive practices outdoors for babies and toddlers. Our research shows they can be invisible in policy and practice as far as outdoor environments are concerned (Josephidou et al., 2021). We are particularly influenced by the Froebelian understanding of the value of being 'in and with nature' from birth (Froebel, 1887: 30). Our data collection has included systematic and narrative literature reviews, a survey of 53 ECEC settings in Southeast England and case studies of 8 ECEC settings, both rural and urban. We draw on appreciative enquiry and critical pedagogy to both value the role of the practitioner and also to question possibilities for very young children outdoors. Our principal ethical concern was that both practitioners and babies were not viewed in deficit ways. Therefore babies are presented as competent, and practitioners are positioned as experts within this research. The development of more inclusive outdoor practices for babies and toddlers requires an understanding of what is possible, and our co-constructed framework offers a way of being outdoors with very young children. Our framework will be of interest to an international audience, as it speaks to both policy and practice, addressing concerns around human and environmental health.

babies, infants, toddlers, outdoor environments, pedagogy

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Being outdoors in day-care: practitioners' perspectives about their role

Presenters
Ana Sofia Lopes, Centro de Investigação em Didática e Tecnologia na Formação de Formadores, Departamento de Educação e Psicologia, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal, Portugal

All authors
Ana Sofia Lopes, Centro de Investigação em Didática e Tecnologia na Formação de Formadores, Departamento de Educação e Psicologia, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal, Portugal
Gabriela Portugal, Centro de Investigação em Didática e Tecnologia na Formação de Formadores, Departamento de Educação e Psicologia, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal, Portugal
Maria Figueiredo, CI&DEI and School of Education, Polytechnic of Viseu, Portugal

The study analyses dimensions of the adult style (ASOS) considered important for outdoors by teachers working with children from 0 to 3 years old. Adult's style is central to children's educational experience and an important indicator of quality. In Portugal, studies raised concerns about the adult style in adult-child interactions (Barros et al., 2018; Cadima et al., 2022), mainly in indoor spaces. Quality of interactions in outdoor spaces is less known (Tonge et al., 2018), although research highlights the growing relevance of being and playing outside at an early age (Bento and Portugal, 2019). The theoretical framework draws upon Bioecological Model of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006), Experiential Education (Portugal and Laevers, 2018) and Attachment Theory (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1969). The study assumes an interpretative research paradigm (Cresswell, 2014). Two focus group were developed with 8 teachers. Data was analysed through content analysis (WebQDA software). Information about the study and a consent form were provided to participants and anonymity was assured. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time. Results include the profiles/style of the teachers while outdoors, combined with their views on the relevant dimensions of interactions with the children, being sensitivity

the most mentioned. The discussion of the results with existing studies and guidelines provides a framework for further studies on adult style outdoors as well as guidance for practice.This work is financially supported by National Funds through FCT – Fundação para a Ciência

day-care, outdoor, adult role/style, quality

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The Naturalistic Notebook as an Inclusive Tool for Biodiversity Education: Supporting Children's Outdoor Explorations

Presenters
Monica Guerra, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy
Letizia Luini, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

All authors
Monica Guerra, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy
Letizia Luini, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy
Greta Persico, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

The paper aims to reflect on scientific notebooks (Guerra and Luini, 2024) in outdoor experiences of biodiversity education, as an inclusive and participatory documentation tool for children to keep track of discoveries, hypotheses and questions through heterogeneous languages capable of supporting biodiverse explorations. Education for biodiversity is a multidimensional concept (Navarro-Perez and Tidball, 2012) with multiple interpretations (Persico, 2024), inviting experiential and participatory approaches. The experiential dimension through place-based approaches (Guerra, 2024) can foster connections, awareness and change in individual behavior. Recording outdoor experiences through different languages enables everyone, through inclusive documentation tools, to return their meaningfulness. Through an experiential and participatory approach, children's and notebooks observations gathered by the BEAT (Biodiversity Education and Awareness Toolkit) research group, within the NBFC (National Biodiversity Future Centre) framework, exploit the use of a methodological toolkit to raise awareness of the biodiversity's value through the use of heterogeneous documentation tools. The research was conducted following the Italian pedagogical society's guidelines, asking for the families' consent and children's assent, whose names were anonymised. Scientific notebooks support children's outdoor research on biodiversity by enabling documentation processes through drawings, words, pictures, maps, and collections (Guerra, 2020). This creative, scientific and inclusive tool makes it possible to trace living encounters, fosters deeper connection to nature and highlights the relationships between people and environments from a child's perspective, the basis of biodiversity education processes. The use of nature notebooks can support inclusive biodiversity education by fostering active exploration, experiential learning outdoor and conversation spaces for children in dialogue with policy makers.

biodiversity, outdoor educatio, documentation, naturalistic notebook, inclusive languages

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C21 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G319, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

PRAXIS, PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND WORKSHOPS (PAIR)

Chaired by Jackie Brien, The University of Melbourne, Australia

Professional reading about diversity and inclusion: educators' and leaders' experiences that have significance for policy and practice

Presenters
Jackie Brien, The University of Melbourne, Australia

All authors
Jackie Brien, The University of Melbourne, Australia

This research aimed to explore professional reading habits of early childhood professionals to examine how this informs knowledge and practice. The presentation will specifically refer to professional reading about diversity and inclusion. Existing literature provides limited information, although it has been recommended that educators read research (OECD, 2022; Ramia et al., 2023). Rudland and Kemp (2006) found that special educators engaged in limited professional reading. This study was informed by ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and professional learning theories (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002; Rickinson et al., 2020). An interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methodology was used, including questionnaires and interviews. 43 participants self-selected to be involved following an invitation in the national online newsletter, including educators and a range of leadership professionals. The research met Australian ethical requirements (NHMRC, 2023). Following provision of plain language statements, participants provided written consent to questionnaires, interviews, writing and distribution of the research, Evidence illuminates how professional reading informs and inspires knowledge, learning and practice around diversity and inclusion, supporting the 'best interests' of all children (UNHCRC, 1989). Participants sought specific professional reading to enhance understanding and implementation of evidence-informed pedagogical practice that celebrates and includes all children. Educators wrote of their own experiences, contributing to practice-based evidence. Leaders used professional reading to develop policy and regulatory expectations for inclusion. This presentation will include examples of participant voices to illuminate their perspectives and experiences. Implications for policy and practice include the importance of supporting engagement in professional reading for individual, collective and systems-based knowledge and practice celebrating diversity and enacting inclusion.

professional reading, diversity, inclusion, learning, professionalism

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Praxis in Day-Care

Presenters
Mariana Estrela, CIE-UMa, Portugal

All authors
Mariana Estrela, CIE-UMa, Portugal
Ana Kot-Kotecki, CIE-UMa, Portugal

Understanding a praxis in day care in the Autonomous Region of Madeira. Pedagogical praxis is a situated educational action (...), fertilized in theoretical and investigative knowledge and in a system of principles, values and beliefs. (...) Thus, praxis is the locus of Pedagogy and, therefore, becomes the locus for the search for everyday testimonials where practical professional knowledge. (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2018: 33) Educators "are the key to change. Without them there will be no progress" (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2001: 143). In this framework we emphasize praxis as the locus of pedagogy (Formosinho, 2013; Oliveira-Formosinho and Formosinho, 2013). Qualitative methodology, ethnographic case study. Data collection techniques: naturalistic observation; semi-structured interviews; documentary analysis. An educator's praxis, over two years, in a private institution, tutored by the government, with a protocol with the University. We respected the ethical requirements of the rights: to privacy; non-participation; anonymity; confidentiality; the researcher's sense of responsibility. We considered the ethical and

deontological principles developed by EECERA (2014), the ethical research procedures regulated by UMa, the General Data Protection Regulation, informed consent and the official protocols for carrying out the research. The visibility of praxis projects the voice of an educator through their foundations and actions. The praxiological complexity is decisive for pedagogical quality, with an impact on the development and learning of each baby and child. Reflection, analysis and articulation of policies, services and practices for and in day-care is crucial. By characterising a praxis, we highlight the role of educators as a guarantee of pedagogical, equitable and inclusive quality.

praxis, day-care, conceptions, educators, childhood pedagogy

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C22 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G320, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

HOW YOUNG CHILDREN SEE AND USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Chaired by Amanda Levido, Southern Cross University, Australia

Children's perspectives of learning with technology at home: Findings from a homeschooling family

Presenters
Amanda Levido, Southern Cross University, Australia

All authors
Amanda Levido, Southern Cross University, Australia
Sarah Matthews, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Philippa Amery, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Emma Cross, Curtin University, Australia

This research investigated the following question: What are children's perspectives on learning with digital technologies at home? Children often engage with digital media at home from a young age (Danby et al., 2018). There have been calls for further study of children's perspectives on digital technologies (Plowman, 2015). This research is founded on post-digital (Jandric et al., 2018) sociomaterial perspectives (Burnett and Merchant, 2020; Fenwick and Edwards, 2010) to investigate the relationship between the 'things' within three participant family homes, including people and technologies, and how the relations between these shape understandings of learning and digital technology. Taking a relational sociomaterial approach, we present a detailed, in depth, single case analysis of one family, tracing the detailed practices of the human and non-humans involved with learning at home with digital media. We conducted two home visits with a homeschooled child (aged 7) and their parent. We undertook semi-structured interviews and a child-led technology tour (Plowman and Stevenson, 2013; Scott, 2022). When in family homes, we were mindful of capturing data that the child and parent consented to and reaffirming the child's assent. It became apparent that technology allowed for flexible learning for this family. The technology and the parent supported the child's autonomy for both learning, play and, most notably for the child, enjoyment. Although limited in scope to a single case, this study provides a rich sociomaterial account highlighting the importance of children's perspectives while also considering the multiple negotiations between human and non-human actors when using digital media for learning at home.

digital media, learning, homeschooling, technology, children

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Views of Arab Preschoolers in Israel on Digital Technologies

Presenters
Ora Segal-Drori, Levinsky-Wingate Academic Center, Israel
All authors
Ora Segal-Drori, Levinsky-Wingate Academic Center, Israel
Islam Abu Asaad, Sakhnin College for Teacher Education, Israel

The Arab population in Israel comprises about 21% of the citizens and is a unique cultural group that speaks Arabic and has a separate education system. The present study explored the views of Arab preschoolers in Israel regarding digital technologies in their lives. Investigating children's perceptions is a field of research that emphasizes the importance of engaging directly with children as active participants, and not only subjects (Wall and Robinson, 2022). These insights were influenced by a democratic worldview and by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that each child will have the right to freedom of expression, to give and receive ideas of any kind, in an artistic manner, orally, in writing, in print, or by any other means of their choice (United Nations, 1989). Thirty Arab children from Israel, aged 4 to 6, participated in in-depth interviews regarding their views on digital technologies in their lives, which included their taking pictures and drawing digital devices at home. The interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Children and their parents assented to participate and they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. The findings yielded information regarding digital devices in children's day-to-day lives, their entertainment and learning purposes, gender differences in use, digital devices as an opportunity for social interactions, and restrictions on use of digital technologies. It is recommended that adults should mediate children's use of digital technologies more effectively and adapt them to the children's views.

digital technologies, early childhood, children's perceptions, research with children, children's voice

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Exploring Children's Voices on the Role of Interactive Apps in Enhancing Writing Engagement in the Primary Classroom

Presenters
Jill Dunn, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

All authors
Jill Dunn, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom
Gene Mehigan, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland
Mark Ballentine, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

This small-scale study aimed to explore children's voices on the potential of interactive apps in engaging children in writing in the classroom. Early writing is described as a 'highly complex task' (Quinn and Bliss, 2021, p232) and it is claimed that children's writing is at crisis point (Clark et al., 2024). It is argued that digital technology has the potential to provide opportunities for engaging and motivating children in writing (Canning, et al., 2017). The research took a children's rights perspective recognising their rights to express their views and participate in decision-making about matters affecting them (Huser et al., 2022). In exploring children's voices, we are positioning children as competent, expert informants about their learning (Anning, 2003). The study adopted an interpretivist stance, concentrating on the meaning people bring to situations (O'Donoghue, 2007). Twenty-four children (aged 6-7 years) were involved in writing using the interactive app and then participated in four focus groups where their views were sought on this approach to writing. Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyse and report themes from within the data. Voluntary informed consent was obtained from all participants and individuals' rights to privacy were recognised in accordance with EECERA's ethical code. Findings indicated that the interactive app made writing more enjoyable for children. They particularly liked the interactivity, the fun approach and the opportunities

for choice. Capitalising on a more creative, enjoyable writing experience may be a valuable way of developing children's writing skills at a time when children's writing is seen as 'in crisis'.

writing, digital technology, children's rights, curriculum, children's voice

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set C23 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G329, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

EXPLORING PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION - SUPPORT AND INSIGHTS

Chaired by Alison Watson, Federation University Australia, Australia

Exploring pedagogical support for vulnerable children

Presenters
Alison Watson, Federation University Australia, Australia

All authors
Alison Watson, Federation University Australia, Australia

This inquiry aims to describe and evaluate how early childhood educators and teachers (ECETs) are supported through professional development and learning (PLD) to educate and care for vulnerable children. ECETs are uniquely positioned to support vulnerable children, yet frequently lack the training and resources. There is a critical demand for specialised PLD (Roberts, 2015; Krakouer et al., 2017) that is further complicated by the lack of consensus on defining ongoing learning and professionalism in the early childhood context (Alchin and Ledbrock, 2021; Havnes, 2018; Molla and Nolan, 2018). The research used Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994), and Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field, and habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) together with a professional learning framework (PLF) adapted to suit the early childhood context (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2012). A qualitative, interpretive case study design was utilised (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2012). Thirty-three ECETs completed online questionnaires and nine elected to participate in the second stage of the study involving two semi-structured interviews and periodic written reflections. Data was analysed thematically and cross-checked for quality (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Ethical considerations included ethical approval, informed consent, voluntary participation, and pseudonyms. The findings reveal a significant gap, showing that ECETs have not received adequate support through PLD and other systems to comprehend children's vulnerabilities and respond appropriately. The study identified a need for expanded and contextualised PLD opportunities for ECETs.The exposed systematic problems extend beyond the study, requiring comprehensive policy changes.

vulnerability, children's needs, professional development, reflective pedagogy, qualitative research

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Let the Walls Speak: Using Insights from Pedagogical Documentation to Foster Inclusive Participatory Processes in Collective Settings

Presenters
An Piessens, Researcher, Belgium

All authors

An Piessens, Researcher, Belgium
Siska Van Daele, Researcher, Belgium
Marie Van Roost, KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Belgium
Anouk Van Der Wildt, KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Belgium

This paper presents a participatory action research approach designed to richly document children's lived experiences and foster responsive practices. Central to this is the "living wall," a shared space that promotes children's participation and ownership. European research highlights ongoing exclusion in participatory practices, especially for marginalised children (European Commission, DG Justice, 2021). Lundy (2007) critiques structural flaws that hinder meaningful involvement. Our approach integrates Reggio Emilia pedagogy (Malaguzzi, 1996; Rinaldi, 2021), the Mosaic approach (Clark, 2017), and the concept of the Living Wall (Bjartveit et al., 2019), along with insights on children's rights and the sociology of childhood (Baraldi and Rabello de Castro, 2020). Initially implemented with refugee children in asylum reception centers (van Daele and Piessens, 2019; 2021), the living wall combined visual, arts-based methods and interviews to support multilingual storytelling. These stories were co-constructed with children publicly, encouraging reflection and ownership. The method was adapted for school-based children's councils in the GOTALK (CERV) project. When used successfully, the wall became a landscape of diverse voices and concerns. This research addresses critiques of tokenistic participation by seeking more inclusive and dialogical methods. Ethical approval was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Antwerp University Association. Professionals valued the living wall's potential to make participation visible. When meaningfully used, it moved beyond an information board to a space of inclusion. The findings expose tensions between genuine participation and result-driven cultures. Inclusive participation requires time, commitment, and belief in the value of children's voices—regardless of their age or position within the setting.

participation, UNCRC, pedagogical documentation, slow pedagogy living wall

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A cross-context comparison of educator pedagogical risk-taking in early childhood education

Presenters
Mandy Cooke, Deakin University, Australia

All authors
Mandy Cooke, Deakin University, Australia

This research aims to explore educators' perspectives and practices of pedagogical risk-taking, and the conditions that enable and constrain risk-taking, in early childhood education (ECE) across a range of contexts. Research shows that providing opportunities for children to take risks supports learning, development and wellbeing (e.g. Sandseter and Kennair 2011; Brussoni et al. 2015). It is also increasingly evident that educator risk-taking supports high quality ECE through innovation, creativity, professional growth, advocacy and social justice (Cooke et al. 2020a; Grieshaber et al. 2014; Henriksen, 2016; Howard et al., 2018; Little and Stapleton, 2021). Yet there remains minimal research on educators' pedagogical risk-taking. As an education focused practice theory, the theory of practice architectures provided a useful theoretical and analytical tool to explore educator risk-taking practices and the conditions that enable and constrain these practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). Undertaken using a constructivist paradigm, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered via an anonymous Qualtrics online survey in Australia and Norway. Analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Participants provided consent in Qualtrics prior to completing the survey and were asked not to reveal any identifying information in their responses. Preliminary findings from the 669 participants in the Australian survey identifies a possible correlation between educator longevity in their workplace and the ECE profession and their

engagement in pedagogical risk-taking. These findings have implications for how the ECE sector supports educators to stay in the profession.

risk-taking, courage, professional support, the theory of practice architectures

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set C24 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G362, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) INCLUSIVE PLAYWORLDS AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: REIMAGINING EDUCATOR-CHILD INTERACTIONS IN ECEC

Chaired by Anna Hreinsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

Adult–Child Play and Social Sustainability in Icelandic and Swedish Preschools

Presenters
Anna Hreinsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Anna Hreinsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Robert Lecusay, Stockholm University, Sweden
Eva Hallgren Eva, Stockholm University, Sweden

The aim of this research is to explore if and how role and imaginary play in ECEC settings can contribute to fostering education for social sustainability. The research draws on documentation from ECEC educators engaged in Lindqvist's (1995) play pedagogy during an Erasmus exchange between Icelandic and Swedish preschools. Rooted in Vygotsky's theories of play, aesthetics, and cultural development, this research builds on Lindqvist's (1995) early childhood play pedagogy with emphasizes on the role of socio-dramatic play between adults and children in the creation of collaborative idiocultures of play (Fine, 2012; Lecusay and Nilsson, 2024). The study draws on an interpretivist, qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2013). Narrative analyses together with concepts from drama pedagogy (Hallgren, 2018; 2022) are applied to characterize educators' reflections and perspectives on the relationship between children's play and social sustainability (Lindqvist, 1998; Nilsson and Lecusay, 2024). Informed consent was obtained from the participating educators. Preliminary findings indicate that educators perceive character and fantasy play in ECEC settings as contributing to social sustainability. Their reflections highlight how imaginative environments and active educator facilitation shape their understanding of the relationship between play and social learning, as well as their role in fostering relational trust—key components in developing sustainable educational practices. These findings suggest that national ECEC policies should emphasize the value of adult–child fantasy play as part of sustainability education. Practice can be supported through professional development and leadership initiatives that help educators integrate collaborative storytelling and drama into everyday pedagogy to foster inclusion and social learning.

playworld, social sustainability, drama, inclusion, educators.

Enhancing Playworlds in ECEC: Exploring Connections with Social Sustainability and Inclusion in Swedish ECEC

Presenters
Angelika Hatlevoll, Kungsholmen City of Stockholm, Sweden
Kristine Rende, Kungsholmen City of Stockholm, Sweden

All authors
Angelika Hatlevoll, Kungsholmen City of Stockholm, Sweden
Kristine Rende, Kungsholmen City of Stockholm, Sweden

This project explores how role play, and imaginative play can be enhanced in ECEC while examining their intersection with social sustainability. Key questions include: How are play and social sustainability connected? What abilities do children develop through play that contribute to a sustainable future? How does the pedagogue's role-taking influence relationships with children from a social sustainability perspective? The project builds on the role of play in children's development, learning, and wellbeing (Lpfö18). Prior studies highlight the diminishing space for play in knowledge-oriented preschool curricula and its potential to foster resilience and agency in children (Wood, 2013). The framework integrates social constructivist theories, emphasizing the role of play in fostering social and emotional development (Vygotsky, 1987), alongside concepts of social sustainability focused on resilience and agency (Lecusay and Nilson, 2024). Using action research and reflective job-shadowing (McNiff, 2013), educators from four Swedish ECEC settings engaged in observations, role play activities, and reflections to exchange knowledge and improve practices. The project adhered to ethical standards for international collaborations, ensured anonymity, and minimized power imbalances (Bertram et al., 2024). The participants gave their consent to participate. Preliminary results indicate that extended, structured role play enhances relationships between children and educators, deepens skill development, and promotes autonomy. The project also identifies synergies between imaginative play and social sustainability, fostering resilience and inclusion. This project highlights the potential of international collaboration to enrich pedagogical approaches to play and social sustainability. Findings suggest integrating autonomous play and sustainability concepts into preschool curricula, leading to a framework for early education.

role play, imaginative play, social sustainability, resilience, ECE

Inclusive Playworlds: Fostering Creativity, Learning, and Social Sustainability in Icelandic Preschools

Presenters
Auður Ævarsdóttir, City of Reykjavik, Iceland

All authors
Auður Ævarsdóttir, City of Reykjavik, Iceland
Kristín Ólafsdóttir, City of Reykjavik, Iceland

This research explores how shared playworlds, co-created by educators and children, foster creativity, learning, inclusion, and social sustainability within Icelandic preschools. The question is: How can preschool educators effectively engage in role and imaginative play with children to support inclusive learning environments? The study builds on Vygotsky's (1978, 1987) theories of teacher-child interactions in play and Lindqvist's (1998) concept of shared playworlds, where educators and children collaboratively create imaginative spaces. The study is further supported by Wood's (2013) emphasis on child-led play as a primary learning pathway and Lecusay and Nilson's (2024) findings on the connection between play and social sustainability, highlighting play's role in fostering resilience, agency, and inclusive social interactions. Grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, the research focuses on shared play experiences between children and educators within social and cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1987; Lindqvist, 1998). It employs a qualitative case study methodology, using teacher narratives, reflective journals, and focus group interviews to capture diverse perspectives (Creswell and Poth, 2017). Informed consent was obtained from parents, teachers, and administrators, with children's assent respected during play. Participant anonymity was ensured, and efforts were made to minimize disruptions to natural play settings (Bertram et al., 2016). Shared playworlds enhanced creativity, social interaction, and emotional development, more inclusive teacher-child connections. While teachers' active participation enriched play, maintaining a balance to preserve spontaneity and

child-led dynamics proved essential. The study underscores the importance of fostering inclusive, collaborative play cultures aligned with broader goals of social sustainability and equity in early childhood education.

inclusion, shared playworlds, creativity, social sustainability, early childhood education, teacher-child interactions

Symposium Set C25 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 08:30 – 09:50 | Room G366, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) CAPTURING JOY, WONDERMENT AND MUSICALITY

Chaired by Fran Paffard, Comet Nursery School and Chidren's Centre, United Kingdom

Moments of joy, physical and musical literacy inform praxeological intent

Presenters
Christine Parker, Independent researcher and writer, United Kingdom

All authors
Christine Parker, Independent researcher and writer, United Kingdom

This longitudinal study aims to explore children's physical and musical literacy and how adults respond with praxeological intent. Aligned to the child study tradition (Isaacs, 1930) this investigation seeks connectivity between physical and musical literacy (Brierley, 2017; Trevarthen, 2010) including expressions of joy in an endeavour to develop praxeological pedagogy (Formosinho and Oliveira-Formosinho, 2012; Pascal and Bertram, 2012). Observations are studied through the theoretical lenses of 1) physical literacy (Clark 2021) 2) musicality (Odam, 1995) and 3) emotional aspects of play (Karjalainen et al., 2019). Specific concepts and terminology relating to physicality and musicality illuminate narratives. An autoethnographic family member study with 2 children, aged 4 and 5-years (Matthews, 2003) applies narrative, and video observations, which invite interpretivist methods for data analysis to identify recurring themes. The relationships between child, parent and researcher are honoured. All ethical permissions are gained and regularly reviewed. Children's ongoing assent is articulated by each child and secured by requesting permission to film, scribe, and dialogue at each encounter. Being attuned to children's physical and musical literacy through play, impacts on their developing persistence in approaching challenge and channelling their emotional responses. Current observations connect with earlier narratives, demonstrating the connectivity between the past and present and possibilities for the future. Observation through theoretical lenses that illuminate and develop an appreciation for what a child brings to a moment in play emotionally, physically and musically, strengthens praxeological intent over time.

emotion, joy, musicality, physical literacy, praxeology

Finding Joy: Exploring children's experiences and practitioners' understandings of joy in early years settings

Presenters
Fran Paffard, Comet Nursery School and Chidren's Centre, United Kingdom
Rosemary White, London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

All authors
Fran Paffard, Comet Nursery School and Chidren's Centre, United Kingdom
Rosemary White, London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom
Lisa Clarke, Headteacher, United Kingdom

This research across four nursery schools investigates the multiple sources of joy children experience and how practitioners define, recognise and inspire this. Expanding on Kingston-Hughes advocacy of joy (2024), researchers explore the parameters of an ill-defined area drawing on psychology and neuroscience studies Trevarthen, C. and Bjørkvold, J.-R. (2016) on companionship Laevers on wellbeing (1994) and Panksepp and Biven (2012) on emotion, Csikszentmihalyi, M. on flow (1992). The study uses participatory action research (Udas, 1998) drawing on dynamical systems theoretical frameworks (Smith and Thelen, 2003; Spencer, Austin, and Schutte, 2012) and sociocultural perspectives Vygotsky (1978) Rogoff (2003). The research explores children's occurrences and expressions of joy in a situated interpretivist paradigm (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Methods include observations and video of children's emotional expressions, alongside practitioner analysis and discussion. Open-ended action research methodology collaboratively reviews and adapts research foci alongside findings (Rhedding-Jones, 2003). The power relationships between education providers and young children are considered. All staff and families involved in research have given informed consent for use of videos, images and data, and pseudonyms used. Children's ongoing consent is monitored and responded to. Early findings reveal a complexity of feeling and expression that pushes the boundaries of definitions for practitioners in recognising and nurturing joy. Simultaneously this focus on positive emotion shifts practice significantly for practitioners and children alike. Observation and planning for children's joyful experiences may have a transformative impact on practice. Practitioner awareness enhances possibilities but more research is needed.

joy, observation, planning, emotion, happiness

Capturing moments of wonderment in early language interventions

Presenters
Kathryn Morris, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom

All authors
Kathryn Morris, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom

This research aims to highlight how, creating a sense of 'wonderment' (L'Ecuyer, 2023) and encouraging trusted adults to 'Follow the Child's lead (Wiseman, 2017) supports early language development. The Better Start early language service recognises the importance of early intervention (Heidlage et al. 2020) in minimising the impact language needs have for children (Hollo et al., 2014; Van Daal et al., 2007). The intervention follows Hanen Spark, coaching adults to use strategies in naturalistic interactions (Wolery, 1994), focusing on 'following the child's lead' (Weitzman, 2017). Outcomes are improved when children are supported by sensitive care givers who are able to tune in to their needs and think about what is beautiful for that child (L'Ecuyer, 2014). Children have their language needs identified using WellComm and families are offered intervention in their home, early years setting or elsewhere in the community. The intervention creates opportunities of wonderment (L'Ecuyer, 2014) to truly engage with children's during the intervention and quantitative data through Wellcomm to track progress. Parents have consented to this research and all names have been changed. Childrens on going assent is gained through observation using the Lundy Model of Child Participation ensuring their voices are heard and practitioners act on their right to withdraw. By following the child's lead trusted adults are able to that create opportunities that are truly beautiful and that support their early language development. Language development is best supported by adults, who know the child's unique needs and are able to create individualised opportunities that are beautiful and bespoke them.

wonderment, language intervention, voice, child led

Symposium Set D

10:40 – 12:00, Wednesday 27th August 2025

Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava

Symposium Set D1 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G103, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

LANGUAGE, STORIES AND CULTURE

Chaired by Marco Delgado, University of Derby, United Kingdom

Picturebooks. Supporting preliteracy skills in communities with no written form of language in Mexico and Colombia (Pilot Study)

Presenters
Marco Delgado, University of Derby, United Kingdom

All authors
Marco Delgado, University of Derby, United Kingdom

The aim is to discuss the experiences of children, families, and preschool educators who promote preliteracy through picturebooks. The study focuses on practices using potential anti-colonial perspectives. In the 1500s, Meso-America lost 90% of its population due to colonisation (Salmerón-Sanginéz, 2021). Books and documents were destroyed as part of the symbolic violence. Some studies have used picturebooks with indigenous children (Haese, 2018); here, books were made with children using local symbols. The study considers literacy from a constructivist point of view (Ferreiro, 2006) regarding a transparent language when the rules are mainly phonetic. However, other cultural components (Rogoff, 2023) can also represent meanings, such as images or syllabic symbols. The study considered action research (Kemmis-McTaggart, 2000) combined with narrative enquiry (Amadasi, 2024). Community-based staff implemented the strategy "My first book,"which consisted of children's stories using culturally relevant symbols to create picturebooks mainly through photographs. Such symbols are part of cultural artefacts such as ceramics, textiles, paintings, etc. Eight participants were interviewed regarding how picturebooks were elaborated, their use at home and preschool and children's reactions. Participants' consent was obtained, and CONAFE granted ethical permission. Children were not interviewed as limited time would not allow the construction of trustful and respectful relationships needed to use the Mosaic Approach. Children created picturebooks and used them. Some illiterate adults enrolled in adult education to "tell their story,"similar to Freire's popular education process. Preliteracy skills can be developed using culturally relevant symbols before learning a second language. Local cultures can become part of everyday activities.

pre-literacy, cultural relevance, community, preschool, indigenous peoples

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Aesthetic Approaches to Sami Language and Culture in Preschool

Presenters
Cathrine Bjerknes, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway
Tove Ingebrigtsen, Nord University, Norway

All authors
Cathrine Bjerknes, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway
Tove Ingebrigtsen, Nord University, Norway
Elisabeth Bjørnestad, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway
Kristin Østrem Fløtten, Nord University, Norway
Viktor Johansson, Nord University, Norway

This study explores how creative book-making processes with children can raise their voices and awareness of Sami language and culture in preschool. Previous research by Jannok Nutti and Joks (2018) shows that action research collaboration between staff, children, and researchers in Sami kindergartens, through mutual relations, can support children's voices and builds bridges between cultures. The theoretical framework draws upon the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy (Malaguzzi, 1993) and is inspired by Archibald's (2008) understanding of Indigenous Storywork. The project is inspired by other action research studies in Sápmi (Jannok Nutti, 2018; Archibald, 2008). The scientific foundation is based on Indigenous action research methodological perspectives and paradigms (Kovach, 2009; Jannok Nutti, 2018). Various methods have been utilized, such as educators' creative book-making processes with children, interviews with educators, and sharing books between the five participating kindergartens. The study adheres to ethical standards and privacy policies approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Service. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. The study also follows The EECERA Ethical Code. All participants are informed and consent to the study. Preliminary findings reveal that creative book-making processes strengthen educators' attention to children's modes of expression and increase awareness of the role of Sami languages in preschool settings. Creative book-making with children enabled educators to align more effectively with the national curriculum's guidelines regarding Sami content in preschools.

ECEC, Sami language, children's stories, picture books, indigenous methodology,

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Philosophy with Children in It: Weaving and thinking with the Lives of Indigenous Children through Stories of the Land

Presenters
Viktor Johansson, Nord University, Norway

All authors
Viktor Johansson, Nord University, Norway
Ngaroma Williams, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

This study highlights the ways children's everyday interactions with oral traditions, Land-based knowledge, and cultural narratives shape ethical philosophizing. Drawing on Ingold's idea of "philosophy with people in it,"we examine how Māori and Sámi children engage with the Land through stories and play, fostering an embedded, lived philosophy. The research builds on Indigenous epistemologies, particularly Māori and Sámi storytelling traditions in conversation with Wittgenstein's ordinary language philosophy. It extends discussions on anthropology as a philosophical inquiry (Ingold, 2022) and engages with Indigenous methodologies that emphasize storytelling and weaving as modes of theorizing in conversation with ECE (Lee, 2009; Knoblock, 2022). The paper weaves with Indigenous epistemologies, Wittgenstein's ordinary language philosophy, and Ingold's anthropology to explore children's narrative, ethical reasoning in an engagement with Land. We employ narrative-based Indigenous methodologies. It follows an essayistic approach that weaves lived experiences, traditional and contemporary Indigenous narratives, with the authors different positions, Māori and Sámi children's literature, children's interactions with stories, and intergenerational knowledge. The research adheres to Indigenous ethical frameworks, prioritizing reciprocity, relational accountability, and respect for Indigenous traditions and knowledges. We conclude

that Indigenous children's interactions with stories and the Land contribute to a form of lived philosophy that integrates ethics, ontology, and epistemology. Narratives functions an active philosophical engagement where children reflect on identity, belonging, and relationships with the Land. The paper contributes to storytelling and Land-based pedagogies in early childhood education. Which involves acknowledging children as active philosophers and support Indigenous pedagogies emerging from traditional and contemporary stories.

indigenous education, indigenous philosophy, indigenous children's literature, children's ethics, land education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D2 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G104, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

ANTI-BIAS AD ANTI-RACISM

Chaired by Shaddai Tembo, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom

Exploring Teachers' Racial and Gender Biases in Identifying Adverse Behaviors of Kindergarten Students

Presenters
Kyler Leiter, Notre Dame of Maryland University, United States

All authors
Kyler Leiter, Notre Dame of Maryland University, United States

This 15-week inquiry aimed to discover the level of unconscious biases of U.S. kindergarten teachers in the identification of students' adverse behaviors regarding race and gender. Research has indicated that the manner in which educators view student behaviors is heavily influenced by racialization and gender stigmatization processes in schools (Fish, 2017; Ogden et al., 2023) with a disproportionately higher level of discipline towards Black and male students (Morris and Perry, 2016; Sørlie et al., 2021). This study was constructed upon a combination of pragmatic and intersectionality theoretical lenses (Deckha, 2008; Morgan, 2014), with the acknowledgment that social and cultural identities tend to develop unconscious biases, often leading to discrimination and privilege. Through a longitudinal mixed methods approach, students' (n=100) behaviors were rated weekly on a 5-point Likert scale. Through a multivariate analysis, the impacts of students' race and gender were identified. Additionally, a focus group was held with teachers (n=6) to gain qualitative insight into the study's objectives. Informed consent was obtained from both teachers and guardians of student participants to develop transparency. No identifiable information was provided or included within reporting, with the exception of racial and gender identification. The preliminary findings indicate a statistical significance between behaviors in regard to race and gender, most notably the identification of oppositional defiance of Black students and aggression in male students. These findings suggest the manner and need for teacher self-reflective practices in order to identify and respond appropriately to underlying biases regarding student behaviors.

unconscious biases, gender, race, adverse behaviors, equity

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

What White People Did Next: Educator Insights on Building an Anti-Racist Early Years Forum

Presenters
Shaddai Tembo, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom
Beth Wilkinson, Easton Community Children's Centre, United Kingdom

Erin Blessitt, Hotwells Children's House, United Kingdom
Isabel Ruddick, Easton Community Children's Centre, United Kingdom

All authors

Shaddai Tembo, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom
Beth Wilkinson, Easton Community Children's Centre, United Kingdom
Erin Blessitt, Hotwells Children's House, United Kingdom
Isabel Ruddick, Easton Community Children's Centre, United Kingdom

Thinking-with Dabiri's (2021) What White People Can Do Next, this study examines the formation of an anti-racist forum led by white early childhood (EC) educators in England, exploring their motivations, challenges, and positionalities in sustaining anti-racist practice. Existing research highlights the necessity for anti-racist EC education (Tembo and Bateson, 2024), yet little is known about how white educators may engage at collective, grassroots levels. Using collaborative autoethnography within a critical research paradigm (Tracy, 2020), we document our experiences as part of the Bristol EY Forum for Anti-Racist Practice. Following Toyosaki and Pensoneau-Conway (2016), CAE is a means to evaluate (axiology), become (ontology), and act (praxiology) in anti-racist work. Interviews and focus group discussions with the forum leadership team were thematically analysed. While CAE inherently promotes ethical engagement (Chang et al., 2016), it also raises concerns about researcher vulnerability and the implications of shared stories (Roy and Uekusa, 2020). In response, and in addition to institutional ethical approval, we implemented a "four-person tick" process to ensure ongoing consent, including the right to withdraw. Structured check-ins before and after discussions also provided a space for reflection. Preliminary findings reveal four key themes: navigating discomfort, leveraging privilege, recognising systemic barriers, and sustaining the work through joy and collective care. These insights contribute to discussions on how (white) educators can take accountable action. This research has implications for anti-racist policy and practice in EC. It reveals the value of grassroots practitioner-led learning communities and argues for stronger racial literacy training in professional development frameworks.

anti-racism, collaborative autoethnography, practitioner-led learning communities, racial literacy, critical reflection

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Assessing Classroom Environments for Anti-Bias Education in Early Childhood

Presenters

Çağla Banko Bal, Yeditepe University, Türkiye

All authors

Çağla Banko Bal, Yeditepe University, Türkiye
Berrin Akman, Hacettepe University, Türkiye

This study aims to examine the physical environment of classrooms in early childhood education institutions in terms of supporting anti-bias education. Educational environments that promote diversity and inclusion in education enhance children's perspectives, reduce bias, and foster critical thinking, empathy, and self-esteem, according to the Anti-Defamation League (2012). Trust building requires understanding cultural and individual communication styles, as conflicts are often attributed to personal traits. Recognizing these differences in classroom contexts helps formulate strategies to mitigate potential difficulties or conflicts (Wolpert, 2005). Anti-bias education requires to recognize all differences on classroom settings (Derman-Sparks and Edwards, 2019). This study adopts an interpretivist approach, utilizing a qualitative survey methodology. Convenience sampling was employed to pick approximately 200 preschool educators. Data were gathered using a control list entitled "Checklist for Evaluating Classrooms in Early Childhood Education Institutions Regarding Anti-Bias Education." Data are being gathered via

survey and will be evaluated employing descriptive statistics. Informed consent is being secured, and pseudonyms are being utilized to preserve participant anonymity. After all the data are obtained, it is thought that the findings will reveal the extent to which early childhood education environments support anti-bias education. At the same time, it will be evaluated whether the support of educational environments for anti-bias education differs in terms of various variables like having children with differences in the classroom and having received training on the subject before. The findings will highlight the importance of intentionally designed early childhood classroom environments in fostering inclusivity, reducing bias, and supporting equitable learning experiences.

classrooms, anti-bias education, preschool education, preschool teachers, early years

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D3 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G113, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN IMAPCTED BY THE TRAUMAS OF WAR, EARTHQUAKE AND HOME DEMOLITION

Chaired by Emma Ferris, SETU, Ireland

A Home Under Threat: The Meanings of Home Among Bedouin Children in Unrecognized Villages in Israel

Presenters
Ibtisam Marey-Sarwan, Sakhnin College Academic for Teacher Education, Israel

All authors
Ibtisam Marey-Sarwan, Sakhnin College Academic for Teacher Education, Israel
Or Perah Midbar Alter, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, United Kingdom

This study examines how young Bedouin children perceive the concept of home amidst challenging socio-political conditions, including the constant threat of home demolition facing their families (Kremer, 2021). Given the harsh living conditions, previous research in Israel underscores that children are acutely aware of their surroundings. It is vital to capture their perspectives on issues that significantly impact their lives and development (Marey-Sarwan, 2020). Adopting a context-informed perspective (Nadan and Roer-Strier, 2020), this research analyzes how socio-political contexts shape children's experiences and understanding of home. It incorporates the sociology of childhood framework, emphasizing that childhood is a crucial developmental phase (Mayall, 2002). Using a qualitative methodology (Darian-Smith and Henningham, 2014), data were collected through drawing activities and open interviews with 25 Bedouin children aged 4 to 6 from unrecognized villages in Israel. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key insights about their concepts of home. Ethical considerations included obtaining children's assent and ensuring a safe environment with familiar adults, while informed consent was secured from their mothers. Findings reveal four main themes: (1) children's understanding of home; (2) perceptions of police actions and home demolition; (3) home as a source of emotional distress; and (4) children's coping mechanisms. The study emphasizes the significance of family, community, toys and nature as protective sources that foster resilience and emotional security for these children. These insights advocate for culturally sensitive interventions, improved infrastructure in underserved areas, and the integration of children's perspectives in decision-making processes that affect their living conditions.

Bedouin children, unrecognized villages, context-informed perspective, sociology of childhood, home demolition

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Effects of a Custom-Design Preschool Education Intervention on Development Trajectories of Earthquake-Affected Children

Presenters
Elif Anaçali, AÇEV, Türkiye

All authors
Elif Anaçali, AÇEV, Türkiye
Güneş Ertaş, AÇEV, Türkiye
Sevgi Yakın, AÇEV, Türkiye
Ersoy Erdemir, Boğaziçi University, Türkiye

This study examines the effects of a 34-week custom-design preschool education program on developmental wellbeing and school readiness of 5-to-6-year-old children in earthquake-affected regions of Turkey. Humanitarian disasters can disrupt children's development, causing greater risk for school readiness (Mollica et al., 2004). However, tailored preschool education interventions can foster resilience and wellbeing, promoting readiness for primary school (Dybdahl, 2001). This study builds on bio-ecological models of early childhood interventions to support development and resilience in children exposed to early life adversities (Bronfenbrenner, 2001; Boon et al., 2011; Ungar et al., 2013). A trauma-informed, skill-based preschool program is currently being implemented in provinces affected by the 2023 Southeastern Turkey earthquake. Program's content and structure are designed to meet children's needs within their fragile contexts. In a pre-post test control-group evaluation, 317 children are receiving the 34-week intervention, while 384 control children come from the same communities. Cognitive, language, motor and socioemotional competencies linked to early development and school readiness will be assessed by various instruments, with repeated measure analyses. Trained teachers and researchers ensure trauma-sensitive approaches, activating psychological referrals when necessary. Ethical approval and child/family consent are secured. It is anticipated program participation will lead to significant gains in executive functioning, receptive/expressive language, emotion regulation, and social competence—exceeding expected levels without intervention. These improvements may suggest enhanced wellbeing and school readiness. The study underscores the critical role of custom-design preschool interventions in disasters. NGOs and policymakers should prioritize such programs to strengthen resilience and ensure smoother school transitions for affected children.

early intervention, early adversities, preschool education, school readiness, developmental wellbeing

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Popular Music and Wellbeing of Children with Wartime Migration Experience: A Participatory Approach

Presenters
Marta Kondracka-Szala, University of Wroclaw, Poland

All authors
Marta Kondracka-Szala, University of Wroclaw, Poland
Roksolyana Pryzvanska, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine

This study examines the impact of popular music-based interventions on the wellbeing of young children aged 7-8, including Ukrainian war migrants in Wrocław, Poland. It aims to: (1) identify children's preferred popular music and its role in peer interactions, (2) explore how engagement with self-selected music influences wellbeing, and (3) assess whether structured music activities support emotional resilience and social integration. Music helps alleviate trauma and supports wellbeing (MacDonald et al., 2013; Ferguson and Sheldon, 2013). Research highlights migrant children's emotional distress and the need for inclusive interventions (UNESCO, 2019; OECD, 2022). Popular music fosters communication and inclusion (Campbell and Scott-Kassner, 2018; Ilari, 2014). The study applies

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (1979), Seligman's PERMA model (2012), and praxial music education theory (Elliott, 2009; Regelski, 2008) to explore music's role in wellbeing. A mixed-methods design includes: (1) participatory music activities, (2) quasi-experimental wellbeing assessment (M&Mf, SLSS, SRS), and (3) qualitative observations and interviews. Participants include 40 Ukrainian and 40 Polish children from Wroclaw schools. Ethical measures ensure informed consent, child-centered participation, and culturally sensitive approaches to psychological safety. Preliminary results suggest that engaging with familiar, self-selected music enhances emotional resilience, peer connections, and a sense of belonging. Findings highlight popular music's potential as an inclusive tool for migrant children's wellbeing, informing music-based interventions in multicultural classrooms.

popular music, wellbeing, child migration, participatory research, early childhood education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D4 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G114, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

COMMUNITY BASED ARTS EDUCATION IN ECE

Chaired by Josephine Deguara, University of Malta, Malta

Young Eyes on the Sea: Maltese and Norwegian children's drawings of the sea

Presenters
Josephine Deguara, University of Malta, Malta
Anne Grethe Baustad, Nord University, Norway

All authors
Josephine Deguara, University of Malta, Malta
Anne Grethe Baustad, Nord University, Norway

This study explores how children in Maltese and Norwegian coastal communities use drawings to communicate their perspectives on the sea, contributing to a children's rights-based approach to marine sustainability. Building on Fache et al., (2022), it reinforces the importance of young children's connections to the sea, in sustanability discourse. Grounded in social semiotics (Kress, 2010), this study considers drawings as meaningful signs through which children convey their understandings (Deguara and Nutbrown, 2025). From a sociocultural perspective, children's sea drawings reflect cultural narratives, social experiences and environmental influences. Following an interpretivist paradigm, this qualitative study uses a child-centred, participatory approach. Eight, 4-5-year-old children from two Maltese kindergarten settings and eight, 4-5-year-old children from two Norwegian kindergarten settings, were invited to draw three drawings each about their experiences with the sea. Selection was based on children's enjoyment of drawing, parent consent and children's assent. The drawing process was video-recorded and the drawings scanned. All data were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the University of Malta Research Ethics Committee and the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. Pseudonyms ensured anonymity. Participants could withdraw at any time. Video-recordings were used for transcription purposes only. Preliminary findings reveal children's strong connections to the sea, highlighting three themes in shaping children's identities: children's understandings of the sea, the uses of the sea, and their concerns about the marine environment. The insights from the study emphasise the need to prioritise children's perspectives in marine education and policy discussions.

children's drawings, *perspectives on the sea*, *coastal communities*, *Maltese children*, *Norwegian children*

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Teacher Education: Assessing Teacher Candidates' Preparedness

Presenters
Eda Sevinç Özgen, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye

All authors
Eda Sevinç Özgen, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye
Canan Peker, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye
Ceyda Durmuş, Ministry of National Education, Türkiye

The current study aims to learn about the personal and professional readiness of pre-service teachers for CRP in the context of a teacher education faculty at a state university. There is a lack of practices that provide applicable solutions in educational settings. Ladson-Billings (2021) attributes this to the teacher education program that is insufficient to support real-world application and theory-lacking workshops. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) enhances teaching by integrating a combination of knowledge, practices, and attitudes connected to the cultural characteristics, experiences and perspectives of students (Gay, 2002). Effective CRP requires teachers to communicate meaningfully with students from various cultural backgrounds, bridge students' home and school cultures, and foster an inclusive learning environment (Gunn et al., 2020; Parkhouse et al., 2023). The research utilizes an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design proposed by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018). Research data is collected by utilizing the Culturally Responsive Teaching Readiness Scale (α = .92 for personal readiness, α = .87 for professional readiness, α = .90 overall) (Karataş and Oral, 2017). Study includes 290 participants in total (17 pilot study; 273 main study). For the next phase, 54 participants provided their contact information for the qualitative part of the study which is ongoing and nearing completion. This study was approved (0238-ODTUIAEK-2024); consent obtained, data anonymized. The result of the quantitative parts identifies overall readiness of teacher candidates for CRP while the qualitative part will be expected to explore influencing factors, challenges, and support mechanism. Findings will guide CRP teacher preparation.

culturally responsive pedagogy, inclusive education, teacher education, teacher preparedness, explanatory sequential mixed methods

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exploring the themes from four pieces of Arts Council England funded research into arts and creativity in the early years, focused on the creative lives of young children, families and arts professionals.

Presenters
Stefanie Williams, Arts Council England, United Kingdom

All authors
Stefanie Williams, Arts Council England, United Kingdom

This paper explores findings from four Arts Council England-commissioned research projects. These projects explore cultural and creative provision for 0-5-year-olds in two geographical areas (CREC, 2024; NESTA, 2024), professional development needs in the early years (Book Trust, 2025), and current creative practices with 0-3-year-olds (Magic Acorns, forthcoming). The Durham Commission (ACE, 2019) recommends creativity and teaching for creativity should be recognised and supported in the early years. Alongside this, ACE's Let's Create (2020) prioritises accessible, high-quality arts opportunities for 0-5-year-olds. This context underpins the research, providing a framework for the recommendations. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1977; 1994) provides the theoretical structure, examining how children's engagement with arts and culture unfolds within families, communities, and

broader social, political, and funding systems. Analysis of themes is undertaken through a qualitative interpretive paradigm (Mukherji and Albon, 2018). Six phases of thematic analysis of the data (Bruan and Clarke, 2022) were used to determine key themes. Data included desk-based mapping, surveys, interviews and workshops with families, parents, arts organisations, and cultural sector professionals. A Theory of Change (Arts Council England, 2024) foregrounding equity, inclusion, and diversity guided participant recruitment. Ethical procedures included informed consent, anonymity, and right to withdraw. Findings highlight how young children access arts within their communities, the specialised expertise of early years arts practitioners, and the extent to which Arts Council funding reaches families with very young children. Recommendations address embedding creativity in early childhood, aligning with ACE's strategic aims, and show how exemplary arts provision can be replicated more widely.

arts and culture, creativity, families, access, Arts Council England

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set D5 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G115, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) PARENTS AS PARTNERS: SUSTAINING COLLABORATION FOR INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN MALTA

Chaired by Shirley Ann Gauci, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta

Beyond the School Gate? Repositioning Parents as Agents of Change in School Reform

Presenters
Heathcliff Schembri, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta

All authors
Heathcliff Schembri, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta

Parental engagement is often positioned as supplementary rather than central to school reform, reflecting a persistent policy-practice gap. This study examines how a school curriculum reform initiative in Malta, undertaken to bridge a divide between the early and junior years, integrated parental engagement into its restructuring process. The research aims to analyse how leadership, teachers, and parents co-construct reform processes. Research highlights the importance of parent-school partnerships (Epstein, 2011) in fostering inclusion yet critiques their often tokenistic nature (Vasey et al., 2018). Policy enactment theory (Ball et al., 2012) frames the study, examining how reform strategies are interpreted, negotiated, and materialised in practice. Distributed leadership theory (Spillane, 2005) further frames the inquiry by positioning parental engagement as a decentralised, collective process rather than a hierarchical intervention. This study employs a constructivist paradigm with ethnographic case study methodology, capturing the researcher's role over a four-year period (2021-2025). Data sources include interviews with four members of the school leadership team, CPD meetings with over 70 educators, and five parent workshops. Ethical considerations centred on power asymmetries in leadership-parent interactions and the risk of performative consultation, and ethical protocols included voluntary participation and assured confidentiality. Findings highlight tensions between institutional control and participatory engagement, showing that while parental engagement enhances trust and pedagogical continuity, governance structures often constrain its transformative potential. The study advocates for policy shifts that embed meaningful, systemic parent-school collaboration, offering insights, and a practical guide, into the intersection of policy implementation and inclusive school reform.

distributed leadership, parent agency, parent partnership, reculturing process, school reform

Fostering Reciprocal Parent Partnerships: Leadership Practices for Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Childcare

Presenters
Shirley Ann Gauci, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta

All authors
Shirley Ann Gauci, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta

This study examines how childcare managers in Malta construct and enact reciprocal partnerships with parents in culturally diverse childcare settings. It explores leadership practices facilitating shared decision-making and culturally responsive engagement, advancing inclusive parental participatory approaches. Parental involvement is integral to inclusive early childhood education and care. However, systemic barriers, such as language and power asymmetries, often hinder full participation (Esterhuizen et al., 2023). Reframing parents as partners fosters trust and shared responsibility (Connelly et al., 2024), while participatory approaches serve as transformative mechanisms that enable them to engage in decision-making processes (Lunga, 2024). This study draws on Rodd's (2013) conceptualisation of leadership in early childhood education and care, which emphasises democratic, relational, and adaptive leadership as essential for fostering collaborative family partnerships. Employing an interpretivist research paradigm, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with six childcare managers in multicultural Maltese settings. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) identified recurring patterns and themes, offering deep insights into leadership practices. Institutional ethical approval was obtained, and participants provided informed consent. Pseudonyms ensured non-identifiability, and participants retained the right to withdraw at any stage. The findings indicate that childcare managers strive to cultivate reciprocal partnerships through culturally responsive and collaborative decision-making. However, this process is fraught with complexity, as rigid policies, systemic biases, and diverse parental expectations cause challenges. The findings call for policy reforms and adaptive practices to strengthen parent partnerships in childcare. Overcoming institutional constraints through inclusive, dialogical engagement is crucial for participatory decision-making that honours diverse multicultural family realities.

culturally responsive, inclusive leadership, multicultural engagement, parent partnership, participatory decision-making

The COMPASS Project: Prioritising Parental Perspectives on Initial Teacher Education

Presenters
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Heathcliff Schembri, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Malta

The COMPASS Project aimed to evaluate initial teacher education within the Maltese context through a multi-stakeholder approach. This study focuses on the perceptions of parents of children aged five to seven. This study expands on existing research which highlights the importance of acknowledging the parents' role (Darmanin, 2023) and their input in the educational process (Minoza and Avenido, 2023) and teacher formation. Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1992) and within the themes of belonging, wellbeing, autonomy, and agency, the study explored how initial teacher education can encompass these themes and sustain a more responsive educational system. The study was located within the qualitative interpretivist paradigm, and data was

gathered through a focus group interview with eight parents having children attending state, church and independent schools. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) facilitated the identification of themes. Institutional ethical approval was achieved and participants granted informed consent. Confidentiality and non-identifiability was secured through pseudonyms. Participants had the right the withdraw without any consequence. Preliminary findings indicate that a number of parents felt they were given limited space to share thoughts about initial teacher education. Others expressed the need for enhanced initial teacher education which foregrounds effective communication and inclusive engagement strategies. The study emphasises the need to prioritise and integrate parents' voices throughout the entire process, from the design phase of teacher education programmes to their realisation.

compass project, *initial teacher education*, *Malta*, *parent partnerships*, *parents' voices*

Symposium Set D6 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G117, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Chaired by Arlinda Beka, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo

Seeing the magic moments: The creation of inclusive learning space in preschools learning communities

Presenters
Hrönn Pálmadóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Hrönn Pálmadóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Kristin Karlsdottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

This study aims to explore episodes from preschool teacher student's internship when shaping an inclusive learning space in multicultural learning communities. The question is: How did they create an inclusive learning space in preschool practice? Policy in Iceland and other European countries stipulates children's rights to participation and agency in society and schools. Nevertheless, research shows that immigrant children's participation can be limited (Einarsdóttir and Ólafsdóttir, 2020). The study is grounded in literature on multicultural education (Banks and Banks, 2020), and inclusive learning spaces emphasizing children's and preschool teachers' resources (Soto Manning, 2013). Also, in learning communities where the group shapes common knowledge and shares interests, views, and values about learning and education (OECD, 2023). Seeking support from qualitative paradigm, data consisted of recordings from 12 meetings with three preschool teacher students who were invited to participate in the study. The meetings were audio-recorded, transcribed, and subjected to reflective thematic analysis. The results emphasize the voices and experiences of the students. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured regarding sensitive information about the participants, preschools, children and families (EECERA, 2024). Participants gave their consent; power relations were attended to such as values and attitudes. Participants were informed and gave feedback about the analysis and presentation of the study. Findings demonstrates challenges in practitioners' diverse perspectives towards children's strength and learning. Opportunities emerged in creating inclusive learning spaces to empower children and practitioners in the learning communities. This confirms the importance of reflecting on practice during the mentoring process in student's internship in teacher education.

multicultural-preschool, inclusion, learning space, learning communities

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

The Importance of the Environment in Fostering Inclusion: A Reggio Emilia Approach in Kosovo's Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Arlinda Beka, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo

All authors
Arlinda Beka, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo
Engjerlina Dukaj, "Botanika"- Community-based Kindergarten, Kosovo

This study, aims to discover how the learning environment affects inclusion in early childhood education in Kosovo. It will investigate how purposefully designed environments benefit different types of learners and this study hopes that it will lead to the improvement of equality of participation and engagement. This study builds on research highlighting the environment as a "third teacher"in the Reggio Emilia approach (Malaguzzi, 1998; Rinaldi, 2006), addressing a gap in its application within early childhood settings in Kosovo. Socio-constructivism, as described in Bandura's (1986) observational learning, Vygotsky's (1978) socially mediated learning, and Malaguzzi's (1998) hundred languages of children, informs the approach to understanding the dynamic interactions of children, teachers, resources, and environments fostering inclusivity This qualitative study addressed ethical issues including informed consent and confidentiality from an interpretivist perspective using a case study technique of participant observations and interviews of teachers in Reggio-inspired classrooms. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality through anonymization, and adhering to institutional ethical guidelines for research involving children. Findings show that while well-organized, flexible classrooms support cooperation, individuality, and self-expression, traditional teaching methods, limited resources, and weak policies hinder progress. Ongoing professional development is vital to help teachers build inclusive, child-centered environments. Applying Reggio Emilia principles can further support inclusive early childhood education in Kosovo for diverse learning styles. Ensuring this means adjusting curriculum standards, teacher preparation, and creating laws that acknowledge the environment as an integral component of inclusive education.

Reggio Emilia, inclusive learning, early childhood education, learning environment, Kosovo

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Inclusive Early Learning and Care physical environments supporting children's development of self-regulation

Presenters
Mai Burke-Hayes, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

All authors
Mai Burke-Hayes, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

This research aims to explore early childhood environments for children aged between one year and school age. Specifically, how these environments support development of competencies like managing behaviour and feelings, controlling impulses, focusing and shifting attention. This study addresses the gap in literature relating to how the physical environment supports self-regulation competence development and is influenced by Universal Design Guidelines for ELC settings (Grey et al., 2019), children's voices in the design of their learning environment (Perry et al., 2023), self-regulation development in childhood (Robson and Zachariou, 2022), spatial characteristics influencing behaviour and development in early childhood (vanLiempd et al., 2020) and educators understanding and support of self-regulation (Vasseleu et al., 2022). This research is underpinned by Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory and Gibson's (1986) theory of affordances. This study utilises a pragmatic, case study approach in order to gather the perspectives of children and early childhood educators on how the early learning environment influences children's development of self-regulation. Pilot data collection has taken place and will be analysed thematically. Key ethical

considerations include voluntary participation, informed consent, on-going assent from children through child-friendly visual and verbal methods, confidentiality and anonymity and data storage. Children's rights and voice are fundamental to this research with their perspectives being listened to and respected. The findings of this research intend to further inform educators on the role of the physical environment for self-regulatory competence development supporting the provision of the optimum inclusive physical environment for young children's learning and development.

early childhood education, self-regulation, inclusive-environments, child development, self-regulated learning

Symposium Set D7 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G118, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

EARLY MATHS LEARNING

Chaired by Linda Bosman, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

The Prediction of Young Children's Math: Parietal Lobe Activation, EF, Home and School Environment

Presenters
Beyza Hamamcı, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye

All authors
Beyza Hamamcı, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye
Hasibe Özlen Demircan, Middle East Technical University, Türkiye
Yusuke Moriguchi, Kyoto University, Japan
Gülnaz Yükselen, Acibadem Mehmet Ali Aydinlar University, Türkiye
Sinem Burcu Erdoğan, Acibadem Mehmet Ali Aydinlar University, Türkiye Ata Akın, Acibadem Mehmet Ali Aydinlar University, Türkiye

The study's aim is to investigate the relationship between preschoolers' math abilities and hemodynamic responses in parietal lobe, EF, home and school environment. Literature suggests the importance of parietal lobe activation (Visibelli et al., 2024), EF (Bull et al., 2014), home and school environments (Silver et al., 2022) in math achievement. This research contributes to literature by integrating those sources while explaining preschoolers' math abilities. This study grounded in Bioecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1993), Neuroconstructivism (Westermann et al., 2017), Triple Code Model (Dehaene, 1992), and Causal Model for math abilities (Butterworth et al., 2011). This is a cross-sectional-predictive study (Johnson, 2001). Participants were 239 typically-developed preschoolers (127 girls; M=66.58, SD=4.78), their parents, and teachers in Istanbul. Data collected byEF-Touch (Willoughby et al.,2016; Hamamcı et al.,2023), TEMA-3 (Ginsburg et al., 2003; Erdoğan, 2006), specialized fNIRS Math Task (Authors), Early Mathematics Questionnaire (Missal et al., 2015; Karakuş, 2022) Mathematics Activities in the Classroom Questionnaire (Choi et al., 2014; Authors), and the Mathematical Development Beliefs Questionnaire (Platas, 2015; Karakuş et al., 2018). Ethical permission was obtained from METU.Written and verbal informed consent obtained from the participants.Pseudonyms were used for names. The model results indicate that children's math abilities are explained by their EF, the school and home environments collectively. Additionally, left intraparietal sulcus is activated while children perform math tasks and it is associated with their math scores. Further, the multiple regression analysis indicated that each EF component additionally oxygenation-level in intraparietal sulcus has a moderate prediction. This results implies the importance of integrated approach, including biology, cognition, and environment, while assessing mathematics.

early math, home environment, school environment, hemodynamic responses, EF

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Foundation Phase Children's Experiences of Mathematics Anxiety: "Maths makes me feel scared and sweaty"

Presenters
Linda Bosman, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

All authors
Linda Bosman, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
Chanté Waggie, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
Agatha Lucy Lebethe, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Anchored in children's right to voice their experiences (Lundy, 2007; UNCRC, 1989), this study explores Foundation Phase children's mathematics anxiety (MA) from their perspectives, seeking to reveal its origins, manifestations, and inform child-informed interventions in South African classrooms. South Africa grapples with educational inequities and mathematics underperformance (TIMSS, 2023), jeopardizing mathematical literacy essential for sustainability. MA - tension, worry or fear of mathematics (Ashcraft, 2002) - erodes motivation, performance and future success (Ramirez et al., 2013), emerging in early years (Lu et al., 2021). Yet, South African children's experiences of MA remain underexplored, necessitating context-specific insights for early identification and support. A socio-constructivist lens (Vygotsky, 1978) frames MA as constructed through social interactions in home and school contexts. Within these relational and contextual settings, dialogue, collaboration, and cultural tools play a role in exacerbating or alleviating anxiety. An interpretive, multiple case-study approach engaged 19 purposively selected Foundation Phase children from two Cape Winelands aftercare centers, identified using the adapted YCMAX and EES-AMAS scales plus narrative discussions. Focus groups, drawings, and voice-elicitation interviews yielded rich, child-voiced data (Spiteri, 2024). Beyond institutional and parental consent, child-focused ethics sessions ensured informed participation and safeguarded rights with integrity (Bertram et al., 2024). Sensitivity to MA-related distress was paramount throughout. Children articulated MA via emotional (e.g., unhappiness, shame, fear) and physiological (e.g., elevated heartbeat, sweating) responses, often hindered by limited emotional vocabulary and reflection opportunities. Findings call for early MA identification, child-informed interventions, and reflective, mathematics-friendly practices to build emotional literacy, resilience, and positive mindsets.

early mathematics, mathematics anxiety, foundation phase, child voice, socio-constructivism

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Bridging Play and Learning: Examining Educator Practices in Literacy and Numeracy Development in Early Childhood

Presenters
Blerta Perolli Shehu, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo

All authors
Blerta Perolli Shehu, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo
Arian Musliu, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo

The study aims to assess the extent to which educators integrate play as a pedagogical tool, the quality of teacher-child interactions, and the effectiveness of instructional support provided in play-based literacy and numeracy activities. Extensive research in child development and education highlights the critical importance of early childhood years in establishing positive outcomes across various domains of an individual's life including health, education, overall wellbeing, and productivity (Perolli-Shehu and Gjelaj, 2024). Play-based learning is a fundamental approach in early childhood education (ECE), fostering cognitive, social, and linguistic development while laying the

foundation for literacy and numeracy skills. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research involves direct classroom observations and teacher self-evaluations across public, private, and community-based early education institutions. The study aims to assess the extent to which educators integrate play as a pedagogical tool, the quality of teacher-child interactions, and the effectiveness of instructional support provided in play-based literacy and numeracy activities. Informed consent, maintaining data protection, and prioritising the wellbeing of children and educators throughout the process. Findings indicate that while educators recognise the importance of play in fostering early learning, its implementation varies widely, often focusing more on structured activities rather than child-led, exploratory play. Teachers demonstrated strengths in facilitating collaboration among children, yet opportunities for open-ended inquiry, problem-solving, and guided discovery remain under-utilised. The research underscores the need for targeted professional development to enhance educators' capacity to integrate play effectively into literacy and numeracy instruction. Recommendations include fostering inquiry-based learning through play, and refining child-centered, interactive learning approaches.

play-based learning, ECE, literacy development, numeracy development, educator practices
This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set D8 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G127, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) THREADS OF TOGETHERNESS: CELEBRATING CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR TRAINING

Chaired by Rita Melia, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

Developing Ocean Literacy in Early Childhood with Children, Families and Community

Presenters
Rita Melia, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland
Joanne Doherty, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

All authors
Rita Melia, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland
Joanne Doherty, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

This study, aimed to ignite early years students' interest in ocean literacy and explore how this could be shared with preschool children. The United Nations designated 2021- 2030 as the 'Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development' (UN, 2021). UNESCO as the key global body for advancing ocean literacy (2020) confirm that the oceans are critical for survival. SDG 14, calls for conservation and sustainability of our oceans. Ocean literacy is an understanding of how we can influence the ocean and how the ocean can influence us (UNESCO 2020). The shores offer a rich environment for play (Speldewinde, 2024; Vitale et al., 2022). In this ethnographic mixed-methods study, 25 Degree Early Childhood Education and Care students at Atlantic Technological University, engaged with an eLearning programme, lecture content. Students worked with early years settings, two visits with children & families to the aquarium, two beach play days (n=200). Scientists worked with 3 Early Years settings (n=66) children. Parental and student surveys, student focus group. Parental, adult consent, child assent, anonymity and freedom to withdraw, consent for photographs. Student feedback emphasized the need for enhanced ocean literacy skills to empower educators to share marine knowledge with children and families. Parents indicated increased awareness of the beach as a learning and play environment. Children's feedback revealed a strong commitment to protecting marine life, particularly through litter prevention. The study confirms, the value of partnership with families in promoting ocean literacy and the need to embed nature based education in preservice teacher training programmes.

ocean literacy, beach school, partnership with families, wellbeing, play

Enhancing Infant Mental Health through Relational Engagement - A Three year Community Initiative.

Presenters
Mary Skillington, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

All authors
Mary Skillington, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

This presentation explores the insights gained from three years of collaborative community partnerships dedicated to raising awareness of infant mental health. The research focuses on "Mayo Baby Week – Infant Mental Health" events, where in addition to positioning parents and babies as spectators, experiences fare designed to be relational and participatory, encouraging co-discovery, joint attention, and mutual interaction. This initiative builds on existing community activities, such as buddy walks and weaning groups, to create meaningful engagement. The infant-parent dyad represents a mutually regulated system of communication continuously operating to provide scaffolding of the infants' engagement with the world around them (Tronick and Beeghly, 2011). The programme of events is centred on the relational framework approach (Priddis et al., 2018). This study is grounded in the bio-ecological approach, recognising the family as the primary environment in which children grow and develop (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). The parent-infant relationship has long been recognised as fundamental to enhancing infant mental health (Fraiberg, 1980). Using a qualitative methodology within a constructivist paradigm, we conducted 6 semi-structured interviews and observations with 20 participating families. The expertise of community leaders was integrated with that of researchers with two-way knowledge exchange. Informed consent from parents and guardians for photographs and video was obtained prior to events with full disclosure on the purpose of the research. Preliminary findings suggest that engaging in creative, interactive experiences fosters emotional bonding and enhances parental confidence. Implications for early childhood practice, and the role of community-based arts in strengthening parent-infant relationships.

parent-child relationships, infant mental health, community partnerships, baby week

The Impact of Creative Movement in Early Childhood Education and Care Teacher Education Training

Presenters
Monica Munoz, Artist in Residence Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

All authors
Monica Munoz, Artist in Residence Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

This research explores how a dance artist supports BA, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Students to develop Creative Movement skills and increases student's creative movement and dance skills and implementation in ECEC settings. In order to meet the educational needs of children in early childhood, learning opportunities should be provided to develop physical, auditory, linguistic, tactile, kinesthetic, visual, cognitive, social-emotional, moral, and self-care developmental characteristics and skills (Harrell, 1977; Oral, 2016; Saçkes, 2013; Tunçeli and Zembat, 2017). Swetha and Rajiv (2021) suggest Creative Movement as a pedagogy can be adopted and further customised according to the curriculum to meet educational requirements. Cheung (2010) suggests all teachers should be trained in creative dance and movement. This qualitative case study explores the work of an Artist in Residence at Atlantic Technical University (ATU). The artist facilitated Creative Movement sessions with (n=18) year four ECEC students over one year. A baseline assessment questionnaire of students understanding of the value of creative movement and their approach in practice was conducted. Students' reflections, semi structured interviews and evaluation of learning and implementation. Student consent, freedom to withdraw, anonymity. Feedback from students confirms, creative movement sessions has had significant impact on students' knowledge and confidence in supporting children's movement and playful interactions and increased positive attitude towards teaching through

creative movement. Integrated into an alternative assessment strategy, students undertook workshops demonstrating their learning. Creative movement is an essential element of ECEC teacher education curriculum.

creative movement, wellbeing, social-emotional, creativity, physical Interaction

Symposium Set D9 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G210, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

EXPLORING WAYS TO DEVELOP AND EVALUATE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Chaired by Lucia Hlavatá, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

Integrated practices as an alternative for the split system in ECEC

Presenters
Lobke Van Lombergen, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium
Jochen Devlieghere, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

All authors
Lobke Van Lombergen, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium
Jochen Devlieghere, Ghent University - Centre for Pedagogical Studies on Early Childhood Education and Care, Belgium

We investigate how integrated practices influence pedagogical quality and children's wellbeing and engagement. Splitsystems exclude children in vulnerable situations (Melhuish et al., 2015). While integrated practices promote inclusion, their impact on children remains understudied, with research focusing mainly on structural and policy aspects (Kaga et al., 2010). This study addresses this by examining integrated practices at the process level. This study builds on frameworks that explore the relationship between care and education (Bennett, 2012). It draws on process quality models, emphasizing meaningful interactions and integration as key to high-quality ECEC (Slot, 2018). These frameworks highlight interplay between structural and process quality, aligning the study's focus. The mixed-method design includes standardized and participatory observations in three groups (15 educators, 76 children) fostering care and education for children between zero and five. Cases were selected based on their integrated practices. This study was approved by the Ethical Committee following the ethical protocol of the researchers' faculty and Ethics in Social Science and Humanities. Key concerns included informed consent, voluntary participation, and protecting children's rights and privacy. Parents and professionals gave their written consent, and children's verbal assent was regularly sought. Participants could withdraw at any time. Integrated practices offer significant potential to address the exclusion of certain children by responding to both educational and care needs. However, structural conditions can either support or hinder the successful implementation of these practices. The key barriers and facilitators for integrated practices provide actionable insights to develop policies and interventions that support integration and benefit children.

preschool, childcare, integration, split system, quality

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Every voice matters: A holistic approach to evaluating an Inclusion Programme for Early Childhood Teachers

Presenters

Chloe Beatty, LINC Consortium, Ireland

All authors

Chloe Beatty, LINC Consortium, Ireland

The research provides an overview of the key findings from a holistic evaluation of the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) Programme, provided to Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs) in Ireland to build their competencies in creating inclusion within their Early Learning and Care (ELC) settings. The research evaluates elements of the Government-led Access and Inclusion Model, supporting inclusion in ELC settings (Government of Ireland, 2022). Equipping ECTs with specific knowledge(s), practices, and values is critical to providing high-quality inclusive ELC settings (Ring et al., 2018). Evaluating this professional development provision is equally important. Therefore, an adapted version of Guskey's (2002) framework for evaluating such programmes underpins the current research. The research collected mixed-methods data from LINC graduates, their employers, professionals in the sector, parents of the children within their ELC settings, and the children within the settings themselves. Ethical approval was gained by the institution's ethics committee, and all participants' consent to participate was secured. Data showed an increase in LINC graduates' competencies in embedding inclusive culture, practice, and pedagogy within their settings. Graduates and employers commented on the confidence and knowledge gained from the Programme, while professionals in the sector noted the need for the Programme and the positive impact is has on the sector. Guskey's (2002) framework provided a holistic approach to evaluating the Programme and is therefore recommended to others in professional development provision. Equipping ECTs with knowledge on inclusive practices improves the sector for the children within it and increases the professionalisation of the sector.

inclusion, early years, professional development, programme evaluation, Guskey's framework

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

An experience of inclusion practice in early childhood: towards a participatory model

Presenters

Lisa Sacerdote, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

All authors

Lisa Sacerdote, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy

Through the experience of L'ABC del Quartiere, a multifunctional educational center in the San Siro district of Milan, this research examines how an informal socio-educational service can develop sustainable models of inclusion by fostering the integration of educational perspectives across different cultures from early childhood. It has been observed that quality ECEC services can become "spaces of encounter" (Bove and Mantovani, 2006), fostering multicultural pedagogical alliances (Epstein, 1997) and co-educational experiences across diverse educational practices through specific strategies and approaches tailored to the complexity of cultural diversity. From a holistic, systemic, and ecological perspective (Bateson, 1972; Bronfenbrenner, 1979), educational practices are culturally situated (Colby and Shweder, 1996; Rogoff, 2004). Historical and sociocultural contexts must be considered to ensure inclusive ECEC services, especially in multicultural settings (Bove, 2020). This study, conducted within the qualitative research paradigm, adopted an exploratory approach. It involves three mothers with their children (aged 0–3), one cultural-linguistic mediator and four educators, with participatory observations and in-depth interviews. People involved in the activities were informed and consented to the research objectives and processes, ensuring their understanding and respecting the diverse cultural perspectives. Preliminary results show how a proximity-based, educational service can foster reflection on early childhood educational practices. The interaction between Arabic-speaking mothers, the mediator and professionals, was a catalyst for dialogue and shared learning. L'ABC addressed the needs of families and co-constructed shared educational practices. This research highlighted

strategies to implement inclusion, reduce inequalities, and potentially lower long-term welfare costs, as results of a quality ECEC.

non-formal education, multiculturalism, sustainable ECEC, inclusive early education, parent involvement

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D10 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G211, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

HOME TO ECE TRANSITIONS

Chaired by Glenda Walsh, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

Early childhood educational trajectories and factors associated with children's preschool timing of entrance

Presenters
Pamela Soto-Ramirez, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Chile

All authors
Pamela Soto-Ramirez, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Chile
Macarena Hernandez, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Chile

This study examines the trajectories of children entering center-based early childhood education (ECE) in Chile, and the family and child factors predicting early, middle, and late entry. Previous research has explored factors affecting enrollment in ECE (Sindhu and Gupta, 2024), considering family and child characteristics and supply-side availability (Coley et al., 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2016). However, most studies focus on the age group of 4 or 5 years, leaving earlier entry into ECE and a temporal perspective largely underexplored. We use the accommodation framework of selection into ECE (Meyers and Jordan, 2006) to examine factors influencing different entry times to center-based education. Based on former research our model incorporates family factors (e.g., maternal employment, household composition), resources (income, education), cultural norms (parenting behaviors), and child-related aspects (Coley et al., 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2016). Using a longitudinal dataset of 704 Chilean children aged 12 months to 6 years, we employ latent class analysis to identify distinct ECE entry profiles and multinomial logistic regression to assess family and child variable influences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were permitted to withdraw from the study at any time. Results revealed three distinct entry profiles, indicating that early ECE entry relates to caregiver employment, lack of grandparental support, reduced overprotection, and boys with positive temperaments. The findings suggest that while socioeconomic factors may have little impact on ECE enrollment, cultural and preference-based factors play a significant role, highlighting different policy implications for increasing ECE enrollment.

preschool trajectory, ECE entry, family ECE trajectories, family ECE trajectories, profile analysis, Chile

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

The transition from home to the culturally diverse early childcare institution

Presenters
Lina Lillebo Bjunes, NLA University College, Norway

All authors
Lina Lillebo Bjunes, NLA University College, Norway

The aim of the research project is to attain knowledge about and a deeper understanding of the pedagogical practice "adjustment" ("tilvenning") in the transition from home to the culturally diverse ECI in a Norwegian context. And especially about mid-level leadership in the transition. This presentation will focus on the research questions "How do pedagogical leaders describe "adjustment"in their culturally diverse ECI? What is important for them in the transition?" A literature review found a lack of research concerning the transition from home to the culturally diverse Norwegian ECI (Bjunes, 2024). The results of the interviews will be discussed using inspiration from Krügers theory about curricular spaces, inspired by amongst others Popkewitz and Foucault (Krüger, 2018). This theory highlights factors that might affect pedagogical practices, such as interaction, traditions, time, premises, economy, politics etc. Twelve qualitative individual interviews with pedagogical leaders have been conducted, rooted in social constructivism. The data is analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022). Informed consent forms have been signed by the informants. Audio recordings will be deleted when they are transcribed and anonymized. "Adjustment"in the culturally diverse ECI is complex. Preliminary results indicate two central themes: To "use enough time"in the transition. And to "build secure relationships"with parents and children, sometimes using creative ways to communicate when the staff do not speak the same language and there are cultural differences. The informants' descriptions are important. Due to the lack of previous research, this project provides an interesting contribution to the field.

transition, adjustment, leadership, culturally diverse, early childcare institution.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Transition from home to early childhood education – fostering a sense of continuity and belonging in transition groups.

Presenters
Tove Erna Belland, Filiorum, University of Stavanger, Norway

All authors
Tove Erna Belland, Filiorum, University of Stavanger, Norway
Lars Yngve Rosell, Filiorum, University of Stavanger, Norway

The research question explored: How do ECEC teachers experience the transition when children and parents start together in a group, and how do these teachers experience that the transition group can help foster children's sense of continuity and belonging? Traditional transition to ECEC often focus on the individual child and one- to one transition (Abrahamsen, 2015), rather than in groups. Some models involve more active parent participation (Søe et.al, 2023). Research highlights a gap in fostering community, belonging and enhancing peer relationships (Hygum and Sørensen, 2022). The theoretical perspectives are Bollnow's (1969) description of continuity, Pianta's (1999) system-theoretical thinking, and Yuval-Davis 's (2011) descriptions of belonging and the politics of belonging..
The study is within the qualitative interpretive research paradigm and relies on two focus group interviews with ten teachers and analyzed within a hermenautic approach and Braun and Clark`s (2022) thematic analyses. The study is approved by Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (SIKT). Ethical guidelines (Kallenberg, 2016) were followed (e.g., participant's written consent and data storage). The study highlights parents as crucial, by actively participating and serving as care models. Transition groups also helped children in fostering a sense of belonging to other children. The study demonstrates that systematic efforts in communication and community-building can foster a sense of belonging in children. ECEC, as a group setting, has different attachment processes compared to home. Emphasizing continuity and belonging can enhance pedagogical practices, recognizing the start of ECEC as a crucial part of children's community experiences.

belonging, continuity, parent-active transition, transition from home to ECEC.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D11 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G215, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: DIGITAL AND VIDEO INTERACTIONS AND A TOOLBOX FOR DATA COLLECTION

Chaired by Krystyna Heland-Kurzak, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland

The Role of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) in Developing Parent–Child Interactions in ECEC

Presenters
Krystyna Heland-Kurzak, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland

All authors
Krystyna Heland-Kurzak, The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland

What potential do VIG for increasing the effectiveness of interactions between caregivers and children?The aim of the project is to explore the potential of the Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) method as a research tool in the analysis of communication processes between caregivers and children in nurseries. Previous studies confirm that the use of video-stimulated reflection positively affects the quality of interactions between teachers and children (Pianta et al., 2008; Fukkink et al., 2011; Marttila, 2023). Observational studies on caregivers' ability for attuned interaction usually analyze video recordings of adult-child interactions (Meins and Fernyhough, 2015; Sheng et al., 2021). In intervention studies, participants – e.g. teachers – are asked to describe the child (Meins, et al., 2014). The VIG intervention is based on the principle of attuned interaction, which occurs when adults actively share the same attention, communicating and negotiating meaning and intentions. Qualitative research,quasi experiment,small-scale pilot intervention study. Consent and privacy for video recordings.Anonymization and limited access to videos. Ethical considerations included anonymity, informed consent from capable adult volunteers, reciprocity, and the option to refrain. No sensitive personal data was collected. Practitioners receive video recordings of their interactions with children to reflect on their communication. Video-based interventions significantly improve caregiver-child interactions in nurseries. This research has significant social potential, as it can be the basis for developing modern training programs for caregivers, teachers and parents. The results obtained will enable the design of more individualized interventions, focused on strengthening competences in effective communication and adapted to the needs of the child.

vigecec, reflective intersubjectivity, practitioners

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Enhancing Language Development in LIC through Pre-Recorded Therapy Videos: Equipping Speech-Language Therapy Students with Digital Intervention Skills

Presenters
Mignon Botes, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

All authors
Mignon Botes, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

This study explores the use of pre-recorded speech-language therapy videos as a tool for language development in early childhood centers in low-income communities, focusing on how student speech-language therapists acquire and perceive digital intervention skills. The study aims to assess students' perspectives on the effectiveness, accessibility, and sustainability of this approach in low-income contexts. Prior research highlights the role of

telepractice and digital tools in speech-language therapy, particularly in addressing accessibility barriers in resource-constrained environments (Benz et al., 2022). Building on existing literature by examining how student therapists develop and apply these skills within an academic service-learning framework. Based on findings from Kuter and Özer (2020), the study is grounded in experiential learning theory and socio-constructivist approaches, emphasizing the role of hands-on experience and reflective practice in professional skill development. A qualitative interpretivist approach is employed, analyzing student reflections and coursework through thematic analysis. Data sources include student-created therapy videos, reflections on the learning process, and their perceived value of digital tools in speech therapy. Ethical clearance was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Data was anonymized, and participation was voluntary, ensuring student autonomy and confidentiality. Preliminary findings suggest that students recognize the value of pre-recorded therapy videos in enhancing accessibility but report challenges in digital content creation. Many acknowledge the need for further training in culturally responsive and age-appropriate video development. Integrating digital intervention training into speech-language therapy curricula may enhance service delivery in under-resourced areas. Findings support policy recommendations for expanding telehealth competencies in speech-language pathology education.

speech-language therapy, digital intervention, academic service-learning, accessibility, telepractice.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Developing a toolbox for early years practitioners to collect child and family information on toddlers' communication and language support and development

Presenters
Katharina Ereky-Stevens, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

All authors
Katharina Ereky-Stevens, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Caitlin Shaughnessy, University of Sussex, United Kingdom
Leon Feinstein, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Priya Tah, University of Oxford/Department for Education/Rees Centre, United Kingdom

This study was carried out in collaboration with an English local munincipality, to improve their collection and use of information on early speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). The ambition is to better use information on child vulnerabilities and social-risk factors. Timely and accurate identification is linked to the provision of early support for language learning; both its challenges and its priortity are recognised (Law et al., 2023). SLCN development is situated within the social context (Bruner, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978), and measures consider language skills alongside child experience in language environments and supportive interactions (Law et al., 2017; McKean et al., 2022). Collecting information on the home leanring environment (HLE) is a difficult task. This study focused on the process of collecting, documenting and sharing HLE information by listening to the voices of parents and practitioners. Development and toolbox testing invovled exploratory- and consultation work at the local site, a literature review, and interviews and focus group discussions with parents, and early years practitioners and leaders. Ethical approval was granted by the university ethics committee. Ethical principles of decision-making and consent, right to withdraw and confidentiality were followed. The study contributes to our understanding of what is needed to collect SLCNs information in ways that are meaningful, feasible and acceptable. Use of SLCNs information is considered both at individual and aggregate level, i) to guide decisions decisions on support needs and the work with families; ii) to help understand local needs and the planning of service delivery.

early speech, language and communication, assessment, parent-practitioner collaboration, home learning environment, COM-B model

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D12 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G222, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

STEM: BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Chaired by Christina Pernsteiner-Koller, PH Burgenland, Austria

MESH in Action: A Human-Centred Alternative to STEM-Driven Education

Presenters
EBRU AYDIN, İstanbul Kültür University, Türkiye

All authors
EBRU AYDIN, İstanbul Kültür University, Türkiye
İPEK ÖZTÜRK, İstanbul Kültür University, Türkiye
GÜL DEMİR, İstanbul Kültür University, Türkiye
BEGÜM KIRKAN, İstanbul Kültür University, Türkiye

This study explores how Media Literacy, Ethics, Sociology, and History (MESH) can be integrated into early childhood education (ECE) curricula. It examines the theoretical and empirical findings of the MESH Education Module, implemented in a quasi-experimental study with 117 children (aged 60-72 months) in Türkiye. Neoliberal policies have shifted ECE towards workforce preparation and STEM, sidelining human-centred values (Sims, 2017; Roberts-Holmes and Moss, 2021). Wise (2019; 2020) called for integrating MESH to foster a justice-oriented pedagogy, yet efforts to embed these disciplines in education remain limited. The MESH approach proposes a paradigm shift by embedding these disciplines into early learning, challenging neoliberal paradigms and advocating a human-centred pedagogy (Biesta, 2010; Noddings, 2005). A quasi-experimental design was used. The experimental group participated in MESH Education Module for 12 weeks. The intervention involved teacher training and activities fostering media discernment, ethical reasoning, and historical-sociological awareness. Pre- and post-tests measured changes in critical thinking, value acquisition, and problematic media use. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured. Children's participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was ensured following EECERA's Ethical Code (2024). Findings showed significant improvements in critical thinking and value acquisition ($p<.001$). No significant difference in problematic media use was found between the groups, suggesting digital habits require sustained interventions. This study is a step towards rethinking ECE, contributing to the broader paradigm shift needed. Findings highlight MESH's potential to equip young learners with critical skills to engage with social realities, fostering both cognitive growth and ethical responsibility.

Human-centred pedagogy, MESH framework, interdisciplinary learning, alternative approaches, early childhood environments.

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

STEAM Education in Early Childhood: Beliefs and Practices of Stakeholders

Presenters
Ahmet Simsar, Sharjah Education Academy, United Arab Emirates

All authors
Ahmet Sami Konca, Higher Colleges of Technology, United Arab Emirates
Ahmet Simsar, Sharjah Education Academy, United Arab Emirates
Ayse Duran Yilmaz, Adiyaman University, Türkiye

Priti Verma, Higher Colleges of Technology, United Arab Emirates

This study aims to foster research debates on advancing SDG-4 by enabling and facilitating STEAM education in early childhood education in Turkey. Specifically, it investigates how structural inequalities impact early STEAM education integration. Research indicates that the implementation of STEAM education in Turkey at the early childhood level remains insufficient. Prior studies highlight challenges; inadequate teacher training, curriculum gaps, and socio-economic barriers. However, there is limited research on the intersection of STEAM education and structural inequalities in early years (Kermani and Aldemir, 2015). This study is grounded in equity-oriented education frameworks and socio-cultural learning theories, emphasizing how contextual factors shape learning opportunities (Traill et al., 2015). It adopts a critical lens to explore how educational inequalities affect access to early STEAM education. A qualitative research design is utilized semi-structured interviews with 16 scholars, school principals, teachers, and parents from various preschool settings, selected for their prior STEAM experiences. Thematic analysis is used to interpret the data. The study adheres to ethical research guidelines (EECERA, 2015) for working with educators and families, including informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. This study examines varied views on early childhood STEAM education in Turkey from stakeholders like scholars, teachers, and parents. It identifies implementation disparities linked to resource limitations and socio-economic challenges, particularly affecting rural and disadvantaged communities, highlighting the need for systematic efforts to enhance equitable access. The study highlights the need for targeted policy interventions in Turkey's early STEAM education. It emphasizes teacher training in STEAM pedagogy, improved resource allocation for underprivileged areas, and fostering parental engagement.

early childhood, STEAM education, policy, stakeholders, SDG-4

his application discusses a completed piece of research.

Enhancing outdoor STE(A)M learning in ECEC and the first years of primary school

Presenters
Miriam Molina Ascanio, European Schoolnet, Belgium

All authors
Miriam Molina Ascanio, European Schoolnet, Belgium
Agueda Gras-Velazquez, European Schoolnet, Belgium
Ivelina Ivanova, European Schoolnet, Belgium

United by the goal of the European (EU) Green Deal - to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, green and blue initiatives are shaping sustainability Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. Despite efforts from EU-funded programs (e.g., Horizon Europe, Erasmus+), early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals and early primary school teachers lack sufficient resources to introduce sustainability to children under 9. This contribution investigates how nature-based and outdoor STE(A)M pedagogies can support educators in building sustainability competences early. OUTSTE(A)M builds on research in outdoor learning and play-based STE(A)M (e.g., Bratton; 2019; Siskind, 2020; Remmen, 2022), extending NBS EduWORLD into early education. Through practice-based research across Europe, the project co-created and piloted a toolkit for ECEC and early primary education professionals. NBS EduWORLD explores how nature-based solutions (NBS) can be integrated into classrooms through co-created learning scenarios (LS) that embed sustainability across curricula. Drawing on the State-of-the-Art Report (2023) by the project, it piloted LS in diverse settings and used them to inform a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for teacher training. Ethical considerations included informed consent from all participants and ongoing opportunities to withdrawal. Data were anonymised, and inclusive pedagogical design ensured sensitivity to gender, and learning styles. Findings align with the Scientix paper “Green and blue projects: leading the way for environmental sustainability in STEM education in Europe” and indicate that early outdoor STE(A)M promotes

curiosity sustainability engagement. Age-appropriate technology supports inquiry-based learning, though barriers (e.g., digital literacy, limited green access) persist - emphasising the need for targeted teacher development.

STE(A)M education, NBS, outdoor learning, educational technology, ECEC

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D13 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G231, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

THE VALUE OF PLAY IN CHILDREN'S FLOURISHING (PAIR)

Chaired by Jóhanna Einarsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

Educators' Supporting Social and Emotional Learning

Presenters
Jóhanna Einarsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Anna Hreinsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Jóhanna Einarsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Anna Hreinsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

The study aimed to develop strategies to support children's social and emotional learning (SEL) through play and daily activities, fostering their friendships and interactions. The concept of children's SEL is multifaceted, encompassing social skills, emotional regulation, behavior, and self-control (Halle and Darling-Churchill, 2016). Preschool educators play a critical role in fostering children's SEL (Blewitt et al., 2021; Rosenthal and Gatt, 2010). This study is guided by constructivist theories that see SEL learning built through interaction and reflection. 20 educators in five preschools participated in an action research project in collaboration with two researchers from the University of Iceland who conducted interviews at the beginning and end of the project. The educators documented their work and regularly presented the project's progress to one another. Thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) informed the analysis The participants provided their informed consent, and their confidentiality and privacy were carefully safeguarded. Attention was given to addressing power imbalances between the researchers and educators Through participation in the project, the educators are now better equipped to support SEL during play and daily interactions. The main challenges encountered was high staff turnover and educators' lack of time for documentations. Cross-preschool collaboration proved to be valuable, providing educators with many useful ideas applicable to their work. The project highlighted the importance of developing and implementing effective strategies to support children's SEL in preschools. Further, there is a need for more extensive training and understanding of the importance and application of play documentation to support SEL.

social emotional competencies, social emotional learning, wellbeing, play, action research

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Flourishing and Play Participation in ECEC

Presenters
Hanne Hede Joergensen, VIA University College, Denmark
Anette Boye Koch, VIA University College, Denmark

All authors
Hanne Hede Joergensen, VIA University College, Denmark
Anette Boye Koch, VIA University College, Denmark

This four-year project aims to develop a pedagogical perspective on wellbeing in collaboration with pedagogues. RQ: How can children and adults cocreate knowledge about connections between flourishing and play participation through play experiments? Understandings of wellbeing are various, contradictory and seldomly defined in child research and practice (Molbæk et al., 2022). Research that investigates children's perspectives on wellbeing state that children emphasise play as pivotal (Koch, 2013). Theoretically, we draw on a pedagogical paradigm of flourishing (Kristjansson, 2017). We understand play as children's preferred way of being and draw on theory of play as a mood practice (Skovbjerg, 2013.) Furthermore, play is seen as a special order entangled with the surroundings and containing dynamic processes of in-and exclusion (Hansen et al., 2022). The project originates from a pragmatic paradigm for social research (Morgan, 2014). Methodologically we emphasise relations between materials, surroundings and people. We use design-based-research as a method to frame play experiments as cocreative spaces for adults and children (Jørgensen, 2023). Two ECEC have volunteered to join the project. Pedagogues have established 5 play groups for approx. 50 children of 3 years. Written informed consent was obtained from the children's guardians and pedagogues. Children are continuously given the opportunity to withdraw from play. All names are anonymised. Preliminary findings show that play experiments illuminate discursive practices in ECEC and enables pedagogues to promote various ways of participation, hereby to enhance each child's unique flourishing. Findings suggest that play experiments makes pedagogues question their everyday settings and views on children's flourishing

children perspectives, flourishing, participation, play experiments, Interdisciplinarity

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D14 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G242, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

BABY AND TODDLER'S VOICE IN UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCES IN ECE

Chaired by Cara Blaisdell, Queen Margaret University, United Kingdom

Exploring a concept of voice in the collaborative, decision-making interactions between 0-3 year olds, adults and their environment on walking journeys in their local community

Presenters
Anna Jackson Ready, Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom

All authors
Anna Jackson Ready, Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom

This PhD study aims to develop a holistic concept of very young children's agency that views voice as a collaboration between child, parent and their environment. Clark and Moss (2011) encourage the use of a variety methods of eliciting the voice of young children, but favour an individualistic, 'pure' concept of voice. Alderson (2005, 2006), too, decentres verbal communication, situating voice within parent-child interactions. Building on these works, my approach models preverbal children's agentic voice as the product of conflict, compromise and collaboration between child and adult in embodied ways that is inclusive of very young children. Utilising Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Ecological System's Theory, and reconstituting Lundy's (2007) elements of voice, I am exploring a holistic concept of young children's voice that moves from private (audience) to public (influence). I have used a walking ethno-methodology, with its basis in critical communicative methodology, to observe parent-child (0-3 years) dyads moving

within their local community in Liverpool (Gomez et al., 2011). A critical realist approach to thematic analysis was then taken to discover emergent themes (Fryer, 2022). Co-production of research with pseudonymised, very young participants was an important ethical consideration. Action cameras were used to co-create a view of the world, and member checks made age-appropriate through 'Our Journey' photobooks. Emergent themes include parents' perceptions of risk and their child's understanding in voice-collaborations and children's input being their committed use of powerful, embodied expressions of voice. The emergent themes and methods used have implications for the inclusion of (previously excluded) 0-3s' voice in settings and policy development.

voice, participation, rights, 0-3s, agency

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The Voice of the Baby: The Light and Shadow of the Evolving Capacities Principle

Presenters
Cara Blaisdell, Queen Margaret University, United Kingdom

All authors
Cara Blaisdell, Queen Margaret University, United Kingdom
Rachel Drury, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, United Kingdom
Rhona Matheson, Starcatchers, United Kingdom

This study explored how the experiences and perspectives of babies influenced the planning and delivery of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) during a pilot programme in Scotland. Babies' right to be heard is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), but they are often excluded from rights-based research (Horgan 2024; Lundy et al., 2024) and are rarely included in strategic planning (e.g. McFayden et al., 2022). The framework for this study drew on relational theories, approaching participation rights through a lens of interdependence, embodied interactions, sensitive interpretation and mutual construction of understanding (e.g. Hultgren and Johansson, 2019; O'Toole, Walsh and Kerrins, 2023; Lundy et al., 2024; O'Donnell, 2024). The study was conducted within an interpretative paradigm and qualitative methodology. Researchers conducted participant observation in 6 ELC settings and interviews/focus groups with 20 ELC staff. Participants were provided with information sheets and consent forms and had the right to withdraw (themselves and any existing data). Pseudonyms are used. Assent was with babies themselves during observations such as the researcher interacting with / ceasing interaction with a child; moving away or changing position. Findings demonstrate that the principle of evolving capacities is both an enabling principle and a barrier to young children's right to be heard. We offer examples and argue that this is a generative contradiction. The project suggests practical examples of how generative contradictions can be harnessed, feeding babies' experiences into strategic planning at short, medium and long-term levels.

babies, children's rights, voice, evolving capacities, UNCRC

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Toddlers create a sense of belonging without a spoken common language through play and drama

Presenters
Jaana Keränen, University of Oulu, Finland

All authors
Jaana Keränen, University of Oulu, Finland

The article focuses on how toddlers with linguistic differences communicate, play and participate through play and drama in early childhood education and care (ECEC). Linguistic differences can be large among children of the same age and can affect communication (Kunnari and Välimaa, 2024). Toddlers create and participate in their own ways (Hultgren and Johansson, 2019). Play, drama and puppetry have an important role in supporting the child's development (Vygotsky, 1933; 2002; Brėdikytė, 2022). Drama is understood through play (Heikkinen, 2002) and the puppet acts as a child's friend and supporter (Gobec, 2012; Korošec, 2012; Winnicott, 1971). The research is ethnographic childhood research (Alanen, 2009; Kananen, 2014). The research follows the GDPR and ethical guidelines (EECERA, 2024; TENK, 2019); permits from guardians and the willingness of toddlers were observed.
The research group includes 11 toddlers from a northern Finnish daycare center. The data is collected practically by participating, videotaping and writing a research diary. The analysis is based on the videos and diary. Preliminary results suggest that the children express themselves through the puppet, verbally and non-verbally (Gunnarsdottir and Bateman, 2017; Majaron, 2012). Monolingual and bilingual children with linguistic differences cope better with storytelling after hearing a “model story,” and linguistic differences are also decrease through storytelling (Gagarina et al., 2025). Early childhood education should strengthen equality and equity, as well as the appreciation of diversity and community (Finnish National Board of Education 2022), The task of an adult is to create a positive communication situation and enable cohesion (Viljamaa et al., 2018).

toddlers, puppet, play, communication, a sense of belonging

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D15 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G243, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

TEACHER'S ROLE IN STEAM DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Robert Osaďan, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Early Years Physics Teaching of Science Process Skills in Preschool: Dialogic Reading and Group Experiment Applications

Presenters
Esra Doğanay Koç, Usak University, Türkiye

All authors
Esra Doğanay Koç, Usak University, Türkiye

This study was planned to create a physics application that deals with daily life events involving different methods and to examine its effect on preschool children’s science process skills Research results show that the use of contemporary methods and techniques in science education supports preschool children’s science process skills (Elkeey, 2017; Gao, 2002; Kefi, 2017; Mbewe et al., 2010; Yıldız, 2019). For this research, after completion of the reading process of physics picture books, make a group of the experiment applications to be carried out are support concretization of learned issues. Because group experiments involve higher-order thinking processes such as cooperation, information sharing, reasoning, discussion, and science communication to increase the application’s effectiveness (Doğanay Koç, 2023; Kalogiannakis et al., 2018; Önen et al., 2009). The current study was structured within the framework of a quasi-experimental design, encompassing both pretest and posttest assessments within a control group. Participants included 60 children aged five to six years attending in Turkey. A consent form and information sheet was provided to all participants. Participants' names were not used. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. These applications that are used for dialogic reading, along with experimentation methods that support higher order critical skills of the twenty-first century, support science process skills as well as observation skills. The realization of physics education using contemporary methods and effective applications will support skills acquisition to individual needs and able to use its in their life in today's century.

preschool, physics education, dialogic reading, experiment method, science process skills

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Leveraging LEGO Bricks to Promote Child Development: An Empirical Study

Presenters
Xinyu Wang, Beijing Normal University, China

All authors
Xinyu Wang, Beijing Normal University, China
Minyi Li, Beijing Normal University, China

This study investigates the impact of the "LEGO® play box"materials and the accompanying Play Agent Workshop teacher training program on preschool children's development in rural areas of the Three Prefectures: China's Most Impoverished Regions. Previous studies have established LEGO bricks as valuable tools for domain-specific educational interventions in early childhood, evidenced by improved mathematical competencies (Wolfgang et al., 2003) and spatial reasoning (Borriello and Liben, 2018), yet their socio-linguistic and developmental potential in China's under-resourced regions remains underexplored. Based on the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), this study investigates the impact of family circumstances, LEGO® Play Box materials, and their usage modalities on early childhood development. This quantitative study adopts a positivistic paradigm. Utilizing purposive sampling, we collected 2,231 family demographic questionnaires from participants in the LEGO® Play Box Program and 137 teacher implementation surveys. Children's developmental outcomes were directly measured using standardized tools: receptive vocabulary (PPVT, n=476), emotion comprehension (TEC, n=477), and divergent thinking (n=432). All participants provided voluntary informed consent with anonymized researcher data. The findings reveal that LEGO® Play Box users primarily originate from lower-SES households, demonstrating suboptimal parenting practices and educational caregiving patterns. While material use is frequent, it primarily involves child-led free play with limited contextual diversity. Teachers' implementation impacts outcomes: activity diversity marginally enhances emotion comprehension (β=0.149+, 0.05<*p*<0.1), while session duration predicts divergent thinking novelty (β=0.040*) and fluency (β=0.027*). The study advocates for upholding children's right to play and promoting sustained, systematic teacher training to enhance educators' play-based pedagogy competencies.

LEGO® play box, play agent workshop, ethnic minority, rural preschool education, early childhood development

Who is to do the screening of spatial reasoning? Semantic profiles in teacher interaction with 6-year-olds in a screening activity

Presenters
Sergej Ivanov, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Andreas Ebbelind, Linnaeus University, Sweden

All authors
Sergej Ivanov, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Andreas Ebbelind, Linnaeus University, Sweden

The aim is to highlight the complexity for teachers to conduct screening of spatial reasoning to identify children at risk at an early stage. Spatial reasoning is crucial in developing children's mathematical knowledge (Clements and Sarama, 2011). Preschool teachers may direct teaching toward the screening activity (Walla, 2024), which is known as teaching for the test (Volante, 2004). This implies that assessment results do not necessarily reflect children's spatial reasoning outside the screening situation. To understand teacher-child interaction in the screening activity,

the lens of legitimation code theory (LCT) is used to examine what role the teacher plays in identifying children at risk. This qualitative study uses LCT's semantic profiles as combination of semantic gravity and density to analyse three consecutive 20–26-minute video-recorded screenings conducted by a female teacher with three groups of four six-year-olds each. The teacher's, children's and their guardians' informed consent was obtained with the right to withdraw without prejudice. Children's consent was monitored during data collection by observing their non-verbal expressions. The findings suggest that in 83 % of interactions, the teacher maintained the same degree of semantic gravity and density as the previous child's utterance, thus conducting the screening. However, she sometimes deviated from this pattern and started teaching instead, potentially failing to identify at-risk children. The study underscores the challenge for teachers to be screening administrators, as they may struggle to resist the temptation to turn a screening session into a learning opportunity. The question remains who is to do the screening then.

screening, children at risk, spatial reasoning, Legitimation code theory, mathematics education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set D16 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G244, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING SIG 2: INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PATHWAYS IN NATURE KINDERGARTENS: WELLBEING, PARTICIPATION, AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Chaired by Georgia Gessiou, Independent Researcher, Greece

Less sick leave among staff in nature kindergartens.

Presenters
Olav Lysklett, Queen Maud University College, Norway

All authors
Olav Lysklett, Queen Maud University College, Norway
Hilde Bremset Bårdstu, Queen Maud University College, Norway

This study investigates absence due to illness among staff in kindergartens in Trondheim, Norway. Research questions are: Are there differences in sick leave among nature kindergartens and regular kindergartens, and if so, how can such differences be explained? Nature kindergartens are highly valued culturally in the Nordic countries, and characterized by small groups of children, time spent in nature, routines and rules that allow the children a significant amount of trust. Sick leave in Norwegian society represents a major cost and is significant in many sectors. In the kindergartens there are reports of quite high sick leave rate. Norway, the distribution between private and public kindergartens is approximately 50/50. Some of the kindergartens have different specializations such as nature, sports, culture i.e. The municipality of Trondheim represent the public kindergarten sector and runs approximately 100 Kindergartens. Five of these are nature kindergartens. The sick leave rate among staff, both self-reported and medically notified illness, is registered by the corporate health service in the Municipality of Trondheim (MT). MT also conduct working environment surveys and sick leave rate will be connected to answers from this survey. Data are registered at kindergarten level and no personal information is collected. The average sick leave rate over the past 13 years in the kindergarten sector was 12.9% while nature kindergartens have had 7.7%. The average difference over the past 13 years is 38.8% less sick leave in nature kindergartens. These findings indicate that spending more time in nature may reduce sick leave among kindergarten staff.

illness, kindergarten staff, nature kindergarten, sick leave, working environment

Pedagogical Documentation as a Tool for Inclusion, Participation and Co-Inquiry in Outdoor Learning and Play

Presenters
Georgia Gessiou, Independent Researcher, Greece

All authors
Georgia Gessiou, Independent Researcher, Greece

This study explores pedagogical documentation as a reflective and participatory tool in outdoor learning and play. Conducted as a qualitative case study in a nature school, this research investigates how teachers, children, and parents interpret and engage with documentation, considering its potential to support inclusion, reflective teaching, and curriculum co-construction. Research has shown that pedagogical documentation helps children articulate outdoor play experiences, revisit learning, and generate new play ideas (Kim, 2019). It also enables educators to understand children's perspectives, fostering co-experimentation and shared inquiry (Merewether, 2018). Additionally, pedagogical documentation offers a structured approach to reflecting on and refining outdoor learning strategies (Hatten, 2018). Building on previous research that positions pedagogical documentation as a democratic practice that makes children's voices visible (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Rinaldi, 2006), this study also draws from sociocultural and participatory learning theories (Rogoff, 2003). Employing a case study methodology, data collection includes semi-structured interviews with teachers, children, and parents, alongside observations of documentation practices in outdoor play settings. Ethical considerations involve informed consent, anonymity, and strategies to authentically represent children's perspectives in research findings. Findings suggest that pedagogical documentation in outdoor learning environments fosters inclusion by making children's learning visible, validating diverse experiences, and deepening educator-child-family relationships. However, challenges remain in navigating assessment-driven educational cultures and ensuring that documentation remains a tool for co-inquiry rather than a means of external evaluation. Implications for practice emphasize the need for professional development and policy support to integrate pedagogical documentation into outdoor learning as a tool for participation, inclusion, and meaningful curriculum development.

pedagogical documentation, outdoor learning and play, reflection, participation, co-inquiry

Water, water everywhere! Nature kindergartens relations to "water" - development of an inclusive and sustainable ECE-practice.

Presenters
Birgitte Madsen Theilmann, VIA Aarhus, Denmark
Kari Anne Joergensen-Vittersoe, OsloMet Universtiy, Norway
Olav Lysklett, DMMH, Norway

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Kari Anne Joergensen-Vittersoe, OsloMet Universtiy, Norway
Olav Lysklett, DMMH, Norway

Examine how water activities, can promote the development of sustainable learning, inclusion and belonging environments in ECE. This project examines ECE practices of water projects in nature kindergartens in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The presentation builds on research on Nordic nature kindergartens, and research asking for inclusion of children's wellbeing, diversity, equality, friendships in addition to environmental issues in education for sustainability in early years(Siraj-Blatchford and Pramling-Samuelsson, 2016). Theoretically the study connects to inclusive pedagogy. Sustained shard thinking and inclusive sustainable practice are central concepts. Paradigm is shared sustainable thinking and children ans active participants. Methodology connects to cultural-historic contexts

and the idea of children as active agents in sustained shared thinking. Pedagogues in nature kindergartens have documented practices for sharing and pedagogues' thoughts and reflections around the activities are documented and analyzed retrospectively. The data is based on group interviews with participating kindergarten teachers and presentations of their selected examples of best practice. No personal information can be identified, however there are written consent for the use of the shared ideas. Water as a theme can be adapted to different environmental and cultural outdoor contexts to enhance development sustainable pedagogical practices. This contributes to inclusive pedagogic facilitated by the ECE staff, where children can explore and gain experiences as competent participants. Time and finding place stands out as important. The preliminary findings reflect ways to use natural environments and water activities to develop pedagogy for sustainable and inclusive practices. take responsibility to support children's competencies and readiness for the future

nature kindergartens, water activities, sustainability, inclusive pedagogy, diversity

Symposium Set D17 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G246, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN TEACHING ECEC STUDENTS

Chaired by Vikki Wynn, University of Sunderland, United Kingdom

Early Childhood Education and Care student-teachers' views on the effect of media news on their wellbeing

Presenters
Ingibjörg Sigurdardottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Ingibjörg Sigurdardottir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Svava Mork, University of Iceland, Iceland
Samuli Ranta, University of Lapland, Finland

The aim of the study was to explore how early childhood student-teachers in Finland and Iceland perceive media coverage related to ECEC and how it effects their wellbeing and expectations of future work. Previous studies identify that media news related to the educational sector often highlight challenges and problems (Shine and Rogers, 2021; Ranta and Sintonen, 2023). Studies have underscored concerns about wellbeing and resilience of ECEC educators (Sirvio et al., 2023; Staffans and Ström, 2022). Media often highlights adverse events or negative aspects of phenomena, which can lead to overestimation of issues and misunderstanding (VanderWeele and Brooks, 2020). From a wellbeing perspective, fostering optimistic understanding of future work is essential, as individuals with positive view are more likely to perceive their future optimistically (Diener and Chan, 2011). This study operates on the paradigm that positive emotions, self-satisfaction, and optimism contribute to present and future wellbeing. These resources are seen as essential in shaping how individuals cope with challenges and envision their professional trajectories.Data was gathered through online survey based on recent news on ECEC. 105 student-teachers in Finland and 100 in Iceland responded. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns within data (Willig, 2014). Participation was voluntary, and no personal identifiable information was gathered. Our findings suggest that student-teachers find media coverage distressing, causing anxiety about entering the profession. Students find media coverage add pressure and responsibility on them. Findings are important contribution to knowledge on teachers' wellbeing and the importance of introducing quality practice to support positive discourse around ECEC.

student-teachers, media news, wellbeing, resilience, future work

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Faces of a Profession: Parallel Kindergarten Teacher Training at Secondary and Higher Education Levels in the 21st Century

Presenters
Szilvia Golyán, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

All authors
Szilvia Golyán, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

The research offers an overview of kindergarten teacher training, comparing the bachelor's degree program (EQF 5) with the secondary-level kindergarten technician qualification (EQF 3). In Hungary, secondary-level training was reintroduced in 2023, alongside the bachelor's program, which has existed since 1959 (Golyán, 2023; 2024). The study examines similarities and differences in historical evolution, curriculum content, required competencies, and employment opportunities. Special emphasis is placed on the 2023 legislative change, which, from 2025, allows holders of either qualification to occupy the same teaching roles in kindergartens. Employing an interpretative qualitative methodology, the study applies thematic content analysis to systematically explore how education policy and legal documents conceptualize and justify the parallel existence of secondary and higher education pathways in kindergarten teacher training. This includes identifying recurring themes, shifts in discourse, and underlying assumptions regarding professional roles, qualification standards, and institutional responsibilities. Although no personal data or human participants were involved, the research complies with the EECERA Ethical Code (2015), acknowledging relevant cultural and historical contexts. The research identified key challenges arising from the parallel qualification pathways, including: (1) Labor market disruptions (e.g., defining job roles, risk of over- or underqualification); (2) Loss of professional identity (e.g., diminished social prestige, weakened professional cohesion, demotivation); (3) Erosion of quality and regulatory objectivity (e.g., inconsistent training standards, regulatory ambiguities, limited professional development opportunities). The findings suggest that parallel training routes may result in inefficient resource allocation and, at the systemic level, risk compromising educational quality and equal access to high-quality early childhood education.

comparative analysis, employment opportunities, practical training, professional competencies, training curriculum

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Creating a pedagogical approach in a distance learning higher education programme to develop an inclusive communitas that reflects the passion and enthusiasm evident in ECEC practice

Presenters
Vikki Wynn, University of Sunderland, United Kingdom

All authors
Vikki Wynn, University of Sunderland, United Kingdom

Within the UK, it is assumed that learners within Higher Education (HE) are 'traditional learners' and university is a place for andragogy (Yoshimoto et al., 2007). However, on the ECEC post graduate programme I have worked on, a collaborative community is evident via pedagogical approaches. The aim of this study is to understand why a communitas is evident within the ECEC programme. Previous studies within the researchers' team indicate a stark difference of approach and engagement among students studying ECEC. This study hopes to understand what elements create the unique form of 'social imagination' (Greene, 1995). An interpretivist paradigm allows for an improved understanding of the 'world' from the experiences of individuals. Embracing qualitative methods are emancipatory through the feminist lens (Cohen et al., 2018). A netnography design (Kozinets, 2009) reflects the nature of online learning, with a single cohort of the ECEC programme, including audits of existing practice and four focus groups. A multi-modal approach will be employed to ensure practice is inclusive, along with clear participant

information provided and opportunities to opt out. Having written and verbal participation options ensure all voices can be captured. Initial findings indicate a strong communitas and feeling of enhancement (Bernstein, 2000) in ECEC, unlike other phases of study. Thematic analysis of this data demonstrates more emotive, passionate language used rather than the technician style language often associated with HE learning (Moss, 2019). It is hoped that findings will illuminate the possibilities from ECEC pedagogical approaches to support andragogical approaches in HE.

community of practice, practitioner-enquiry, participant research, professional development, enhanced practice

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D18 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G308, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHALLENGING SCHOOLIFICATION OF ECE

Chaired by Evelyn Neudorf, Tallinn University, Estonia

Children's learning in early childhood education: a sociomaterial approach

Presenters
Martine Sletten, Nord University, Norway

All authors
Martine Sletten, Nord University, Norway

This presentation, based on a PhD study, explores young children's learning in ECEC through perspectives that create diversity and participation. Kaurel (2020) and Nygård (2015) points at how national and international education policies, particularly those influenced by the OECD, tend to conceptualize children's learning in terms of standardized outcomes and measurable quality indicators, promoting a structured and outcome-oriented pedagogical approach. In contrast, this study's theoretical and scientific foundation is based on sociomaterial approach through a relational ontology, emphasizing interactions between human and non-human agents (Decuypere and Simons, 2016; Hultin, 2019). The study is qualitative placed within a feminist (Haraway, 1988), and posthuman paradigm (Braidotti, 2013). Data consists of narratives written by ECEC teachers, analyzed through diffractive reading within a material-discursive and narrative methodology (Livholts and Tamboukou, 2015). To ensure anonymity, all collected narratives are encrypted, and all names within the narratives are fictional. The analysis follows an ethical approach inspired by Donna Haraway (2016), emphasizing situated knowledge, responsibilities and transparency in scientific inquiry. The discussion explores how children's learning can be seen as small bubbles of reflection and action, emerging through diverse encounters and relationships. These insights may support practitioners in recognizing and valuing diverse forms of learning, encouraging pedagogical practices that are responsive to both material environments and children's relational engagements. Findings suggest implications for rethinking how children's learning is discussed within dominant discourses, which often promote a standardized understanding with predefined learning outcomes.

children's learning, diversity, sosiomaterial approaches, relations, alternative discourse

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

"Schoolification" in Early Childhood Education: Estonian Kindergarten Teachers' Experiences in Selecting Learning Materials

Presenters

Evelyn Neudorf, Tallinn University, Estonia
Kerstin Kööp, Tallinn University, Estonia
Aalo Banko, Tallinn University, Estonia

All authors

Evelyn Neudorf, Tallinn University, Estonia
Kerstin Kööp, Tallinn University, Estonia
Aalo Banko, Tallinn University, Estonia

The use of workbooks and worksheets in early childhood education is often associated with the phenomenon of schoolification, where early learning environments adopt more formal, school-like practices. Our research seeks to identify Estonian kindergarten teachers' experiences and reasons for using workbooks and worksheets in kindergarten. This research is related to previous studies which concluded that the pursuit of academic goals has led to a situation where kindergartens, both in Estonia and elsewhere in the world, increasingly resemble general education schools in terms of educational activities. (Neudorf et al., 2017; Roden and Szabo, 2017; Wahlgren and Andersson, 2022). In kindergartens, the main focus has shifted to meeting uniform standards, achieving learning goals, and individual competitiveness, which is why children are no longer able to learn in a natural development environment for them, and opportunities to play and directly interact with their peers have decreased. (Moss, 2007; Sylva et al., 2015; van Laere et al., 2012). This study used mix methods: 83 questionnaires were filled and 12 interviews were conducted with kindergarten teachers. The ethical guidelines set by Estonian researchers (Eesti ..., 2023) and EECERA Ethical Code (2024) were followed, ensuring anonymity, voluntary participation, and transparent data usage, while data handling. The results revealed that the use of worksheets and workbooks in kindergarten is not consistent with the modern approach to learning. However, all survey respondents use them in their work. This study provides valuable information for those who want to learn more about the reasons for "schoolification" and the use of workbooks and worksheets in kindergarten.

schoolification, Estonia, worksheet, workbook, kindergarten

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Leading inclusive learning in ECEC: shifting policy and practice in Australia

Presenters

Susan Irvine, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Lennie Barblett, Edith Cowan University, Australia

All authors

Susan Irvine, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Lennie Barblett, Edith Cowan University, Australia

The research aim is to explore the role of curriculum as policy in leading inclusive education as both content and practice in Australian ECEC. There is considerable growth in research and understanding relating to inclusive education environments and practices (Cologon, 2013). Leveraging new knowledge, Australia's updated Early Years Learning Framework promotes a rights-based approach to embedding inclusion in ECEC. The intent is to make visible and celebrate the diversity of children's lives, while building educator capacity to enact inclusion for all children (Barblett et al., 2021). The study is underpinned by a right-based framework (UNCROC, UNCRPD) and key principles of inclusive education - equity, diversity and inclusion. Using a constructivist frame, the study applied mixed-methods, including a scoping literature review and empirical research with providers, practitioners and children (e.g., online surveys, pilot case studies; children's drawings). Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS and qualitative data was analysed using a hybrid inductive deductive narrative approach. Researchers used a scoping

protocol, a quality audit and consistent approach to presenting information to maintain integrity of the review. Participants signed a consent form and informed assent was negotiated with children with parental permission. There was strong stakeholder support to update and strengthen inclusion terminology, concepts and practices throughout the EYLF. Equity was characterised as access to responsive and respectful education and care, supported by reasonable adjustment. Informed by research and practice wisdom, curriculum frameworks have a key role to play promoting the active role of educators in building caring, fair and inclusive ECEC learning communities.

curriculum, inclusion, content, practice, holistic approach

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set D19 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G309, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

LEADERSHIP IN ECEC

Chaired by Karin Černickaja, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

How to manage? Navigating Team Leadership and Professional Wellbeing in ECE

Presenters
Pernilla Kallberg, Mälardalen University, Sweden
Anne Lillvist, Mälardalen University, Sweden

All authors
Pernilla Kallberg, Mälardalen University, Sweden
Ester Catucci, Mälardalen University, Sweden
Anne Lillvist, Mälardalen University, Sweden

This study examines team leadership (TL) among preschool staff and how professional wellbeing can be related to the enactment of TL in preschool. Previous research show the significance of supportive structures as well as using the strengths of each team member in enhancing team functionality and overall performance within ECE settings (Ranta et al., 2023) and for sustaining a high quality in ECE (Sisson et al., 2021). Less functional teams can have an impact on the wellbeing of the staff (Ranta et al., 2022) as well as contributing negatively to the retention of qualified preschool staff (Heilala et al., 2022). The JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017) is used to explore job demands and resources in team leadership in relation to professional wellbeing in ECE. Methodologically, the study employs a mixed-methods research paradigm carried out as an online survey followed by qualitative interviews with ECE staff. Ethical considerations have been discussed throughout the project and the research follows the Swedish Research Council's guidelines ensuring confidentiality and informed consent, including rights to withdraw and GDPR/privacy detail. All data have been pseudonymized and results are presented on an aggregated level. The study's preliminary findings shows how the enactment of functional TL can have a positive impact on professional wellbeing. Furthermore, the findings indicate both challenges and possibilities, expressed by the participants, in relation to job demands and resources in ECE. This research provides insights for key stakeholders of ECE workforce and teacher educators on how to sustain a functional TL for an inclusive ECE.

team leadership, professional wellbeing, ECE-staff, interviews, survey

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Servant leadership in a “Loving battle” in the best interest of the child

Presenters
Kathrine Moen, Nord University, Norway
Tryggve Andreassen, Nord University, Norway

All authors
Kathrine Moen, Nord University, Norway
Tryggve Andreassen, Nord University, Norway

We will discuss how “Servant leadership” and “Loving battle” may be constructive for leadership on all levels in kindergarten regarding opposing ideas of what is in the best interest of the child. Moen (2021) “Loving battle” (PhD) and Andreassen (2017) on Servant leadership in kindergarten are prerequisites for the discussion. Otterstad and Andersen 2012, Stier and Sandstrøm 2018 regarding opposites are relevant. The main objective of Greenleaf’s philosophical theory “Servant leadership” (1970) is focus and commitment towards the Other. Ricoeur (1948) describes communication between opposites as a constructive “loving battle”. For all levels of staff, these concepts may enhance ethical discretion (Moen, 2023). The approach is philosophical discourse, based on hermeneutical studies of six kindergarten teachers’ stories, and observations in 2 ECECs. Consent was given by SIKT, informed consent and anonymized participants. The kindergarten’s main objective is the best interest of the child. This may cause “value battles” between parents and kindergarten staff (Moen, 2021). To help staff develop their ethical discretion, the core question from “Servant leadership” is crucial: Do the Other grow as a person by my leadership? Will they be healthier, free, wiser, more integrated? Ricoeur’s concept “Combat amoureux” as a constructive battle for the best of the Other may invigorate the discussion. The aim is to further develop staff’s ethical discretion, develop servant leadership, and have authentic dialogues concerning values.

“servant leadership”, “loving battle”, “best interest of the child “, discretion, values

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Strong leaders – strong teams?

Presenters
Anna Haberl, Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich, Austria
Simone Breit, Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich, Austria

All authors
Anna Haberl, Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich, Austria
Simone Breit, Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich, Austria

This study examines transformational leadership in a Viennese ECE-private-provider to assess current leadership-practices and improvement-areas. Research shows transformational leadership enhances team dynamics and job satisfaction.The AQUA- and LeiKi-studies confirm impact on educational quality (Schreyer et al., 2014: 131; Eling et al., 2023: 113).Studies indicate varying leadership profiles shaped by qualifications and institutional structures(Grantham-Castona and DiCarlo, 2023: 105–114;Eckstein-Madry et al., 2025: 1–9), highlighting the need for targeted leadership concepts. Transformational leadership is characterized by motivation, inspiration, and individual employee support (Bass and Avolio, 1994: 19). Core element is fostering strong teams through appreciation and encouragement. This study follows a positivist approach, collecting objective data via standardized instruments.A quantitative design is applied, using the MLQ5X (Felfe, 2006: 61–78). An online survey of 155 leaders examines leadership styles' impact on team strength. This study adheres to scientific and ethical standards, ensuring voluntary, anonymous participation, follows EECERA Ethical Code (Bertram et al., 2016), prioritizing respect, confidentiality and transparency while minimizing biases and risks. Analyses of collected data(n = 85) indicate positive correlation between transformational leadership and leaders' satisfaction with team performance, r = .26, p

= .015. Leaders with higher transformational scores rate team dynamics more positively.An ANOVA suggests significant difference in satisfaction across leadership levels, F(2, 82) = 3.4, p = .038, though post-hoc tests showed no significant pairwise differences. Findings support the hypothesis that transformational leadership enhances collaboration and team relationships, with small to moderate effects. As a basic-management-course is legally required in Vienna (section3a paragraph1 no2 Wiener-Kindergartengesetz), transformational skills should be included systematically and in the curriculum of the management-training of the provider involved in this study, to strengthen team collaboration/leadership satisfaction/staff retention.

transformational leadership, early childhood education, team dynamics, MLQ, leadership quality

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D20 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G315, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

UNIVERSAL POLICIES TO ENABLE GREATER ACCESS

Chaired by Jonina Saemundsdottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

How Much 3-Year-Old Preschool are Children Getting? A State-Wide Australian Study of Children's Preschool Attendance in a Universal Funded Program

Presenters
Hannah Bryson, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Penny Levickis, The University of Melbourne, Australia

All authors
Hannah Bryson, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Penny Levickis, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Hannah Stark, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Patricia Eadie, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Laura McFarland, The University of Melbourne, Australia Damien Mannion, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Priyanka Nair-Turkich, The University of Melbourne, Australia

This study aims to undertake a large-scale analysis of children's preschool attendance within the state-wide Educational and Developmental Gains in Early Childhood (EDGE) Study: to quantify the hours attended by children in a universal funded 3-year-old preschool program in Victoria; and identify family socioeconomic factors associated with attendance. Most preschool evaluations measure access using children's enrolment. However, enrolment and attendance are not the same (Harrison, 2023). Preschool absences can be due to socioeconomic, cultural, or health factors (Beatson, 2022). Examining attendance can help understand the actual hours preschool children are participating in. This study draws on the Social-Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) to consider interacting factors that may impact a child's preschool attendance. A post-positivism quantitative approach was used, within a state-wide cohort study. Daily arrival and departure records were collected for 520 children attending 3-year-old preschool in 2023, across 112 services. Average weekly hours of attendance was calculated and examined for associations with family socioeconomic factors of parent education, employment and income. Informed consent was obtained from parents/guardians to collect children's attendance data. Data were deidentified and aggregate data are presented. Within stand-alone preschools, children attended 10.3 hours/week (SD=4.3) on average. Children receiving preschool within long day-care attended 22.8 hours/week (SD=9.4). Parent being in paid employment (B=2.2) and higher household income (B=0.3) were associated with higher attendance hours. Within a

universal program of up to 15 hours of free 3-year-old preschool in Victoria, variability in children's attendance was associated with family socioeconomic factors. Actual attendance will be further compared to funded service hours.

preschool, attendance, socioeconomic, cohort, kindergarten

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

"It has lowered the barriers": Results of new "wellbeing" law in Iceland

Presenters
Jonina Saemundsdottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Jonina Saemundsdottir, University of Iceland, Iceland

The aim of this research is to explore the effects of recent legislation in Iceland intended to improve the access to and integrate professional services to children and their families. The collaboration and integration of different system like social services, health care and educational system is regarded important for the accommodation of children with special educational needs but it can be complicated and does not necessarily happen naturally (e.g Cariére, Gascon and Déschenés, 2013).As concern had been voiced regarding inadequacy of integration/collaboration and access to services in Iceland a legislation was passed as an effort for improvement. Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) was used as framework as the study explores integration/collaboration of institutions/services belonging to different systems. In this small qualitative research six key members of two pilot municipalities, that played key roles in implementing the legislation were interviewed by using semi structured interviews. Data was analysed according to thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). All participants gave informed consent, were given pseudonyms and informed that they could quit the research at any time. Results showed that although still in implementation phase and in spite of some initial difficulties the legislation seems to be serving intended purpose and on the whole participants felt positive. Access to services had, for example, been improved and collaboration of institutions and professionals/specialists facilitated which eased the burden on families. As findings indicate the legislation benefits children and families, it can be recommended as policy elsewhere.

integration/coordination of services, children, families, special educational needs, legislation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Conceptualising Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as a Public Good

Presenters
Tracy McElheron, Maynooth University, Ireland
Georga Dowling, Maynooth University, Ireland

All authors
Tracy McElheron, Maynooth University, Ireland
Georga Dowling, Maynooth University, Ireland
Leah O'Toole, Maynooth University, Ireland

This project aimed to conceptualise a new model of public ECEC in the Irish context. It was underpinned by Biesta's (2012; 2013) writings on education as a public good, and examines the democratic possibilities of ECEC after the critiques of neo-liberalism (Säfström and Biesta, 2023). This work conceptualises a model of ECEC based on Biesta's

(2012; 2013) framework which sees education 'in the interest of the public' as the ideal. This was a conceptual piece resulting from a collaborative writing project carried out within a community of practice. As this was a collaborative writing project, rigour and authorship were important. Data which was researched to underpin the writing was done through reputable, peer-reviewed publications. All authors who contributed were acknowledged, and conversely, everyone who was acknowledged had a significant role in the writing process. The reliance on consultation to inform key policy changes and elicit meaningful and effective outcomes is problematic. As those who have the loudest voice are often heard over more marginalised others, we argue that deep and purposeful consideration of all stakeholders, children, family, educators and community, is a more ethical and constructive method of underpinning significant policy developments in ECEC. This study can significantly influence the development of policy which is more equitable and sustainable, and has far-reaching consequences for an ECEC sector which is 'in the interests of the public' (Biesta, 2012; 2013).

public good, policy, consideration, neo-liberalism, Ireland

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set D21 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G319, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

GENDER AND THE ECE WORKFORCE (PAIR)

Chaired by Radhika Viruru, Texas A&M University, United States

Male students' experiences of preschool teacher-training programs in Sweden and Brazil

Presenters
Sara Frödén, Örebro University, Sweden
Ricardo Gonçalves, Örebro University, Sweden

All authors
Sara Frödén, Örebro University, Sweden
Ricardo Gonçalves, Örebro University, Sweden

Only 4% of ECE staff in Sweden and Brazil are men, despite significant differences in gender equality policies and views on male caregiving. To address this gender imbalance, this study aims to explore the experiences of male preschool teacher students in Sweden and Brazil. What challenges do these students encounter, and which factors contribute to successfully completing preschool teacher education? While previous research often focuses on practicing professionals (Hedlin et al., 2019; Warin, 2015) and masculinity theories (Heikkilä and Hellman, 2017; Haddad and Marques, 2022), fewer studies center on male ECE students, the diversity within this minority group and their sense of belonging in higher education (Grimshaw et al., 2023). To address this gap, this study combines various minority theories (Frost and Meyer, 2023; Diamond and Alley, 2022; Moss Kanter, 1977). Thematic data analysis is performed using an abductive approach within a qualitative interpretative paradigm. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fourteen male students at the end of the preschool teacher training program in Sweden and Brazil. The students gave informed consent, and pseudonyms were used to protect their identities. To ensure voluntary participation, the interviewing researchers had no examining role toward the students and emphasized their right to withdraw consent at any time without affecting their education. The results highlight the importance of male representation, mentorship, social network support, positive work experience in preschools, and the impact of intersecting categories like ethnicity and age. Also, several strategies for developing an inclusive and supportive environment for male preschool teacher students are suggested.

male preschool teacher-student, higher education, gender, Sweden, Brazil.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A revolution sounds like a whisper: a historical narrative review of women's participation in childcare in the United States through four waves of feminism.

Presenters
Radhika Viruru, Texas A&M University, United States

All authors
Radhika Viruru, Texas A&M University, United States
Erica Ritter, Texas A&M University, United States

This paper explores how sociopolitical events impacted women's participation in childcare through waves of feminism in the United States. Feminist movements that address social and political realms have historically focused on collective freedom resulting in positive impacts on the historically marginalized early childhood workforce. This paper draws from feminist theory that aims to disrupt systems of power and oppression and analyzes gender within intersections of race, class, and privilege. The terms history, narrative, child care landscapes, early childhood education, workforce and care work were used to search databases that included empirical and non-empirical literature. Seventy-one pieces of literature were analyzed. Each article was coded using keywords/phrases including feminist movements, legislature, regulations, funding, pay, attrition and workforce. Codes were clustered to form themes explored in the paper. This work was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the university. Using feminist theory which positions the childcare workforce as both visible and indispensable further strengthened the ethical foundation of the study. Women's roles and responsibilities have experienced significant yet uneven transformations over time. During the pandemic childcare workforces gained visibility; however despite initial support, funding was subsequently reduced. The "she-cession" emerges as a significant finding reflecting the unpredictability of the child care market, losing hard-earned feminist gains. Childcare workforces have historically. been underpaid and under-recognized. Attempts to professionalize childcare have been hampered by structural and cultural resistance, lack of institutional support and exclusionary paths to professionalism. Establishing a common professional development system with consistent funding and restructuring of career pathways can alleviate this issue.

workforce, feminism, childcare, united states, professionalism

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set D22 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G320, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

ADHD, HEARING LOSS AND COLOUR BLINDNES: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Chaired by Irina Silva, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Children with hearing loss engaging in music play through digital technologies

Presenters
Irina Silva, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Philippa Amery, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

All authors
Irina Silva, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Philippa Amery, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Understanding how digital technologies can support children's engagement with music in various contexts through digital technology. Music therapy can support children with hearing loss attention, sound perception, memory, socialisation and wellbeing (Lo et al., 2022). Despite the recognised evidence of the benefits of music in the everyday lives of children with hearing loss (Torppa and Huotilainen, 2019), their access to music can be limited by their family's access to musical instruments or music therapy. Digital technologies such as tablets and apps afforded young children opportunities to explore various musical instruments, their sound and frequency contributing to developing their speech, language and communication skills. Children's rights and the sociology of childhood framed this study, offering children opportunities to agenticly explore music, instruments, technology and make decisions independently (Corsaro, 2015). Children aged 3 to 8 years with a medical diagnosis of hearing loss, living in Australia, participated in a series of digital play music workshops with their families. During these workshops, they explored music using iPads with the support of music therapists. Children's consent was required and sought in a child-friendly manner. Children were assured they could stop engaging in the activities at any time without providing additional justification. Participation in this study empowered children and families to explore multiple musical instruments and understand how music could support children with hearing loss social interactions, communication and self-regulation. The outcomes allowed the team to grant funding to replicate these workshop series in partnership with an Australian Institution that supports children with hearing loss.

young children, hearing loss, music play, digital technologies, children's rights

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Kindergarten teachers' level of knowledge about ADHD

Presenters
Ágnes Tóth-Szerecz, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
Judit Finánczy, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
Judit Podráczky, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
Melinda Csima, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences ; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary

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Judit Finánczy, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
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Melinda Csima, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences ; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary

The aim of the study is to explore the kindergarten teachers knowledge about ADHD. Previous studies on ADHD have focused primarily on school teachers, with limited involvement of kindergarten teachers (Awadalla et al., 2016).

Most teachers have adequate knowledge of ADHD symptoms and diagnosis, and the majority correctly identify its signs (Mohr-Jensen et al., 2019). Research indicates that primary school teachers possess more knowledge and have received ADHD-related training at a higher rate than their kindergarten colleagues (See et al., 2021). ADHD is considered a heritable disorder (Millenet et al., 2013), one of the most common neuropsychiatric conditions worldwide, affecting 5-8% of children (WHO, 2019) depending on gender, age and diagnostic criteria (Pérez-Crespo et al., 2020). The measuring instrument of our cross-sectional, quantitative research is ASKAT questionnaire developed by Mulholland et al. (2016), which was completed by Hungarian kindergarten teachers (n=342). The study was conducted in accordance with the EECERA Ethical Code for Early Childhood Researchers (Bertram et al., 2024), with informed consent obtained and participants' anonymity ensured. Our results show that educational level of kindergarten teachers has a predictive effect on treatment knowledge related to ADHD (β=-0.15, $p<0.05$). Participation in SEN training has a significant effect on kindergarten teachers' knowledge of ADHD symptoms (β=0.14, $p<0.05$) and treatment (β=0.13, $p<0.05$). Kindergarten teachers' age and teaching experience have no significant effect on ADHD knowledge. Recognizing ADHD in children is crucial for kindergarten teachers, as early diagnosis significantly influences efficient support and treatment of children with ADHD.

kindergarten teacher, ADHD, neurodiversity, knowledge, early detection

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Colorfit: a new board game for the early detection of color blindness in preschool children

Presenters
Michela Bettinelli, Department of Education and Humanities, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy

All authors
Liliana Silva, Department of Education and Humanities, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy
Michela Bettinelli, Department of Education and Humanities, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy
Elsa Manzini, Department of Education and Humanities, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy
Alessandro Rizzi, MIPS Lab, University of Milan, Italy

The aim of this research is to improve accessibility for CVD children in early education through ColorFit, a competitive board game based on color matching and color perception. Color blindness affects around 8.5% of the population (Maffia et al., 2022), but often remains undetected due to cortical compensation mechanisms in early childhood (Eschbach et al., 2014; Rizzi et al., 2014). The study is based on the Universal Design for Learning framework (CAST, 2018; Meyer et al., 2014) and the study of Silva, Rizzi and Manzini (2024) . Using a mixed methods approach (Baldacci & Frabboni, 2013), data collection includes teacher questionnaires, systematic observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups with educators and parents. The study follows strict ethical guidelines ensuring parental consent, anonymity through coded badges and voluntary participation. The study includes 350 children (3 – 6 years). In this presentation, we will present the preliminary results from 75 children, which indicate that 85% of children struggle with sustained attention, with play lasting between 30 seconds and 7 minutes. Very short games occur when children disregard the rules and play indiscriminately, making it difficult to assess color perception. The design of the game board influences engagement: concrete shapes (e.g. animals) distract children from focusing on the color, while abstract shapes improve attention (Fisher et al., 2014; Burns and Vandenberg, 2008). To counteract this, future modifications will include larger abstract panels and a "solo"mode for play. The results will improve teacher training and inclusive curriculum development. The data collection will be completed in April 2025.

gamification, colourblindness, preschool education, inclusive education, board game

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set D23 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G329, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) HARNESSING THE POWER OF CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES: CHALLENGING ADULT-CENTERED VIEWS IN ECE RESEARCH

Chaired by Sofie Areljung, Umeå University, Sweden

Understanding urban infrastructure through children's hands: How stories of road and water systems emerge in arts activities

Presenters
Sofie Areljung, Umeå University, Sweden

All authors
Sofie Areljung, Umeå University, Sweden

This study explores how children engage with water and transport infrastructure during arts activities. The research question is: How do children make meaning of infrastructure in collaboration with peers and art materials? The presentation contributes to ECE by addressing large drivers behind sustainability challenges. Such content is often overlooked in ECE, where staff typically focus on recycling and care for nature (Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Sundberg, 2016; Meland, 2021). Herein, I adopt a socio-material perspective (Barad, 2007; Penn, 2019) to capture how meaning making emerges in intra-action between children and materials during art activities. The study involved three preschools with children aged 2–5 years. Following an interpretivist paradigm, I analyze how children and materialities intra-act while sculpting road networks with clay and drawing water systems. Each video-recorded session included 3–6 children, selected based on the teachers' professional judgment to ensure a fair distribution and responsiveness to children's needs. Ethical measures included informed consent, children's assent, and discussions with teachers to ensure inclusive participation. The findings show that children initially create networks of roads or pipelines. Then their engagement deepens and they introduce imaginative narratives, such as using "breathing pills" to move inside the water pipes. Hence, children's perspectives on urban infrastructure extend beyond the researcher's initial objectives. The study contributes to ECE practice and policy by illustrating how factual and imaginative elements intertwine in children's meaning making of sustainability issues. Moreover, it contributes to ECE research by showing how responsiveness to children's perspectives can enrichen the knowledge generated in research.

children's perspectives, video analysis, sustainability education, arts education, urban infrastrutcure

Non-verbal research approaches to children's perspectives? Reflections on the interpretation of children's drawings

Presenters
Melanie Kubandt, University of Osnabrueck, Germany

All authors
Melanie Kubandt, University of Osnabrueck, Germany

The presentation explores the possibilities and limits of interpreting children's drawings as access to children's perspectives based on findings from the project "Methodological approaches to children's drawings in qualitative research". Research on children's drawings has a long tradition, e.g. in developmental psychology (Richter, 1987), while in educational science there is an empirical neglect of non-verbal approaches. Arguments are the risk of

reification and the difficulty of capturing the perspective of children (Heinzel 2012; Kekeritz and Kubandt, 2022). The project combined the perspective on Children's drawings as an aesthetic process with questions dealing with children´s perspectives on different topics (Kekeritz and Kubandt, 2022). From a methodological social-constructivism-perspective, research requires a sensitive datacollection-situation (Hülst, 2012), which took place at daycare-centers or in the children's homes following their own interests and perspectives. The drawings were analyzed using the documentary method (Bohnsack, 2017). Ethical considerations were given priority in the project and followed with voluntary, informed consent sought from children and parents. For example, the children were able to decide for themselves whether to keep finished drawings or make them available to the project. It will be discussed, how children`s drawings can give empirical access to the perspectives of children on the background of the method's limitations and research pitfalls. Suggestions are made that could guide the reflections of researchers who want to draw on children's drawings in their studies. Identifying the blind spots of research "out of children's perspective" gives further guidance on reflecting about reification and how to adequately deal with typical pitfalls as adult researchers.

children's drawings, children's perspectives, reflections as researcher, research pitfalls

'Unicorn Moments' in interviews with children

Presenters
Katrin Velten, Alice Salomon Hochschule, Berlin, Germany

All authors
Katrin Velten, Alice Salomon Hochschule, Berlin, Germany

The paper examines "Unicorn Moments" (Ranta, 2023) in adult-child interview interactions from an adultism-critical perspective. It focuses on how these "ethically significant moments" (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) challenge adult-centered views on children's perspectives and expertise, especially when children express views that adult researchers cannot immediately comprehend. It builds on previous studies by Höke and Velten (2024), Velten and Höke (2023), Liebel and Meade (2023), and Ranta (2023), extending the understanding of adult-child interactions in research contexts and the balancing act of demands for ethical research with children. The study is based in the theory of generational order shaping child-adult interactions, with both groups positioning themselves accordingly (Alanen, 2009). This dynamic is particularly evident in interviews, where adults' research objectives may lead to unintended adultistic behavior (Velten and Höke, 2023; Höke and Velten, 2024). Interview sequences from three research projects are re-analysed (Höke, 2016; 2020; Velten, 2019) using sequence analysis (Schütz et al., 2012). It focuses on how unexpected child interpretations are handled, considering the goal of recognizing children's perspectives and expertise against adult-centered standards. Interpretive bias was addressed through independent coding and joint moderation. The previous studies adhered to EECERA research ethics (Bertram et al., 2016). Findings question when, where, and how researchers speak of "the child's perspective" and explore children's expert status. The paper advocates for refocusing on research approaches that understand children's perspectives and reflect on adultist habitualizations in research interactions. It addresses adult-centered bias in analysis and interpretation, aiming to enhance ethical research practices with children.

unicorn moments, adult-child interactions, interviews with children, children´s expertise, adultism

Symposium Set D24 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G362, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AGENCY AND RESILIENCE

Chaired by Mia Heikkilä, Department of Child- and Youth studies, Stockholm University, Sweden

Resilience in ECEC – agency and belonging

Presenters
Mia Heikkilä, Department of Child- and Youth studies, Stockholm University, Sweden

All authors
Mia Heikkilä, Department of Child- and Youth studies, Stockholm University, Sweden
Ann-Christin Furu, Åbo Akademi University, Finland
Linda Eriksson, Åbo Akademi University, Finland
Siv Lundström, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The aim is to explore how different aspects of resilience are present in today's early childhood education and care (ECEC) centers' work and also to provide deeper knowledge on resilience work and how it can be linked to understanding children's lives in ECEC. Pascal and Bertram (2023) argue that ECEC needs to turn the attention towards how we can create living conditions where children can flourish and feel fulfillment (c.f. Furu et al. 2023, Furu and Heikkilä, 2022). We explore resilience through the lence of agency, belonging and compassion, inspired by relational ontology and slow pedagogy. Clark (2023) suggests that there is a need to reassess our priorities, specifically our relationship with time, and advocates slow knowledge. The ethnographic research has been conducted in four different ECEC settings in Finland, all in all during 56 days including 48 children and 10 teachers and childcarers. The research data consists of videoobservations, interviews, photographs and documents. The research is conducted in accordance with the guidelines for good research practice (TENK 2019), and participants of the research have given their informed consent to the study. Children's consent was processed continuously during fieldwork. Ethical approval has been given from the ethical board of the university. DMP is available. On-going analysis process and preliminary results will be presented through themes such as wondering, circle-time and sticks and the great variety of how resilience emerges will be discussed through empirical examples. This knowledge can strengthen personel in working with children's resilience as an important part of ECEC.

resilience, ethnography, agency, belonging, sustainability, world view education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

"I think it comes from my mother": Influences on the Quality of Pedagogical Orientations of Educators in Nursery Settings

Presenters
Emma Bernard, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

All authors
Emma Bernard, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
Lise Lemay, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
Lorie-Marlène Brault-Foisy, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

This project explores the quality of pedagogical orientation (QOP) in nurseries, focusing on educators' beliefs, values, attitudes, and professional identity, and aims to understand how context, time and individuals interact to influence daily educator-child interactions. Despite their role in ensuring high educational quality, limited research has examined educators' subjective actions (Bigras et al., 2020; Smith and Lawrence, 2019), particularly regarding the impact of their beliefs, values, and professional identity on quality in infant settings. Using Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model (1998), this presentation examines the social, personal, and contextual factors influencing educators. Using an interpretative qualitative approach, a multiple case study with six educators from four settings Quebec (Canada) settings was conducted, featuring stimulated recall videos and semi-structured interviews to reflect on their experiences and actions. Before the project, all participants, settings, and parents agreed to consent and

confidentiality protocols. Children were given time to acclimatize, with agreement that confidentiality could be breached if a child's wellbeing was at risk, per the Youth Protection Act. Preliminary findings suggest that QOP is mainly influenced by educators' personal experiences and impacts educator-child interactions. While context and time have little effect on QOP. This study supports existing research indicating that these, along with individual factors, affect proximal processes. The interaction of PPCT model variables and QOP highlights how educators' experiences, environment, and values shape interactions with infants. This research addresses a gap in understanding QOP in nurseries, offering a systemic view of factors impacting quality and laying the groundwork for future studies.

early childhood, nursery, educational quality, pedagogical orientations (QOP), PPCT model, educators

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

What do you mean by identities?

Presenters
Karen Williams, University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

All authors
Karen Williams, University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Focusing upon how vocational backgrounds are mediated as part of being and becoming an ECEC academic, this research explores implications for identities. Highlighting the significance of challenging traditional notions of academic identity, consideration of how this opens space for diversity within academia and supports the ECEC workforce is discussed. Drawing upon completed doctoral research I explore the identities of University Lecturers in Early Childhood Studies from a range of practice backgrounds (Williams, 2024) 'Figured worlds', Holland et al. (1998), is used to examine notions of identities as lecturers encounter and navigate their way through their professional landscape and their encounters with students. Research adopted a qualitative, interpretivist paradigm (Birks, 2011). Methodologically, narrative life history was utilised (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Analysis was conducted through theoretical thematic analysis (Holland et al., 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Three HE Lecturers with ECEC backgrounds completed all stages of the project. Informed consent was gained. Pseudonyms replaced the names, places and events. Participants were continuously consulted to avoid identification by association. Significance of vocational experience as claims to being and becoming a lecturer are set against a backdrop of culturally, historically and socially constructed notions of the traditional. Importance of sharing 'life histories' (Richards, 2021) in our role as educators is explored providing a diversity of voices for future ECEC professionals, to co-construct identities, and to challenge discourses of undervalue. Vocational experience as foregrounding expertise requires recognition as an essential part of HE lectures sense of professional identities and a vital conduit to work with students.

identities, life histories, diversity, students, vocational

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set D25 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 10:40 – 12:00 | Room G366, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) ENVISAGE: SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PROVIDERS AND FAMILIES THROUGH EMPOWERMENT

Chaired by Kerry Britt, The University of Melbourne, Australia

Impact of ENVISAGE-Families workshops on outcomes for caregivers of children with developmental disabilities

Presenters
Christine Imms, The University of Melbourne, Australia

All authors
Laura Miller, Australian Catholic University, Australia
Christine Imms, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Andrea Cross, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada
Kinga Pozniak, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada
Bridget O'Connor, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Rachel Martens, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada
Vicki Cavalieros, Murdoch Children's Research Institue, Australia
Rose Babic, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Australia
Monika Novak-Pavlic, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada
Myanca Rodrigues, McMaster University, Canada
Abha Balram, Australian Catholic University, Australia
Debbie Hughes, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada
Elizabeth Chambers, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada
Jenny Ziviani, The University of Queensland, Australia
Peter Rosenbaum, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada

ENVISAGE (ENabling VISions and Growing Expectations) is a program co-designed with families to empower caregivers raising children with childhood-onset disability. The research aimed to explore the impact of ENVISAGE-Families on caregiver wellbeing and empowerment. Caregivers raising children with disabilities continue to experience physical and psychological health problems and socioeconomic burden (McConkey et al., 2023). Using an integrated Knowledge Translation approach, program workshops were developed addressing evidence-based themes in childhood disability underpinned by holistic, strengths-based, family-centred service (Dunst and Trivette, 2009; Rosenbaum et al., 1998), the ICF (World Health Organization, 2001) and its 'F-words' translation (Rosenbaum and Gorter, 2012). Caregivers of a child <7 with neurodevelopmental disability across Australia and Canada participated in five weekly online workshops, co-facilitated by a parent-clinician/researcher dyad. Quantitative data were collected using surveys, and qualitative data collected via interviews. Qualitative data analysis was guided by interpretive description methodology. Informed consent was obtained from participants, and de-identified data was used for analysis and reporting. ENVISAGE-Families increased family empowerment, family functioning, and parent confidence. Qualitatively, parents identified a significant shift in how they thought, felt, and talked about disability with their families and service providers. Parents also reported that ENVISAGE concepts needed to be adopted by service providers to enable and support partnerships underpinned by shared ideas and language. These results supported the need for a large-scale hybrid implementation study, which is currently underway in Australia. In addition, the need for a program for service providers to share knowledge and ideas to support family empowerment was required.

childhood disability, co-development, family engagement, parents, participatory research

ENVISAGE-Service Providers: Creating opportunities to change how service providers think, talk about, and approach childhood disability

Presenters
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Debbie Hughes, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada
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Sarah Knight, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Miriam Yates, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Australia
Andrea Cross, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada
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Laura Miller, Australian Catholic University, Australia
Christine Imms, The University of Melbourne, Australia

ENVISAGE for Service Providers (ENVISAGE-SP) professional development program aims to increase service providers knowledge of, attitudes towards, and skills to apply contemporary evidence-informed approaches in their work. This study explored the program's impact on participants. Contemporary approaches can improve parent wellbeing and empowerment (McConkey et al., 2023), having a cascading effect on child developmental and behavioural outcomes (Dunst et al., 2019). Developed using an integrated Knowledge Translation approach, workshops were based on the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, lifecourse health development (Halfon et al., 2014), everyday learning opportunities (Dunst, 2020), transactional model of development (Sameroff, 2009), ICF and 'F-words' (Rosenbaum & Gorter, 2012) Following participation in five weekly online workshops, co-facilitated by a parent- researcher dyad, interviews were undertaken with 27 purposively selected (of 118) consenting participants from Australia and Canada. Within an Interpretive Description methodology, reflexive thematic analysis was undertaken. Participants provided informed consent, and analysis and reporting used de-identified data. A thematic metaphor, constructing family-centred approaches described the program's impact. Subthemes described how (i) participants come with their own foundation; (ii) ENVISAGE-SP provides scaffolding for family-centred service; and (iii) 'my construction' – describing the influence on participants. Constructions included connections between ways of thinking and doing, and bridges between providers and families. ENVISAGE-SP provided the scaffold supporting participants to build on their foundations in ways meaningful for them. Providers working in childhood disability have foundations for learning and practice including their professional and personal experiences and attributes. Participation in ENVISAGE-SP shifted ways of thinking, feeling, and acting with families.

professional development, childhood disability, early intervention, providers, families

The feasibility of an 'integrated' version of ENabling VISions and Growing Expectations (ENVISAGE): A program for service partners and parents of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Presenters
Elizabeth Chambers, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada

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Jessica Hanson, Children's Treatment Network, Canada
Myanca Rodrigues, McMaster University, Canada

Christine Imms, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Michelle Phoenix, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, CanadaSandra Moll, School of Rehabilitation Science, McMaster University Hamilton, Canada
Peter Rosenbaum, CanChild Centre for Childhood-Onset Disability Research, McMaster University, Canada

A novel iteration of ENVISAGE was created to bring together service providers and caregivers to explore strengths-based approaches to childhood-onset disability and family-centred service (FCS). A feasibility study was conducted to assess acceptability and feasibility of the 'ENVISAGE-Integrated' program. The ENVISAGE-Families (Miller et al., 2023) and ENVISAGE-SP (Britt et al., 2025, under review) programs demonstrated positive impacts on how parents and SPs think, feel, and act related to FCS. In addition, there is evidence of positive and reciprocal effects on how 'separate' groups can learn together how to best work together (Cross et al., 2025, under review). Like all versions of the ENVISAGE program, the integrated iteration contains the same contemporary ideas about child health and development, including the ICF (World Health Organization, 2001) and the 'F-words' (Rosenbaum & Gorter, 2012). Using convenience sampling, participants (parents of children <10 years with developmental concerns (median age=4) and service partners) were recruited from a Canadian children's treatment centre. Surveys were administered before, during, and after the program that included Likert-scaled and open-ended questions that were analysed descriptively. Participants provided informed consent and surveys were anonymous. Participants emphasized the value of hearing from different perspectives during group discussions. However, recruitment challenges impacted feasibility, and the small sample size limited the study's generalizability. Findings informed a pilot longitudinal study at another children's treatment centre to assess 6-month outcomes on family empowerment, parenting confidence, and perceptions of FCS.

family-centred service, childhood-onset disability, parents, early intervention, partnership

Symposium Set E

13:00 – 14:20, Wednesday 27th August 2025

Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava

Symposium Set E1 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G103, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

APPROACHES TO ORGANISING LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ECE SETTINGS

Chaired by Katri Hansell, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Children's reflections on the linguistic and semiotic landscape of a language immersion preschool

Presenters
Katri Hansell, Åbo Akademi University, Finland
Maria Kvist, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

All authors
Katri Hansell, Åbo Akademi University, Finland
Maria Kvist, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The aim is to examine children's reflections on linguistic and semiotic landscape (LSL) of a language immersion preschool. The study builds on research in LSLs (Pakarinen et al., 2024; Pesch, 2021) in the context of language immersion (Björklund et al., 2016). LSL cover the visual learning environment, where language is used together with other modalities such as pictures (Pakarinen et al., 2024; Pesch, 2021). Early total immersion in the national languages in Finland is a multilingual programme starting in ECEC or preschool (Mård-Miettinen et al., 2022). The study is based on social constructivist paradigm, conducted as walking interviews (Fjeld and Giæver, 2024). We interviewed children and their reflections of the LSL. The interviews were video recorded and transcribed for thematical analysis. Research approval and informed consent has been provided on multiple levels; The study was permitted by the municipality, the children's guardians gave informed consent to participation, and the children were asked for permission to interview and film them. The data is pseudonymized to guarantee privacy. The immersion language, together with the children's first language, is predominant in the reflections. The immersion language is mentioned especially in relation to pedagogical activities and teachers' presence, and the first language in communications with other children and parents. The children focus on spoken language, even when asked about the languages visible in the physical learning environment. Increased understanding of the LSL can be utilized to create LSL that supports language use and learning in language immersion ECEC and preschool.

child perspective, language immersion, linguistic and semiotic landscape, multilingualism, walking interview

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Kindergarten leaders' support in organization of language learning

Presenters
Tiina Peterson, University of Tartu, Estonia

All authors
Tiina Peterson, University of Tartu, Estonia

Tiia Õun, Tallinn University, Estonia

The research aim of this study was to explore kindergarten leaders' assessments regarding the organization of language learning. In the implementation of multilingual education, Kirss et al. (2020) proposed a conceptual framework for analyzing and evaluating characteristics of multilingual education. Preschool leaders create a working culture in the kindergarten and support the professionalism of teachers (Peterson, 2023). In current study early childhood education is primarily presented through a contextual leadership perspective based to the Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological theory and describes the structural framework of the factors related to leadership (Hujala, 2013; Hujala et al, 2023). The study was based on a contextual approach to supporting and managing the child's learning and development environment. Data was collected during the 2023/2024 academic year from leaders (N=32), who participated in the pilot project "Professional Estonian-language teacher in kindergarten", using focus group interviews and a written survey. Principles such as honesty, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality were followed in the study. The study results suggest that, in organizing language learning, leaders prioritize supporting children's individuality, learning in small groups, and assessing children's development in collaboration with parents. The organization of analyzing educational processes, group discussions, reflections, and development activities related to planning learning and teaching were mentioned only to a very limited extent in the responses. The transition to Estonian-language education requires high-quality language instruction, teacher professionalism, leadership support, and the implementation of a comprehensive language learning system that promotes a cohesive value and cultural environment. This study primarily provided an overview of leaders' assessments.

early childhood education, leaders, teachers, parents, language learning

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Unlocking Early Literacy: Teachers' Perspectives on the Transformative Power of the Whole Language Approach in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Noviana Mustapa, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

All authors
Noviana Mustapa, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
Samihah Mahamud, Albukhary International University (AIU), Malaysia
Erie Siti Syarah, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
Siti Aisyah, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
Erna Risnawati, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
Muktia Pramitasari, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

The aim of this research is to explore teachers' perspectives on the impact of the whole language approach in early childhood education, focusing on how this methodology influences early literacy development. This study also seeks to understand the practical applications, challenges, and outcomes of implementing the whole language approach in early childhood settings. Recent research has examined the role of teacher agency and professional development in implementing the whole language approach. White et al. (2021) found that teachers have important role in enhancing the adaptation and innovation of whole language methods. This study is based on Piaget's and Vygotsky's constructivist learning theories which focus on social aspect of learning within the Zone of Proximal Development. This framework consists of several interconnected components: Whole Language Philosophy; Teacher Perspectiveson the impact of educators' beliefs and methodologies on literacy instruction; Early Literacy Development influenced by linguistic exposure and Classroom Environment. Paradigm: a constructivist paradigm

Methodology: A mixed method Methods: Questionnaire on whole language approach. Semi-Structured Interviews. Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation. The whole language approach in early childhood education focuses on integration of language learning with meaningful experiences and context-rich environments. Using the key themes of Immersion, Demonstration, Expectations, Responsibility, Approximation, and Feedback. The whole language approach in early childhood promotes a nurturing, engaging, and effective pathway for language development. By aligning practice and policy with the principles of the whole language approach, it can effectively support young children's natural language development, setting a strong foundation for lifelong literacy and communication skills.

early literacy, teachers' perspective, whole languange approach, early childhood, education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set E2 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G104, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND AGENCY; POLICY, PRACTICE AND PARTICIPATION

Chaired by Christine Parker, Independent researcher and writer, United Kingdom

Cross-Cultural Challenges to Children's Agency in ECEC: a comparative policy analysis in Ecuador, Spain, and Wales

Presenters
Gisselle Tur Porres, Swansea University, United Kingdom

All authors
Gisselle Tur Porres, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Michelle Brinn, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Hazel Acosta, UNAE, Ecuador
Juan Carlos Brito, UNAE, Ecuador
Virginia Gamez Ceruelo, UNAE, Ecuador Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Lauren Henderson, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Rubén Chao Garcia, Universidad Santiago de Compostela, Spain

This study analyses how policy frameworks in Ecuador, Spain, and Wales support young children's agency in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Drawing on childhood agency literature (James, 2009; Esser et al., 2016; Sutterlüty and Tisdall, 2019; Varpanen, 2019), this comparative study aligns with prior cross-country research (Mateos-Blanco et al., 2022). Using a children's rights lens (UNCRC, 1989; Lundy, 2007; Welty and Lundy, 2013), the study critiques dominant Ethnocentric/Eurocentric views (Fatyass, 2023). It adopts a relational understanding of agency as socially/culturally constructed (Biesta and Tedder, 2007; Baraldi, 2022), rather than an individual trait. The study follows a qualitative paradigm and reflects diverse perspectives embedded in policy documents. Documentary analysis serves as main data collection method, using interpretative approach, identifying cross-context patterns and conducting constant-comparative analysis of datasets (Cardno, 2018). The lens of documentary authors and stakeholders would be reflected in the documents for review:

- How is children's agency recognised in education policies?
- What challenges or barriers (bureaucratic/cultural/pedagogical) hinder the translation of policies into practice?

Aligned with EECERA ethical guidelines (Bertram et al., 2024), the analysis incorporates reflexivity and collaborative validation–sharing of analyses among co-researchers– to minimise bias. Policies across all three contexts recognise child agency but face structural and cultural barriers in practice. Tensions arise in balancing adult-led models with child autonomy, generating challenges in culturally diverse environments. Findings offer insights for

educators/policymakers/communities aiming to foster inclusive, culturally responsive education. Understanding the nuanced uptake of agency-focused policies can promote empowerment in teaching and learning.

children's agency, children's rights, cross-cultural approaches, minority groups, early childhood education and care (ECEC)

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A scoping review of child-centred approaches and organisational dimensions in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services

Presenters
Letizia Rota, University of Verona, Italy

All authors
Letizia Rota, University of Verona, Italy

The concept of child-centredness, a pedagogical imperative and key term in the European Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (European Commission, 2014), is frequently highlighted in ECEC service charters as a foundational value. This work investigates how this declared centrality manifests organisationally within educational contexts. This ongoing scoping review, part of a doctoral project, maps the existing literature on the relationship between child-centredness and the organisational dynamics of educational services. The study adopts Bronfenbrenner's (1986) bioecological perspective, considering an ecology of systems co-participating in organisational aspects that are integral to children's daily experiences. Morin's (2000) complexity theory allows for the central positioning not of an ideal child but of the multiple and diverse children's identities. Adopting an interpretative paradigm (Barroso and Sandelowski, 2007), the contribution identifies themes, gaps, and opportunities shaping this centrality organizationally.The scoping review extracted 252 articles from the British Education Index, Scopus, and ERIC databases; 49 duplicates were removed, leaving 203 for screening. To date, 44 relevant articles have been included in the review. This scoping review uses secondary data from three databases known for their scientific quality standards. The anticipated results encompass research on organisational, spatial, and temporal conditions enabling educational practices positioning multiple children's identities at the centre, each with their own interests and needs. This work prompts reflection on ECEC services' organisational aspects, aiming to create contexts where children recognise themselves and others as complex, with diverse interests and needs, fostering reciprocal recognition and a sense of community (Ceruti, 2018).

child-centred, ECEC services, organisational dimensions, educational practices, scoping review

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Theatre for Transformation: Exploring Child Agency and Resilience Through Participatory Research Theatre and Sustainability

Presenters
Ka Lee Carrie Ho, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

All authors
Ka Lee Carrie Ho, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

Young children often struggle to gasp resilience concepts due to their cognitive and emotional maturity, posing challenges for educators (Masten and Gewirtz, 2006). This study highlights a successful participatory research

theatre project in Hong Kong that promoted child agency and resilience through Sustainability Education. Participatory Research Theatre fosters child agency, resilience, and sustainability education (Osborne, 2024). Davis and Elliott (2014) emphasise young children as capable agents of change in sustainability education. This research used arts-based participatory theatre as a tool to effectively convey child resilience through sustainability. Drawing on Deleuze's concept of "becoming" (1995), this study highlights how participatory theatre fosters continuous transformation and new possibilities, allowing child actors and audiences to evolve and reshape their identities and understandings. This case study involved 300 participants in four acting and setting workshops, and four live performances, with feedback collected from 1,000 students. Using participatory methodology, children's voices were gathered through co-created script, videos, interactive performance sessions, questionnaire and leaf-pledges. The University Research Ethics Panel approved the research, parents/guardians and children provided consent before participating in the activities. 94% of participants reported a deeper understanding of sustainability beyond environmental concerns. Open-ended responses revealed increased awareness of social dimensions, including reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and fostering sustainable communities (SDG 11). This study demonstrate how participatory theatre effectively teaches child resilience through sustainability education, positioning children as active change agents. It provides insights for educators on using expressive arts to equip young learners with

child resilience, child agency, sustainable education, participatory theatre

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E3 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G113, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ECE SERVICES

Chaired by Miranda Lin, Illinois State University, United States

"It reminds you you're alive": Interactions between young children and older residents engaged in a co-located intergenerational program

Presenters
Sarah Young, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Lisa Murray, The University of Melbourne, Australia

All authors
Sarah Young, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Lisa Murray, The University of Melbourne, Australia

This research aimed to identify the learning and social benefits for children and residents participating in a co-located intergenerational program (IGP), with a focus on the quality of interactions between participants. Research has documented the social, civic and functional benefits of IGPs (e.g., Golenko et al., 2020). Evidence points to prosocial effects for children, but less is known about the detail of interactions and the learning opportunities for children (Jarrott et al., 2022). This project contributes to IGP research by paying closer attention to intergenerational interactions and the benefits for both children and residents. The conceptual framework centres on social capital theory which pays attention to the relationships and connections people form within and between groups (Lin, 2001). Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, this mixed-methods project (including validated measurement scales, interviews and surveys) used an intrinsic case study design (Creswell and Poth, 2023). The participants included 19 children (3–5-year-olds) and families, 7 residents, and 8 staff. Participation was voluntary. Consent forms, plain language statements, and oral explanations were provided to residents, staff, and children's families. Ongoing assent was negotiated with children. Findings demonstrate the wellbeing and engagement of children and residents were well supported across activities, with adult-child interactions characterised by high levels of emotional support and

intergenerational respect. The findings identified the personal impact on participants and the implementation processes that may support staff in delivering engaging IGPs that support children's learning.

intergenerational programs, adult-child interactions, relational pedagogy, young children, intergenerational respect

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Children Engage in Community Service Projects with College Students: A Case Study

Presenters
Miranda Lin, Illinois State University, United States

All authors
Miranda Lin, Illinois State University, United States

This study explores how service and collaboration with college students while creating service projects are perceived by children and preservice teachers. Research questions constructed for this study are: 1) What is service in children's eyes, and 2) What do preservice teachers perceive children learn during the process? The positive outcomes for students who participate in service-learning have been documented (e.g., Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020), as participating in community service projects can be transformative for children. The community service experiences help children see the benefits of positively impacting their community. It also gives them a sense of gratitude and humility. Service learning as a pedagogy has been deemed a high-impact practice in education at all levels for decades (Kaye, 2010). However, research on service-learning in children or at the primary school level is limited in the literature, even though several investigations of service-learning in early education have emerged (e.g., Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020). 25 preservice teachers and 37 children were divided into five groups to create a service project that they believed would benefit their community. Data were collected from students' reflections and in-person debriefings. IRB approval was granted and participants signed consent before the study was carried out. The study's findings indicate that children learned to be creative, voice their opinions, and develop a sense of giving back, teamwork, and empathy. Children were perceived to be capable of constructing knowledge and executing tasks. Children need to be viewed as capable agents and encouraged to collaborate with college students to benefit their communities.

collaboration, service-learning, civic responsibility, teacher education, empathy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Be together or bring together? - An analysis of the concept of togetherness and community

Presenters
Marit Frimannslund, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway

All authors
Marit Frimannslund, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway

This paper aims to examine how community is manifested in the Norwegian Framework Plan for Kindergartens, focusing on its impact on inclusive policies and practices (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). The research question is: How is the concept "fellesskap" framed in the Norwegian Framework Plan for Kindergartens? Central to Norwegian society, equality is posited by Gullestad (1985) as a determinant of community boundaries, which become increasingly indistinct in the presence of inequality. Løkken (1996) observes that toddlers in kindergartens naturally form peer communities through egalitarian interactions, underscoring the role of equality in fostering community.

Studies show that fostering a sense of community among children in diverse groups is challenging (Einarsdottir and Ólafsdóttir, 2023; Emilson and Eek-Karlsson, 2022). In the context of contemporary inequality, this study investigates the concept of fellesskap in the Framework Plan. The study is grounded in theories of community, particularly drawing on Tjora (2018), and employs thematic analysis methods (Braun and Clarke, 2022) to explore the concept of community. This qualitative document analysis is part of an ongoing PhD-project. To ensure knowledge from multiple perspectives, the curriculum context and intention is framed in the analysis. Utilizing thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022), findings reveal that fellesskap is ambiguously represented, encompassing both passive group inclusion and active participation. These dual aspects are further analyzed through Tjora's (2018) perspectives on community, offering a multifaceted view of togetherness. By conceptualizing community, this research aims to deepen understanding of inclusive policies and practices within ECEC systems, informing strategies that embrace the complexity of community building in kindergartens.

diversity, community, togetherness, ECEC, curriculum

Symposium Set E4 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G114, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) ADVANCING COMPUTATIONAL LITERACY SKILLS IN SLOVENIA

Chaired by Marta Licardo, University of Maribor, Slovenia

Exploring Factors Shaping Early Childhood Educators' Interest and Perceived Barriers

Presenters
Marusa Laure, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education, Slovenia
Boštjan Šumak, University of Maribor, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Slovenia

All authors
Marusa Laure, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education, Slovenia
Boštjan Šumak, University of Maribor, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Slovenia
Adriana Anžel, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education, Slovenia
Saša Grašič, University of Maribor, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Slovenia

This study examines factors shaping early childhood educators' interest in implementing digital literacy skills through unplugged activities and analyzes how experiences and contextual conditions contribute to perceived barriers in practice. This study builds on research highlighting the benefits of introducing digital literacy skills in early childhood (Brodnik et al., 2021; Vahrenhold et al., 2017; Bers, 2020), with limited research, focused on the practical challenges of implementation. The study is based on frameworks of digital literacy (Bers, 2018) and computational thinking (Wing, 2006), emphasizing algorithmic thinking, problem-solving, and logic as core competencies, independent of digital technologies. A quantitative survey was conducted with 129 early childhood educators participating in the RINko project. The questionnaire examined their experience with teaching computational literacy skills, interests, perceived barriers, and contextual factors. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analyses. Ethical considerations included informed consent, anonymization of responses, and the voluntary nature of participation. Special attention was paid to safeguarding participants' autonomy and confidentiality, in alignment with the EECERA Ethical Code (2024). The findings indicate that perceived barriers are strongly associated with lower levels of interest in digital literacy skills. Educators with relevant experience reported higher interest and fewer perceived barriers. Organisational conditions and access to appropriate materials also emerged as significant factors. Findings suggest the need to strengthen professional support, provide adequate resources, and develop targeted training to facilitate the introduction of unplugged digital literacy skills in early childhood education.

digital literacy skills, computational thinking, unplugged activities, early childhood education, implementation barriers

Empowering Educators in Developing Computational Thinking Competencies in Early Education

Presenters
Maja Pušnik, University of Maribor, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Slovenia

All authors
Maja Pušnik, University of Maribor, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Slovenia
Špela Pučko, University of Maribor, Slovenia
Katja Kous, University of Maribor, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Slovenia

This study evaluates a training program aimed at strengthening preschool teachers' competencies in teaching computing literacy skills. It explores the use of unplugged activities, their impact on educators' confidence, and the integration of computing in early childhood education. We build on existing research (systematically summarized by Undheim, 2021), emphasizing the importance of integrating computing literacy skills into early education without the use of computer devices. It highlights how interactive learning fosters critical thinking and problem-solving, while addressing the gap in teacher competencies for effectively implementing this in classrooms. This study is guided by frameworks of early childhood computing education (Su et al., 2023) and computational thinking (Zeng et al., 2023), including algorithmic thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration for a program that equipping educators to integrate computational thinking into early education. A mixed-methods approach to assess the training program for preschool teachers will be employed. A survey among 51 preschool teachers who worked with children using innovative approaches was used to measure their confidence, challenges, and experiences. We follow ethical guidelines to protect participants' rights and privacy. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity, following institutional ethical standards, in alignment with the EECERA Ethical Code (2024). The study found the training program boosted teachers' confidence in teaching computing literacy skills. Participants appreciated the unplugged approach. The findings highlight the need for professional development for teachers to integrate computational thinking into early education. Policymakers should prioritize computing education in curricula, providing training for educators to support learning and overcome barriers.

computational thinking, early childhood education, teacher training, programming, interactive learning

The Role of Innovative Physical Learning Environments

Presenters
Miha Cojhter, Andragoški zavod Ljudska univerza velenje, Slovenia

All authors
Miha Cojhter, Andragoški zavod Ljudska univerza velenje, Slovenia

This study explores how physical, innovative learning environments contribute to digital literacy skills in Slovenia. It examines how flexible, interactive spaces foster engagement, collaboration, and skill comprehension through unplugged, hands-on, interdisciplinary activities. Interactive stations prompt learners to solve real-world challenges collaboratively through exploration, experimentation, and peer support. The study also considers how spatial design influences learning by focusing on problem-solving while addressing educators' challenges. This study based on research highlighting the importance of digital literacy for problem-solving and computational thinking (Thies and Vahrenhold, 2013; Fidai et al., 2020). Bers (2020) emphasizes play-based, developmentally appropriate approaches, while Brackmann et al. (2017) show cognitive benefits from integrating digital literacy. Recent work (Haddad and Draxler, n.d.; Hodges et al., 2020) underscores the importance of inclusive, collaborative spaces, yet the role of

physical environments in supporting digital literacy remains underexamined. Grounded in experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and digital literacy frameworks (Bers, 2018), this study examines how spatial design, pedagogy, and algorithmic thinking intersect. Mixed-methods design: observations, questionnaires, and performance tasks. Sample: 1,106 participants from nine primary schools (800 pupils aged 6-15 (of which 380 aged 6–8), two specialized groups from CVIU Velenje, 37 teachers, and 10 teaching assistants. Participants provided informed consent, with data protection and inclusive participation observed in accordance with the EECERA Ethical Code (2024). Results show that innovative environments boost motivation, collaboration, digital literacy, and teacher-student interaction. This study emphasizes the role of inclusive, well-designed spaces in fostering digital literacy, offering insights for educators and policymakers to enhance learning.

digital skills, interactive learning spaces, interdisciplinary activities, computational thinking, early childhood

Symposium Set E5 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G115, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) PERSPECTIVES ON ISRAELI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS COPING WITH THE IRON SWORDS WAR

Chaired by David Brody, Orot Academic College, Israel

Pedagogies of early childhood educators in the shadow of war

Presenters
David Brody, Orot Academic College, Israel
Sharon Kaplan, Efrata Academic College, Israel

All authors
David Brody, Orot Academic College, Israel
Sharon Kaplan, Efrata Academic College, Israel

This research identifies kindergarten teachers’ emotional and professional responses to war, examining their pedagogic adaptations. Research on teachers in wartime reveals adaptation and resilience. Teachers' personal accomplishment and faith related to resilience (Sharafian, 2023). Brody and Baum (2007) reported on teachers excluding war talk to promote sense of security and others encouraging open discussion. Nissim and Naifels (2024) found safety concerns influencing wartime practice. Young children may be the most vulnerable population in wartime (Myers-Walls, 2018). Their psychological responses to war depend on adult behavior (Shaw, 2003). Young children exhibit extended grieving for a parent killed in action (Oglio-Taverner, 2021). Teacher mediation of children's responses is very relevant. Seven veteran Israeli kindergarten teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured format. Transcripts were analyzed thematically (Corbin, 2017). Themes were drawn from data instead of using a-priori categories. Teachers' identity and work context was suppressed. Efrata Academic College Ethics Committee granted approval. Teachers were not asked to tell about their war-shock, rather they were asked to speak about their experiences in an unstructured manner. Teachers moved through four stages: war shock, adaptation and accommodation, routine, and closure. In the routine stage, they questioned pre-war pedagogies, choosing to respond to children's concerns both spontaneously and with planning. They established a safe space for children to express their trauma through play and discourse. They also used faith-based activities such as group prayer, song and theological reassurance. Support for teachers in wartime should include sensitivity towards teachers' own trauma, respect for their agency, and provision of individual and peer networks.

trauma, war, young children, teachers, pedagogy

The Role of Community Among Kindergarten Teachers in Gaza Border Kibbutzim Since October 7th

Presenters
Shulamit Hoshen-Manzura, Michlalah Jerusalem College, Israel

All authors
Shulamit Hoshen-Manzura, Michlalah Jerusalem College, Israel
Sigal Achituv, Oranim College of Education, Israel

This research explores how kindergarten teachers (KTs) in Gaza border Kibbutzim have experienced the role of community since October 7th. Family and community are meaningful forces that affect children's development (Crawford, 2020). Community-based ECEC programs showed better outcomes than programs isolating children from their broader community (Winter et al., 2007). Kibbutzim maintain holistic connection between kindergartens and community (Dror, 2021). Research shows Israeli KTs develop resilience strategies during prolonged emergencies (Brody & Baum, 2007). In comparison with global studies on KT's community perceptions (Albaiz and Ernest 2021), kibbutzim educators viewed community as fundamental, integrating children into community life (Achituv et al., 2025). A qualitative paradigm employed narrative semi-structured interviews (Clandinin, 2022). 10 KTs who worked with evacuated Gaza border kibbutzim participated. Transcripts were analyzed thematically using grounded theory (Corbin, 2017). Anonymity was achieved and contextual identity was suppressed. Oranim College Ethics Committee granted approval. During October 7th, KTs maintained contact with children despite personal challenges. Throughout Israel-Hamas war, community resilience enabled quick reopening of evacuated kindergartens, preserving traditions that provided confidence. Drawing on professional knowledge and intuition, Kts navigated relationships between the evacuated community and their new environment. Some chose to distance children from the traumatized community, diverging from kibbutz communal values. In times of crisis the value of community serves as an anchor for educational frameworks, contributing to children's resilience. The study spotlights the unique role of kibbutz KTs during emergency situations.

October 7th events, Israel-Hamas war, kindergarten teachers in Gaza border Kibbutzim, kindergarten-community relations, trauma and resilience

Safe Educational and Therapeutic Spaces for as a Response to Primary Trauma in Israel

Presenters
Yaara Shilo, Efrata Academic College, Israel

All authors
Yaara Shilo, Efrata Academic College, Israel
Yan Serdtse, Early Starters International, Israel
Yulie Khromchenco, Early Starters International, Israel

This study, conducted in Israel during the Iron Swords War, examines the effectiveness of safe spaces in supporting young children in crisis settings, assessing impact on socioemotional development and resilience. The study builds on research related to child-friendly spaces, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, Winnicott’s transitional space, and resilience in early childhood Creation of safe spaces in child development theory and understanding of trauma responses. is grounded in educational and therapeutic approaches. Social-emotional learning principles assess the role of structured environments in fostering resilience. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory emphasizes interconnections of family, community, and environment, supporting the role of structured safe spaces for resilience This qualitative study is based on observations in safe spaces established by Early Starters International in crisis-affected areas, using two tools: Childhood Perspectives and Social Skills Improvement System Children’s emotional-social behaviors were observed without reference to their identity. Data will be analyzed statistically, obviating personal information. Caregivers collected the data, providing an additional level of anonymity for participants. Approval was granted by the Ethics Committee of Efrata Academic College. Data were collected from

two cities attacked in the war in southern Israel through professional staff operating the children's space. Preliminary findings suggest that safe spaces provide stability, enhance socio-emotional development, and build resilience. Further analysis will explore the impact of daily routines, age-appropriate activities, and nurturing adult presence The findings will inform the design of safe spaces in humanitarian crises, and encourage their integration into relief and disaster relief efforts to support children's long-term wellbeing.

safe spaces, recovery from trauma, resilience, socio-emotional development, ecological systems theory

Symposium Set E6 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G117, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

EXPLORING APPROACHES TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Mandy Cuttler, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

Inclusive Leadership in Maltese Childcare Centres: Strategies, Challenges, and Implications for Equity and Inclusion

Presenters
Charmaine Bonello, University of Malta, Malta
Jonathan Borg, University of Malta, Malta

All authors
Charmaine Bonello, University of Malta, Malta
Jonathan Borg, University of Malta, Malta

This study explores the strategies and practices employed by childcare centre managers in Malta to foster inclusive leadership, as well as the challenges they face in implementing and sustaining equitable practices. While inclusion has traditionally been linked to special educational needs, inclusive leadership goes further, addressing systemic inequities across diverse stakeholder groups (Kuknor and Bhattacharya, 2020). With growing diversity in childcare settings, fostering inclusion is a critical challenge for senior leaders (European Commission, 2024). This research adopts an Inclusive Leadership Theory framework (Carmeli et al., 2010), which highlights openness, accessibility, and availability as key leadership attributes that foster inclusion. It offers a broader lens to explore how leaders shape inclusive environments through their behaviours, policies, and organisational structures, enabling a more in-depth analysis of how childcare centre managers promote inclusivity. The qualitative study involved two focus group discussions with childcare centre managers from both state and privately owned centres providing services for children aged 0–3 in Malta. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Malta, and participants signed confidentiality agreements to ensure anonymity, with pseudonyms assigned accordingly. Findings illuminate how inclusive leadership is enacted in the Maltese childcare sector, highlighting both the efforts and challenges encountered by managers in creating equitable environments. This study offers insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, presenting recommendations to strengthen inclusive leadership at the foundational level of the education system. By addressing leadership and inclusion gaps, this research contributes to the development of equitable, sustainable practices in early childhood education and care.

inclusive leadership, Malta, early years leadership, childcare centre managers, inclusion

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exploring variation in Professional Development Investments in Swedish preschool

Presenters
Anne Lillvist, Mälardalen University, Sweden

All authors
Panagiota Nasiopoulou, Södertörn University, Sweden
Anne Lillvist, Mälardalen University, Sweden
Pia Williams, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Jonna Larsson, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

The paper investigates the variation in educators' Professional Development (PD) provision and its association with preschool quality. Previous research suggests that early childhood education and care (ECEC) educators' PD is crucial for enhancing preschool quality (Egert et al., 2018; Siraj et al., 2019). However, there is a lack of consensus regarding the content, context, design, and delivery of PD and its association with preschool quality (Brunsek et al., 2020). The project is informed by the ecological system theory in which the ECEC profession is seen as intertwined in various systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) The study employs a quantitative research paradigm. A web-based survey was designed and pilot tested by the researchers. From a nationally representative sample, 289 preschool principals completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 21 %. Descriptive analyses and latent CLASS analysis were conducted to identify potential diversity in educators' PD provision and identify PD profiles. The research project has been approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (dnr 2024-03379-01) and follows the Swedish Research Council's guidelines, ensuring informed consent from participants. Ethical considerations are continuously discussed to ensure a safe and secure context. Preliminary findings highlight variation in the content and extent of PD initiatives as well as challenges in finding relevant PD initiatives to meet the diverse professional needs of the entire work team and time to participate. A prioritized focus for PD initiatives is supporting children with different needs. Implications are related to educators' need for targeted PD initiatives and preschool quality investments.

professional development, preschool quality, Ecological Systems Theory, survey methodology,

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Organisational Investment in Education: Utilising Work-Integrated Degrees to Enhance Inclusion in Early Years Academia

Presenters
Mandy Cuttler, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom
Bobbi-Jo Reilly, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

All authors
Mandy Cuttler, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom
Bobbi-Jo Reilly, London Institute of Early Years, United Kingdom

This study investigates how employer-led, work-integrated ECE degrees enable early years practitioners (EYPs) to access higher education (HE). Despite a well-established link between EYPs qualifications and quality provision (Sylva et al., 2004) the number of graduate EYPs in England has declined steadily. ECE undergraduates are predominantly mature, part-time students who may face barriers to accessing HE, including challenges balancing studying with work and family responsibilities (Campbell-Barr et al., 2020). Research suggests that work-integrated degrees can widen participation in HE (Doolan et al., 2013), with support services key to enabling mature students to achieve good academic outcomes (Kaldi and Griffiths, 2011). Drawing on theories of professional identity (Kendall et al., 2012) and work-integrated learning (Heagney and Benson 2017), the research explores how these programmes overcome barriers faced by ECE students. The research is a case study framed within a participative praxeological paradigm (Pascal et al., 2012). Data was collected through interviews with 7 EYPs completing a work-integrated degree, and common themes identified through thematic analysis. Researchers adhered to the EECERA Ethical Code (2024); power dynamics between the researcher and participants were considered, and informed consent sought

with participants made aware of their right to withdraw without impacting their studies. Pseudonyms are used and identifying details omitted to preserve anonymity. Findings reveal that students' familiarity with their tutors and perceived support from their employers contributed to their decision to undertake further study. The study recommends that thoughtfully structured work-integrated degree programmes be considered by policy makers as a means to enabling EYPs to engage in HE.

workforce, professionalism, higher education, qualifications, widening-participation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set E7 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G118, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

PLAY AND PARTICIPATION

Chaired by Niklas Pramling, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Fostering inclusive play and literacy practices in Finnish ECEC: A relational approach

Presenters
Alexandra Nordström, University of Helsinki, Finland

All authors
Alexandra Nordström, University of Helsinki, Finland
Gunilla Holm, University of Helsinki, Finland
Jan-Erik Mansikka, University of Helsinki, Finland
Monica Londen, University of Helsinki, Finland
Maria Saloranta, University of Helsinki, Finland

This paper investigates inclusion and exclusion in play and literacy practices within Finnish ECEC through a relational approach. We focus on the interactions among children and educators within social and material literacy environments. In the Finnish ECEC context, play is crucial for children's learning, development, and wellbeing. However, we argue that play is deeply entangled with and co-creates the social and material conditions within which children might include and exclude others. Previous research highlights the dynamic nature of children's negotiations about participation, rules, and roles in play (Boldermo, 2020; Skoglund, 2020). Additionally, studies have shown that children include and exclude others based on gender, language, and other differences (Mansikka et al.,2024). A relational ontology emphasises the interconnectedness of entities and the importance of affective and embodied interactions, underscoring the importance of understanding the intricate and dynamic relationships among children, adults, and materials in ECEC (Murris and Osgood, 2022; Hackett, 2021). Thematic analysis is used to analyse empirical data from the ALLBINK project, which explores inclusion and exclusion in 18 Swedish-speaking ECEC centers in Finland through participant observations and staff interviews. Ethical considerations address the power dynamics and the role of researchers as knowledge producers. Preliminary findings highlight the role of educators and approaches that integrate materials, spaces, and atmospheres in fostering inclusive practices. The study identifies challenges to achieving inclusive play and literacy practices. Examining young children's play and literacy practices through a relational lens highlights the use of space, resources, and embodied interactions, and underscores the need for ongoing educator training and integrating relational approaches into the curriculum to promote inclusivity.

play, literacy practices, inclusion, exclusion

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Adults and children engaging together in play: Implications for practice in ECEC

Presenters
Niklas Pramling, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Ann Farrell, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Malin Nilsen, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

All authors
Niklas Pramling, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Ann Farrell, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Cecilia Wallerstedt, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Malin Nilsen, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

The research aims to reveal the active participation of adults and children in play. Previous work, Play-Responsive Early Childhood Education and Care (PRECEC) (Pramling et al., 2019), underpins the theorization of adults and children mutually engaging together in play. Conceptual understandings of play (cf. van Oers, 2014) contrast the notion of play as an 'adult-free zone' and affirm that adults may be participants 'in' play and contributors 'to' play. The paradigm for participation in play employs a range of research methods to illuminate what form adult participation may take in playing with children, what patterns of communication emerge, and how participation and narratives are made visible (Pramling et al., 2024). Informed voluntary consent and active participation underpin the ethical conduct of the examples of research reported in the symposium. Findings from studies addressed in the symposium reveal affordances for adults and children engaging together in play, providing new insights into what happens when adults play with children, and what are the potentials, consequences, challenges of, or resistances to doing so. Implications of this corpus of empirical research include reconsideration of how adults engage with children in play in ECEC and the provisions required of ECEC to cater for their mutual engagement in play.

play, adults in play, play research, ECEC, international research

Adults' active play support can promote children's social-emotional skills and peer relations

Presenters
Sonja Perren, University of Konstanz, Switzerland

All authors
Sonja Perren, University of Konstanz, Switzerland
Isabelle Kalkusch, University of Teacher Education in Special Needs, Zurich, Switzerland

The study aims to investigate whether adults' involvement in social pretend play has a positive impact on preschool children's social development. The study is based on former work suggesting that pretend play and especially a high pretend play quality might be a driver for children's social, language and cognitive development (Bodrova et al., 2013; Elkonin, 2005, Vygotsky, 1978). Our research is based on empirical studies and co-constructive theories showing that adults' emotional and learning support is important for children's outcomes in early education settings (Vygotsky, 1978, Hoefkens et al., 2023). However, the role of adults in children's play is still debated. We adopted a quantitative experimental approach. We conducted a controlled intervention study with a pre-, post-test, and follow-up design on pretend play tutoring and children's social development. The study sample consisted of 27 Swiss play groups with N=215 three- to four-year-old children, who were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions: Pretend play tutoring, provision of role play material, or usual interaction. Research follows relevant ethical guidelines (national, university's). Active consent of caregivers and parents and processual consent from children were obtained. The results showed that taking an active role in children's pretend play improved the quality of their play compared to solely providing play materials or usual interaction. This ultimately enhanced children's

social skills and peer relation quality. The study identified effective educational strategies to improve children's competences. It has practical implications for the design of child-centered learning environments that encourage peer interactions and social development.

social pretend play, peer relations, immigrant children, language development, adult support

Symposium Set E8 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G127, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) USING REALIST ACTION AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO DEVELOP A MINDFUL PEDAGOGY TO SUPPORT SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

Chaired by Kate Russell, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

How Realist and Participatory Approaches Support a Mindful Pedagogy

Presenters
Eleanor Milligan, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom
Lois Ferguson, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

All authors
Eleanor Milligan, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom
Lois Ferguson, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom
Kate Russell, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom
Kimberley Bartholomew, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

How does a realist and participatory approach support development of an inclusive mindful pedagogy? Research on mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in early years (EY) highlights multiple benefits for children and practitioners (Culotta et al., 2024; Thierry et al., 2016; Flook et al., 2015). However, MBIs face challenges regarding feasibility, inclusivity, and sustainability (Holt et al., 2022), following prescriptive formats overlooking participant needs. Practitioners may lack agency, training, or feel overwhelmed by implementation demands. MBIs do not often consider children's diverse needs, resulting in ineffective outcomes. A realist approach explores how, why, for whom, and under what conditions programmes work, thereby supporting more effective programme developments (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Positioned within a realist paradigm, realist methodology combines evidence synthesis, expert consultations, and programme testing, obtaining multiple perspectives. This enables authentic understanding of EY contexts and guides the development of a mindful pedagogy. The participatory approach prioritises stakeholder needs by collaborating with 11 EY practitioners, 10 EY academics and 1 mindfulness expert to design, implement and evaluate the programme. A realist and participatory approach addresses accessibility and inclusivity concerns by centering multiple perspectives at all stages (e.g. EY experts, child and practitioner voices shape <u>research design and programme development). To address practitioner burden, professional knowledge on appropriate data collection methods was gained to inform programme development. An initial programme theory was generated to support the development of a mindfulness programme responsive to diverse needs and contexts. This approach fosters ethical, inclusive, and accessible participation in research for children and practitioners.

realist methodology, mindfulness, participatory, inclusive

The Little Minds Pedagogy: From Doing Mindfulness to Being Mindful

Presenters
Kate Russell, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

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How can we develop a mindful pedagogy which enables practitioners to develop speech, language and communication (SLC) in young children? Mindfulness can improve wellbeing through emotional regulation, socio-emotional growth, and conflict resolution (Holt et al., 2022). Mindfulness can support emotional language development, enhancing communication skills between children, and between children and adults (Thierry et al., 2016). Less is known about embedding a mindful approach vs experiencing a single mindful task. Realist methodologies ensure interventions are informed by what works, for whom, when and how (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Mindfulness programme design should maintain congruence to core mindful principles whilst aligning to individualised setting needs (Crane et al., 2017). Positioned within realist paradigm, realist methodology combines evidence synthesis, expert consultations, and programme testing. 11 EY practitioners, 10 EY academics and 1 mindfulness expert were selected to collaborate on design, implementation and evaluation strategies. Developing mindful awareness can impact on practitioner wellbeing which was mitigated by transparency during training and provision for ongoing self-care support. Mindful practices were responsive/inclusive of children's needs. Parental/carer awareness and consent for approaches taken were sought and ongoing child assent engaged in through a narrative story to explain research. Ongoing researcher support provided practitioners access to guidance throughout to ensure confidence. Mindful pedagogy enables practitioners to model mindful approaches to everyday interactions, creating opportunities for children to learn from this. Practitioners found it beneficial to wellbeing and more meaningful engagement with children. Mindful approaches allow for inclusive and diversity focused approaches adapting pedagogy to individual needs and settings.

mindfulness, pedagogy, speech, language and communication, practitioner wellbeing

The Little Minds Pedagogy: Findings from Two Educational Settings

Presenters
Kimberley Bartholomew, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

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How, why, for whom, and under what circumstances does a mindful pedagogy support the development of children's speech, language and communication (SLC)? Mindfulness supports the development of executive functioning (EF) (Wood et al., 2017), and EF is associated with SLC (Bruce & Bell, 2023). Less is known about EF as a mechanism linking mindfulness to SLC. The impact of mindfulness on emotion knowledge (EK), a correlate of both EF and SLC (Tang et al., 2021), is also under-researched. Realist action research involves practitioners trialling potential solutions to problems to evaluate how, why, for whom, and under what conditions programmes work (Westhorp et al., 2016). Positioned within a realist paradigm, this study adopted a multiple case study methodology to inform the implementation and ongoing evaluation of a mindful pedagogy. Ten children from two early years settings were observed by practitioners across a 10-week period. Pre and post measures of EF, EK, and SLC were also collected. Consideration during the purposive sampling of the focus children was important to promote inclusion and avoid the adoption of a deficit model. Child assent was gained before each voluntary data collection task. Diverse data collection methods were used to mitigate biases present in many language measurement tools (Polišenska et al.,

2020). Findings examining the impact of the mindful pedagogy on EF, EK, and SLC across the 10 children will be discussed during the presentation alongside practitioner observations. Preliminary findings suggest that embedding a mindful approach can support SLC development in young children.

mindfulness pedagogy, realist action research, speech, language and communication, executive functioning, emotion knowledge.

Symposium Set E9 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G210, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

IMPACT OF COVID ON CHILD AND PARENT WELLBEING

Chaired by Susanne Kuger, Deutsches Jugendinstitut/ German Youth Institute, Germany

Post Covid 19: Curricular Implications of Infant Preparedness for school.

Presenters
Anne Horan, INTO, Ireland

All authors
Anne Horan, INTO, Ireland

“What are the challenges teachers face when working with Junior Infants following the Covid 19 pandemic?” During the COVID 19 pandemic, children missed the social, emotional and cognitive development usually experienced during interactions in Early Years schooling (Spiteri, 2021; Timmons et al., 2021; Kelly Gallagher-MacKay et al., 2021; Barnados, 2020b; Unicef, 2020; 2021, WHO, 2020). Preparedness for school of Junior Infants in Ireland is considered. (Aistear, 2024; PLC, 2019; PMC, 2023). The theoretical framework draws upon theories of Curriculum Implementation (Tikkanen et al., 2020; Fullan, 2016; NCCA, 2023) and discussions on learning in early childhood settings post Covid-19 (Barnados, 2020b; Aistear, 2024). The study was conducted within a social constructivist paradigm (Robson, 2011; 2018; Crotty, 2015). Using a qualitative approach, semi structured interviews were conducted with 10 Irish Primary school teachers. Braun and Clarkes Thematic analysis was used. Ethical approval was granted by the Mary Immaculate College Research Committee. Care was taken to ensure informed consent was given, maintaining confidentiality of the participants throughout the analysis through pseudonyms The research indicates that resulting from the COVID -19 pandemic, a number of Junior Infants in the 2024/25 academic year are not displaying school readiness in areas such as language, wellbeing, social skills. Education systems must become more flexible to mitigate the educational challenges faced by this cohort of children. Recommendations are made to provide multidisciplinary therapeutic services in schools, to employ educational recovery strategies such as curriculum adaption and accelerated learning programmes such as CLASS hours (extra teaching hours provided in Ireland to target groups affected by school closures).

Covid -19, infants, language, socialisation, wellbeing

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Preschool out of reach: Parental experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic

Presenters
Björn Rúnar Egilsson, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Björn Rúnar Egilsson, University of Iceland, Iceland

The aim of this study is to explore parental perspectives of preschool operations in Iceland during Covid-19. Previous research has highlighted significant impacts on parental experiences during the pandemic. Marschall et al. (2022) reported that disease control procedures hampered parent-educator collaboration. Qvortrup and Lomholt (2022) noted that parents experienced a decrease in communication with educators and other families. This study draws on Bronfenbrenner and Morris's ecological perspectives (2006) to understand the complex interactions between parents, children, and preschool environments. Additionally, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R) was used to assess the quality of educator-parent relations. The research was conducted using qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews with 13 parents of children enrolled in preschool during the pandemic. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was employed to analyze the data. Participants were selected based on their children's enrollment in preschool during the pandemic and their willingness to share their experiences. They were informed of their right to refrain from answering specific questions and to suspend the interview if needed. Informed consent was obtained, and pseudonyms were used during transcription and analysis to ensure confidentiality. Strict infection control measures and partial closures strongly influenced parental perceptions of preschool. Parents sensed a drop in relational and operational quality. Many were denied entry to the premises and reported a sharp decrease in communication with educators and other families. However, lockdowns provided families with opportunities to strengthen bonds between parents and children. Preschools need a resilient and flexible communication strategy that maintains educator-parent relations in unforeseen circumstances.

ECEC, preschool, parents, communications, Covid-19

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Unexpected Daycare Closures and Family Wellbeing: From Pandemic Disruptions to Present-Day Impacts

Presenters
Susanne Kuger, Deutsches Jugendinstitut/ German Youth Institute, Germany

All authors
Susanne Kuger, Deutsches Jugendinstitut/ German Youth Institute, Germany
Franz Neuberger, Deutsches Jugendinstitut/ German Youth Institute, Germany
Mariana Grgic, Deutsches Jugendinstitut/ German Youth Institute, Germany
Johannes Wieschke, Deutsches Jugendinstitut/ German Youth Institute, Germany

We analyze the impact of ECEC closures on family wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic and daycare closures have significantly affected children's and mothers' wellbeing. Stable high quality childcare is essential for children's social-emotional, and cognitive development (Anders and Oppermann, 2024) and helps parents balance work and family. Disruptions create family stress and uncertainty, impacting families (Conger et al., 1992). Using data from the German Youth Institute's Child Care Study (2023, n≈12,000) and the KiTa-Register (weekly surveys of ~4,850 daycare centers) we apply regression and causal forest methods. Maternal wellbeing is assessed using the WHO-5 Index, while children's quality of life is measured via the KINDL questionnaire. The work adheres to ethical standards, particularly regarding participant's informed consent. Findings show significant negative effects of daycare closures on mothers and children. The most pronounced effects appear among single mothers with high weekly childcare hours and higher-income mothers with extensive childcare needs. Grandparental support alleviates maternal stress but benefits children only during short closures. Higher-income children with limited childcare hours show greater resilience to extended disruptions. While pandemic-related closures had limited long-term effects, recent closures strongly impact children's daycare-related wellbeing. Additionally, regions with fewer pandemic-era restrictions now experience more closures, suggesting cumulative staff burden effects. These findings underscore the importance of reliable childcare as a crucial aspect of institutional quality that should be central to policy discussions. Ensuring

stable childcare access can mitigate the negative consequences of disruptions for both children and parents. Reliable daycare services should be considered a key dimension of institutional quality.

Quality, child wellbeing, maternal wellbeing, daycare closures, pandemic follow-up

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E10 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G211, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

METHODS TO DEVELOP INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Chaired by Sivi Harkoma, University of Helsinki, Finland

Emotional availability intervention in the light on inclusive operating culture and practices

Presenters
Sivi Harkoma, University of Helsinki, Finland

All authors
Sivi Harkoma, University of Helsinki, Finland
Mari Saha, Tampere University, Finland
Eira Niska, University of Helsinki, Finland
Nina Sajaniemi, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

The purpose of the study was to investigate how pedagogical intervention can be used to develop an inclusive operating culture in ECEC. Previous studies about emotional availability of ECEC staff are used in the synthesis to examine practices and outcomes of the intervention from an inclusive perspective (Harkoma et al., 2022; 2021). Inclusion is a continuous process that focuses on the presence, participation and achievement of all children and aims to combat exclusion (Ainscow et al., 2006). The studies included children (first study 136; second study 264) and staff (first study 64; second study 61) from 24 groups in 16 ECEC centres in Finland. Study participation was voluntary. Video observations (Emotional Availability Scales) for staff-child interaction were used in the studies. Ecosystem Model of Inclusive ECE is used in the secondary analyses to examine practices and outcomes of the intervention (European agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017). The study was approved by the Ethics Committee on Human Studies (University of Helsinki), and consent forms were received from children's parents and staff. Children's ongoing assent to participate in the study was ensured by observing their behavior during the filming. The synthesis provides new insights into how pedagogical intervention can be used to develop an inclusive operating culture in ECEC. The focus is on the group interactions and supporting the participation of each child that have individual needs and unique characteristics. Information is provided on how future interventions and programs should be developed to serve inclusive operating cultures and practices in ECEC.

intervention, emotional availability, temperament, inclusive practice, professional development

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Cultivating Inclusive Classrooms: How a Community of Practice Transformed Shared Book Reading in a Chinese Kindergarten

Presenters
Yanping Su, Jimei University, China

All authors
Yanping Su, Jimei University, China
Qianni Pan, Beijing Normal University, China
Yousheng Fan, Jimei University, China

This 28-month collaborative action research explores how a community of practice (CoP) fostered inclusive shared book reading (SBR) in a low-resource Chinese kindergarten. While literacy-focused professional development enhances instructional practices (Markussen-Brown et al., 2017), existing PD models often prioritize individual skill-building over collaborative problem-solving (Rogers et al., 2020). Few studies explore how CoPs empower kindergarten teachers to cultivate inclusive literacy in resource-constrained settings (Holmqvist and Lelinge, 2021). Grounded in Lave and Wenger's (1991) CoP theory, this study positions teachers as agentive collaborators in developing inclusive SBR practices. Using purposeful sampling, this study selected a low-resource kindergarten that expressed strong interest in improving emergent literacy practices. Twenty participants, including 2 principals (8+ years of administrative experience) and 18 teachers (2-12 years of teaching experience), joined the project. Teachers were selected based on their willingness to engage in collaborative inquiry and their representation across children's age groups. This participatory action research engaged the team in iterative cycles of training, coaching, reflection, and peer observation. Data from interviews, classroom videos, and artifacts were thematically analyzed with triangulation. Ethical protocols included informed consent and pseudonyms. Findings revealed three shifts: transition from whole-class instruction to small-group dialogic reading, strategic use of SBR for social inclusion, and redesign of reading environments to accommodate learner diversity. Central to these changes was the CoP structure, where peer observation and feedback supported pedagogical innovation. Policy implications advocate institutionalizing CoP frameworks in teacher training, while practical implications highlight peer observation and feedback as catalysts for inclusive practices.

community of practice, shared book reading, inclusive classrooms, culturally responsive pedagogy, action research

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The Role of Communities of Practice and Team Reflection in Inclusive Pedagogy

Presenters
Maja Haals Brosnan, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland

All authors
Maja Haals Brosnan, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland
Thomas Chaisrihar Bach, UC Syddanmark, Denmark
Natasha O'Donnell, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland
Lisbeth Hansen, UC Syddanmark, Denmark
Rhona Stallard, Marino Institute of Education, Ireland

This paper presents learning from a recent Erasmus+ project, Inclusive and Sustainable Post-Covid Pedagogy (InSCoPe) that established a Community of Practice (CoP), which aimed to explore experiences of how pedagogies that enhances inclusion and equality were balanced with Covid-19 restrictions and how these can be sustained into the future and through other crises. The project builds on frameworks for culturally responsive inclusion (Kurian, 2023) and positive climate creation (Khalfaoui et al., 2020), while also considering educator agency supported through CoP (Matuk et al., 2016; Ernst et al., 2023). InSCoPe supports the Salamanca Statement (1994), which committed UN members to inclusive pedagogy, by fostering environments that enhance social participation. Framed within a social constructivist paradigm, InSCoPe used video with practitioner-researcher dialogues to facilitate self-reflection and discussions on ECEC practices (Tobin and Hsueh, 2007). In pursuit of research integrity (Bos, 2020; Lyndon, 2023), issues of power asymmetry were balanced with a reflexive approach, alongside the use of fail-safes

such as checking-in with participants and interviews at times that suited participants. InSCoPe identified key pedagogical practices for inclusion to be sustained into the future. Understandings of inclusion is embedded in cultural understandings of pedagogySmall group sizes/ratios, allocation of designated educators to groups, parent-partnerships, peer and sibling relationships, and routines are central to inclusion.Covid-19 measures led to slower, relational, and agentic practice.Professional loneliness and fragmentation of experience negatively impacts inclusive pedagogy The CoP strengthened educators' professional confidence in inclusive practice, thus highlighting the need for continuous team reflection and shared narratives.

community of practice, fragmentation, shared narratives, professional confidence, group size

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E11 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G215, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

PARENTAL PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES IN REFUGEE COMMUNITIES (PAIR)

Chaired by An Piessens, Researcher, Belgium

Caregiver Practices and Social Development in Refugee Children

Presenters
Kimberley Kong, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

All authors
Kimberley Kong, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
Iram Siraj, University of Oxford, University of Maynooth, United Kingdom
Katharina Ereky-Stevens, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

This study examines the specific caregiver practices that shape children’s social development within culturally diverse refugee households in Malaysia. It aims to identify how parent-child engagement, discipline strategies, and household experiences influence children’s social development, with a focus on actionable insights for culturally attuned interventions. Previous research highlights the challenges faced by refugee families, including restricted education and healthcare access, heightening parental stress and harsh discipline (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). However, the impact of ECE enrollment and cultural beliefs on parenting remains largely unexplored. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) structures our examination of refugee children's development through: (1) proximal parent-child dynamics (micro), (2) home-education linkages (meso), and (3) policy/cultural contexts (exo/macro). This systems view captures displacement's layered impacts on development. Using a multi-informant design, data from 1,051 caregiver-child dyads in Malaysia were collected via direct child assessments using the IDELA tool (Pisani et al., 2013) and structured caregiver interviews. data were analyzed using 2-level regression models. The study adhered to ethical standards, including informed consent, data confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity. Findings indicate that caregiver-child engagement positively predicts social development, while harsh discipline, particularly spanking, negatively impacts prosocial behaviors (Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Children enrolled in early childhood education (ECE) showed lower social skills, reflecting potential challenges in social adjustment (UNESCO, 2015). The findings advocate for culturally attuned policies and practices that celebrate diversity and promote inclusion, emphasizing constructive caregiver-child engagement and equitable access to high-quality early childhood education to support the social development of refugee children in diverse contexts.

refugee families, early childhood education, harsh parenting, spanking, social development

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

'Why Are the White Kids Clean and the Brown Kids Still Dirty?': Parental Encounters with Racial Discrimination in Early Childhood Services

Presenters
Cherie Lamb, University of New England, Australia

All authors
Cherie Lamb, University of New England, Australia

This presentation explores encounters between refugee parents and Australian early childhood education and care (ECEC) providers to discover why parents removed their children after enrolment. Refugee families experience limited participation in ECEC services due to poverty; trauma (Signorelli et. al, 2017); limited language rights (Kaur, 2012); variance between home and ECEC settings; and structural racism (Lamb, 2020; 2025; Rutter, 2006). Critical race theory provided a lens through which to scrutinize the way racism implicitly impacts structural practices within ECEC environments (Yosso, 2005). Fifty-five participants, including refugee parents, support workers, and ECEC practitioners were sampled through focus groups and interviews. Analysis followed the principles of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), viewed through a critical/interpretive paradigm. This research was approved by the University of New England Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval No: HE15-092). Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Consensus amongst participants was that many services were culturally unsafe, unsuitable, and unavailable to families of colour. Parents perceived being treated differently, believing their values, beliefs, and parenting practices were considered inferior. Children from refugee backgrounds were frequently marginalized and ignored, compromising their sense of identity and belonging. The overarching message was that worth and value are framed primarily within the parameters of the dominant culture, which is taken for granted by educators, who are predominantly White and middle class. Discussion focuses on ways that the ECEC system could be reformed to createwelcoming, equitable, inclusive, and socially cohesive environments for refugee families, promoting acceptance, participation, and belonging.

early childhood education, refugee families, racism, cultural identity, cultural safety, cultural competence, belonging

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E12 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G222, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

READING PRACTICES IN ECE SETTINGS

Chaired by Andrea Lupi, Università degli Studi di Urbino, Italy

Gaps Between Recognizing the Importance of Small Group Work (SGW) and Repeated Picture Book Reading (RPBR) and Implementing These Practices in Preschools

Presenters
Clodie Tal, Hemdat Academy, Israel

All authors
Clodie Tal, Hemdat Academy, Israel

This study aims to make an inquiry into preschool teachers' perceptions and implementation of small group work and picture books read-alouds. Wasik (2008) and Tal (2018) found that SGW is underused and ineffectively implemented in ECE. SGW is based on Vygotsky's socio-constructivist theory (1978), which emphasizes both the

social nature of knowledge construction and the importance of discourse as a “carrier” and creator of thought. It is also inspired by Malaguzzi's emphasis on SGW a a foundational practice in ECE. This is a quantitative study based on a questionnaire administered in 2024. The questionnaire included questions about teachers' perceptions and implementation of SGW and book reading. The participants were 215 Israeli preschool teachers. Questionnaires were filled anonymously. Although perceived as important SGW is being perceived by preschool teachers as almost impossible to implement. It is being implemented infrequently, and very limited time is dedicated to reading picture books. Books are being read mostly in plenary sessions. Rather than recommending top down directives to implement SGW and RPBR, there is a need for encouraging teachers to engage in action research leading to a tailored implementation of these practices to each setting and group of children.

socio constructivism, read-alouds, small group work action research

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

The affordances of a particular form of read aloud for toddlers

Presenters
Martina Norling, Örebro University, Sweden

All authors
Martina Norling, Örebro University, Sweden
Maria Simonsson, Linköping university, Sweden
Niklas Pramling, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

This study examines a phenomenon that appears to be unexplored in previous research on reading aloud to the youngest children in ECEC: “waking up to a book." Research builds on previous studies emphasizing the potential of children's books and reading aloud for teaching and research highlighting read aloud practices associated with the period after sleeping time in ECEC settings (Grunditzs, 2013). Theoretically, the study adopts a sociocultural perspective on communication and learning (Säljö, 2010), and affordance theory (Gibson, 1979) to analyze what opportunities, engagement, and care that are offered. The study has a qualitative approach. Data consist of video recorded read aloud sequences (N=4,5 h). The transcribed sequences serve as the foundation for detailed analysis of affordances. The project has been approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr 2023-03161-01). The ECEC participants and the children's parents have been informed and have given their consent to participate in accordance with ethical considerations of confidentiality (Swedish Research Council, 2024). We have applied the ethical code for EC researchers (Bertram et al., 2024). Consideration has been given to any indications from participants expressing not to be video recorded. Results indicate that reading aloud practices of 'waking up to a book,' are characterized by flexibility and situation-specific goal orientation, where a holistic approach to being responsive to the children's needs and supporting their participation is central. Findings contribute knowledge on how a previously unexplored form of read aloud can function as an educational resource to support toddlers’ interest in books and reading together with peers.

ECEC settings, EDUCARE, read aloud, toddlers, affordances

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Reading Practices in Italian Nurseries: The Gap Between Declared and Observed Reading Styles

Presenters
Andrea Lupi, Università degli Studi di Urbino, Italy

All authors
Andrea Lupi, Università degli Studi di Urbino, Italy
Mirko Susta, Università degli Studi di Urbino, Italy

This study investigates the gap between self-reported and observed reading styles among Italian nursery educators (0–3 years). It aims to map predominant reading styles and assess educators' awareness of their pedagogical strategies. While shared reading is crucial for early language development (Farrant and Zubrick, 2011; 2013; Price and Kalil, 2018), research suggests that it is rare in nurseries (Honig and Shin, 2001; Norris, 2017). Educators often overestimate their use of interactive reading strategies (Torr, 2019), yet little research has examined this discrepancy systematically. This study is based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of adult mediation in language development, on Bruner's scaffolding model (1983), and on professional reflection models (Schön, 1983). The study applied a qualitative approach to 20 nurseries, using video-recorded reading sessions, structured observations, and self-report questionnaires . Data were analyzed through thematic coding, based on common conceptualizations from previous literature (Zucker et al., 2021), and intercoder reliability was ensured. The study follows GDPR, including informed consent, video anonymization, and restricted data access. Findings reveal that most educators adopt a traditional, non-interactive reading style, despite self-reporting dialogic approaches . This misalignment suggests a lack of professional reflection on reading practices . This study calls for professional development initiatives aimed at fostering educators' awareness of their reading styles and promoting dialogic reading strategies in nurseries. Implications highlight the need for professional development programs fostering educators' awareness of dialogic reading strategies . Findings contribute to discussions on early literacy education, advocating for evidence-based interventions to align pedagogical intent with observed practice.

early literacy, reading styles, dialogic reading, educators' self-perception, nursery education

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E13 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G231, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Chaired by Smadar Dolev, Oranim College of Education, Israel

Enhancing Quality Preschool Interactions Improves Immigrant Children's Second-Language Acquisition: A Pilot Study

Presenters
Smadar Dolev, Oranim College of Education, Israel

All authors
Smadar Dolev, Oranim College of Education, Israel

This intervention aimed to enhance preschool interactions for immigrant and veteran children to strengthen second-language acquisition. Immigrant children face challenges in acquiring a non-native language (Long, 1981; Swain et al., 2002), yet educators often lack readiness to address these needs (Faltis, 2012). Quality classroom interactions, emotional support, and effective management foster learning (Hamre, 2014; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2009). Therefore, strengthening teacher-child and peer interactions may enhance second-language acquisition. This study's framework examines language acquisition challenges (Schwartz and Palviainen, 2016) and the role of quality educational interactions for learning (Brown et al., 2003; Pianta et al., 2010). This quantitative study involved two preschools: an intervention (28 children) and a control (26 children), each with half immigrant children. The six-month intervention was based on three quality interaction methods: CLASS (Pianta et al., 2008), Emotional Availability Scales (Biringen et

al., 2014), and VIPP-CC (Werner et al., 2018). In the intervention preschool, small mixed groups met 3-4 times weekly, with sessions videotaped. Staff received video-based supervision to enhance sensitivity and interaction quality. Second-language expression (Tavor test) and interaction quality (CLASS) were assessed pre- and post-intervention. All participants signed consent forms, with pseudonyms replacing names. Participants could withdraw at any time. Study findings confirmed hypotheses. There were higher vocabulary gains and improvement in interactions and classroom quality in the intervention preschool compared to the control preschool. Enhancing preschool interactions through small-group activities fosters second-language acquisition, engagement, and problem-solving. Video-based supervision improves staff responsiveness. Implementing such interventions may benefit immigrant children's language development and educational experiences.

teacher education, multicultural teaching, second language acquisition, quality interactions, development

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy in Finnish Early Childhood Education: Practices to Support Increasing Linguistic Diversity

Presenters
Maria Tyrer, University of Turku, Department of Teacher Education, Finland

All authors
Maria Tyrer, University of Turku, Department of Teacher Education, Finland
Juli-Anna Aerila, University of Turku, Department of Teacher Education, Finland

Promoting language awareness is a key goal in Finnish early childhood education (EDUFI, 2022), yet implementing linguistically responsive pedagogy remains challenging. The study examines educators' attitudes, knowledge, and skills regarding multilingualism, investigating gaps in reported practices and their alignment with the framework. This study is part of the Assessment of Linguistically Responsive Learning Environments project (Aerila, et al. 2024, Repo et al. 2024), which investigates linguistically responsive and multilingual pedagogy in Finnish ECEC groups using the LangPeda tool as a data collection instrument. The LangPeda tool has been developed to support the implementation of linguistically responsive practices and to facilitate Finnish language learning for multilingual children. The study is grounded in the concept of linguistically responsive pedagogy, which encompasses teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Lucas and Villegas, 2013). A linguistically responsible teacher values multilingualism and understands the connections between language, identity, and environment (Alisaari, 2019; Hollie, 2017). Using the LangPeda tool and a design-based research approach, data were collected from 81 educator teams and analyzed through theory-driven qualitive content analysis. Informed consent, voluntary participation, data anonymization, and adherence to GDPR regulations, ensured confidentiality. The preliminary findings indicate that while many practices align with linguistically responsible pedagogy, some aspects are underrepresented or diverge from the framework. This suggests limitations in educators' awareness and implementation. Policymakers should integrate linguistically responsible pedagogy into national guidelines, allocate funding for multilingual education, and establish evaluation frameworks. There is a need for PD-programs on enhancing linguistic awareness, providing multilingual resources, and fostering stronger collaboration with families.

linguistically responsive pedagogy, practices, language, identity and environment

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Challenges and Successes in Teaching Estonian as a Second Language

Presenters

Kerstin Kööp, Tallinn University, Estonia
Evelyn Neudorf, Tallinn University, Estonia
Aalo Banko, Tallinn University, Estonia

All authors
Kerstin Kööp, Tallinn University, Estonia
Evelyn Neudorf, Tallinn University, Estonia
Aalo Banko, Tallinn University, Estonia

This study explores how Estonian-speaking kindergarten teachers support children with other home languages in acquiring Estonian as a second language. The research aims to identify teaching strategies, collaborative practices, and challenges in language learning settings. Effective early language learning depends on rich linguistic environments and collaboration among educators (Goullier et al., 2015). Research suggests that team-based teaching approaches improve language exposure and learning outcomes (Samuelsson, 2020).
The study is framed within sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), emphasizing language learning through social interaction. The language immersion approach provides a foundation for structuring Estonian language exposure in multilingual settings (Talts et al., 2010). This qualitative study follows a constructivist paradigm, employing a focus group methodology. The sample includes Estonian-speaking kindergarten teachers (n=79) participating in a government-funded pilot project. Data were collected through semi-structured focus group interviews in spring 2024 and analyzed using thematic analysis. Ethical approval was obtained, with informed consent, confidentiality, and secure, anonymized data storage. Reflexivity and non-biased questioning minimized researcher influence. Data handling followed EECERA Ethical Code (2024) guidelines. Findings indicate that teachers prefer small-group learning, fostering individualized language support. Structured play and active learning strategies facilitate Estonian language acquisition. Collaborative teaching approaches were crucial, with team members actively reinforcing Estonian language throughout daily activities. Emphasizing the need for structured pedagogy, the research underscores its impact on multilingual early childhood education, shaping language immersion policies, teacher training, and collaborative teaching for inclusive learning.

second-language learning, teacher collaboration, multilingual education, early childhood education, Estonian as a second language

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E14 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G242, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

TEAMS, COLLABORATION AND CO-TEACHING

Chaired by Svitlana Holovchuk, NLA University College, Norway

Collaboration Between Support Staff and Teachers in Early Childhood Education: Expectations and Realities

Presenters
Özge Ünsever, Istanbul Gelisim University, Türkiye

All authors
Özge Ünsever, Istanbul Gelisim University, Türkiye

The aim of this research is to examine the interactions and collaboration between support staff and preschool teachers working in early childhood education institutions. Collaboration dynamics between teachers and support staff significantly influence the quality of care, support, and educational services provided to children in preschool settings (Can and Kılıç, 2021; Brownlee, et al., 2009). The theoretical framework of this study is based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. According to the theory, collaboration between support staff

and teachers is one of the key factors that directly influences children's learning experiences. This qualitative study will involve seven support staff and seven preschool teachers from public kindergartens. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using inductive content analysis with the constant comparative method. Before the interviews, participants were provided with an information sheet about the study and were asked to sign consent forms confirming their voluntary participation. Preliminary findings of the study indicate that the number of auxiliary staff should be increased in order to alleviate the workload of teachers and increase the efficiency of educational processes. It is thought that auxiliary staff should be included in educational processes more effectively, providing not only care but also pedagogical support, and their job descriptions should be rearranged. The results emphasize the need for training and communication programs to enhance teacher-support staff collaboration, with school leadership fostering teamwork and developing policies to promote staff's active involvement in pedagogy.

early childhood, teacher, collaboration, childcare, education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Supporting Multi-professional Teams in Diverse Early Childhood Settings

Presenters
Alexandra Anton, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

All authors
Alexandra Anton, Åbo Akademi University, Finland
Juli-Anna Aerila, University of Turku, Department of Teacher Education, Finland
Elizabeth Steed, University of Colorado Denver, United States

The purpose of this study is to contribute to knowledge about early childhood education and care (ECEC) staff's perception of the support structures that are most effective in assisting them in their work with culturally and linguistically diverse children. Previous research has focused on support needs identified by school leaders and newly qualified teachers (Harju & Niemi, 2018), but we could not identify any studies interested in exploring multi-professional teams' perspectives, especially those working in predominantly multicultural daycares. We were guided by the existing 'educational ecosystem' framework (Niemi, 2021) for all crucial support to be included. We employed critical case study research (Diem et al., 2023) based on a semi-structured interview approach. The interviews were analysed using a hermeneutic approach (Gadamer, 2013). The participants provided their informed consent to participate in the study, were assured of anonymity, and were informed of their right to withdraw from the project at any time, following the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity guidelines (TENK, 2023). The thematic analysis of interviews indicates that the support structures within the Finnish educational ecosystem consist of a complex network of interconnected structures on four pillars of support: national policy, municipality, daycare leadership, peer and self-support, The findings revealed a support system that is weak on certain pillars (education policy for training pre- and in-service teachers) and heavily reliant on others (municipality). Sustained and coordinated efforts from all pillars of the educational ecosystem are necessary to uncover the support mechanisms tailored to each community and educational system.

early childhood education, professional teams, cultural diversity, educational ecosystem, support structures

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

The Benefits of Co-Teaching in The Early Childhood Teacher Education Program

Presenters

Svitlana Holovchuk, NLA University College, Norway

All authors

Svitlana Holovchuk, NLA University College, Norway

The research aim to explore the benefits of co-teaching in the Early Childhood Teacher Education (ECTE) program, based on the learning area “Society, Religion, Worldview and Ethics”. The projects start point is the previous research from the last five years related to co-teaching in higher education (Rooks et al., 2022; Roland and Jones, 2023; Steinert and Jurkowski, 2024; Banda and Reyes, 2024; Lenong and Palmer, 2024). The theoretical and conceptual framework is based on the Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1971) and Pragmatical Learning by Dewey (1897; 1916). A phenomenological aspect of the project focuses on the student's and teacher's experiences with co-teaching in higher education. The data collection is based on a digital survey with students and a dyadic interviews with co-teachers. The project is focus on The Norwegian Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH, 2021). Participation in a digital survey and a dyadic interview is voluntary and anonymous. Informed consent will be requested for participation. The preliminary findings were structured into 3 categories: Co-Teaching as a Phenomenon in Higher Education (benefits and challenges of co-teaching, multidisciplinary approach in teaching practice, relationship, co-creation, reflection and evaluation); Observational Learning (learning through observation of other co-teachers, self development); Students’ Professional Development (developing of knowledge and skills, students’ formation, awareness of future profession, values and attitudes). The study can contribute to new approaches of teaching practice in Early Childhood Teaching Education and promote students’ professional development.

co-teaching, diversifying of teaching approaches, early childhood teacher education (ECTE), observational learning, multidisciplinarity.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set E15 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G243, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

PEDAGOGY FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN ECEC (PAIR)

Chaired by Mosa Khasu, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Collective Voices: promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity through plurilingualism

Presenters

Christina Egan Marnell, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

All authors

Christina Egan Marnell, Early Childhood Ireland, Ireland

This study explores plurilingualism in the early years sector, examining its impact on language development, integration, and wellbeing, while identifying effective pedagogical strategies. Plurilingualism values the dynamic use of multiple languages and cultural knowledge, emphasizing interconnectedness over differences. This approach values ALL language knowledge ((Piccardo and North, 2022). Plurilingualism promotes a holistic approach, viewing children’s linguistic skills as assets for learning additional languages (Cummins, 2000). This fosters an inclusive, culturally responsive pedagogy that celebrates diversity (Gay, 2010). This study acknowledged that children acquire languages through meaningful interactions with peers, educators, and families, aligning with Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) ecological systems theory and Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development and scaffolding. Plurilingualism can be nurtured when children’s existing language skills in one language reinforce their abilities in others (Cummins, 2000), facilitated by a culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings 1994). A qualitative, interpretive research paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018) was used with semi structured

interviews conducted with 3 participants in an urban Irish setting. Data was analysed through a thematic analysis approach. Written consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, the dissemination plan and their right to withdraw at any time. Participants' wellbeing was prioritised to minimise any potential distsress. The findings highlighted that valuing and embracing linguistic diversity through a plurilingual approach fosters respect, empathy and belonging amongst children. Educators should be provided with professional development opportunities to enhance their competence in supporting plurilingual learners. Fostering collaboration between families, communities, and settings can create inclusive environments that values lin

plurilingualism, diversity, inclusion, pedagogy, identity

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Towards a signature pedagogy for playwriting as a language teaching tool in the primary school

Presenters
Mosa Khasu, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

All authors
Mosa Khasu, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

The purpose of this study was to explore how classroom plays can serve as pedagogical tools for teaching vocabulary in the primary school. The modality of playwriting and classroom theatre as pedagogical tools in the Sesotho and isiZulu languages is a unique approach that this study explored for strengthening future teachers' pedagogical content knowledge when teaching vocabulary. The study was framed in Shulman's (2005) model of a signature pedagogy, with the intersection of the Vygotskyan concept of a zone of proximal development (Kozulin, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978) for learning and acting in a play as an important component of classroom theatre as an educative medium. This qualitative case study is situated in an interpretivist paradigm and a practitioner research design (Heikkinen et al., 2016). Thematic analysis was applied to analyse classroom play artefacts and the focus group interviews with participating students about their experiences during the playwriting course. Ethical clearance for this study was granted by the ethics committee in the Faculty of Education at the university where the study was conducted. Informed consent was requested and obtained from the participants participating in this research (Arifin, 2018). The findings showed that student teachers had learned how to write classroom theatre plays through collaborative online group work, and also contribute to the corpus of pedagogies for the teaching of vocabulary in African languages The study has contributed not only with the playwriting model but also with suggestions for several applications of classroom playwriting and theatre for literacy development.

classroom theatre, playwriting, practitioner research, signature pedagogy, zone of proximal development

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E16 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G244, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) HOLISTIC WELLBEING SIG

Chaired by Zoi Nikiforidou, University of Ioannina, Greece

The Children's Worlds scale

Presenters
Zoi Nikiforidou, University of Ioannina, Greece

All authors
Zoi Nikiforidou, University of Ioannina, Greece
Antoanneta Potsi, Bielefeld University, Germany

The aim of this presentation is to showcase the rationale and methodology that underpin 'Children's Worlds', the International Survey of Children's Wellbeing (ISCWeB), addressing subjective opinions of 6-10 year olds about their lives. This lies into previous research underlining children's right to be listened to in decisions that affect the quality of their lives (Ben-Arieh and Frønes, 2011) and a subjective approach on the value of young children's personal experiences (Andresen et al., 2019). The conceptual framework is based on Allardt's (1993) model of having, loving, being where wellbeing is based on needs satisfaction rather than on resources. This worldwide research survey is consisted of eight life domains and is divided into 10 parts inviting children to rate how they feel and think of themselves, their home, belongings, friends, the area where they live, their school, free time, feelings and aspirations for their future. Quantitative data will be collected in Greece (N=500) and factor analyses will be conducted. The study meets ethical aspects of anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw. Children and their parents will give their consent prior to the study. The preliminary findings are to be discussed with an emphasis on methodological underpinnings of measuring and gaining insightful data from children at various ages. Quantitative approaches and the items of the survey are critically reviewed. The purpose is to raise awareness in regards to what matters to children in the greek context regarding their lives and how these can be integrated in school, community and family life.

subjective wellbeing, children, survey, children's voices, methodology

Children's subjective wellbeing - Inclusion and Exclusion through Languages: Multilingualism and wellbeing of children

Presenters
Christa Kieferle, State Institute of Early Childhood Research and Media Literacy, Germany
Anja Seifert, JLU University, Giessen, Germany
Igor Shiian, MCU, Russian Federation
Maire Tuul, Tallinn University, Estonia

All authors
Christa Kieferle, State Institute of Early Childhood Research and Media Literacy, Germany
Anja Seifert, JLU University, Giessen, Germany
Igor Shiian, MCU, Russian Federation
Maire Tuul, Tallinn University, Estonia
Irina Vorobeva, MCU, Russian Federation
Aino Ugaste, Tallinn University, Estonia

This study examines how Germany, Estonia and Russia approach children's multilingualism in early and middle childhood within wellbeing-focused frameworks. Key questions include:

- How is multilingualism integrated into education systems?
- What strategies support multilingualism in children's play and learning while fostering wellbeing?
- What studies and concepts address the challenge of supporting multilingualism in young learners?

A well-established discourse on multilingualism, translanguaging and education exists at both political and theoretical levels (e.g. Kirsch 2018; García and Wei 2014)Research emphasizes the link between multilingualism, education, and children's wellbeing (Derakhshan, 2022; Han, 2010; Sun et al., 2021). Multilingualism is a complex, multifaceted experience influencing many aspects of life (Gullifer and Titone 2020; Marian and Hayakawa 2021; Han 2010; Sun et al. 2021). This study draws on translanguaging theory and multilingual education research, focusing on

inclusive linguistic practices (García 2009, 2011, 2012), and integrates frameworks from positive psychology and wellbeing (Diener et al. 2011; Keyes 2006; Seligman 2011). The study follows a comparative qualitative content analysis approach, systematically analyzing and comparing documents, political measures, and educational approaches. Ethical considerations include data integrity, cultural sensitivity, researcher objectivity, and proper citation. The study follows EECERA Ethical Code (2024) guidelines. Preliminary findings highlight diverse policy approaches, the importance of teacher training, and the link between multilingualism and wellbeing. Challenges include resource limitations and policy implementation. This contribution connects research and practice, offering insights on policy support, effective multilingual education, and inclusive language strategies for academic success and wellbeing.

wellbeing, multilingualism, social emotional learning, translanguaging, inclusion

Catching up by slowing down. - An action research study of slow pedagogy in a community impacted by conflict in NI.

Presenters
Clionagh Boyle, Ulster University, United Kingdom

All authors
Clionagh Boyle, Ulster University, United Kingdom

The research documents the implementation of a slow pedagogical approach (Clark 2023, Honore 2004) with Early Childhood Educators in a neighbourhood impacted by inter and intra community conflict in Northern Ireland. The research is oriented in the conceptual framework of slow pedagogy (Clark 2023). Additionally, temporal narratives of intergenerational conflict and the pandemic discourse of levelling up (Pascal and Bertram 2021) has added to what Clark (2023) describes as the 'rhetoric of catching up, the language of competition, running a race'(p.9). This connects to wider theoretical debates around performativity and measurement that characterise challenges to the neoliberal encroach on ECEC (Ball 2016, Robert-Holmes and Moss 2021). The overarching paradigm that frames the study is critical pedagogy that contests neoliberal approaches in ECEC. The methodology is Action Research (MacNaughten, 2008) and the specific method is teacher and practitioner audio diaries (Cottingham 2019) analysed through Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke 2021) The research has been conducted in alignment with the revised EECERA ethical code 2024 and considering the specific community context where conflict and high poverty impact embodies an awareness of social responsibility towards the communities and societies in which it is conducted. Emergent findings include the influence of practitioners own childhoods growing up in situations of conflict. This included the motivation to give the children they work with a 'better childhood' which was sometimes interpreted as doing more within the time. Implications for policy and practice include considerations of the differential impacts of poverty, pandemic and conflict on the wellbeing of children, families and communities.

holistic wellbeing, slow pedagogy, conflict, neoliberalism

Symposium Set E17 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G246, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN SHAPING CHILDREN'S LIVES

Chaired by Nathalie Frey, University of Würzburg, Germany

Treatment-Sensitive Target Vocabulary: Novel word learning in ECEC via iconic gesture

Presenters
Nathalie Frey, University of Würzburg, Germany

All authors
Nathalie Frey, University of Würzburg, Germany
Carina Lüke, University of Würzburg, Germany

The intervention study examines the implementation of iconic gestures as a multimodal strategy to support novel word learning in German ECEC. There is evidence for the facilitative effect of iconic gestures in novel word learning in mono- and multilingual children as well as in children with and without speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) in one-on-one settings (e.g., van Berkel van Hoof et al., 2019) as well as for primary and college students (e.g., Yohannan et al., 2021). The theoretical framework of this study postulates that iconic gestures serve as “semantically enrichment cue” (Capone Singleton, 2012) and contribute to the more elaborate storage of words in the mental lexicon (Levelt, 1989). The interventionstudy (waiting control group design) was conducted in two kindergartens in Germany, analysing a total of N = 80 children and N = 12 educators. Both the implementation of the language support strategy by the children (language skills, gesture production) and by the educators (questionnaire) was examined at four measurement points. Following ethical approval and in compliance with data protection regulations, participants received an information sheet and consent form. They were informed of their right to withdraw anytime, contact the researchers, and that children's consent would be obtained before language tests. Our findings show that iconic gestures can be used as a method to foster novel word learning in ECEC, particularly benefiting children with SLCN. Adding the visual-manual modality provides children with SLCN another opportunity to actively communicate and facilitate spoken language acquisition.

treatment sensitivity, novel word learning, iconic gesture, group setting, speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN)

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exploring the Use of Picture Books Combined with Story Drama to Enhance Young Children's Emotional Competence

Presenters
Yi-Wen Tsai, National Pingtung University, Taiwan

All authors
Yi-Wen Tsai, National Pingtung University, Taiwan
Wei-Ru Chen, Wenshan Elementary School Affiliated Kindergarten, Taiwan
Chia-Yen Hsieh, National Pingtung University, Taiwan

This study aims to explore the implementation of an emotional education curriculum that integrates picture books and story drama to enhance young children's emotional competence. Previous studies emphasize that picture books support children’s understanding of emotions through narrative, while drama activities encourage emotional expression and regulation in interactive contexts (Aram and Aviram, 2009; Isbell and Raines, 2007). This study builds on these findings by combining both methods to explore their integrated impact on young children's emotional competence. This study is based on Saarni’s (1999) emotional competence model, focusing on emotional awareness, regulation, and expression, and creative drama theories, which emphasize role-playing as a tool for emotional learning. To examine these frameworks in practice, 21 preschoolers (ages 4-6) participated in a two-phase teaching intervention incorporating ten emotional picture books with structured drama activities. Data were collected via observations, semi-structured interviews, parent feedback, children’s creative work, and pre/post assessments. Parental consent was obtained, and confidentiality maintained. Activities ensured a safe emotional environment, allowing children to express emotions freely while avoiding distress. Preschoolers frequently experienced anger, sadness, frustration, and anxiety, often triggered by peer conflicts. The intervention significantly improved emotional

awareness, understanding, regulation, and expression, with the most notable gains in emotional comprehension. This study supports integrating picture books and drama in early childhood curricula to enhance emotional learning and foster social-emotional competence, benefiting educators, curriculum designers, and young learners.

picture book teaching, story drama, emotional competence, emotional regulation, emotional expression

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Saajve – Stories, didactics and artistic practice in a South Saami preschool

Presenters
Berit Frogner, Nord University, Norway
David Kroik, Nord University, Norway
Viktor Johansson, Nord University, Norway

All authors
Berit Frogner, Nord University, Norway
David Kroik, Nord University, Norway
Viktor Johansson, Nord University, Norway

Explore how educators, children, architects and artists can work together to strengthen Saami themes within the ECE institution. Creating pedagogical approaches and spaces where Saami storytelling traditions and -languages become part of children's play through joint creative work. The project builds upon Indigenous methodologies and ECE. Indigenous pedagogical and Sami language didactic orientation towards storytelling meets artistic design and children's play within the ECE institution. (Kleeman, 2021; Nutti and Johansson, 2024; Straszer and Kroik, 2021). Rooted in Indigenous methodologies, - theories and decolonisation, the project is lifting these important matters into the Saami ECE area. (Kovach, 2009; Archibald, 2008; Smith, 2019). Grounded within Indigenous methodology, storywork and transdisciplinarity. The project shows how Indigenous peoples' stories, language and epistemology are made part of the work of educational institutions where pedagogical practices involve counter-colonizing and decolonizing processes. 5- 10 children aged 1-6 years old are involved). The project has been approved by Swedish Ethical Review Authority. All children involved will be anonymous. As an important part of Indigenous research ethics, we strive for our project to give something back to the Saami community. We argue that these kinds of transdisciplinary collaborations can contribute to the international research on language didactics and Indigenous early childhood education. Pinpointing how Indigenous pedagogy where indigenous peoples' knowledge and ways of looking at the world are made part of the work of educational institutions where pedagogical practices also involve counter-colonizing and decolonizing processes. We suggest that artistic collaborations can generate important knowledge for the work with Saami themes in early childhood education.

play, stories, didactics, decolonisation, pedagogy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set E18 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G308, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

Chaired by Diana Židová, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Raising awareness of inclusive communication: Supporting environments, opportunities and interactions

Presenters
Sanna Kraft, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Sergej Ivanov, Linnaeus University, Sweden

All authors
Sanna Kraft, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Sergej Ivanov, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Christian Waldmann, Linnaeus University, Sweden

The aim is to raise teacher awareness of how to support children's language development by transforming learning environment, opportunities and interactions. A professional development programme (PDP) focusing communication supporting environment (Dockrell et al., 2015) was implemented in line with earlier findings on how to efficiently change teacher practice (Kraft et al., 2018; Snyder et al., 2015). Few studies on such PDPs have been conducted (e.g. Edlund, 2025). Based on the sociocultural perspective, we used a PDP as a conceptual framework to reflect on factors that support children's language development. In this study, we analyse changes in teacher awareness and practice from a quantitative and qualitative point of view, as reflected in observation, survey and interview results within a one-year PDP involving 27 pedagogues (3 preschool units). The PDP was a collaboration between the preschool units and university language professionals. Informed consent was obtained from all the participating teachers. To preserve confidentiality, all names and locations have received pseudonyms. Since the sole focus was on changes in teacher awareness, no observation data on children was collected. Preliminary findings show that the professional development programme increased teacher awareness of what constitutes language learning environments, opportunities and interactions, and their use of communication supporting strategies. This study highlights collaborative gains between language professionals and preschool teachers. It indicates that a combination of a few lectures, workshops, self-reflection, discussion and observations in an iterative fashion has potential to make a considerable improvement in preschool communication supporting environment and make it inclusive for all children.

communication supporting environment, professional development programme, preschool, teacher awareness, collaboration

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The Impact of Montessori Method on Language Development of Greek-speaking 4-7 years old children

Presenters
Evmorfia Nefeloudi, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors
Evmorfia Nefeloudi, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Athanasia Siaviki, Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece
Vasiliki Karavida, Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece
Eleni Tympa, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

The main aim of this research was to investigate the language development of children aged 4-7 years old attending a Montessori preschool educational center and those of children at the same ages attending typical educational settings. The impact of the Montessori method on various aspects of children's cognitive and socioemotional development in educational systems is being examined globally (Lillard et al., 2017). Relative scientific efforts have shown that young children taught with the Montessori method demonstrate higher academic performance in the fields of language development, mathematical competence and socioemotional skills (Calderon, 2024). The overall research sample consisted of 142 children, 68 from the Montessori institution and 74 from the typical ones. The

measurements of the language development were carried out via the standardized language assessment tool “Logometro” in the Greek language. The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Ioannina. A consent form was provided to the parents and anonymity ensured. Research findings showed that the overall language development of the children attending the Montessori educational institution was higher than the one of the children coming from typical educational frameworks. Moreover, statistically significant differences were found for the variables 'Speech Comprehension', 'Vocabulary Knowledge', 'Phonological Awareness' and 'Pragmatic Proficiency' between research and control groups for the total sample. Future research could focus on how different variables, such as the configuration of the school and the classroom environment, the different socio-economic context of raising children and activities outside the school context, affect children's cognitive development in the modern educational reality.

vocabulary, cognitive development, cognitive skills, children, Montessori

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Embodied Inclusion in Norwegian Kindergartens

Presenters
Ida Pape-Pedersen, Nord University, Norway
Susanne Bjur, Nord University, Norway

All authors
Ida Pape-Pedersen, Nord University, Norway
Susanne Bjur, Nord University, Norway

This paper focuses on how kindergarten teachers use the body in their encounters with children, focusing on inclusion. Asking: How do kindergarten teachers work with their bodily professional knowledge as they embody inclusion in kindergarten? All children should have access to the community in the kindergarten and a sense of belonging (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). The conditions of the culture and the child's experience determine whether a child is included in the community in kindergarten (Arnesen, 2017). How we use the teacher-body in our encounters with children plays an important role in how we succeed (or not) in including all children in the community in kindergarten. The theoretical framework of this study is phenomenological, leaning on Maurice Merleau-Pontys's (1994) phenomenology of perception. The study is phenomenologically founded, moving towards a performative/post-qualitative research paradigm, with an ethnographic methodologically design, using video observation and video-stimulated recall. We look at the kindergarten teacher's embodied experiences with inclusion. Additional to consent form, information sheet and that participants can withdraw from the study any time, we listen to the children’s embodied signals of consent. All data will be anonymized. We see the contours of how the kindergarten teacher's body plays an important (but still overlooked) role in the professional work and practice of inclusion (and exclusion) in kindergarten practice. The way the body is woven together with space and materiality, and how gazes, facial expressions, floors, and bodies are woven together in practices that include/exclude in kindergarten.

embodied inclusion, video-stimulated recall, phenomenology of perception, bodily professional knowledge, kindergarten teacher profession

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set E19 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G309, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY ON TRANSITIONS TO SCHOOL

Chaired by Sue Dockett, Charles Sturt University and Peridot Education, Australia

Children's continuity of learning during ECEC transitions in the Faroe Islands

Presenters
Sonja Olsen, University of Faroe Islands, Faroe Islands

All authors
Sonja Olsen, University of Faroe Islands, Faroe Islands

The aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of educator's perspectives on children's continuity of learning during ECEC transitions. Research has indicated that contexts, systems and approaches intersect in ECEC transitions. This can either serve as prompts for new learning or be impediments to continuous development (Dockett and Einarsdóttir, 2017). Continuity of learning means learning build on what has gone before (Dockett and Einarsdóttir, 2017). Well-coordinated structural continuity, developmental continuity, and contextual continuity throughout children's transitions are crucial for children's learning and during transition to school (Boyle et al. 2018). The study includes interviews with 14 educators from two case studies. A content analysis within a phenomenological hermeneutical approach was applied. Signed informed consent was provided from all participants. The participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms replaced the names of participants. Preliminary findings indicated that the educators had different perspectives on children's continuity of learning. Emerging findings might demonstrate different structural-, developmental-, and contextual continuity in the two cases. The study is an important addition to the discussion of children's transition processes in ECEC, both nationally and internationally. The study has implication for both policy and practice in the Faroe Islands. Until recently, findings from other Nordic countries have been applied to ECEC practices in the Faroe Islands, despite cultural differences.

ECEC transitions, educator's perspectives, continuity of learning, case studies, phenomenological hermeneutical approach.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Inclusive Transition to School – Continuities and Discontinuities in Educational Support

Presenters
Laura Rantavuori, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

All authors
Laura Rantavuori, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

This study explores the transition from preschool to school for Finnish children requiring intensified support, focusing on discourses in multi-professional transition meetings. It examines how these conversations influence pedagogical continuity or discontinuity. Smooth transitions support children's wellbeing and learning (Dockett and Einarsdottir, 2017), but they can also cause stress and uncertainty (Soini et al., 2013; Ackesjö and Persson, 2022). Effective transitions rely on collaborative pedagogical practices among educators and families Rantavuori (2019). Using Anne Edwards' (2017) concepts of boundary work and relational expertise, the study analyzes knowledge-sharing processes in these meetings. A discursive perspective guides the research, applying discourse analysis to examine how continuity and discontinuity are constructed. The dataset consists of six hours of videotaped transition meetings, 18 pages of parental diaries, and seven hours of interviews with teachers and parents. The study follows seven children and involves preschool and special education teachers, class teachers, and parents. Ethical guidelines, including informed consent and confidentiality, are strictly followed. The study adheres to ethical research standards, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and the protection of participant identities. Findings reveal

key factors affecting the continuation of support in primary school, such as alignment or misalignment of expectations between families and educators, as well as structural and communicative barriers. The study emphasizes the importance of structured collaboration and shared expertise to enhance pedagogical coherence. Policy recommendations include strengthening teacher-parent dialogue and refining support structures to improve inclusive transitions.

inclusive education, school transition, educational support, discourse analysis, pedagogical continuity

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Developing a shared understanding and inclusive school readiness approach – a reflective journey of collaborative work to mitigate school readiness disparities.

Presenters
Natasha Harrison, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom

All authors
Natasha Harrison, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom
Jessica Parr, Blackpool Better Start, United Kingdom

The Blackpool Better Start partnership fosters collaboration for an inclusive school readiness approach. Our aim was to bring together a diverse group of early years experts, parents, and the community through a strategic partnership group to develop and test school readiness priorities, practice, and provision. We evaluated these priorities with families of children starting primary school. Our 'Ready Steady School' project promotes inclusive practices and positive relationships to support children's development. Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), we address diversity and school readiness inequities by emphasizing the roles of parents, educators, environments, and the community, to maximise children's learning opportunities. Employing an improvement science approach (Bartman et al., 2018) and the Scottish Model of Infant Participation (Infant Pledge, 2023), research enables all children and their families to influence what school readiness looks like for them. Our feasibility and acceptability study utilises qualitative and quantitative methods, including discussion, case studies and questionnaires with 112 Blackpool families transitioning to primary school. Participants were informed about anonymity and consent procedures, including the right to withdraw. Pseudonyms are used in dissemination, and ethical approval was granted by the NSPCC. Results show that co-designed priorities and resources benefit parents and educators in supporting children's school readiness. A consistent, collaborative approach and shared vision are essential, where all adults have an equal role and responsibility to support the child's school readiness journey and achieve impactful outcomes.

school readiness, collaborative working, child development, shared understandings, improvement science

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E20 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G315, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

MATERNAL SEPARATION, INSECURITIES, CHALLENGES AND WELLBEING - PARENTHOOD

Chaired by Sally Pearse, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

Parents' wellbeing: perceptions of happiness and challenges in parenthood in Latin America

Presenters

Angel Garcia, University of Hull, United Kingdom

All authors

Angel Garcia, University of Hull, United Kingdom

To explore how Latin American parents' wellbeing is influenced by parenthood in a culture strongly influenced by Machismo/Marianismo. Research on parenthood-wellbeing often employs a positivist perspective and focuses on non-LA samples (Aassve et al., 2015; Sheldon and Lucas, 2014) -limiting our understanding of the influence of gender-based perspectives in parents' wellbeing. Subjective-Wellbeing Model and the Circumflex Theory suggest that positive/negative emotions can co-exist simultaneously –making them relevant when considering the adverse circumstances parents live with, in Latin America. Contacted via social media, fifteen parents of children (0-8), living in LA completed an online semi-structure interview. An interpretative analysis (Tuffour, 2017) was followed and data were analysed via reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2023). No sensitive topics were discussed and issues around anonymity/confidentiality were addressed by using a coding system. A personal reflective exercise addressed the author's biases. Socio-economic factors such as crime-violence-economic inequality, negatively influence parents' emotions experienced and how satisfied they are with their lives. Parents find joy in sharing own personal experiences and passing on gender-based models. However, parents perceive family pressure as a "burden" when expected to follow principles of Machismo/Marianismo. Similar to Asian, but unlike European parents, LA parents seem to experience a mixture of positive and negative emotions whilst parenting. Our findings could help inform educational policies by including activities that promote positive and supportive relationships in schools. Findings can help policymakers develop psycho-educational interventions to offer parents effective strategies to navigate through parenthood and yet, be able to support their own wellbeing.

parental wellbeing, Latin American parents', happy parents, parenthood, parents' machismo/marianismo

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Early Regulatory Difficulties and Their Impact on Maternal Separation Anxiety in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Adaptation – A Survey Among Hungarian Mothers

Presenters

Zsófia Csáky-Pallavicini, University of Pécs, Hungary

All authors

Zsófia Csáky-Pallavicini, University of Pécs, Hungary
Georgina Csordás, Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, Hungary
Eszter Hámori, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Hungary

This study explores psychological factors influencing ECEC adaptation in Hungary, focusing on potential protective and risk factors. Main research question is: How do early regulatory difficulties impact maternal separation anxiety in ECEC adaptation? Previous research highlights the role of maternal separation anxiety (Hock et al., 1989; 2004) and its impact on separation-individuation processes (Berger and Aber, 1986). Others (Klein et al., 2010) emphasize on the mother's perception of her own role in stress-regulation process and its effectiveness. Behrendt et al. (2020) suggest a reciprocal link between maternal anxiety and child self-regulation. The study based on Stern's self-development theory (1995), linking regulatory patterns to parental competencies, and on Hock et al.'s research (1989) regarding maternal separation anxiety. Our quantitative survey involved 452 mothers of children aged 0-3 years using a self-developed questionnaire assessing enrollment circumstances, maternal attitudes, hopes and concerns. A smaller sample (n=150) completed standardized tests: the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale (Hock et al., 1989; Hámori, 2005) and the Regulation Questionnaire (Hámori et al., 2016). The study received ethical approval, data collection was anonymous, ensuring data security via a double coding system per Hungarian research and

EECERA (2024) ethical guidelines. Findings show that maternal separation anxiety subfactors correlate with past regulatory difficulties in feeding and night awakenings. Persistent separation-related regulatory difficulties negatively correlate with child-focused nursery concerns, while crying-related difficulties associate negatively with maternal anxiety and nursery-related concerns. Early regulatory difficulties significantly shape parental attitudes toward nursery adaptation. Further research should identify protective and risk factors to support successful transitions.

early childhood care, separation, regulation, maternal anxiety, adaptation

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Insecure lives: How multiple insecurities affect life chances and wellbeing in families

Presenters
Sally Pearse, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

All authors
Sally Pearse, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom
Helen Lomax, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

To examine families' experiences of living with Multiple Insecurities (MI) relating to domains such as income, housing, health and caring responsibilities and the impact these have on the wellbeing and opportunities of parents and children. Numerous existing resources evidence the existence of multiple risks (Biosca et al., 2020). There have been some scattered references to 'multiple material-need insecurities' (Whittle et al., 2020), 'Intersecting household-level health and socio-economic vulnerabilities' (Mokolai et al., 2020). However, the clustering of risks, and their interaction and cumulative effects within families are under-researched. We advance the concept of 'multiple insecurities' to capture how challenges combine to undermine wellbeing. Whilst the experience of multiple insecurities is likely closely related to multiple disadvantage, it may further corrode wellbeing and hamper individual's engagement with interventions aimed at improving their life chances and that of their children. This qualitative study explored parents lived- experience of multiple insecurities and the impact they believe this had on their children. The study used 'careful' visual storytelling methods (Lomax and Smith, 2024) to enable participants to tell their stories. Ethical approval was secured from the Research Ethics Committee at the lead institution. Participants received detailed information about the project and consent forms (BERA, 2018). Parents identified multiple insecurities that were impacting on their wellbeing and life chances and identified key ways in which the complexity of these challenges impacted their children. The study is important to policy makers as it indicates that multiple insecurities are felt as a combined challenge for families but are often addressed in policy silos.

visual-methods, parents, families, community, disadvantage

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set E21 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G319, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

THE POTENTIAL OF PICTURE BOOKS DRAWING AND PLAY

Chaired by Elena Severina, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

Children's drawing and visual events within STEAM education

Presenters

Lena O Magnusson, Department of Educational Science, University of Gävle, Sweden

All authors

Lena O Magnusson, Department of Educational Science, University of Gävle, Sweden

This presentation concerns how preschool children's act of drawing and the resulting drawings can become a source of knowledge concerning STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) subjects and the interplay in-between those subjects. The study takes as its point of departure that STEAM education—where the A (i.e., arts), including dance, drama, music, and visual arts, are fully integrated—can expand knowledge development across all the included disciplines. A central premise is that children are viewed as active, meaning-making agents capable of contributing knowledge, experiences, and insights (e.g., Corsaro, 2018) to everyday educational practices. The data in focus derives from an ethnographic fieldwork and addresses children's drawings intentionally produced during planned STEAM teaching events and those that emerge spontaneously within educational practices of STEAM learning. In the analysis performed, the use of a spotlight approach is tried out, which entails directing the searchlight towards four positionings (Areljung, 2023) that can show STEAM learning in the visual events in the produced data (video, photos, and field notes). The study adhered to the ethical principles, including provisions for information, informed consent, the right to withdraw from participation, confidentiality in data usage and children's informed consent during the ethnographic fieldwork. The interplay between visual events, children's drawings and STEAM education makes way for new and altered ways of understanding knowledge development within STEAM education. The study's results can contribute to research and provide practical insights into how children learn and what they learn through drawing in the context of STEAM education.

children's drawings, STEAM education, STEAM interplay, spotlight method, visual events

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exploring the Potential of the Use of Picture Books for Eliciting Mathematical Thinking in the Early Years

Presenters

Iliada Elia, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

All authors

Lucy Alambriti, University of Cyprus, Cyprus
Iliada Elia, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

This study aims to explore the possibilities offered by the use of picture books (PB) with different characteristics with respect to mathematical content for inducing early mathematical thinking. Research suggests that PB can be used as a pedagogical tool to support children's mathematical development (Dunphy, 2020), as they provide a meaningful framework for learning mathematics (Van den Heuvel-Panhuizen et al., 2009; 2016). Marston (2014) proposes the following categorization of PB according to their mathematical content: PB with (a) explicit mathematics, written to teach children mathematics, (b) embedded mathematics (EM books), written primarily to entertain but mathematics is intentional, and (c) perceived mathematics (PM books), in which mathematics is unintentional and implicit in the story. This is a qualitative case study in which a 4-year-old child participated. Two regular trade picture books, an EM book and a PM book, which tell appealing stories, were read to the child in separate sessions. A book-reading scenario including mathematics-related questions and activities was used. Vignettes of reader-child interactions were analyzed. The child's parents were informed about the study and a consent form was provided to them. Findings showed that using both PB, irrespectively of their type, had the power to elicit the child's thinking in various mathematical topics and processes and also to reveal child's conceptions, competences and difficulties in different mathematical areas. These findings suggest implications for the possibilities of using PB with either intentional or unintentional mathematical content, as a didactic tool and also as a formative assessment tool in early mathematics.

picture books, mathematical thinking, embedded mathematics, perceived mathematics, case study

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Parents' beliefs about children's play: play support, academic focus, tradition and children's right to play

Presenters
Rozafa Ferizi- Shala, University of Prishtina, Albania

All authors
Rozafa Ferizi- Shala, University of Prishtina, Albania
Majlinda Gjelaj, University of Prishtina, Albania
Arian Musliu, University of Prishtina, Albania

This study aims to explore parents' beliefs about children's play from the perspective of play support and academic focus and also to measure their beliefs about how much tradition influences children's right to play. Fogle and Mendez (2006) developed and validated the rating scale measurement Parent Play Beliefs Scale (PPBS) to measure parents' beliefs about play. LaForett and Mendez (2016) also show that it is essential to consider how culture can influence parents' opinions based on cultural background about play and its impact on children's lives. This study is based on the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987). The family is the first social environment for the child, so how play takes place within the family and what place it has in the child's daily life is very important (Whitebread, 2012). Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used (Matthews and Ross, 2010). A questionnaire (PPBS) was conducted with 86 parents from 4 public institutions in Prishtina. To see how tradition influences play 8 parents were interviewed. The questionnaire (PPBS) was initially translated and adapted into Albanian. Participation in the study was voluntary. The main findings show that parents have an open attitude towards supporting play, but also towards an academic focus. The way they conceive of play is closely linked to tradition, which affects the child's right to play. Social awareness about the child's right to play is necessary for our society. A social investment in parenting is vital to orient parents towards the healthy growth of their children.

parents, play support, academic focus, tradition, right to play

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set E22 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G320, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES IN ARTS AND CREATIVITY

Chaired by Nicola Wallis, Fitzwilliam Museum, United Kingdom

Connecting architecture, design, music and literature to early childhood education: Volunteer Architect's strategies for social reconstruction in RS, Brazil

Presenters
Clarice Bourscheid, Autonomous, Brazil
Luciane Zorzo, Zorzo Design/Volunteer Architects, Brazil

All authors
Clarice Bourscheid, Autonomous, Brazil
Luciane Zorzo, Zorzo Design/Volunteer Architects, Brazil

This study aims to integrate knowledge from architecture (Ceppi and Zini, 2013), design (Wahl, 2020; Arruda, 2017), music (Schafer, 2001), and literature (Zumthor, 2018) into early childhood education.
Building on the work of Bourscheid (2019) and Bourscheid and Barbosa (2021), the objective is to foster an aesthetic-poetic approach to early childhood education. Design as a process for generating positive impact. We learn together (Sennett, 2012), especially with children (Malaguzzi, in Cagliari, 2016). Our methodology lies in the convergence of different fields and the subtle presence of beauty and joy in the lived experiences of 183 children in two reconstructed schools. Focusing on the dimensions of “health and wellbeing”, “connection with nature,” “environmental education,” “movement,” and “art and culture,” the latter serves as a lens to assess the impact of music and storytelling workshops with children (0-6) at kindergarten.This is an early-stage study. Data collection includes reports from coordinators, audio and video recordings, to map contexts and actions that generate sensations and connections, fostering new meanings (Vecchi, 2010). Informed consent was obtained for the use of images and testimonials for academic and dissemination purposes. By strengthening sensory and cultural connections, this strategy enhances wellbeing, joy and sense of belonging. Cooperation, solidarity, and creativity have proven essential in overcoming the effects of a climate-related tragedy. The collaboration of professionals from different fields is fundamental to ensuring high-quality early childhood education for all. Considering subtlety played a key role in fostering a vibrant, meaningful school environment. These initiatives demonstrate their potential as a model for other educational contexts.

kindergarten, aesthetics, cultural experience, design, reconstruction

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Personal, material, and social engagement: what children's experiences with art museums tell us about caring and inclusive pedagogies

Presenters
Nicola Wallis, Fitzwilliam Museum, United Kingdom

All authors
Nicola Wallis, Fitzwilliam Museum, United Kingdom

My doctoral study aimed to understand the nature of young children's engagement with art museums and the implications for early years and museum practice. Research shows that museums support learning (Dilli and Dümenci, 2015; Rapoport and Keaton, 2021), communication (Hackett et al., 2023; Lester et al., 2023) and relationship-building (Callanan et al., 2020). We need to develop inclusive practices to make these benefits available to all (González-Herrera et al., 2023). The study draws on social constructivist museum theory (Hein, 1998) and pedagogies of new materialism (Hood and Kraehe, 2017). A cultural rights framework (Drury and Ruckart, 2023) underpins the research methodology. A qualitative praxeological paradigm (Pascal and Bertram, 2012) shaped the study. Eleven families with children aged 2-4 years took part in accompanied museum visits, documented using fieldnotes, photographs, and journaling. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022) was carried out on the data. Informed consent was negotiated throughout with child and adult participants given options for different ways of engaging with or withdrawing from elements of the research. Photographs are shared with consent, and participant names are pseudonyms. Findings demonstrate that children engage in sophisticated ways with museum objects and spaces. My solar system model shows how material, personal, and social engagement are nurtured by the time, space, objects and care offered by museums. My work has implications for how adults attend to children’s engagement with their environments, and what this means for their inclusion in cultural life more broadly.

engagement, museum learning, cultural rights, inclusive practice, arts-informed methods

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Dance making in a STEAM project in early childhood education

Presenters
Anna Lindqvist, Umeå University, Sweden

All authors
Anna Lindqvist, Umeå University, Sweden

The aim of this study is to investigate how dance emerges in a STEAM project in preschool. What can dance become in STEAM teaching? Research shows that opportunities for learning through dance vary across Swedish preschools. For some preschool teachers, teaching dance appears to be challenging. Different types of child-initiated dance are encouraged, and preschool teachers emphasize the importance of including all children (Pastorek Gripson et al., 2022). Dance is often described as "girlish"(Risner, 2017). Areljung and Günther-Hanssen (2022) highlight the importance of applying a gender lens in STEAM practices. This research is based on a sociomaterial perspective (Barad, 2007). "Agential realism" explores how social and material entities are entangled. Spaces, objects, phenomena, and concepts are intertwined and mutually shape one another. The research project was conducted in collaboration with preschool teachers. One preschool teacher structured a dance activity based on a fairy tale. The group consisted of 12 children aged 4–5 years. Data was collected through video recordings. Ethical guidelines were followed. A consent form, including information about the project and the participants' rights, was provided to parents and preschool teachers. Written consent was collected by the researchers. Findings indicate that the fairy tale stimulated children to express and experience emotions through their bodies. Learning in dance can involve embodiment, play, and sensory exploration. The children engaged in activities related to shape, space, body, and effort. Various dance activities emerged, involving intra-actions with props, among other elements. From a gender perspective, inclusivity and collaboration were evident.

bodying, dance, fairy tale, gender, STEAM

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set E23 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G329, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) PROFESSIONALIZATION OF DIVERSITY IN ECEC

Chaired by Svenja Garbade, University of Hildesheim, Germany

Doing care in drug-addicted families from a child´s perspective

Presenters
Stephanie Meiland, Hildesheim University, Germany

All authors
Stephanie Meiland, Hildesheim University, Germany

The study explores the everyday life of children of drug-addicted families, their subjective perspectives, experiences and coping strategies. Usually growing up in drug-addicted families is understood as a form of social disadvantage that makes childhood unsafe and children vulnerable in a specific way (e.g. BMFSFJ, 2020; Klein, 2018). Further there has been a lack of sufficient engagement within the experiences and constructions of meaning of children themselves as well of an in-depth examination of the topic that goes beyond assumed causalities and categories of difference. The theoretical framework of this study is based on childhood theory, that takes children as social actors and being, who are involved in shaping their own childhood (e.g. Alanen, 1997; Honig, 2009). As part of this case-study empirical findings were gained on three levels of understanding (childhood, being a child and doing child) by using a multi-material approach (interview, photos, field protocols; e.g. Fuhs, 2012) and the analytical method of

hermeneutic sociology of knowledge (e.g. Soeffner, 1989). Informed consent of children and their parents was continuously obtained through the process of field research as well as a concept in case of child protection was developed. In contrast to the so-called normal childhood, the results show that a diversity-sensitive approach is needed, that highlights differences in the experience of being a child as well as specific needs for inclusion and participation. The study imply consequences regarding diversity educational practices and the professionalization of early childhood educators.

drug-addicted families, doing care, being a child, case understanding, professionalization

The padagogical demonstration of irrelevance. Early childhood educators in the day nursery and central patterns of interpretation of gender

Presenters
Svenja Garbade, University of Hildesheim, Germany

All authors
Svenja Garbade, University of Hildesheim, Germany

The study discussed in the presentation therefore examines the central patterns of interpretation of gender among educational professionals in the crèche in order to clarify the significance of gender for the professionals. The significance of gender for educational professionals is a recurring theme in both theoretical and practical discourse (Focks, 2016; Kubandt, 2016). In a constructivist understanding of gender, however, the question arises as to whether the interpretations of childhood education professionals are more relevant than the gender of the professionals (Rendtorff 2006). The theoretical framework of the study is the question of the professionalization of educational professionals, taking into account the social construction of gender (Garfinkel, 1967). In a constructivist paradigm of qualitative research, 12 stimulated recall interviews were conducted in which the professionals watched a video of their own practice in the day nursery. The constructivist grounded theory was used to reconstruct the patterns of interpretation of gender (Charmaz, 2014). The videography was ethically significant, as the professionals were filmed and, accordingly, children could also be seen on the videos. For the research project, the interviews were the material to be analysed. The main finding is that German professionals are unable to fulfil the diffuse demand to put gender into practice, so that they declare gender irrelevant, be it in children's choice of toys, parental work or the consideration of discrimination. The results imply that practice needs methods of organisational translation in order to meet the demands. In addition, resources must be made available for gender-equitable work in terms of education policy.

day nursery, gender, professionalization, constructivism, stimulated-recall-interviews

Vignette-based qualification for inclusion and diversity

Presenters
Peter Cloos, University of Hildesheim, Germany

All authors
Peter Cloos, University of Hildesheim, Germany

This presentation hichlights the need for further professionalisation with regard to inclusion/diversity. It asks whether working with vignettes in higher education teaching can contribute to professionalisation.
The lecture takes up the results of studies that qualitatively examine competences in dealing with gender (Garbade, 2023), disability (Cloos and Töpfer, 2022; Krähnert et al., 2022) and poverty (Kerle, 2023). Case understanding is regarded as a central professional task (Abbott, 1988). The presentation suggests using empirical materials from the

research projects as vignettes that enable case-based reflection. The different qualitative studies recorded 30 interviews, 32 conversations and ethnographic data from several weeks of observation. They were analysed using either grounded theory (Strauss, 1994) or documentary method (Bohnsack, 2014). The studies were reviewed by the ethics committee and judged to be ethically unobjectionable. A signed informed consent was obtained from all participants. Research ethics issues in the context of diversity were reflected on extensively in the research groups. The studies show that in the context of inclusion/diversity, the competence to deal with dilemmatic situations and case understanding are central to professional practice. They underline the special challenge of dealing with categorizations without dramatizing difference. They show ways in which the diversity of children can be recognized pedagogically. When conducting seminars, casuistic case work with vignettes has proven to be a successful strategy for in-depth reflection on inclusion/diversity. The working materials are made available on a digital platform for different contexts. They contain contextual information on the respective topic and the empirical procedures.

professionalisation, higher education qualification, vignettes, case understanding, reflexivity

Symposium Set E24 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G362, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

TEACHER EMPATHY, EMOTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Chaired by Mandy Cooke, Deakin University, Australia

Coming to practice 'with emotions' differently in educational praxis

Presenters
Mandy Cooke, Deakin University, Australia

All authors
Mandy Cooke, Deakin University, Australia

This research explored the emotions associated with educators' pedagogical risk-taking in early childhood education (ECE). Research shows that educator risk-taking supports innovation, creativity, professional growth (Howard et al., 2018; Henriksen, 2016; Little and Stapleton, 2021), advocacy, social justice and high-quality ECE (Cooke et al., 2020a; Grieshaber et al., 2014). Yet there is a scarcity of research exploring educator's lived experiences of pedagogical risk-taking. As an education focused practice theory, the theory of practice architectures provided a useful theoretical and analytical tool to explore the sayings, doings and relatings of risk-taking practices and the conditions that enable and constrain practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). Undertaken using a qualitative constructivist paradigm, the multisite ethno-case study (Parker-Jenkins, 2016) was conducted with 55 educators in three Australian ECE settings. Analysis was conducted using thematic analysis drawing on the theory of practice architectures. Written consent was received from all participants and quotes are presented using pseudonyms. A reflexive praxis stance was used to reduce the inherent subjectivity of qualitative research methods. Findings identify that educators' risk-taking was characterised by negative affect and emotional labour. Negative affect was due to the possibility of undesirable outcomes and relational tensions associated with what was 'best'. Emotional labour resulted from educators' attempts to display certainty in their practice, despite the uncertainties inherent within risk-taking. In response to these findings, a model for bringing emotions and relational tensions to the fore as collective feeling-thinking praxis will be presented - as a strategy for embedding courage and humanity in educational praxis.

pedagogical risk-taking, emotions, affect, praxis, the theory of practice architectures

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Teacher empathy in early childhood education: A mixed-methods approach to valuing diversity

Presenters
Charyna Ayu Rizkyanti, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia

All authors
Charyna Ayu Rizkyanti, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia
Popi Rosepti, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia

This research aims to gather both qualitative and quantitative data on how early childhood (EC) teachers practice empathy and leverage these insights to develop a teacher empathy scale tailored to the Indonesian context. We found little research focused on teacher empathy in young children (Hodgkins, 2022; Vaquier, 2020), particularly within early childhood education in Indonesia. Some previous studies revealed discussions that focus on how empathy can influence to teacher-student relationship (Hodgkins, 2022), support positive learning environment (Kim, 2017), promoting equity classroom (Christenson et al., 2021), also school culture (McKeown, 2022). We draw upon Noddings' care theory (1995), framing teaching as a caring activity where empathy fosters positive relationships, and Cooper's theory (2011), identifying key empathy types in education. We employ an exploratory design (1) a qualitative approach that involves semi-structured interviews with nine participants, analyzed using the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method; (2) quantitative data is collected from 420 participants to develop the teacher empathy scale and analyzed using Rasch model for the construct validity. A consent form and information sheet was provided, including the use of Pseudonyms, also the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. The qualitative findings illustrated a range of experiences in dealing with students' traits, the ability to communicate with students and parents, and classroom activities to nurture empathy, while the quantitative phase validated these insights through the development of the Basic Teacher Empathy Scale (BTES). This study contributes to policy makers and teacher educators to build a pedagogical framework for early childhood-empathy-based education.

early childhood education, empathy, preschool teachers, teacher empathy

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Expectations of Pre-school Teachers Towards Two-Year-Old Children: Implications for Adaptation and Wellbeing in Czech Pre-schools

Presenters
Barbora Loudová Stralczynská, Charles University Prague, Czechia
Martina Kampichler, Masaryk University, Czechia

All authors
Barbora Loudová Stralczynská, Charles University Prague, Czechia
Martina Kampichler, Masaryk University, Czechia
Vlastimil Chytrý, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Czechia

This study examines pre-school teachers' expectations towards two-year-olds in Czechia and their impact on adaptation and wellbeing. It explores: What expectations do teachers have regarding self-sufficiency and adaptation? How do these expectations align with child development principles? How do they relate to the wider pre-school system in Czechia? Pre-school enrolment of two-year-olds is on the rise across Europe (OECD, 2024; European Council, 2019). However, admission standards often remain decentralized and result in inconsistent and developmentally inappropriate expectations (European Commission, 2025), which may cause stress for children and parents and complicate adaption (Pianta et al., 2009). Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1994)

capturing the complex interplay between individual and structural conditions this study examines how teacher expectations and systemic factors shape adaptation. A quantitative survey of 574 pre-school teachers was analysed using descriptive statistics, non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA, Spearman's correlation), and thematic analysis. The study followed the EECERA Ethical Code (2024), ensuring voluntary participation, anonymity, and informed consent. Ethical safeguards focused on avoiding reinforcement of biased views on child readiness. Results show that key teacher expectations exceed typical developmental norms. Expectations were not significantly influenced by teacher experience or education ($p > 0.05$, Cohen's $d < 0.2$), suggesting systemic rather than individual factors drive these expectations. Findings highlight the need to: 1) Revise admission criteria to reflect developmental realities, 2) Increase relevant teacher training, 3) Enhance structural support for younger children and their families. A clearer policy framework would support adaptation, reduce stress, and promote equity in pre-school access.

pre-school teachers, admission standards, toddlers, kindergarten, child's wellbeing

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set E25 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 13:00 – 14:20 | Room G366, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

PLAY AS RESEARCH METHOD AND RESISTANCE

Chaired by Jana Chandler, University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom

Research with young children: Play as a method.

Presenters
Jana Chandler, University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom

All authors
Jana Chandler, University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom

Applying a critical lens to the adult researcher this research explores possibilities for novel practices when conducting research with young children. Implementing children's rights in early childhood through research is essential (UN Committee, 2005). Acknowledging barriers to realising children's participation (e.g. Lundy et al., 2024; Tisdall et al., 2024), many adults grapple to realise children's rights in practice. Young children's perspectives in research are often limited (e.g. Kauhanen et al., 2022; Eurochild, 2023), with parental views obtained on their behalf. Yet, children's perspectives can offer valuable insights in improving practice (Wright, 2023) and should have a rights-based place in society. Adopting the childhood studies perspective of children as social actors and agentic (James and Prout, 2014: Tisdall et al., 2024), this paper also draws on theories of space and place to problematise the understandings of spatial social relations, practices and power (Massey, 2005). Situated in the social constructivism paradigm, ethnography-informed approach was used (Shah, 2017; Pink, 2015). Methods have been informed by Mosaic approach (Clark, 2017). In addition to the national and international ethical frameworks, reflexivity (Coyne et al., 2021) and ethical mindfulness (Canosa et al., 2018) were adopted to navigate ethical challenges in research. Working with two early years settings over the period of eight weeks, children's ongoing consent was obtained (Unicef, online). Challenging the orthodox methods, the most important preliminary findings suggest play as a method for research with young children. This research intends to contribute to the rhetoric associated with realising a child's human right to participation in the research practice context.

ethics, research, children, participation, play

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exploring a 'Movement' Project in One Infant Room at a University Lab Center

Presenters
Jeesun Jung, Ohio University, United States

All authors
Jeesun Jung, Ohio University, United States

This study aims to explore how teachers implement a 'movement' project in an infant room and how infants participate in the project. The project encompasses a broad spectrum of motion-related experiences, ranging from visually perceived movement (optical sensory) to object movement caused by the infants and to the infants' self-initiated bodily movement. Existing literature highlights project approach as an in-depth investigation of a topic of children's interest, led by children and facilitated by teachers (Jin et al., 2023). However, there is a lack of empirical studies on infant project work. The study is based on sociocultural theory by Vygotsky (1978), project approach (Katz and Chard, 2000), and Embodied Cognition (Thelen and Smith, 1994), which cognition is rooted in movement and sensory experiences. This qualitative case study is framed within constructivism. Over three months, four infant teachers and six infants, aged from eight to twelve months, participated. Data sources include observation, individual teacher interviews, video-recording of activities and teachers' planning meetings, and documents. Consent forms were provided to and negotiated with all participating teachers and the parents of the infants. Pseudonyms are used. The participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. The findings show that the infants were active partners and learners, deeply engaged in this project, and that the teachers' observation, reflection, and accurate interpretation of the infants' interests were essential in implementing the successful project. The findings imply that project approach can be implemented as pedagogical practice even with the youngest group of children.

project approach, infant led, teacher reflection, play, infant teacher

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Resistance stories: Telling and sharing material stories of play as a resistance to the formalisation of early childhood education.

Presenters
Jo Albin-Clark, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

All authors
Jo Albin-Clark, Edge Hill University, United Kingdom
Nathan Jon Archer, Independent Researcher, United Kingdom

This two-year ongoing research enquiry aims to tell stories of how play is embodied in everyday materialities as an act of resistance to the formalisation of learning in early childhood education (ECE) in England. As resistance scholarship grows (Albin-Clark and Archer, 2023; 2024) its enactments require scrutiny. Building on how resistances are lively materialities (Albin-Clark et al., 2024), like Malone et al. (2020) we look to more-than-human resistances. In our enquiry we theorise the storying of resistances with feminist posthuman and materialist thinking to notice what is situated, multiple, embodied and in relation with the more-than-human world (Osgood, 2023; Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016). In a post-qualitative paradigm, with arts-based research-creation (Manning and Massumi, 2014), we gather visual, audio/video expressions with twenty educators. Iterative analysis will be dialogic with participants and creative noticing of spaces and materialities in data. Ethical considerations employ international guidelines (EECERA, 2025) including confidentiality, risk management and secure data handling. With informed consent alongside data that is more than language, we account for relationships with materials and spaces. Preliminary findings suggest that

resistances are situated in places and spaces. Stories reveal ‘idle moments’ resistant to adult agendas through hesitation and alertness to events, such as noticing a spider’s web. Analysis reveals ecologies of minor, everyday events that push back on major politics. Implications for practice suggest that whilst play can be marginalised, storytelling pushes back as a hopeful advocacy that embraces a liveliness beyond the child. The research platforms storytelling as an applicable and relevant powerful mode of resistance.

resistance stories feminist posthuman formalisation storiesplay

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F

14:50 – 16:10, Wednesday 27th August 2025

Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava

Symposium Set F1 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G103, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

ASPECTS OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Susan Catapano, University of North Carolina Wilmington, United States

Pre-Service Teachers' Social Self-Efficacy: The Role of Institutional Belonging and Perceived Ostracism

Presenters
Anastasia Vatou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors
Anastasia Vatou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Vasilis Grammatikopoulos, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Evridiki Zachopoulou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Maria Tsitiridou-Evangelou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

This study aims to examine pre-service teachers' social self-efficacy and its associations with institutional belonging and perceived ostracism. This study addresses three research questions:

1. What are the levels of social self-efficacy, institutional belonging, and perceived ostracism among pre-service teachers?
2. To what extent does institutional belonging influence social self-efficacy?
3. How is institutional belonging related to perceived ostracism?

This study builds upon existing research on teacher wellbeing, social self-efficacy, and institutional belonging in the context of higher education. Previous studies highlighted the importance of social self-efficacy in shaping pre-service teachers' confidence, classroom management skills, and resilience in the face of professional challenges (Pendergast et al., 2011). Rooted in Social Cognitive Theory, it extends prior research on teacher wellbeing by exploring the interplay of these constructs in a higher education context. In the context of teacher education, social self-efficacy pertains to pre-service teachers' confidence in their ability to engage effectively in social interactions within educational settings. The study employs a quantitative methodology. A sample of 271 pre-service teachers selected via convenience sampling, completed the Social Self-Efficacy Scale, Institutional Belongingness Questionnaire, and Workplace Ostracism Scale. Inclusion criteria required participants to be currently enrolled undergraduate students. Ethical considerations included voluntary participation, informed consent, and data confidentiality. The findings emphasize the significance of fostering institutional belonging to enhance social self-efficacy and mitigate perceived ostracism among pre-service teachers. These insights inform teacher education programs, advocating for policies and practices that create inclusive and supportive learning environments. Strengthening these factors can contribute to improved teacher preparedness and wellbeing.

social self-efficacy, institutional belonging, perceived ostracism, pre-service teachers, teacher education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Constructivist Practices in Undergraduate Teacher Education: Ideas from the Field

Presenters
Susan Catapano, University of North Carolina Wilmington, United States
Lynn Navin, University of Missouri St. Louis, United States

All authors
Susan Catapano, University of North Carolina Wilmington, United States
Lynn Navin, University of Missouri St. Louis, United States

This study aims to explore how 10 early childhood teacher educators model constructivist practices in undergraduate college classrooms. Research on constructivist practices in teacher education is abundant in the area of science and math education (Boz and Celtin-Dinhar, 2023; Gressham, 2023; and flipped classrooms (Noguera and Laia Albo, 2022) but is limited in EC teacher education and is often focused on the pre-service teacher perspective (Marshall, 2008; McNaughton and Krentz, 2000) rather than the teacher educator perspective (Ray, 2008). The theoretical framework for this study draws upon the progressive theory of Dewey (1938) and constructivist theories of Piaget (1950) and Vygotsky (1997). This study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm. Un-structured focus interviews (Merton and Kendall,1946) were given to ECE teacher educators. A Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012) of interview responses was conducted. Participants are teacher educators who volunteered to participate in the study. Their identities are hidden. Findings noted that teacher educators used approaches based on constructivist practices of active learning and exploration. Strategies identified included learner-led questions, projects, discussing case studies, choice-based assignments, real-world simulations, and hands-on application of the content. A guiding checklist was developed for faculty. Strategies and experiences of early childhood university faculty will be summarized and presented in a set of recommendations for teacher educator faculty to use in preparing early childhood teachers. The aim is to increase beginning ECE teachers use of constructivist practices in their classrooms by experiencing modeling of practices in their teacher education experiences.

teacher education, coaching, constructivism, pedagogy, beginning teachers

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Early childhood teacher students' professional development and formation in practical training

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

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

How can early childhood teacher students' experiences with professional development as leaders in practical training be understood in a formative perspective? Based on teacher students' professional development (Sørensen and Bjørndal, 2021) we explore students' professional formation in a Norwegian kindergarten context, where professional knowledge is challenged (Eik et al., 2016; Ministry of Education and Research, 2018; Vala and Sell, 2020). This study explores students' professional development (Sørensen and Bjørndal, 2021) in practicum from a formational perspective (Klafki, 2011). The study draws on 14 group discussions with 83 EC teacher students. The study has a hermeneutic approach. Through 1) an inductive thematic analysis based on emphasis and frequency in the material (Repstad, 2007) and 2) an abductive analysis process (Tjora, 2021) alternating between empirical data and theory, we identified key phenomena and concepts. We have ensured anonymity and informed consent for the participants and been mindful of how power aspects and our positions as teachers and researchers may affect

participants and results. We aimed for respectful interactions, and transparency and multiple perspectives have been highlighted (Bertram et al., 2025). Being two researchers has provided broader perspectives in our ethical reflections. Theoretical knowledge and professional language are significant for arguing and justifying professional decisions, still, several students avoid causing disruptions and disagreements in the kindergarten community. This is interesting, as interacting and pedagogical discussions can be seen as central parts of professional formation. The study points to formation perspectives in the education and how to promote students' professional development.

formation, professional development, early childhood teacher education, early childhood leadership, professional practice.

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F2 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G104, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATIVE RIGHTS

Chaired by Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University, United Kingdom

“The teacher has to choose”: young children’s experiences of their participative rights in early education in Wales

Presenters
Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University, United Kingdom

All authors
Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University, United Kingdom
Sarah Chicken, University of the West of England, United Kingdom
Jacqui Lewis, University of the West of England, United Kingdom
Patrizio De Rossi, University of the West of England, United Kingdom
Jane Waters-Davies, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, United Kingdom Alison Murphy, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, United Kingdom
Jennie Clement, Cardiff Metropolitain University, United Kingdom
Jane Williams, Swansea University, United Kingdom

The research aims to explore, how young children's participative rights in schools are experienced by young children in Wales. We build upon the field of participatory methodologies (Clark and Moss 2017; Arnott and Wall 2021), the literature on researching with young children (Urbina-Garcia et al., 2021), and research which explores children’s views on their right to participate (Kosher, 2018). A construction of the child as an agentic meaning-maker was adopted (Malaguzzi, 1998), and a rights-based approach that draws on UNCRC article-12 (UNICEF, 1989). The research is underpinned by interpretivism (Denscombe, 2021) and phenomenology (Eberle, 2014). Data was gathered with 95 children (aged-5-7), using 21 focus groups in 10 schools across Wales. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was utilised (Eberle, 2014), in order to reduce data (Flick, 2024), yet maintain the focus on lived experiences (Denscombe, 2021). EECERA ethical principles underpinned the research, specially; respect for all, equity, dignity, awareness of power dynamics and a lack of prejudice (Bertram et al., 2024[SC1]). Alongside a focus on ‘hearing’ authentic ‘voices’ of children (Ceballos and Susinos 2022). Drawing on Lundy’s Model (2007) as a framework, findings suggest that children did not always report experiencing opportunities to make decisions and be heard by those who had influence. There were some exceptions including choices at playtime and in specific boundaries (Clement, TBC) contexts. The work highlights the need for early years practitioners to highlight and talk about choices, decision making and agency more explicitly, so children are aware of, when and what participative rights they have.

child voice, participation, participative rights, children’s views, early education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Children's Rights through the looking glass: A critical analysis of negotiating children's rights within an early childhood care and education setting in Ireland.

Presenters
Georga Dowling, Maynooth University, Ireland

All authors
Georga Dowling, Maynooth University, Ireland

This study critically reviewed how young children's rights were visualised, understood and negotiated within an early childhood setting in Ireland? Lundy's model of participation (2007), Guard's reconceptualisation of babies' voices (2023) and French's extensive literature on the importance of relational pedagogy (French, 2019) highlights the importance of participation, rights and relationships with young children. Theorists focusing on sociocultural contexts illuminated this study. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1971) highlights the sense of belonging as a basic right (Moss, 2007). Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (1986) emphasises that interactions and relationships are crucial to enact children's rights. This is a qualitative insider study encompassing all preschool classes in the setting: thirty-four children aged 3 and 5 years, five educators and three parents (all parents were asked). Video observations, field notes, child conferencing, children's drawings and photographs were used to gather the children's experiences. Focus groups, interviews and pedagogical conversations captured adults opinions. The rationale for utilising a multiplicity of methodologies ensures a holistic understanding of the experiences of the children were gathered. All Articles of the UNCRC were upheld, the children were viewed as knowledgeable partners. Power dynamics were addressed throughout. Informed consent and assent were sought on an ongoing basis. Confidentiality and anonymity were upheld. The key findings were relational pedagogy is essential to ensure children's rights. Embedding rights within policy is essential for enactment of rights in practice. Developing a robust community is integral to fulfilling children's rights. The role of the educator is central to children's rights. This research can inform future policy and practice.

rights, participation, relational pedagogy, inclusion, voices

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Teaching young children is heart work not hard work: Co construction of children's participatory rights framework through teachers images

Presenters
Naseema Shaik, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa
Trevor Moodley, The University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa

All authors
Naseema Shaik, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa
Trevor Moodley, The University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa

How do teachers' interpretations of children's participation through images influence the co-construction of a participatory rights framework in early childhood education? Research on implementation of children's participatory rights in ECCE in South Africa remains sparse, with challenges in effective execution (Shaik, 2021). Internationally, studies by Correia et al. (2020) have shed light on relationships between teachers' and children's views on participation rights. These studies highlight the significance of teachers' practices, both self-reported and observed, as key links between teachers' and children's perspectives. However, no research has explored how teachers'

understanding of participation, through use of images, contributes to the co-construction of a children's participatory rights framework. To examine this, the study draws on the pedagogical theories of Maria Montessori (1974) on love and education, Paulo Freire's (1973) theory of conscientisation, and axis of belonging in Formosinho and Formosinho's (2016) pedagogy of participation. These theoretical perspectives investigate how teachers' interpretations of children's participation through images influence the co-creation of a participatory rights framework. A qualitative, participatory methodology was employed, interpreting images drawn by teachers to understand their perceptions of children's participation. Consent was obtained from participating teachers. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with the option to withdraw at any time. Key Findings reveal Participation as giving and receiving love, Participation as a sense of belonging, Participation as a sense of wellbeing Findings emphasize the importance of teachers' voices in shaping the children's participatory rights framework. Love, belonging, and wellbeing emerge as critical factors in co-constructing the framework.

teachers' voices, children's participatory rights framework, South Africa

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set F3 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G113, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

CREATIVE APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT

Chaired by Claire Butterly, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

The Recruitment of the Educator funded through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)

Presenters
Claire Butterly, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

All authors
Claire Butterly, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

The aim of this PhD study is to examine the recruitment practices and identify challenges faced by ECEC Managers in hiring educators funded under the Access and Inclusion Model(AIM). AIM supports in Ireland have grown by over 150% between 2016-2022 (Goodman, 2022), highlighting the need for quality, inclusive ECEC settings. However, the European Commission (2021) highlights recruitment and retention challenges Europe-wide. Key factors in this include renumeration and conditions, qualifications and continued professional learning opportunities (Partnership for Public Good, 2021). Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory (2006) forms the theoretical foundations for this research. The study was conducted using an exploratory sequential mixed method research design (Creswell 2014), which consisted of online surveys being completed by Managers. Following the analysis of 178 surveys, 8 interviews with Managers conducted. Survey data was analysed using SPSS and thematic analysis. Ethical approval was granted by MIREC, Mary Immaculate College's Ethics Committee. Participants received an information letter and consented to engage in the online survey and interview, having the right to withdraw at any time. Managers consistently reported challenges in recruiting educators for AIM positions, which is having a direct impact on inclusion efforts. Despite proactive steps, such as increasing pay rates, offering more hours, and leveraging online recruitment platforms, many are still struggling to attract suitable candidates. This research highlights the need for AIM policy reform, including increased funding and greater managerial autonomy in approving additional educator support. These changes could improve inclusion by ensuring staffing needs are met more effectively.

early childhood education, inclusion, educators, recruitment, professionalisation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Examining the significance of recognition and resources for teacher recruitment in different urban areas

Presenters
Marika Pylkkö, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

All authors
Marika Pylkkö, University of Eastern Finland, Finland
Sonja Kosunen, University of Eastern Finland, Finland
Heidi Huilla, University of Eastern Finland, Finland
Reija Ahola, University of Helsinki, Finland

In this research we examine, 1) how do directors of ECEC centers talk about sociospatial differentiation in their work, and 2) how do directors talk about different working environments relating to teacher recruitment issues? Shortage of formally qualified ECEC teachers as job applicants is a pressing concern in Finland, where recruitment difficulties are being especially pronounced in the biggest urban areas. Recruitment difficulties together with the issue of urban segregation raises concern for teacher segregation, i.e. the uneven allocation of teachers in urban areas (Bernelius and Huilla, 2021). Availability of qualified teachers is a matter of equitable access to ECEC, and thus an issue of social justice of the ECEC services (Alexandersen et al., 2021). According to Nancy Fraser, both recognition of various people and social groups, as well as redistribution of economic resources, are necessary aspects for society's social justice (Fraser and Honneth 2003). We apply Fraser's theoretical framework to examine directors' speech on the significance of socio-spatial differentiation to teacher recruitment issues. In this qualitative study, semi-structured interviews were conducted together with 8 directors of ECEC centers. The interviewees were chosen based on the socioeconomically varying locations of their workplaces. All interviews were based on informed consent, and ethical considerations were applied in the producing, storage and representation of the data. According to the preliminary results, recognition and resources do not distribute evenly in the sociospatial framework. Policies and practices would benefit from considering both recognition and redistribution together to support equitable access to ECEC.

ECEC directors, recognition, social justice, teacher recruitment, resources

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Supporting Professionalism through an Alternative Approach to the 'Pay Question'

Presenters
Ailbhe Booth, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland

All authors
Oonagh Fleming, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland
Paul Gleeson, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland
Anne-Marie Brooks, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland
Ailbhe Booth, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Ireland

This research aimed to assess the impact of an innovative approach to improving pay and conditions of ECEC staff. Emerging from First 5: A Whole-of-Government-Strategy, two key plans were developed in parallel, Partnership for Public Good (2021) and Nurturing Skills (2021), to promote key components of quality early childhood education and care systems (ECEC; European Union, 2019). Both plans, which were informed by extensive programmes of research and stakeholder engagement, set out a roadmap for the sector in terms of the development of the workforce. Supporting Pay increase is a key enabler of many of the actions in the Nurturing Skills. Core Funding, a new paradigm shifting, supply side funding scheme for the ECEC sector in Ireland, was a key recommendation from this work. This funding supports services to meet the cost of independently negotiated minimum rates of pay for the sector workforce. Using administrative data, this research evaluates progress on key indicators relating to improvements in

pay, a graduate led workforce and staff retention rates. Information about data processing for research and statistical analysis was detailed in the privacy statement for the administrative system. No personal information was processed, and results are discussed in aggregate. The findings suggest improvements in staff pay and graduate supports. This presentation will explore how the innovative approach to the 'Pay' question is contributing to professionalism of the sector. To inform how ongoing supply-side funding can be used to support and strengthen the ongoing process of professionalisation for those working in the sector

funding, innovation, sustainability, quality, professionalism

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F4 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G114, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

DEVELOPING SERVICES FOR UNDER 3S - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Chaired by Dagmar Nemček Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

A Systematic Scoping Review on Under 3-Year-Old Children's Transition from Home to Early Childhood Education and Care

Presenters
Catharina van Trijp, University of Stavanger, Norway
Sara Esmaeeli, University of Stavanger, Norway

All authors
Catharina van Trijp, University of Stavanger, Norway
Sara Esmaeeli, University of Stavanger, Norway
Marianne Ree, University of Stavanger, Norway
Tove Erna Belland, University of Stavanger, Norway
Gunnar Magnus Eidsvåg, University of Stavanger, Norway
Mariella Asikanius, University of Stavanger, Norway
Lars Yngve Rosell, University of Stavanger, Norway

This systematic scoping review aims to identify and analyze peer-reviewed research articles on the transition of children under 3 years old from home to ECEC, focusing on study characteristics, methodology, key concepts, findings, and implications. Globally, more children under three are attending ECEC for substantial hours (OECD, 2021), making well-supported transitions increasingly important for wellbeing and development (O'Connor, 2017). However, research on this transition under 3-years-olds remains limited (Gath et al., 2024). Following scoping review protocols (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), we did not adopt a single theoretical stance but engaged with diverse perspectives in the literature—including attachment theory, ecological systems theory, and sociocultural approaches—to understand how transitions are conceptualized. The study aligns with a pragmatic research paradigm. A systematic search of national and international databases, conducted independently in pairs, identified 20 relevant articles (January 2013–August 2024) in English, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish. PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2022) were followed. As the review relied solely on publicly available sources and involved no personal data, ethical approval was not required. Most studies originated from Europe, particularly Finland. Research was typically descriptive or exploratory, using longitudinal designs with qualitative or quantitative methods and multiple informants. Key topics included children's adaptive behavior, ECEC quality, stress, and parental roles. Findings highlight the need for gradual, well-structured transitions, strong parent-staff collaboration, and culturally responsive practices. Future research, practices and policy should include children's voices and explore diverse family and care system experiences, and the usability of tools.

transition, home, ECEC, under 3-year-olds, systematic scoping review

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Nurturing North-Eastern Neighbourhood Nests: Community-Defined Parent Baby Toddler (PBT) groups and the Role of the Early Years Graduate (EYG) in Supporting Families of Children Aged Under Three Years.

Presenters
Lydia Murphy, Dundalk Institute of technology, Ireland

All authors
Lydia Murphy, Dundalk Institute of technology, Ireland

This working doctoral study is relationally exploring an expanded role for the EYG in parent baby toddler groups (PTB's) in the North-East of Ireland. The field has been evolving since the 70's in all socio-economic communities. However, there is still little clarity contextually and educationally to what this means for babies, toddlers and families (Mc Donald 2024; Lloyd et al, 1989). . I am applying Bronfenbrenner and Morris's Bio-ecological Systems theory (Process, Person, Context over Time) (2006) throughout this thesis to contextualise my research from an underutilised perspective. An ethnographic mixed methods approach was employed to answer the research questions. Phase one set the foundations of this study using a 67-question quantitative survey to firstly observe what was currently available for the under 3's in communities. Ethics was sought from DKIT and these guiding principles were approved power and participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. All questions were voluntary except name and location. From the survey I discovered most the PBT's in the North-East are running and supporting their community over 10 years. At first glance I believed that the PBT sector was sustainable however, on further inspection there is a funding gap of 31.8%. Crucially nearly half of the respondents are seeking for more volunteers, parents, or support to run their PBT group. The findings provided confirmation that further wondering is warranted by digging down into those numbers with qualitative inquiry. This inquiry and policy recommendations for developments will be presented at the 2025 conference.

community parent toddler groups, babies and toddlers, early years graduate, bio-ecological model, relational pedagogy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Inclusive Practices in Maltese Childcare Settings

Presenters
Jefflyn Grech, University of Malta, Malta

All authors
Jefflyn Grech, University of Malta, Malta

This study investigates practices that support or hinder inclusion in Maltese childcare centres. Research on inclusive practices targeting programs for children aged 0-3 years remains limited (Williams et al., 2023; Sawyer et al., 2024), with most studies adopting a broader early years perspective. In the Maltese context, investigations into inclusive practices in ECEC have been addressed as part of a general review of European inclusion policies across the early years (Bartolo et al., 2016). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological systems theory and Noddings' (2012) ethics of care theory were utilised to contextualise child development within societal structures. A constructivist framework was employed to investigate inclusion in childcare through the perspectives of parents, childcare educators, and managers. Data were collected through interviews with five parents and questionnaires with 32 staff members. All

Maltese childcare centres and kindergartens were eligible. Interested parents contacted the researcher directly and were chosen based on having a child at risk of disabilities born from 2019 onwards. Educators and managers were provided links via email and a Facebook campaign. Reflexive thematic analysis identified key practices and challenges. Acknowledging the risk of conflict of interest, staff anonymity was ensured through online questionnaires. Positive beliefs and attitudes towards inclusion, collaboration commitment, and effectively adapting learning opportunities supported inclusion. An inability to respond effectively to needs and systemic inequity presented challenges. Although local policies reflect research findings, a disconnect seems to exist between documentation and the experiences of parents and staff.

early years, inclusion, childcare, disability, policy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F5 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G115, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) SUSTAINABILITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SIG: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPING SUSTAINABILITY IN ECEC

Chaired by Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Mälardalen University, Sweden

Leadership in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability: understandings from Sustainable Preschools, a research and development program in Sweden

Presenters
Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Mälardalen University, Sweden

All authors
Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Mälardalen University, Sweden

The purpose of this study, within the Research and Development programme Sustainable Preschool, was to develop knowledge about early childhood education for sustainability (ECEfS) in Sweden, more specifically around preschool headmasters' and preschool teachers' leadership. This research builds on previous research on ECEfS (Davis, 2009, 2014) and it answers to the need for more research about leadership in early childhood education for sustainability (Davis et al., 2024). It is positioned within a critical and transformative theoretical perspective (Jickling & Sterling, 2017) that promotes critical transformative ECEfS pedagogies and theoretical perspectives on leadership (Davis et al., 2024). This study presents the findings from nineteenth interviews with preschool headmasters and preschool teachers about aspects of leadership in ECEfS. The participants received information about the aim, method, and process, and consent and was collected from all participants. Ethical guidelines from the Swedish Research Council (2024) and EECERA Ethical Code (2024) were considered during the research design and process. The findings show a wide range of aspects regarding leadership in education for sustainability within the headmasters' and teachers' descriptions. Important aspects for a sustainable leadership was: a shared vision for sustainable futures; effective co-ordination; democratic decision-making and communication strategies; critical transformative ECEfS pedagogies, and involvement of all stakeholders (headmaster, staff, children and their parents). This study has implication for both practice and policy. The program has contribute to new knowledge for the participants and the practices, as changing everyday policies as they critically discussed and handled sustainability within the programme.

early childhood education for sustainability, early childhood education, preschool, leadership, education for all

Initial Early Childhood Teacher Education Programs and Sustainability Education: Turkish and Norwegian Cases

Presenters
Sule Alici, Kirsehir Ahi Evran University, Türkiye
Barbara Marie Sageidet, University of Stavanger, Norway

All authors
Sule Alici, Kirsehir Ahi Evran University, Türkiye
Barbara Marie Sageidet, University of Stavanger, Norway

This study aims to examine two countries' initial EC teacher education (IECTE) (HEC, 2018; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2017), which are significant guidelines for pre-service teachers on how to integrate sustainability, sustainability issues, and EfS into daily practices in early childhood learning environments in the future. Davis and Davis (2020) described the literature review results on EfS in IECTE as "abysmal". For them, this state can be improved with the contribution of different types of research, namely policy analyses and comparative studies between countries. Embedded in a paradigm covering environmental, economic, social, cultural, and political sustainability, this study's theoretical and conceptual frameworks include the sustainable development goals (SDGs), transformative learning, global citizenship, critical inquiry, and supporting children's agency. To examine IECTE programs, we utilize qualitative critical document analysis (Li et al., 2019), and compare through content analysis with a codebook developed by the researchers based on a literature review on IECTE analysis on EfS, e.g., Davis and Davis (2021). The study respects diversities related to culture, values, or socioeconomy in the two countries. While using comparative studies between Türkiye and Norway, we believe that our study may provoke these two countries to discover appropriate IECTE that actualize the SDGs (Alici, 2024). We anticipate that the comparative document analysis will shed light on which parts of the programs are strong/ and/or weak/ and/or "patches of green"(Elliott, 2001)/ "bright fields of green"(Davis and Davis, 2021)/need to be developed based on the innovatio

teacher education, undergraduate programs, sustainability, comparative study, critical document analysis

A different viewpoint using Gandhian philosophies for Environmental and Sustainability practices: Examples from India

Presenters
Sylvia Christine Almeida, Monash University, Australia

All authors
Sylvia Christine Almeida, Monash University, Australia

Environmental degradation accelerated by climate change is a leading cause of the global crisis addressed in this conference's theme. The widening disparities and inequalities are glaring in countries like India, where the pressures of a galloping economy, exploding population and public apathy are deeply impactful (Davis and Elliott, 2023). Environmental and Sustainability Education (ESE) supports creation of an informed citizenry with pro environmental attitudes. The research aim is to provide theoretical paradigms that are deeply influenced by Gandhian philosophies (Almeida, 2011) Existing dominant largely westernised worldviews and theoretical paradigms ignore contextual realities and alienate average people especially young children who are future citizens most impacted by the environmental crisis. This paper provides an alternative to existing concepts and theories The study brings together new theoretical framework using Gandian principles of Satya, Ahimsa, Swaraj & Swadeshi and Sarvodaya, as well as the links to deep-rooted environmentalism Qualitative methodology and interpretive paradigms The study involved four schools (focusing on Kindergarten -Grade 3) nationally recognised for their ESE teaching practices across large urban cities and smaller rural towns. Research methods included interviews, observations and a show-and-tell of key ESE practices adopted by leaders and teachers working with the young children University human ethics approval and consent was obtained aligning with rigorous ethical standards Findings showcase how existing ESE practices in India are influenced by Gandhi's values as they provide alternative approaches for embedding robust ESE

implementation in their everyday practices. Research offers a different theoretical and conceptual perspective for a larger global audience especially from Global South.

environment, sustainability, theory, Gandhi, early childhood

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F6 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G117, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

EXPLORING 'BELONGING' IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Chaired by Sue Walker, Southern Cross University, Australia

Parents' and Educators' perspectives about belonging in early years settings

Presenters
Sue Walker, Southern Cross University, Australia

All authors
Sue Walker, Southern Cross University, Australia

The overall goal of this project is to explore belonging and the politics of belonging in early education in five European countries: Finland, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. As diversity in early education settings increases, concerns grow about children's experiences of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This study extends previous small-scale qualitative research by exploring at-scale, belonging in early education. Children's belonging in early education is explored through the eyes of educators and parents (Johansson and Puroila 2021). This study used 'politics of belonging' as a theoretical framework (Yuval-Davis, 2011; 2015). This theoretical perspective helps us understand that processes for belonging in early years education are intersectional, important for promoting belonging in early years settings. A quantitative paradigm with survey methodology was used to collect data from 648 educators and 1,598 parents. Regression analyses were used to explore predictors of belonging for educators and parents. Participation in the survey was anonymous, informed and voluntary. The study received Ethical approval in each of the participating countries. For educators, factors predicting concerns about belonging included perceived competence, structural constraints, resource availability, and beliefs that children are not capable. Parents worried less about belonging if their child was included by educators and peers but worried more if they perceived a lack of resources or competence to support inclusion. Findings indicate feelings of belonging cannot be taken for granted. Many parents and educators worry about children being excluded. Providing all children with welcoming educational environments requires a pedagogical approach in which meaningful and critical dialogue occurs between teachers and children.

belonging, preschool, ECEC, parents, educators

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Children's negotiations of belonging when transitioning between institutional settings in ECEC

Presenters
Tina Binfield-Skøie, University of Agder, Norway

All authors
Tina Binfield-Skøie, University of Agder, Norway

The study aims to explore how children's transitions between institutional settings in Early Childhood and Care (ECEC) involve negotiations of belonging within peer communities. In Norwegian ECEC institutions, transitions from a group of toddlers to a group of older peers are a common feature (Jensen et al., 2023). Previous research indicates that transitions involve a re-positioning period for both the transitioning children and the older peers (Harju et al., 2023). While the transitioning children quickly identify as an older child, the older peers often consider them visitors for an extended period (Fincham and Fellner, 2016). The study draws on the theoretical conceptualisation of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011), which highlights how boundaries for who belongs and how to belong are drawn between social actors and, in this case, within institutional settings. The ethnographic study followed 13 children's transitions in two Norwegian ECEC institutions. The study adhered to the Norwegian Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH, 2021). Particular attention was given to children's provisional consent. The findings suggests that transitioning children's negotiations of belonging consist of positioning themselves as an older child. However, this position is challenged by older peers who differentiate between younger and the older children, positioning the newcomers as outsiders. An implication of the study entails an awareness of how boundaries for belonging is constructed within ECEC institutions. Institutional boundaries are constructed between younger and older children. Additionally, boundaries are constructed between children within the same group.

belonging, educational transitions, institutional participation, internal transitions, subject positions

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Developing a conceptual framework for the study of belonging within cultural and linguistically diverse infant/toddler groups in early years settings.

Presenters
Natália Meireles Santos da Costa, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

All authors
Natália Meireles Santos da Costa, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

This work explores the development of a conceptual framework (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017) for studying belonging applied to cultural and linguistically diverse infant-toddler groups in early years settings. (Non)belonging constitutes a challenge for social sustainability in ECEC (Sadownik et al., 2021), due to the intense diversification of cosmopolitan societies (Eriksen and Visenti, 2024; Yuval, 2011) and the complex dynamics of inclusion/exclusion experienced within diverse groups, even at a young age (Sadownik, 2018). Belonging encompasses a range of conceptualizations, from the viewpoint of human needs of affiliation and connectedness - sense of belonging (Allen et al., 2021) - to contesting situated power and political dispositions that produce difference, exclusion and injustice towards certain groups - politics of belonging (Yuval, 2006; 2011; Johansson et al., 2024). Yet, operationalizing these conceptualizations to infant/toddlers, especially in multicultural and multilingual groups, requires further theoretical and methodological development. As a generative theoretical-methodological tool, conceptual frameworks can guide the integration of reflexive and field-mapping strategies for a more robust framework to the argument for and conceptualization of new research (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017). Furthermore, ethical commitments to such subject require a more robust reflexive exercise (Gaywood et al., 2024). Belonging of infants/toddlers must integrate relational intersections among children, educators, families and policy (Johansson et al., 2024) and situational entanglements (Rasmussen and Schmidt, 2024). Moreover, multivocal and material approaches can offer interesting insight. The potential of ECEC in problematizing and improving belonging within the first years of life has much yet to be developed.

belonging; infants-toddlers, linguistic and cultural diversity, early childhood education and care, conceptual framework

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F7 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G118, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

FIGURE DRAWING, PAINT EASELS AND JUNKYARDS

Chaired by Lucia Bundová, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

"Every kindergarten needs a junkyard": The Israeli Junkyard approach- From Rural Origins to Urban Implementation

Presenters
Sigal Achituv, Oranim College of Education, Israel

All authors
Sigal Achituv, Oranim College of Education, Israel
Shulamit Hoshen-Manzura, Michlalah Jerusalem College, Israel

We aim to identify how Israeli urban ECEs implement the junkyard approach originally developed in kibbutz system. Outdoor play strengthens children's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development (Squires, et al., 2023). The junkyard, developed in Israeli kibbutz systems during the 1940s-50s and still used in kibbutzim and rural communities, provides an environment of repurposed real-world artifacts where children engage in minimally regulated free play (Golden, et al., 2017). Israeli rural ECE's highlight junkyard's benefits: exploration space, community connections, social interactions, physical and cognitive development, and fostering self-confidence (Aviezer, et al., 2021). Urban ECEs familiar with the approach often hesitate to adopt it, encountering challenges unique to urban areas (Dolev, 2024). A qualitative paradigm was used, with narrative semi-structured interviews (Clandinin, 2022). 20 Israeli rural and urban ECEs participated. Transcripts were analyzed thematically using grounded theory (Corbin, 2017). Anonymity was achieved and contextual identity was suppressed. Oranim College Ethics Committee granted approval. Participants provided informed consent, allowing withdrawal anytime. Characteristics of urban implementers include commitment to outdoor learning, and prior familiarity with the approach and its contribution to children's development on their diverse needs. Their unique challenges in establishing and operating junkyards include resistance from parents and staff and difficulties with local authorities and supervision. Educators build supportive communities while maintaining a delicate balance between institutional requirements and their commitment to educational integrity. The research contributes to understanding how educational practices can be effectively translated across different environmental contexts while expanding the concept of community.

junkyard approach, Kibbutz ECEC, urban and rural settings, outdoor learning, community in ECEC settings

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Otherness and the Paint Easel: Innovative Approaches with the Young Child

Presenters
Vicky Grube, Appalachian State University, United States

All authors

Vicky Grube, Appalachian State University, United States

This research engages new materialist approaches to understand how free painting helps the child make sense of their world. Free painting transforms and subverts preconceived notions of childhood. Like studies by Thompson (2022), Kinchloe and Steinberg (2008) and Atkinson (2018), interviews with over twenty children offer perspectives on how free painting impacts the young child. Current research supports the materiality of site, knowing self and the Other (Atkinson, 2022); yet these aims are opposed to common pedagogy where art making is often the mere assembling of parts to match a pre-ordained product. Using a constructivist paradigm wherein individual interactions reveal meaning, the study shows the young child actively building understanding through experience and reflection. Diffractive methodology examines both organic and inorganic matter impacting decisions. Methods include participant observation, interviews, and video. Human Subjects Review was approved, and parents signed releases and learned options to withdraw. The child's comfort was prioritized, stopping interviews if the child became frustrated or embarrassed. Free art making impacts socialization, self-knowing, and ontology. Learning what happens at adjacent easels transcends developmental assessments to include curiosity about each child's free engagement with material and exploration of the world. This work proposes pedagogical transformation through shifting from directive instruction to an emergent curriculum guided by curiosity and material engagement. Through embodied creations, embracing the Other, and rewriting social and cultural legacy in the choices of the young artist, open exploration moves beyond what Sakr (2021) calls "developmental tick-lists." The study advocates for a self-directed experience for children.

diffractive methodology, free painting, otherness, reciprocity, experimentation

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Investigation of Human Figure Drawing and Paper Organization Skills of 6-10 Year Old Children with and without Special Learning Disabilities

Presenters
Ceren Kılıç, Başkent University, Türkiye

All authors
Ceren Kılıç, Başkent University, Türkiye
Raziye Yüksel Doğan, Hacettepe University, Türkiye
Semra Şahin, Hacettepe University, Türkiye
Merve Solak Arabacı, Hacettepe University, Türkiye

This study was conducted to examine the human figure drawing and paper organization skills of 6-10 year old children with and without special learning disabilities. Research has shown that there are developmental differences between children with learning disabilities and children with normal development in terms of human figure drawings (Mati-Zissi et al., 1998; Galli et al., 2011). Children's drawing skills develop from uncontrolled lines to controlled ones, eventually allowing for the representation of the human figure (Willats, 2005; Matthews, 2003; Yavuzer, 2014). In school years, these skills manifest in handwriting. According to DSM-5, skipping letters, irregular gaps between words and letters, incorrect wrist positions, incorrect positioning of the paper are among differences observed in children with learning disabilities (Aral and Gürsoy, 2018). The study was conducted within a quantitative study in survey model. A total of 156 children aged 6 to 10 years were included in the study through convenience sampling. The data of the study was collected through the Child drawing record form and six different sizes of white drawing paper (A4-A8 and half of A8). Children's drawings were evaluated using the Koppitz Human Figure Drawing Test. Written informed consent was acquired from children and parents, with information on confidentiality, voluntary participation, and withdrawal rights as per the Declaration of Helsinki. It was found that children with learning

disabilities drew more stick figures than children without a diagnosis. Longitudinal or experimental designs can test the development of human figure drawing and paper organization in children with learning disabilities.

special learning disabilities, human figure drawing, paper organization, graphomotor skills

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set F8 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G127, First Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES OF MULTI-PROFESSIONAL TEAMS IN ECEC

Chaired by Birgit Riedel, German Youth Institute, Germany

Professional associations and their construction of boundaries

Presenters
Tijana Lujic, German Youth Institute, Germany

All authors
Tijana Lujic, German Youth Institute, Germany
Birgit Riedel, German Youth Institute, Germany

Many countries opened the ECEC occupational field for additional professional groups to address staff shortages and diversity, sparking debates on the benefits of multi-professionalism but also concerns about quality. In Germany, professional associations worry about quality declines due to inclusion of individuals with little or no specific background in ECEC and challenges in integrating professionals from various fields. This paper analyses the discourse of these organizations, identifying concerns from the perspective of established core professions. Research on the expansion of the ECEC occupational field in Germany has focused on policy changes (Grgic, 2020; Friederich and Grgic, 2024). Building on this research, this paper focuses on the discourse of professional associations in their function as political interest groups and their perception on multi-professionalism. Drawing on social identity theory (Jenkins, 2008), the analysis examines how professional organizations construct in- and out-groups, shaping professional boundaries and views on multi-professionalism's potentials and challenges. Using qualitative content analysis, the study gauges discursive elements of identity and boundary setting in position statements from professional organizations on multi-professionalism since 2013. The study was conducted in accordance with APA standards for research ethics. The data analysed are publicly available on the professional organizations' websites. The selected organizations represent a broad range of professional organizations to prevent selection bias. The analysis specifies issues raised by professional associations and discusses under which conditions and what form of multi-professionalism addresses the concerns and interests of core professions. The findings inform staffing policies by highlighting conditions under which professional organizations accept or reject multi-professionalism.

multi-professionalism, professional associations, German ECEC, professional boundaries, discourse

Creating Brighter Futures: Professionalising ECEC for a Public Good

Presenters
Colette Byrne, Colette Byrne, Ireland

All authors
Colette Byrne, Colette Byrne, Ireland

Ireland's ECEC system faces multiple crises. This study examines the effects of a marketized approach that is exacerbating the struggles of the ECEC workforce. It questions the effects that profit extraction is having on the workforce, including; a shortage and high turnover rate of educators, continually precautious employment conditions, increased workload with little compensation, and undermining professional pedagogical skills for profits seeking motivates. The research is centred on previous collaborations within the DCU Early Childhood Research Centre focusing on a rights-based, equitable ECEC system (Urban, 2023). These include the Review of the ILO Policy Guidelines on the Promotion of Decent Work for ECE Personnel (Byrne et al., 2024) looking at creating a sustainable workforce for an equitable system. This research engages Boon et al., (2004) framework, examining the characteristic and levels of integration throughout the ECEC entire system. It explores if a cohesive structure exists between the state, providers, educators and parents. The study applies a anecdotal and explanatory research approach to understanding the staffing crisis within the Irish context. This research was led by EECERA research guidelines(Bertram et al., 2025). The data analysis takes into account the researcher's background as an educator and current research of inequality within the Irish ECEC system (Gilmore, 2024). The findings suggest that inequalities are reflected within all levels of leadership, workforce and communities and that a marketized system is failing the country. The findings informed Ireland that a cohesive approach of a public system would supporting capacity planning, reduced fees and establishment a professional diverse workforce.

Ireland's ECEC, multi-professionalism, diverse workforce, public system, inequalities

Navigating Multi-Professional Collaboration in ECEC: Potentials and Challenges from Slovenia

Presenters
Jerneja Jager, Potentials and challenges of multi-professional teams in ECEC, Slovenia

All authors
Jerneja Jager, Potentials and challenges of multi-professional teams in ECEC, Slovenia

This study explores how team diversity is perceived in Slovenian early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings, examining when it is seen as an opportunity and when as a challenge. It investigates staff responses to diversification, emerging collaboration models, and how professional identities and boundaries are negotiated. Additionally, it seeks to identify policies that support effective teamwork while maintaining quality. Research highlights the benefits of multi-professional collaboration in ECEC (Nutbrown, 2018) but also identifies barriers, such as hierarchical structures, unclear roles, and lack of systemic support (Oberhuemer, 2015; Oberheumer et al., 2023; Urban, 2012). This study contributes by offering insights into how these dynamics unfold in Slovenia, where staff shortages and policy gaps influence teamwork. The study draws on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) by examining systemic influences on teamwork. Using a qualitative interpretivist approach, the study employs semi-structured interviews, and focus groups with ECEC professionals and managers from Slovenian ECEC centres. The study was conducted in accordance with international standards for research ethics (APA). Interview participants were fully informed about the study and asked for their consent. As to avoid bias, literature was critically reviewed, and openly available position statements by ECEC staff were analysed objectively. Findings highlight persistent staff shortages, limiting interdisciplinary collaboration. While recent reforms improve career prospects, rigid professional boundaries and inconsistent implementation remain challenges. Reflection time and mentoring initiatives show promise in fostering collaboration. Enhancing structured reflection time, strengthening cooperation between diverse ECEC staff/profiles, and shifting professional development toward team-based learning are crucial for improving multi-professional collaboration.

multi-professional collaboration, ECEC, staffing challenges, team diversity, Slovenia

INCLUSION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN

Chaired by Helen Awhinawhi, The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Ireland, Ireland

Supporting Migration Background Families of Children with Disabilities: The Role of Early Childhood Education and Care Settings

Presenters
Aurelia Elena Bot, Università degli Studi della Campania "L. Vanvitelli", Italy

All authors
Aurelia Elena Bot, Università degli Studi della Campania "L. Vanvitelli", Italy
Silvia Maggiolini, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

This contribution aims at uncovering the role of ECEC settings in promoting inclusion of migrant families of children with disabilities, whose presence is increasing in Europe (Jørgensen et al., 2021), by highlighting best practices and challenges from parents' lived experiences. It builds on previous research considering the importance of positive relationships between migrant parents and educational settings (Tobin, 2020), and works emphasizing the effects of parental involvement (PI) on the wellbeing of children with disability (Fishman et al.,2015). This study aligns with a theoretical framework promoting school-family collaboration (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Epstein et al., 2004) and draws on participatory approaches in defining the meaning of PI, engaging with families (Devlieghere et al., 2022). Using a Grounded Theory qualitative methodology, semi-structured interviews with migrant parents of children with disabilities are conducted, to explore their experiences, resources and needs within ECEC services. Each participant signs an informed consent detailing data processing. The UCSC Ethics Commission approved and supervised the data collection design, in compliance with European regulations. Perceptions of disability differ across cultures, influencing beliefs and support strategies considered appropriate. The perspectives of migrant parents are dynamic and evolve over time, blending elements from their homeland and arrival community. Effective interventions should integrate diverse family views with professional ones (Sapiets et al., 2019), guaranteeing the wellbeing of both children and their families. To become effectively inclusive, ECEC institutions need to involve parents, especially when they have a migration background, in finding the best strategies for promoting the development and supporting the needs of children with disabilities.

disability, migration background families, parental involvement, participatory approaches

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Refugee Children in the Scope of Inclusive Education; Preschool Teachers Needs

Presenters
Ayşe Duran Yilmaz, Adiyaman University, Türkiye

All authors
Ayşe Duran Yilmaz, Adiyaman University, Türkiye

This study aims to identify the educational needs of preschool teachers working with refugee children and to evaluate these needs within the framework of inclusive education. Education remains one of the major challenges faced by refugee children. Migrant children are often excluded from educational opportunities due to factors such as social and cultural isolation, hazardous labour, extreme poverty, poor health conditions, and language barriers (Rossi, 2008). Teachers play a critical role in supporting refugee students by helping them adapt to cultural norms, acquire literacy skills, learn the local language, and integrate into society (Şeker and Aslan, 2015). The research employs a phenomenological approach, a qualitative research method. Participants were selected using the criterion

sampling method, with the main criterion being experience in teaching refugee children. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and analysed using content analysis Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant authorities, and a voluntary participation form was prepared for the teachers. Although the study is still ongoing, initial observations indicate that preschool teachers encounter substantial challenges, particularly related to language differences, cultural unfamiliarity, and the absence of adequate professional development. These emerging insights underline the importance of policy interventions and targeted teacher training programs that can support inclusive practices and improve educational experiences for refugee children in early childhood settings.

inclusive education, refugee children, preschool education, teachers

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Integrating Culturally Responsive Services to Meet the Needs of Migrant Families with Children Diagnosed with Autism.

Presenters
Helen Awhinawhi, The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Ireland, Ireland

All authors
Helen Awhinawhi, The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Ireland, Ireland
Nnenna Eleke Madukwe, System Property Development Consortium, Nigeria

To evaluate a culturally responsive and integrated therapeutic support model, including respite services and a sensory room, in enhancing wellbeing and social communication among migrant families with children diagnosed with autism in Ireland. Prior studies highlight the importance of culturally attuned interventions for migrant families (Rogers-Sirin and Sirin, 2015; Tincani and Travers, 2019) and sensory-based therapies in autism (Chang and Chang, 2019). This study drew on sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), emphasising culturally responsive practices and ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) to account for the multifaceted influences of family, community, and environment on child development and parental wellbeing. A pragmatic paradigm guided this mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data included pre- and post-intervention assessments of parental stress and child social communication. Qualitative data involved semi-structured interviews with parents to explore experiences and perceptions. Participants were families living in an accommodation centre selected through the centre's management, ensuring diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity were paramount, aligning with the Helsinki Code. All parents reported reduced stress and improved coping, while children exhibited enhanced social communication. The sensory room's environment, designed with child-friendly relevant motifs, emerged as key in reducing sensory overload and promoting engagement. Expanding culturally responsive intervention models and respite resources can strengthen family resilience and child development. Policy support for inclusive programme funding and community-based partnerships can ensure accessible, tailored care for migrant families navigating autism interventions.

migrant families, autism, culturally responsive services, sensory room design, respite services

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set F10 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G211, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

MORAL VALUES, MANAGEMENT AND STRESS

Chaired by Marcela Andoková, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

Employment of a moral classroom management(MCM) approach in coping with social exclusion based on racial stereotypes-A case study

Presenters
Clodie Tal, Hemdat Academy and Levinky-Wingate Academic Center, Israel

All authors
Clodie Tal, Hemdat Academy and Levinky-Wingate Academic Center, Israel

This presentation shows how MCM was employed by a student teacher in a preschool in Israel, to cope with peer exclusion based on racial stereotypes of a Jewish-Ethiopian four-year-old girl. Research shows that young children develop racial stereotypes (Peltola, 2023) and that prejudice is malleable (Weir, 2021). MCM was successfully employed in dealing with behavior problems and social rejection (Tal & Myma,2023). Moral CM is the teacher's ability to lead the class toward achieving all children's socio-emotional welfare and learning. It differs from a behavioristic approach based on reinforcement and punishment. MCM is perceived as a cyclical process intended to bring about ongoing improvement in practices employed to achieve these goals (Tal, 2016). This is a case study based on action research, including a sequence of two episodes focused on the student teachers' coping with the girl's exclusion as well as interventions planned and performed by her, stemming from the analysis of these episodes aimed to change the relationships in the peer group. Both the girl and her parents gave consent to participate and were content with the intervention. Analysis of the student teacher's reflections shows that she moved from a reactive derogation of the exclusion to the implementation of a proactive, social moral plan that motivated the children who excluded the girl to apologize and integrate her into the social group and to a keen satisfaction of the girl who thanked the student teacher for her support. The MCM approach is offered as an alternative to a behavioral approach, including punishment of the perpetrators.

MCM, peer exclusion, case study, action research, preschools

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Ethical dilemmas and moral stress in ECEC

Presenters
Cecilia Heilala, University of Helsinki, Finland
Marina Lundkvist, University of Helsinki, Finland

All authors
Cecilia Heilala, University of Helsinki, Finland
Marina Lundkvist, University of Helsinki, Finland
Mirjam Kalland, University of Helsinki, Finland

The aim is to find out whether and in which situations ECEC staff encounter ethical dilemmas and experience moral stress. Previous studies suggest that ethical dilemmas are stressors that are related to burnout and turnover intentions (Heikkilä et al., 2023; Heilala et al., 2023). The theoretical framework is grounded in Jameton's (1993) concepts on ethical dilemmas and moral stress that can arise in ECEC staff. Moral stress refers to the psychological reaction to the situation and ethical dilemma. The study is situated within a qualitative paradigm. Data consists of nine interviews with teachers and practical nurses in ECEC. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. The study follows the ethical standards by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2023). Informed consent was obtained, pseudonyms were used, and the participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any point. The results show that reasons for stressful situations included staff shortages, disagreements with colleagues,

and pressure from above. When these factors are combined with a strong work ethic, they can lead to feelings of inadequacy, potentially resulting in moral stress. Ways to manage stressful situations include problem-focused thinking, well-functioning communication and collaboration, and self-care. Our research highlights the importance of addressing moral stress. Leaders need to develop a deeper understanding and sensitivity towards these issues to support team communication and collaboration, ensuring that staff feel seen and heard. It is also crucial to assess whether structural changes in the workplace are necessary.

ethical dilemmas, moral stress, ethical sensitivity, wellbeing, early childhood education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Using ancient myths to instil moral values in young children

Presenters
Marcela Andoková, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

All authors
Marcela Andoková, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia
Zlatica Zacharová, Faculty of Education, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

The aim of this paper is to find out whether the myths that young people know from their childhood are carriers of moral values for them. Myths are not just stories, they are part of the way culture explains the creation of the world (von Franz, 2001) and teaches values. Through understanding archetypal images, myths have an impact on child identification and socialization (Dontsov et al., 2018). In Western culture, transmitting morality to children through mythological stories has been a long-standing tradition. Myths, particularly from ancient Greece, offer valuable lessons on behavior, relationships, and ethics. Featuring gods, heroes, and mythical creatures, these engaging narratives capture children's imaginations while conveying moral values in terms of valuing positive heroic behavior. According to Lee et al. (2014), such stories can promote honesty in children. In this quantitative research, 219 Slovak university students aged 18-30 answered an online questionnaire. Participants could choose not to submit their responses and participated in the research voluntarily. The responses showed that 40.6% of the students thought that myths and fairy tales influenced them in their lives, only 9% did not remember any myths, and 14.1% thought that myths should be part of early childhood education. The responses also show that students with a strong Christian background are more negatively disposed towards myths. The use of myths in pre-school and school education can enrich the inner world and help to develop moral and culturally-different understanding as well as children’s life satisfaction.

myths, moral values, socialization, internalization of pro-social behavior, culturally understanding

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F11 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G215, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION: CHILDREN'S VIEWS AND AGENCY

Chaired by Nino Scuderi, University of Derby, Germany

Exploring pedagogical documentation practices to promote children's agency in ECEC

Presenters
Nino Scuderi, University of Derby, Germany

All authors
Nino Scuderi, University of Derby, Germany

This qualitative analysis uses secondary sources to investigate pedagogical documentation practices' impact on children's agency. Literature findings highlighted how the co-constructed learning deriving from discussing documentation evidence and the democratically re-negotiated narratives around PD showcase the latter as the "mediating artefact"accompanied by teachers' intentional revisiting, making up an "affordance network"enabling children's agency (Carr and Lee, 2012: 42). The reconceptualist approach valuing children as meaning-makers (Dahlberg and Moss, 1999), alongside concepts of participation and metacognition as pertaining to children's agency, have informed the research. The research paradigm is, as described above, reconceptualist. I used a combined research strategy entailing two data sets, the thematic analysis of which is based on deSousa's (2019) axes of participation alongside indicators of metacognition and self-regulation in children 3-5 as in Robson's (2016) study to devise a framework to give an original contribution. I selected credible, reputable and ethically sourced datasets. The secondary nature of the research entails corroborating the ethical soundness of the datasets and committing to not bring their authors into disrepute (Largan and Morris, 2019). Findings show PD promoting children's agency in ECEC by helping them build a positive sense of identity, create adult-child and child-child relationships, showcase their understandings and creations in the environment and promote creation of and reflection on knowledge A focus on metacognitive strategies ignited by peer interactions within PD processes, especially in children 2-3, would be desirable in practice to consider the sustainability of the metacognitive and participation repercussions of PD.

pedagogical documentation, agency, metacognition, participation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Room for children's voices. Pedagogical documentation using video recordings

Presenters
Ingrid C. Nordli, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Norway

All authors
Ingrid C. Nordli, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Norway
Kristian Skog, Ameliahaugen kindergarten, Norway

This ongoing inquiry explores video recordings as pedagogical documentation to give room for children's voices. The aim is to uncover and better understand children's take on their own development towards active and attentive listening skills. Research has shown that acquiring active and attentive listening skills requires practice (Itzchakov & Kluger, 2017a), and that pedagogical documentation (Essén et al., 2008), equal dialog (White, 2016), and mutual participation (Sandvik, 2007), are suited tools for practical inclusion of young children's voices. The theoretical framework for this study draws upon current theories on active and attentive listening (Bodie et al., 2015; Boudreau et al., 2009; Wolvin, 2010), pedagogical documentation (Lenz-Taguchi, 2015; Rinaldi, 2005), dialogue (Adelmann, 2009; White, 2016), and participation (Bae, 2009). The study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Analysis of video recording was conducted through a grounded approach (Charmaz, 2006) in reciprocal collaboration between participants. A consent and information sheet was provided to parents of participating children (3-6). The collaborative routine between children and pedagogues, was included as standard activity in the project, which was formally approved by the Norwegian Sikt. Preliminary results reveal that using pedagogical documentation using video along with equal dialog and mutual participation, makes room for children's voices and expands our understanding of children's path towards developing listening skills. Findings suggest implications for kindergarten teacher's work regarding implementing pedagogical documentation using video recordings, equal dialogue and mutual participation in their pedagogical strategies.

active and attentive listening, pedagogical documentation, equal dialogue, mutual participation, children's voices

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Memories from preschool: Children's views about pedagogical documentation in their preschool education

Presenters
Anna Gréta Guðmundsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

All authors
Anna Gréta Guðmundsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

This study explores children's long-term perspectives on pedagogical documentation in preschool to improve the process by incorporating their views alongside those of teachers and parents. The research draws from Childhood Studies, positioning children as competent contributors and experts on their own experiences (Mason & Danby, 2011). It also builds on the Reggio Emilia approach, where documentation serves as a tool for reflection and dialogue between children, teachers, and parents (e.g., Carlsen and Clark, 2022; Rinaldi, 2005; Vecchi, 2010). This study is informed by participatory research, Childhood Studies (Mason and Danby, 2011), and the Reggio Emilia approach (Dahlberg et. al., 2007; Rinaldi, 2005; Dahlberg et. al., 2007), all of which value children's voices (James and Prout, 1997; Spyrou, 2011) and children as co-researchers. It also draws on social constructivism, emphasising knowledge as co-constructed through dialogue and shared experiences. Thirteen former preschool students, aged 7–17, participated in semi-structured interviews inspired by their portfolio content. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed thematically. Ethical concerns were addressed following the EECERA Ethical Code (2025). Parental informed consent was obtained, and children were informed they could opt out at any time. Research aims and methods were explained appropriately for each child's understanding. Findings reveal that children highly value their portfolios, particularly memories of interactions and creative projects. They suggested improvements such as adding more photos, documenting the environment, and clarifying roles in projects. The study underscores the importance of involving children in creating pedagogical documentation, enhancing its relevance during and after preschool.

pedagogical documentation, children's perspectives, preschool, participation research, improving practices

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set F12 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G222, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Chaired by Yalin Gorica, Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Canada

From training to working: Understanding the career intentions and experiences of new ECE graduates

Presenters
Yalin Gorica, Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Canada

All authors
Yalin Gorica, Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Canada
Katherine Becker, Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Canada
Lisa Phyllis, Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Canada

This study explores factors influencing career intentions and experiences of recent graduates from an early childhood pre-service training program in Canada. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs provide

social and economic benefits but face persistent challenges such as educator shortages and underfunding (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2024). In Canada, staffing shortages continue to impact childcare centres, raising concerns about workforce sustainability (Gorica et al., 2023). Given the importance of a well-trained workforce in ensuring program quality (Halfon, 2021), this study examines graduates' career choices and barriers to retention in the field. Guided by Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1979), the research investigates how personal, institutional, and societal factors shape career trajectories. Using a mixed-methods sequential explanatory paradigm design (Ivankova et al., 2006), the study collected survey data (n=56) from graduates who completed their ECE diploma within the past 18 months, followed by qualitative interviews and focus groups (n=18) to explore participants' training experience and career decision-making. Ethical protocols ensured informed consent, anonymous survey responses, and voluntary participation with the option to withdraw at any time. Pseudonyms were given to ensure the confidentiality of participants in interviews and focus groups. Findings show that while most participants initially chose ECE, many do not commit to a long-term career due to poor working conditions and low wages, highlighting misalignment between government policies and workforce realities. Further research is needed on workplace preferences and the impact of pre-service training on career decisions.

ECE preservice training, career choice, barriers to retention, recruitment of ECE, career trajectory

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Workforce Retention in Early Childhood Education: The Role of Personality and Professional Interests

Presenters
Susann Reimers-Schleif, Technical University Munich, Germany

All authors
Susann Reimers-Schleif, Technical University Munich, Germany

This study explores how personality traits and professional interests influence job satisfaction and retention in ECE. How do personality traits/professional interests impact job satisfaction among early childhood educators? What workforce strategies can enhance teacher wellbeing and reduce turnover in ECE? This research builds upon studies in occupational psychology, particularly Person-Job-Fit-Theory (Edwards, 1991) and Holland's RIASEC-model (1997). Studies on the Big-Five-personality-traits (Barrick and Mount,1991) provide a foundation for understanding employee satisfaction in childcare. Prior research suggests, social and extraverted individuals thrive in people-centered professions, but investigation in childcare settings has been limited. Person-Job-Fit-Theory suggests that alignment between personality, professional interests, and job demands enhances job satisfaction and retention.The Big-Five-Personality-Model (Digman, 1997) examines personality traits, RIASEC-model (Holland, 1997) categorizes occupational interests. Study follows a positivist paradigm with a quantitative approach. Study 1: Cross-sectoral-comparison of childcare professionals (n=150), teachers (n=185), and IT professionals (n=198). Study 2: Focused analysis of 150 childcare professionals assessing job satisfaction. Big-Five-Inventory (BFI) (Rammstedt&John, 2007)/General Interest-Structure-Test (AIST-R) (Bergmann and Eder, 2005)/Job-satisfaction-questionnaire (Riechmann and Stahl, 2013) Informed consent was obtained, ensuring anonymity, Ethical approval followed the EECERA Ethical Code (2024), adhered to GDPR-regulations, ensuring data security

- Personality*Job Satisfaction: Extraversion correlated positively with satisfaction, neuroticism correlated negatively.
- Professional Interests: A strong social orientation was a key predictor of job satisfaction, validating Person-Job-Fit-Theory.
- Recruitment: integrate personality/interest assessments into hiring to improve job-person-fit.
- Development: Training should address emotional resilience, classroom management, leadership skills

- Technology: Digital tools should be used thoughtfully supporting pedagogical quality. They can assist educators individualizing learning-experiences, documenting developmental progress, fostering interactions- not only improve administrative efficiency.

ECE-workforce, teacher-job-satisfaction, Big5, professional interests in ECE, person-job fit

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Changing Preschool Teaching Profession? Preschool Teachers as Subjects in Discursive Constructions of the Profession

Presenters
Ida Byhlin, PhD student, Sweden

All authors
Ida Byhlin, PhD student, Sweden

This study aims to identify and problematize different discursive constructions of the preschool profession and how they are negotiated in the professional practice of preschool teachers. Preschool and its teaching profession are in an ongoing process of change and development in Sweden, characterized by tensions between increased government control and a complex everyday life for preschool teachers (Tallberg Broman and Vallberg Roth, 2019; Olsson and Fredriksson, 2024). The study's theoretical framework is based on Foucault's (1969/2002, 1975/2017, 1997/2020) understanding of discourse and the correlated concepts of power relations, subject positions, disciplinary practices and docile bodies. Constructions of the preschool teaching profession is explored through a qualitative approach with critical analyses of recent government policy documents as well as preschool teachers' practice. This presentation focuses on analyses of empirical data generated through video-stimulated reflections together with nine preschool teachers at four preschools. All participating staff and the children's guardians have signed consent forms that included information about the study. The children's consent has been considered throughout all research activities in accordance with EECERAs ethical code (Bertram et al., 2005). The project has gone through an ethical vetting by Swedish Ethical Review Authority to ensure minimal risk of harm for participants. Preliminary results indicate that preschool teachers' understanding of their mission is partly based on their different conditions for their work. The study is expected to provide a problematizing analysis of prevailing discourses, in policy and practice, to produce a knowledge base for further discussions on how to enable an equitable preschool.

preschool teacher, subject positions, profession, video-stimulated reflections, equitable preschool

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F13 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G231, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Laura Trott, University College of Teacher Education Tyrol, Austria

An investigation of preschoolers' phonological training in its context

Presenters
Annika Andersson, Linnaeus University, Sweden

All authors

Annika Andersson, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Corrado Matta, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Sanna Kraft, Linnaeus University, Sweden
Linda Fälth, Linnaeus University, Sweden

Does the intervention FonoMix (Löwenbrand et al., 2011) affect preschoolers' phonological awareness (PA) by its own account, or is it the result of differences in <u>implementationof the intervention or <u>secondary factors(spontaneous PA activities) arising from the introduction of the intervention in a preschool? When preliterate children are trained in PA, effects are observed on literacy up to grade four (Byrne and Fielding-Barnsley, 1991; Lundberg, 1994). However, previous studies do not investigate how the intervention generates its effect. We will discuss how the context, i.e., implementation, secondary effects, and/or the context such as the early childhood center, the teachers in the room, and the group of children, modulate or mediate the effect of an intervention and thus explain both between-group and within-group variances in an intervention effect. Teachers are observered during FonoMix sessions focusing on implementation of the intervention. Children are observed during two days focusing on spontaneous PA-activities. The study have undergone ethical vetting. Caregivers give informed consent and children give continuous consent during observations. We expect to replicate positive effects of PA-interventions on literacy (e.g., Fälth et al., 2020) as measured with LegiLexi. In addition find effects of the context and the secondary factors according to our observational protocols indicating frequencies of spontaneous PA-activities. We extend previous theoretical studies (Matta et al., 2023), and study observations of activities and interplay between teachers and children during a PA-intervention to reveal the underlying mechanisms of the interventions. Results could change how we develop new generations of interventions not specific to PA.

phonological awareness, intervention, context, interplay, teachers' roles

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Exclusive breastfeeding and language development in 3-4 years old children in Greece

Presenters
Evmorfia Nefeloudi, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors
Evmorfia Nefeloudi, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Katerina Mila, Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece
Eleni Tympa, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
Vasiliki Karavida, Early Years Learning and Care, University of Ioannina, Greece

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of the exclusive breastfeeding on children’s 3-4 years old language development in Greece. Breastfeeding has been linked to positive neurodevelopmental outcomes, one of which is language ability (Lamma et al., 2024). The first two years of life are fundamental for cognitive, social, emotional and physical development and nutrition plays an important role in healthy brain formation (Zheng et al., 2024; Chade et al., 2024). The study was conducted in 22 preschool centers in the region of Eastern Attica in Greece. Two hundred twelve (212) children aged 3-4 years participated, of which 52.4% of the sample breastfed exclusively for 6 months, while 47.6% did not breastfeed at all. Demographic and Home Learning Environment (HLE) characteristics were collected through questionnaire. To measure children's language development, the BPVS III receptive vocabulary assessment tool was used, standardized on Greek population (Poppi et al., 2019). The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University and the Municipality, where the preschool settings belong. A statistically significant difference was found between the scores of children who were exclusively breastfed for 6 months and those who were not breastfed at all regarding the development of their receptive vocabulary. HLE affected more children who were breastfed on receptive vocabulary. The study's findings reinforce the World Health

Organization's recommendation to exclusively breastfeed infants for at least six months since breastfeeding appeared to continue to have an independent beneficial effect on language development.

breastfeeding, language development, children, nutrition, demographics

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Participatory Development of Caregiver Communication Skills to Support Children's Language Development and Wellbeing Through a Neurodiversity-Informed Approach

Presenters
Laura Trott, University College of Teacher Education Tyrol, Austria

All authors
Laura Trott, University College of Teacher Education Tyrol, Austria

This three-year study aims to support ECEC educators and families in collaboratively developing and acquiring communication and interaction skills that address the needs of children across all neurotypes, promoting overall wellbeing and language development. High-quality caregiver-child interaction is crucial for children's language development (Julien et al., 2021) and wellbeing (Howard et al., 2020). Caregiver interaction skills can be trained (Brunsek et al., 2024). The neurodiversity paradigm acknowledges neurological differences as variations of human cognition (Bertilsdotter Rosqvist et al., 2020) challenging deficit models. This study draws on an interactionist perspective on child development, socio-constructivist theories of language development, and a neurodiversity paradigm. It is informed by caregiver interaction training programs (Buschmann and Sachse, 2018; Girolametto et al., 1986). A critical-constructivist paradigm (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014) is applied within a participatory action research framework (Lewin, 1946). The iterative qualitative approach prioritises collaborative knowledge generation. Methods include workshops, observations, feedback loops and co-creation of interaction strategies. Participants are educators and parents of children aged 0-6 years attending ECEC institutions in Austria. Participants informed consent is renegotiated as necessary. Efforts are made to avoid Eurocentric and ableist perspectives, critically reflecting with participants to foster an inclusive approach to neurodiversity. Literature reveals a debate on the neurodiversity paradigm's usefulness for research. Evidence on the effect of interaction quality on the language development of children not facing adversity is scarce. The empirical stage is yet to begin. This research could influence policy and practice by offering evidence-based strategies for improving interaction quality in inclusive ECEC.

neurodiversity, language acquisition, wellbeing, interaction quality, participatory action research (PAR)

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F14 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G242, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

TECHNOLOGY USED FOR DOCUMENTATION, COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Chaired by Nadia Koltcheva, New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria

Teachers' experiences of the impact of technology on parent-teacher relationships - research findings

Presenters
Martyna Popławska, University of Warsaw, Poland

All authors

Martyna Popławska, University of Warsaw, Poland

I will present the results of a study of primary school teachers in Poland on the impact of technology on relationships with parents. I will focus on the challenges and benefits of digital communication. Research shows that parents are more likely to use digital media when teachers promote them. However, effective communication requires taking into account the preferences of both parties (Bordalba and Bochaca, 2019; Palts and Kalmus, 2015). Technology shapes interpersonal relationships (Latour, 1987), and its effectiveness depends on how well it connects the microsystems of family and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As part of the study, I conducted in-depth interviews with 14 teachers of various specialties, including early childhood education, focusing on their experiences with technology in communicating with parents. The study was based on an interpretive paradigm and phenomenological approach (Flick, 2010), which allowed me to capture the subjective perspectives of the participants. The schools were selected based on an analysis of parenting programs, the level of digital exclusion in the Mazovian province, and location (urban-rural). It was carried out with the consent of school principals, and teachers voluntarily signed participation and data processing agreements, with the option to withdraw at any time without explanation. Teachers see both pros and cons in using technology to communicate with parents. It's convenient and helps build relationships but can prompt conversations better held in person. Research is ongoing and will be shared at the conference.

This analysis helps identify key difficulties and benefits, contributing to improved collaboration and communication between parents and teachers.

parent-teacher relation, communication, digital skills, technology, teacher's experience

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Digitizing care: the role of communication and registration apps in early childhood education and care.

Presenters
Leen Dom, Researcher, Belgium

All authors
Leen Dom, Researcher, Belgium
An Piessens, Researcher, Belgium
Liesa Lammens, Researcher, Belgium

Digital media play an increasingly important role in the lives of young children (Chaudron et al., 2018) and in early childcare settings. In this study, we investigate how digital media—particularly registration and communication apps—shape care practices in childcare settings. Previous research highlights how digital media play an increasingly prominent role in communication between childcare settings and parents. While this communication can strengthen shared responsibility for young children's development (McLean, 2019), researchers also point to challenges such as increased workloads, inequities in access, and impact on caregiver-child relationships (Stratigos & Fenech, 2021). This research builds on Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2007) to understand how digital media as actors shape care practices. Additionally, we employ care ethics (Tronto, 1993; Mol, 2010) to analyze how apps affect the definition of “good care”. The study is based on two case studies. Data collection included observations, interviews with supervisors and parents, and smartphone diaries. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical Committee of the Antwerp University Association. Informed consent was secured from all participants. Special attention was payed to sound protocols for the photographical data in the research. Our findings indicate that digital media serve three key functions: information, reassurance, and professionalization. While digital documentation increases transparency, it also adds pressure on caregivers. Moreover, although photos offer reassurance to parents, they provide a filtered view of care. Finally, apps contribute to professional recognition but reduce direct interactions. Our findings

highlight tensions between control and trust, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to digital documentation in childcare policy.

digital media, apps, communication, parents, caregivers

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Exploring Digital Documentation in Early Childhood Education: A Systematic Review

Presenters
Serenay Başalev Acar, İstanbul Aydın University, Türkiye

All authors
Serenay Başalev Acar, İstanbul Aydın University, Türkiye
Emine Ferda Bedel, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Türkiye

This study systematically reviews literature on digital documentation in early childhood education, including e-portfolios and mobile documentation. It explores formative assessment, parent-teacher communication, and child participation. The review identifies themes, benefits, and challenges, offering insights for practice and policy. Prior studies highlight both advantages and limitations. Hooker (2017) found that e-portfolios enable structured formative assessment and reflective practice, aligning with this study's findings on assessment benefits. Higgins and Cherrington (2017) reported stronger parent-teacher relationships. However, Knauf and Lepold (2021) noted limited child agency, as documentation is often teacher-directed. Grounded in socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), this study conceptualizes digital documentation as a shared meaning-making tool that fosters collaborative learning by involving multiple stakeholders. Participatory learning theories emphasize the importance of child-led documentation (Sommer et al., 2013). This qualitative systematic review, conducted in accordance with PRISMA guidelines, analyzed 14 studies (2015–2025) retrieved from the Web of Science Core Collection. Inductive thematic analysis involved open coding, theme generation, and constant comparison across studies to ensure coherence and enhance trustworthiness. As a desk-based study, ethical considerations included ensuring comprehensive literature representation, avoiding selection bias, and acknowledging original research contributions. Three themes emerged: Assessment and Reflection, Parental Involvement, and Child Agency. As with all systematic reviews, inclusion criteria— such as database and date range —may have excluded potentially relevant studies. Maximizing digital documentation requires child-accessible platforms with input features, supportive policies that promote participatory practices, ethical frameworks for data use, and teacher training. Design considerations should prioritize accessibility, interactivity, and the promotion of child agency.

early childhood education, digital documentation, e-portfolios, formative assessment, child agency

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F15 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G243, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

THE VALUE OF PICTURE BOOK READING IN ECE SETTINGS

Chaired by Zuzana Jancik Petrova, Institute for Research in Social Communication, Slovak Academy of Sciences / Trnava University, Faculty of Education, Slovakia

Preschool Children's Perspectives on the Role of Illustrations in Book Engagement

Presenters

Zuzana Jancik Petrova, Institute for Research in Social Communication, Slovak Academy of Sciences / Trnava University, Faculty of Education, Slovakia

All authors
Zuzana Jancik Petrova, Institute for Research in Social Communication, Slovak Academy of Sciences / Trnava University, Faculty of Education, Slovakia

This study examines child perspectives on the role of illustrations in picture books. Building on research that views illustrations as an integral part of children's picture books (Kiefer, 2015), providing meanings not accessible through text alone (Sipe, 2015), the study adopts a child-centered perspective (Sommer et al., 2013). This conceptual framework positions children as active agents and meaning-makers (Kumpulainen et al., 2013), acknowledging their individual experiences on the path to becoming readers. The research is grounded in a qualitative interpretive paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2017). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 141 children (69 boys and 82 girls), aged 5–6 years, focusing on their use of illustrations in favorite books, with attention to the child's active engagement with the book during the interview. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022) was employed in data analyses. Ethical procedures included informed consent from parents and verbal assent from children, and the option to withdraw from research at any time. Findings indicate that, from the children's perspective, illustrations play a key role in navigating books, supporting text comprehension, and fostering engagement. Moreover, children's attention to illustrations allows them to act as meaning-makers and active agents, enhancing their autonomy during book interactions. These findings have practical implications for educators and caregivers seeking to support children on their path toward independent reading. Specifically, they underscore the importance of recognizing individual perspectives and creating learning environments that reflect children's interests, accommodate their needs, and promote active participation in the learning process.

child perspective, children's books, illustrations, preschool children, reader development

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Exploring Picturebook Reading Activities in Swedish Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Margareta Lindström, Jönköping University, Sweden

All authors
Margareta Lindström, Jönköping University, Sweden
Carina Hermansson, University of Borås, Sweden

This project aims to describe and discuss how reading activities in Swedish Early Childhood Education are produced in entangled relationships between human and nonhuman matter and discourses. In Swedish Early Childhood Education, it is documented that reading aloud activities are common (Alatalo et al., 2023), however this study has a broader focus on reading activities. Based on posthuman perspectives (Barad, 2007) reading activities are understood as material-discursive phenomena produced in entangled relationships between human and non-human matter, where each relationship contains possibilities and limitations. Data production is ethnographically inspired consisting of video observations of reading activities in one preschool class with 6 teachers and 20 children, aged 3–6. Data was produced in three periods á two weeks between September 2023 – February 2024. A diffractive analysis (Barad, 2007; Gunnarsson and Bodén, 2021) is used to understand and visualize how entangled relationships between actors produce reading activities. The study was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. Teachers and parents received written and oral information of the study, emphasizing voluntary participation and the ability to withdraw consent at any time. Children were orally informed several times during the study and their consent was continuously negotiated. All names are pseudonyms. The preliminary results show that time and space

for children's thoughts in intra-actions with teachers' responsiveness and support are of crucial importance for the becoming of reading activities. Understanding how picturebook reading activities are produced and what matters in these processes is essential in teachers' abilities to promote children's literacy development.

literacy, reading activities, picturebooks, posthuman theory, entanglements

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Diversity and representation in ECEC teachers' book choices for read-alouds

Presenters
Sofie Tjäru, Åbo Akademi university, Finland
Maria Kvist, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

All authors
Sofie Tjäru, Åbo Akademi university, Finland
Maria Kvist, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

The study aim is to examine teachers' choice of books read in Swedish medium ECEC settings in Finland regarding diversity and representation. The research questions are: How is diversity reflected in the read-aloud books? and What role does diversity play in teacher's book choices for read-alouds? The study builds upon the idea that diversity and representation in children's literature can influence children's sense of inclusion or exclusion within a community (Adichie, 2009; Skaremyr et al., 2024). As children's literature can both reflect children's reality and be a window into real and imagined worlds (Bishop, 1990), book choices that embrace diversity support children's linguistic and cultural identity development (Skaremyr et al., 2024). This study is interpretivist and constructivist, employing qualitative content analysis of 148 ECEC teachers' questionnaire responses regarding their choices of books for reading to children aged 1–5. To protect the integrity of the participants, the questionnaire did not request names of individuals, preschools, or municipalities. Preliminary findings suggest that teachers mentioned few read-aloud books that clearly highlight diversity or are set outside Western Europe. Diversity was rarely a factor in teachers' book selection. However, several teachers stated that the read-aloud itself can benefit social development, possibly suggesting that both the situation and the extratextual discussion can provide opportunities for learning about oneself and others. As the national core curriculum for basic education in Finland links literature education to ethical development and cultural understanding (Höglund, 2019), future policy documents for ECEC could be revised to establish similar connections.

book supply, diversity, literature, read-alouds, representation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F16 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G244, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) SLOW PEDAGOGY IN ACTION

Chaired by Kristín Dyrfjord, University of Iceland, Iceland

Exploring Slow Pedagogy in Reggio Emilia-Inspired Preschools

Presenters
Anna Lilja Sævarsdóttir, Idavollur preschool, Iceland
Kristín Dýrfjörð, University of Akureyri, Iceland

All authors

Anna Lilja Sævarsdóttir, Idavollur preschool, Iceland
Kristín Dýrfjörð, University of Akureyri, Iceland
Hordur Svavarsson, Adalthing preschool, Iceland

This study examines how two ECEC settings inspired by Reggio Emilia integrates Slow pedagogy (Slow) into practices. It explores how unhurried learning environments promote social equity and support inclusion. Slow aligns with the Reggio Emilia approach, emphasizing engagement and learning (Reggio Children, 2010). Slow foster emotional wellbeing and strengthen social connections (Clark, 2022). This study is grounded in Nordic educational traditions and play-based learning (Broström, 2016). It explores four key concepts that underpin Slow: Flow, Being With, Going Off Track, and Diving Deep with Children (Clark, 2022). Similar ideas are also found in the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Operating within a constructivist paradigm, the research uses a qualitative case study methodology grounded in action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). Data was gathered through pedagogical documentation and reflective dialogue (Carlsen and Clark, 2022). Participating schools were selected based on ideology and high standards of educators. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and the study posed no risk to them. Ethical considerations include informed consent, cultural sensitivity, and confidentiality, in line with EECERA's ethical guidelines (2024). The preliminary findings indicate that Slow Pedagogy is consistently present in preschool practices that engage with the Reggio Emilia approach. The research suggests that Slow Pedagogy fosters deep engagement, supports multilingual learners, and supports relationships. This research advocates for the integration of Slow Pedagogy into ECEC frameworks, encouraging inclusive, child-centred learning environments in both policy and practice.

slow pedagogy, Reggio Emilia Approach, early childhood education, inclusion and equity, reflective practices

Transforming Early Learning Practices Flow and Slow Pedagogy: Rethinking Learning Spaces in Early Childhood Education

Presenters
Kristín Gísladóttir, Ugluklettur preschool, Iceland
Magnea Arnardóttir, Raudholl preschool, Iceland

All authors
Kristín Gísladóttir, Ugluklettur preschool, Iceland
Magnea Arnardóttir, Raudholl preschool, Iceland

This study investigates how two Icelandic ECEC settings combine the Csikszentmihalyi's concept of Flow and Slow pedagogy (Slow) into their pedagogical approaches. It explores how unhurried, reflective environments promote deep engagement and support meaningful educator-child relationships. Slow aligns with the theory of Flow, which highlights optimal learning through deep, focused engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). When learning is unhurried, children experience increased emotional wellbeing, stronger social bonds, and space for individual expression (Clark, 2022). This study is informed by Nordic values that emphasize democracy and play-based philosophy (Broström, 2016). The conceptual framework is built around four key principles of Slow: Flow, Being With, Going Off Track, and Diving Deep with Children (Clark, 2022). These concepts serve to disrupt hurried, efficiency-driven practices and create space for co-constructed, relational learning. Operating within a constructivist paradigm, the research uses a qualitative case study methodology grounded in action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). Data was gathered through pedagogical documentation and reflective dialogue (Carlsen and Clark, 2022). Participating schools were selected based on ideology and high standards of educators. Ethical approval followed EECERA guidelines (2024), with informed consent obtained from all participants. Cultural sensitivity and confidentiality were strictly maintained. Preliminary findings highlight the potential of Slow to transform daily routines into meaningful, child-led learning experiences The research supports integrating Slow into ECEC policy frameworks to foster equity, inclusion, and reflective practices.

slow pedagogy, flow, early childhood education (ECEC), inclusion and equity, reflective practices

Leadership, Challenges, and Transformative Potential

Presenters
Kristín Dyrfjord, University of Akureyri, Iceland

All authors
Kristín Dyrfjord, University of Akureyri, Iceland
Anna Hreinsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

This research aimed to explore how ECEC leaders support the implementation of slow pedagogies in four ECEC settings in Iceland, gaining insights into the opportunities and challenges ECEC leaders face in implementing slow pedagogy. Children perceive time as a sequence of events rather than the clock, emphasizing the need for balanced preschool practices that foster wellbeing and meaningful learning (Clark, 2023; Hreinsdóttir and Dýrfjörð, 2021). Time practices in ECEC influence quality, affecting the restriction or availability of time for extended play (Dýrfjörð et al., 2023). This study draws on Nordic values emphasising democracy (Broström, 2016) and is influenced by Honoré's (2004) vision of slow pedagogy—thoughtful, reflective, and child-centred. The conceptual framework builds on four core principles: flow, Being With, Going Off Track, and Diving Deep with Children (Clark, 2022). Operating within a constructivist paradigm, this study used qualitative interviews. Five leaders from four Icelandic preschools were purposefully selected for pedagogical philosophies and practices aligned with the study's focus (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Ethical considerations included anonymity, informed consent, cultural sensitivity, and confidentiality, following EECERA's guidelines (2024). This research highlights slow pedagogy's transformative role in fostering reflective learning. Prioritizing natural rhythms and meaningful engagement challenges fast-paced models and emphasizes reclaiming time. Leadership and collaboration were crucial, though systemic constraints like accountability frameworks and resource limitations created tensions. Supportive environments require careful management for equity. Slow pedagogy reduces stress, deepens engagement, and enhances wellbeing, but its sustainability depends on overcoming systemic barriers, fostering commitment, and driving cultural shifts.

slow pedagogy, early childhood education, leadership in ECE, time and learning, reflective practices

Symposium Set F17 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G246, Second Floor, Faculty of Arts

ENHANCING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' DIGITAL LITERACY AND AWARENESS OF THE PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Chaired by Jubilee Smith, Res, Australia

Who will design the learning environment?: The issue of early childhood space in preservice teacher education

Presenters
Beyhan Ataş, Boğaziçi University, Türkiye

All authors
Beyhan Ataş, Boğaziçi University, Türkiye
Zeynep Erdiller-Yatmaz, Boğaziçi University, Türkiye

This study covers the needs analysis for a bachelor-level course design. The curricula of all programs in early childhood education in Turkey were examined. Courses on learning environments were identified, followed by an

analysis of their contents. Learning environments are "the first pedagogical act" (Botta et al., 2017). They can facilitate or impede possible actions and shape experiences (Berti et al., 2019). Teacher preparation programs overlook the physical classroom environment (Guardino and Fullerton, 2010). Teachers typically organize classrooms based on existing regulations and their beliefs or preferences (Nyabando and Evanshen, 2021). Two theoretical frameworks will guide the study: Developmentally Appropriate Practice (NAEYC, 2022) and the Lundy model of child participation (Lundy, 2007), which will be used to analyze the content of the courses. A qualitative, descriptive research design was employed to analyze the content of existing courses. Document analysis was used to identify the themes and their alignment with the theoretical frameworks. No personal data were used; only publicly available course syllabi were analyzed. As no human subjects were involved, ethical approval was not required, appropriate use of public content is ensured. Despite 82 universities offering programs, the number of courses remains very limited. The emphasis is on only learning centers and classroom organization practices, excluding child participation and insights from architecture (participatory design), environmental psychology (sensory environment), or sociology (relational spaces, agency). This research highlights both the limited number of courses and the need for their qualitative improvement. The data will guide the design of new course.

learning environments, space, classroom organization, preservice teacher education, early childhood education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Enhancing preservice early childhood educator's digital literacies to support future decision-making

Presenters
Jubilee Smith, Res, Australia

All authors
Jubilee Smith, Res, Australia

This research aims to understand pre-service educators' digital literacy skills, knowledge and confidence to support future professional practice. Digital literacy is considered a critical 21st century skill (UNESCO, 2023). It has been recognised that early childhood educators need to have digital competence (Martin et al., 2020) to use technology in their practice to support inclusion and quality outcomes for children in an increasingly digital world (Wyeth et al.,2023). Research has suggested pre-service education (Undheim, 2021) has an important role in supporting educator's future use with children. This study draws upon Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) framing the research regarding how educators' decisions about digital technology are made within a socio -cultural/cultural historical context to understand how pre-service early childhood educators develop professionalism and roles within a social context. The research was embedded in a pragmatist paradigm, using a survey of pre-service educators (n=781) undertaking studies at an Australian university. The study design included Likert and open-ended questions to determine the preservice educators' teachers' skills, knowledge and confidence with digital literacy. Ethical considerations (participant consent) followed approval from the researcher's institution: 2024/006. A summary of the study's findings identifying the main themes regarding pre-service early childhood educator's digital literacy will be presented along with a proposed framework for supporting early childhood educator's professional decision making with digital technology in their future practice. Early childhood educators need digital literacy and competence in order to support young children in an increasingly digital world. If pre-service educators increase their digital literacy this will improve quality of early childhood outcomes.

professional learning, digital literacy, decisions

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

A Step Towards Rethinking Play in the Digital Age: Perceptions and Attitudes of Pre-service Teachers

Presenters
Merve Gemici Koşar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye
All authors
Merve Gemici Koşar, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, Türkiye

This study examines the relationship between pre-service teachers' play perceptions and their attitudes toward playing digital games, considering the implications for children's education. The advance of technology sees digital games rising in popularity among young children (OECD, 2023), potentially disrupting developmental play and shifting generational play preferences (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015). Grounded in Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), educators should adopt play-based approaches (Bredekamp, 2009). Play is a universal facilitator of child development (Piaget, 1964). Teachers' characteristics, including play preferences, influence children's development, as highlighted by socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). This study, grounded in a post-positivist paradigm, employs a quantitative, correlational research design. The sample will comprise pre-service preschool education teachers. Data will be collected using the Attitude Scale Towards Playing Digital Games and the Play Perception Scale. Pearson's correlation analysis will be conducted using SPSS. Informed consent was obtained from participants via an online form. It is anticipated that varying play perceptions correlate with attitudes towards digital games. Given future teachers' impact, prioritizing children's right to healthy, developmentally appropriate play is crucial. Findings are expected to inform targeted training modules within pre-service teacher education, focusing on constructively integrating digital tools into play-based learning and fostering critical evaluation of digital games for young children. This could lead to revised curriculum guidelines emphasizing balanced play experiences, incorporating both traditional and digital play, to enrich children's developmental outcomes in early childhood settings and guide effective pedagogical strategies.

play perception, pre-service teacher, attitude, digital games, early childhood education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F18 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G308, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

PRETEND PLAY AND GAMES

Chaired by Igor Shiian, MCU, Russian Federation

Conditions for Pretend Play in Preschool Classrooms as a Prerequisite for the Development of Creative Abilities

Presenters
Olga Shiyan, MCU, Russian Federation
Igor Shiian, MCU, Russian Federation
Tatiana Le-van, MCU, Russian Federation

All authors
Olga Shiyan, MCU, Russian Federation
Igor Shiian, MCU, Russian Federation
Anna Iakshina, MCU, Russian Federation
Irina Vorobeva, MCU, Russian Federation
Tatiana Le-van, MCU, Russian Federation

The aim is to study how the quality of conditions for play in ECEC settings contributes to the development of creativity (dialectical thinking and imagination). Singer and DeHaan (2019), Oers (2014) stressed the importance of pretend play on child development. The data on the influence of play on creativity are inconsistent (Cremin and

Chappel, 2019). Theoretical framework: cultural-historical approach on play and creativity (Vygotsky, 2001; Veraksa, 2019). The two-year quantitative longitudinal study was conducted using non-participant structured observation method - Play Environment Rating Scale: ECERS extension (Shiyan et al., 2025) (39 classrooms from Russia and Kazakhstan) and evaluation of children's creativity (Shannon et al., 2024) (N=236). Informed consent was negotiated with teachers, children and their parents. Pseudonyms have replaced children's names. Participants could withdraw from the study any time. A significant correlation was found between the delta value of imagination and the delta of conditions for play (Spearman 0.199** ($p < 0.01$)). Children in classrooms with higher quality for the item "Adult participation in play"were significantly more likely to demonstrate positive dynamics of imagination and dialectical thinking, for the item "Space and equipment for play"- positive dynamics of imagination (Welsh Two Sample t-test, P-value < 0.05). Positive dynamics in the items "Adult participation in play", "Time for play" and "Space and equipment for play" predicts the development of imagination; positive dynamics in the item "Materials for play" - the development of dialectical thinking (Mann-Whitney, $P < 0.05$). The research contributes to the development of children creativity through improving conditions for play.

play, creativity, dialectical thinking, ECEC quality, PERS

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAY-BASED LEARNING IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION: TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

Presenters
Vaida Padgurskyte, PhD student, Vilnius University Šiauliai Academy, Lithuania

All authors
Vaida Padgurskyte, PhD student, Vilnius University Šiauliai Academy, Lithuania
Daiva Malinauskiene, Professor, Vilnius University Šiauliai Academy, Lithuania

How do teachers' experiences reveal play-based teaching practices in children's education? Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory; Piaget's (2002) theory, asserting that children construct knowledge through experiential learning, where play takes a crucial role. Froebel and Montessori highlighted play as an essential learning tool (Bergen, 2015). Play-based learning is vital in early childhood education and promotes student engagement and skill development (Parker et al., 2022). Schabas (2023) emphasizes that games can enhance logical thinking skills and that play fosters learning through shared experiences (Ridgway et al., 2015). However, integrating playful learning into the curriculum can be challenging for teachers (Li and Kangas, 2024). A qualitative study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews, with data analyzed through narrative analysis. The study involved 15 early childhood educators selected through convenience sampling. The consent was received voluntarily. Their identities were safeguarded using coded identifiers; the data was stored in compliance with GDPR. A respectful environment allowed participants to omit uncomfortable questions. All data was anonymized and accessible only to the researcher, following rigorous data protection standards. The study also emphasized objectivity and critical reflection in analyzing participants' narratives to reduce bias. The integration of play and learning is essential for high-quality early childhood education. Their views are shaped by professional experiences, institutional culture, educational beliefs, and curriculum requirements. This study aims to enhance discussions on how educators can balance structured instruction with child-initiated play in early childhood education. Practical implications include recommendations for early childhood educators on integrating game-based activities into daily curriculum to enhance children's motivation and engagement.

game-based learning, preschool, learning, games, experiences

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Relation between Pretend Play Complexity and Social Competence in Early Childhood Education: a Mediation Model

Presenters
Mireille Smits-van der Nat, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

All authors
Mireille Smits-van der Nat, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
Femke van der Wilt, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
Martijn Meeter, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
Chiel van der Veen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

This study examined the relation between pretend play and social competence in early childhood education. A model was tested connecting pretend play complexity to children's social-cognitive skills with social-emotional behavior during pretend play as a mediator. A recent meta-analysis indicated an overall positive relation between pretend play and social competence (Smits-van der Nat et al., 2024). However, the effect size was small and findings across studies were inconsistent. Therefore, we further examined this relation. From the perspective of cultural-historical activity theory, complex pretend play provides a crucial social context in which children can internalize social rules and different social behaviors (Vygotsky, 1978). In this cross-sectional study, N=248 children (3-6 years) were individually tested to measure children's social-cognitive skills and observed for their pretend play complexity and social-emotional behaviors in the pretend play area of their classroom. Ethical protocols were followed, with active parental consent obtained. Data were processed anonymously and used strictly for the purpose of this study. Mediation analyses showed no evidence of a mediation or a direct link between pretend play complexity and social-cognitive skills. Interestingly, pretend play complexity was related to children's social-emotional behavior during pretend play. The findings emphasize the social nature of complex pretend play (regarding children's social-emotional behavior during pretend play), which is an important implication for educational practice. However, future research is needed to clarify the relation between pretend play complexity and social competence. Educators are encouraged to carefully facilitate pretend play, tailored to the diverse needs of all children, ensuring inclusive practices.

pretend play complexity, social competence, play observations, social-cognitive skills, social-emotional-behavior

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F19 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G309, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

TEACHER'S WELLBEING 2

Chaired by Fufy Demissie, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

The relationship of the type of kindergarten organizational culture and the degree of emotional burn-out of teachers

Presenters
Anastasia Belolutskaya, Moscow City University, Russian Federation

All authors
Natalya Zhabina, Moscow City University, Russian Federation
Anastasia Belolutskaya, Moscow City University, Russian Federation

The analysis of the impact of organizational culture type on the level of professional burnout among kindergarten teachers. This study builds on research linking burnout to dysfunctional organizational cultures (Arvidsson et al., 2019; Jackson, 2001) and aligns with Maslach's (1995) and Boiko's (2019) burnout frameworks. Using Cameron & Quinn's (2001) organizational culture theory, Boiko's burnout scale, and Bajeva's questionnaire, it explores the relationship between organizational culture and teacher wellbeing. This research examines how the alignment between real and desired organizational culture affects teacher burnout. A disconnect between current and ideal culture increases stress and burnout. The study uses an interpretative paradigm, diagnostic tools, and explores solutions to improve practices in early childhood education. This study uses an interpretative paradigm to explore teachers' experiences within their organizational context, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews, surveys, Boiko's burnout scale, and Bajeva's culture questionnaire are used to assess burnout and culture. Data will be analyzed statistically and thematically to understand the impact of organizational culture on burnout. This study follows ethical guidelines, ensuring consent, confidentiality, withdrawal rights, and EECERA compliance. The study found a significant correlation between the "role"organizational culture and higher burnout levels among teachers. Teachers in this culture have an infantile position toward leadership. A "family"culture is desired, fostering collaboration. A greater gap between current and desired culture increases burnout, suggesting that improving culture reduces burnout and enhances wellbeing. The data can form the basis of trainings for kindergarten principals to improve organizational and communication culture

preschool teachers, professional burn-out, organizational culture, emotional stress, style of leadership

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

'Coming back to find ourselves': work cultures as mediators of early years practitioners' wellbeing and professionalism

Presenters
Fufy Demissie, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

All authors
Fufy Demissie, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom
Sally Pearse, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

This study examines early years practitioners' perceptions of their professional roles and identities in a newly opened nursery located in an area of social and economic disadvantage. Practitioners who are enabled to enact their professional identities (autonomy) (Brock, 2013), have better motivation levels, wellbeing and effectiveness (Lipscombe et al., 2022). Moreover, self-efficacy or competence can improve job satisfaction (Heilala et al., 2024). The research draws on the self-determination theory to theorise the participants' perceptions of their professional roles and identities. SDT views individuals' perception of competence, autonomy and relatedness as 'universal and essential for the psychological wellbeing and optimal functioning of all people' (Ryan and Deci, 2017: 4). The study used a qualitative approach to explore six volunteer early years managers' and practitioners' (graduates and Level 3 qualified) experiences of their professional roles. The Listening Room (LR) methodology, which draws on 'friendship as a method,' prioritises participants' voices, subjective experiences, and shared control of the research process (Heron, 2020). Friendship pairs were provided with an audio recorder and a private space to reflect on selected themes. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee with participants reminded of their right to withdraw and friendship pairs used to minimise disclosure risks. The setting ethos and structure improved psychological and physical wellbeing, renewed practitioners sense of professionalism and confidence. For policy makers and leaders, it highlights the importance of relatedness, agency and professional identity in understanding and addressing the issues of staff retention and burnout (McCormick et al., 2022).

professionalism, professional identity, self-determination theory, early years, workforce

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

How well are you, dear early childhood teachers?

Presenters
Syifa Mufiedatussalam, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia

All authors
Syifa Mufiedatussalam, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Indonesia

This study examines the wellbeing of Indonesian early childhood teachers. Studies evidenced that teacher wellbeing can influence socio-emotional child development (Stone et al., 2024). However, research has shown that early childhood teachers encounter significant stress due to working conditions (Nagarajan, 2024). This study, anchored on Seligman's (2011) wellbeing theory, utilizes the PERMA Profiler to evaluate five dimensions: positive emotion (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M), and accomplishment (A). Grounded in a positivist paradigm, this study utilizes a non-experimental quantitative method. Data were collected from 934 early childhood teachers through an online PERMA profiler survey and analyzed using the Rasch model analysis. Data collection started after getting approval from the National Research and Innovation Agency. The privacy of the respondents is kept confidential; teachers completed the informed consent before filling out the questionnaire. The PERMA Profiler was standardized as reliable and valid to measure Indonesian early childhood teacher wellbeing (Cronbach's alpha = 0.90; item reliability = 0.99). Accordingly, their wellbeing levels divided into low (15.16%), moderate (65.78%), and high (19.06%). Based on demographic factors, females possess a higher level (mean = 2.23) compared to males (mean = 1.65); Generation X (ages 44-59) indicates the highest wellbeing (mean = 2.42). Respectively, teachers who possess master's degrees reported the highest wellbeing among others (mean = 2.58). The findings serve as a reference for policymakers regarding the state of teacher wellbeing in Indonesia. Additionally, the scale can be used to measure teacher wellbeing by scholars, educational institutions, and local governments.

teacher wellbeing, human flourishing, Rasch Model analysis, quality ECE, PERMA profiler

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set F20 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G315, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Chaired by Yaara Shilo, Efrata Academic College, Israel

The Power of Community in Kindergarten: Perceptions of Academic Staff, Teachers, and Parents in Efrata Kindergartens

Presenters
Yaara Shilo, Efrata Academic College, Israel

All authors
Yaara Shilo, Efrata Academic College, Israel
Bat-Chen Moalem, Efrata Academic College, Israel

This study examines community perceptions in Efrata Kindergartens, focusing on fostering belonging and social capital during crises like COVID-19 and war. This builds on research by Sadan (2009), Mehta (2014), and Gilchrist (2000) on community's role in social capital and resilience. Studies by Cohen et al. (2019) demonstrate how

supportive relationships enhance outcomes during disruptions. Research by Rubin and Rubin (2008) highlights emotional connections in community development. O'Connor et al. (2021) document teacher-parent interactions creating stability during the pandemic. This study examines organizational kindergartens' unique position at the intersection of academic institutions and community, providing insights into how structured communities respond to multiple crises. The study applies theories of community and social capital to explore how shared values shape belonging in kindergartens affiliated with academic institutions. Using a qualitative paradigm, this case study employed interviews with eight faculty members and five kindergarten teachers, plus questionnaires from fifteen parents, analyzed thematically. The study received Hebrew University Ethics Committee approval with informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and the right to withdraw. Findings show staff and teachers perceive Efrata Kindergartens as a community fostering belonging, while parents connect to individual kindergartens. The community provided stability during crises, with teachers playing a central role between college and community. The study reveals how shared religious values strengthen bonds and how the structure facilitated adaptation during emergencies, creating a protective environment for children. This research offers a model for community engagement in early education, informs emergency preparedness policies, and supports integrating community-building into teacher training programs.

community, social capital, organizational kindergartens, sense of belonging

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Back to the future: Contemporary lessons from a century of learning at Arellian, Ireland's oldest nursery.

Presenters
Diane McClelland, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

All authors
Diane McClelland, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom
Noel Purdy, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

Following the study of education around the time of partition in Ireland, there was a strong sense that this unique nursery and 'outlier' from early years education, merited further investigation. This paper explores the historical and contemporary significance of Arellian examining its foundation as aimed at addressing educational and social disadvantages (McNeill, 1949). Interest in Arellian, Ireland's oldest nursery, began through a SCoTENS seed funding project entitled '"Contested Childhoods across Borders and Boundaries' (2019-2021)". Involving the authors of this article (McClelland and Purdy) from Stranmillis University College, Belfast and a team from Maynooth University (O'Toole, Forde, O'Keefe, Säfström and Walsh). The theoretical framework draws upon work by pioneers such as Owen and McMillan, who emphasized outdoor learning, healthy lifestyles, pupil agency, and strong home school links (Ailwood, 2007) As a historical exploration this article refers to key sources regarding Arellian and the inception of nursery education in Ireland (Moore, 1930; McNeill, 1949; OToole et al., 2021). Notably aligning with current educational priorities in Northern Ireland (Purdy, Logue et al., 2021). This research is a literature review. Ethical consideration has been given to ensure a fair representation of literature from a wide range of sources to avoid bias. The paper argues that Arellian's early adoption of active outdoor learning, agentic play, and community partnerships offers valuable lessons around diversity and inclusion for contemporary educators (Walsh, 2017) This study highlights the importance of integrating holistic, child-centered approaches in early years education to foster resilience and wellbeing among all young learners (O'Toole et al., 2021).

early years, agency, play, outdoor learning, social disadvantage

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Early Childhood Intervention in Natural Environments: Supporting Development Through Family Routines

Presenters
Blerta Perolli Shehu, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo

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Blerta Perolli Shehu, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo
Arian Musliu, Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina, Kosovo
Beke Veliu, UNICEF, Kosovo
Sajeda Atari, UNICEF, Kosovo
Toby Long, Georgetown University, United States

This study presents the process and initial results of a demonstration model of an ECI, designed to integrate family-based approaches to support child development within family routines. The intervention builds upon previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of embedding ECI within natural environments and family routines (Dunst et al., 2001; McWilliam, 2010, Molero et al., 2024). Prior studies have demonstrated that family-centered practices within natural environments promote child development and empower caregivers as active agents of change. ECI plays a fundamental role in supporting child development through structured and evidence-based approaches (Guralnick, 2011). Studies have shown that family interventions significantly enhance developmental outcomes, particularly when integrated into everyday routines (McWilliam, 2010; Proaño et al., 2023, Tekin-Iftar et al., 2024) The intervention with 30 participating families employs a repeated-measures design with three time points: before, during, and after the intervention. A between-subjects design is used to assess intra-individual development over time for each child. Growth models are applied to analyze the trajectory of development across time. Informed consent was obtained from families, with explanations provided regarding the study and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Participation was voluntary. Data protection/confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the intervention. Preliminary findings suggest that structured family-based interventions within natural routines contribute to child engagement, skill acquisition, and increased parental confidence in supporting development. The study contributes to the evidence base on practical and scalable ECI and provides insights into the strengths and challenges of incorporating interventions into family daily routines.

early childhood intervention, family routines, natural environments, developmental support, caregiver engagement

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F21 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G319, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) RECOGNIZING HOME-BASED CHILDCARE AS A VALID OPTION: A GLOBAL 'MATTER OF CONCERN'

Chaired by Lise Lemay, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

How Valid is the use of the CLASS to Assessed Quality of interactions offered in Quebec's home-based childcare?

Presenters
Lise Lemay, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

All authors
Lise Lemay, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
Julie Lemire, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
Alexandra Paquette, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada

This study explores the reliability and the validity of the Classroom Assessment Scoring system (CLASS) tool to measure quality of interactions in Quebec's home-based childcare (HBC). High-quality interactions promote children's development. Standardized tools, such as the CLASS, were developed to assessed it in center-based

childcares. Yet, an handful of research explored the validity of using the CLASS tool in HBC, outside its original context. According to the Teaching through interaction framework (Hamre et al., 2013), interactions that are supportive of children' development are seen in three domains: emotional support, group organization and instructional support. This study was conducted in 38 HBC in Quebec (Canada). In each, interactions were videotaped during a single visit and scored later with the CLASS Toddler (La Paro et al., 2012), FCCERS-3 (Hammer et al., 2019) and CIS (Arnett, 1989). Interviews were conducted with providers to gather data on structural quality. At recruitment, providers and families were informed about the project and ethical considerations. They signed a consent form agreeing to participate. On the filming day, if a child disagreed to participate, the camera angle was modified. The results describe the quality of interactions scores. In addition to provide information about the reliability and validity of the tool when used in Quebec's HBC, the discussion highlights cross-cultural differences that could explain these results. While the CLASS seems a relevant tool for HBC, some precautions are needed when used outside its cultural matrix. Such findings have implications for international research and policy.

home-based childcare, quality of interactions, standardized assessment tool, validation study, cultural differences

A Comparative Analysis of Home-Based Childcare Across Six Countries: Policies, Challenges, and Opportunities

Presenters
Nina Hogrebe, TU Dortmund University, Germany
Lynn Ang, University College London, United Kingdom
Lise Lemay, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
Mikiko Tabu, Seitoku University, Japan

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Nina Hogrebe, TU Dortmund University, Germany
Lynn Ang, University College London, United Kingdom
Juliet Bromer, Erikson Institute, United States
Konstantina Rentzou, University of Ioannina, Greece
Lise Lemay, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
Mikiko Tabu, Seitoku University, Japan
Laura Woodmann, University of Alberta, Canada
Anna Schmidt, Prognos AG, Germany

This study examines the role of home-based childcare (HBC) in early childhood education and care (ECEC) across six countries. It explores how public policies equitably include HBC and the systemic factors influencing its recognition and regulation. Most ECEC research focuses on centre-based childcare, with little attention to HBC. This study builds on prior comparative studies (Ang and Tabu, 2018; Blaxland and Adamson, 2017; Davies et al., 2012) to address policy aspects, highlighting HBC's role in diverse contexts. Using Melvin et al.'s (2022) framework, the study examines four core dimensions to understand systemic and equitable inclusion of HBC: (1) equitable funding, (2) streamlined regulations, (3) HBC-specific quality standards, and (4) supportive infrastructure. We use a comparative methodology following the idea of a "science of difference" (Sousa and Moss, 2022) to understand and value the complexities and variances in educational contexts (Urban, 2022). The EECERA ethical code is obeyed. Publicly available policy documents and the use of secondary data ensure ethical rigor. HBC recognition and regulation vary widely. England and Japan, integrate HBC into ECEC with structured policies, while the U.S. and Canada exhibit fragmented regulations. Germany enforces strict qualification requirements, whereas Greece offers minimal formal recognition. Key challenges include inconsistent funding, regulatory gaps, and a lack of quality frameworks tailored to HBC. Recommendations include increased public investment, quality frameworks recognizing the specific characteristics of HBC, and tailored support for HBC providers. Strengthening the inclusion of HBC in public policies can enhance equitable early education opportunities for all children.

home-based childcare, early childhood education, diversity, inclusion, childcare policy, equitable funding

What works in Home-Based Childcare? Determinants of experiences and outcomes for children who participate in Childminding services

Presenters
Glenda Walsh, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom
Lynn Ang, UCL, United Kingdom

All authors
Glenda Walsh, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom
Lynn Ang, UCL, United Kingdom
Suzanne McCartney, Stranmillis University College, United Kingdom

This presentation draws on a rapid review of the extant literature which sought to identify the key child, caregiver, structural, and pedagogical factors that shape quality and outcomes in home-based childcare. Existing literature on Childminding remains fragmented (Ang et al., 2017), with most research focusing on centre-based childcare (OECD, 2018; Melhuish et al., 2015). Studies have demonstrated the importance of quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) for developmental outcomes (Sylva et al., 2011), but home-based settings have received comparatively less attention. This study builds on prior work by synthesising findings from diverse sources. The review adopts an ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), recognising the interplay of individual, relational, and structural factors in shaping children's experiences. The bioecological model emphasises how proximal and distal influences, such as caregiver-child interactions and wider policy contexts, affect child development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). A rapid review methodology, aligned with systematic review principles, was employed. Searches were conducted across multiple databases using predefined terms. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was used for quality assessment. As a secondary analysis of existing studies, no direct ethical approval was required. However, ethical standards were upheld by critically appraising included studies for methodological rigour and bias. Four determinant categories emerged: child (age, temperament, socioeconomic status), caregiver (qualifications, engagement), structural (care duration, ratios), and pedagogical (interactions, inclusive practices). Findings highlight the need for policy measures that enhance caregiver training, financial support, and structural conditions in Childminding. A focus on child-centred and play-based approaches were found to support quality and outcomes.

childminding, determinants, experiences, outcomes, systematic review

Symposium Set F22 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G320, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

(SOS) THE DIVERSE PRACTICES OF FRONT-LINE PEDAGOGICAL LEADERS IN ECE: INSIGHTS FROM FOUR COUNTRIES

Chaired by Lennie Barblett, Edith Cowan University, Australia

Contextual insights about front-line pedagogical leaders across four countries

Presenters
Maria Cooper, University of Auckland, New Zealand
Karin Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

All authors
Maria Cooper, University of Auckland, New Zealand
Marit Bøe, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

Karin Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

This three-stage empirical study investigates the practices of front-line pedagogical leaders in New Zealand, Australia, Finland, and Norway, with a focus on shared and distinct approaches to leadership in ECE. Pedagogical leadership can guide teachers' pedagogy and enhance children's learning in ECE settings. While effective pedagogical leadership often relies on collaboration, shared responsibility, and reflection among staff (Boe and Hognestad, 2017), there is limited cross-country research examining context-specific understandings and practices. Shadowing methodology (Boe and Hognestad, 2017) and the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008) are used to investigate leadership understandings and practices across countries. The first stage, the focus of this presentation, reviews literature and the researchers' cross-country dialogues regarding the context of leadership in each country. The second stage surveys 50-100 leaders in each country to explore their demographics, roles, and work nature. The third stage involves observing 3-5 leaders in practice in each country and interviewing them to understand their perspectives. Quantitative data is analysed using SPSS software and qualitative data using thematic analysis. Alongside having institutional ethical approval, the researchers employed reflexivity to critically examine their understandings, biases, assumptions, and positionality as ECE leadership researchers to ensure interpretations about leadership in their own countries were corroborated by contextually-relevant literature and policies. Preliminary findings highlight cross-country commonalities and differences in leadership practices, offering a nuanced understanding of the opportunities/challenges faced by front-line pedagogical leaders. This presentation offers insights for practitioners/leaders/policy-makers/researchers to develop contextually relevant policies and professional development strategies that support front-line pedagogical leadership in ECE.

context, ECE, four countries, front-line pedagogical leadership, shadowing

Frontline pedagogical leadership - knowledge, beliefs and tasks. Building practice knowledge across four countries.

Presenters
Lennie Barblett, Edith Cowan University, Australia

All authors
Lennie Barblett, Edith Cowan University, Australia
Johanna Heikka, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

This study sought to describe the tasks, knowledge, skills of frontline early childhood pedagogical leaders across four countries. Effective pedagogical leadership is an indicator of quality provision (ACECQA, 2024) and leadership tasks are often distributed across ECEC staff teams (Heikka et al.,2020) so are not easily identified. Theory of practice architecture (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008) guided the study as practices are structured through social, cultural and material conditions. A mixed methods survey was used across Australia, New Zealand, Finland and Norway by way of a convenience then snowball sampling strategy. Over 150 front-line pedagogical leaders described their leadership with conditions and barriers encountered. SPSS and thematic content analysis were used. All participants gave informed consent to participate, where confidentiality and anonymity were assured. Preliminary findings showed the similarities and differences of the tasks of frontline pedagogical leaders across the countries. Notable were the qualification differences and the levels of leadership tasks undertaken. Respondents described similar attributes of effective leaders but leadership tasks demonstrated different leadership layers. Respondent's leadership journeys were described in different ways highlighting conditions as well as process and structural barriers. The work of positional leaders is often described however those at the frontline working with children are not often attributed with leadership tasks. The notions of collaborative and distributed leadership in the work of frontline educators requires discussion and illumination. These findings address this gap and suggest that early childhood leadership professionals would receive more support for the systemic planning and implementation of pedagogical leadership.

ECEC, pedagogical leadership, international, collaborative and distributed leadership

Shadowing Across Borders: Research Design Considerations in Cross-National Studies

Presenters
Karin Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

All authors
Karin Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway
Marit Bøe, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway

The study aims to explore the key considerations for a cross-national research team when applying shadowing methodology across four different countries. The study builds on previous research using qualitative shadowing in ECE leadership research (Hognestad and Bøe, 2016). While shadowing is recognized in leadership research, there is limited reference to its use as a qualitative method in cross-national leadership studies. A narrative inquiry framework (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) focuses on individual experiences and stories, and on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives that shape and give meaning to these experiences. Narratives, told and retold across contexts, can challenge and transform those very contexts. The study is grounded in a social constructivist paradigm and employs a qualitative narrative methodology. Data were collected through online focus group discussions within the team, which were audio-recorded for analysis. When conducting self-studies, ethical considerations are crucial to ensure the integrity and respect for all involved. The study has received formal ethics approval from the participating countries. Additionally, as members of the cross-national team, we have provided our written consent to participate as informants in this study. Address potential bias through reflexivity and multiple perspectives. We present six key research design considerations that researchers should take into account when applying shadowing methodology in a cross-national study: cultural and contextual differences, compatibility of data, the role of researchers, translations of data, differences in research and data analyses. These findings imply how researchers design and apply shadowing methodology in cross-national studies, ensuring consistency, ethical alignment, and contextual sensitivity.

shadowing methodology, *cross-national research*, *cross-cultural differences*, *pedagogical leadership*, *focus groups*

Symposium Set F23 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G329, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

CONFLICT, OSTRACISM AND EMPOWERMENT IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by Andrea Lupi, Università degli Studi di Urbino, Italy

Can reflective supervision and placement learning empower Early Years Teacher trainees to become emotionally and pedagogically baby aware?

Presenters
Dilys Wilson, Middlesex University, United Kingdom

All authors
Dilys Wilson, Middlesex University, United Kingdom

This study aimed to elicit the views of English Early Years Teacher trainees on placement learning with babies and the impact of reflective group supervision on their development as pedagogical leaders and advocates for babies. Research suggests that reflective supervision during training can effectively address the emotional and pedagogical

complexities of professional roles with babies (Tobin et al., 2024: 25), fostering peer support networks and communities of practice within and beyond the training context (Recchia and Puig, 2019:53). The conceptual framework used praxeological principals including working collaboratively and ethically to improve practice and build supportive communities of practice (Pascal and Bertram, 2012). Psychodynamic theory was used to explore the impact of emotional experience on early development, thinking and learning (Bion, 1962). This qualitative practitioner research study used constructivist grounded theory to guide data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014). 17 trainees took part in focus groups and 6 discussed their experience further in interviews. As a practitioner researcher directly involved with trainee participants, a relational, situated and reciprocal ethic of care was integral to the study. Participants received information and discussed their involvement and right to withdraw prior to consenting. The main findings suggest that reflective group supervision fostered exploratory shared dialogue and contributed to a growing awareness of wider professional perspectives. Recognising and expressing the emotive aspects of pedagogy with babies requires time and supportive facilitation. Findings suggest that to become emotionally and pedagogically baby aware, professionals need time to experience facilitated group supervision and connect through peer support networks.

pedagogy with babies, placement learning, reflective supervision, practitioner inquiry reflexive practice

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Shaping Future Educators: A Longitudinal Analysis of Social Self-Efficacy, Institutional Belonging, and Perceived Ostracism

Presenters
Vasilis Grammatikopoulos, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

All authors
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Anastasia Vatou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece
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Maria Tsitiridou - Evangelou, Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, International Hellenic University, Greece

This longitudinal study investigates the development of social self-efficacy and institutional belonging throughout one academic year and their potential impact on perceived ostracism among pre-service teachers. The development of social self-efficacy and institutional belonging is critical for pre-service teachers as they navigate the challenges of teacher education programs. While previous research has established the importance of these constructs in teacher preparation, there is limited longitudinal evidence of their dynamic relationship over time (Bjorklund et al., 2020; Sotardi, 2022). This longitudinal study is grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986), which posits that learning and development occur through dynamic interactions between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. Data were collected from undergraduate students in Greece at two time points over an academic year using the Perceived Social Self-Efficacy Scale (PSSE), Institutional Belongingness Questionnaire (IB), and Workplace Ostracism Scale (WOS). Statistical analyses, including repeated measures ANOVA and cross-lagged panel analysis, assess the stability and predictive relationships among these constructs. Ethical considerations include informed consent, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality. This longitudinal study aims to provide insights into the development of social self-efficacy and institutional belonging over one academic year among pre-service teachers. By examining these relationships over time, the study is expected to reveal whether social self-efficacy and institutional belonging remain stable, increase, or decline across the academic year. Understanding these patterns

can inform policies aimed at enhancing institutional support and reducing experiences of social exclusion, ultimately contributing to the wellbeing and professional development of future educators.

longitudinal study, social self-efficacy, institutional belonging, perceived ostracism, pre-service teachers

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Montessori Teacher Training and School Quality: When Professional Development Leads to Workplace Conflicts

Presenters
Andrea Lupi, Università degli Studi di Urbino, Italy

All authors
Andrea Lupi, Università degli Studi di Urbino, Italy

This study explores the unexpected negative impact of Montessori teacher training on school quality in Trentino, where educators' professional development triggered workplace tensions and pedagogical conflicts. While research confirms the positive correlation between teacher training and service quality (Manning et al., 2017; Siraj et al., 2019), findings from this study challenge this assumption, revealing organizational and relational disruptions linked to shifts in professional identity. The study draws on professional identity theory (Schön, 1983; Bandura, 1977) and frameworks on ECEC teacher development (Campbell-Barr and Leeson, 2016), focusing on the interplay between training, identity formation, and workplace dynamics . The research adopts a qualitative methodology to explore the interplay between professional training, identity transformation, and relational dynamics in ECEC. A case study design enabled in-depth investigation of Montessori-implemented ECEC settings in Trentino. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews (n = 6) and two three-session focus groups—one with coordinators, and another with 22 teachers. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were fully anonymized, and participants engaged voluntarily in discussions about their professional experiences. The study adhered to ethical principles of confidentiality and responsible research practices . Results show that Montessori-trained teachers can developed a rigid professional identity in certain cases, dismissing previous educational models and creating tensions with traditionally trained colleagues . Training-driven curricular rigidity also led to disputes over play, expressive arts, and outdoor learning . Findings suggest a need to integrate reflective practice and organizational change management into training programs to prevent professional fragmentation and ensure a collaborative professional culture in ECEC.

Montessori education, teacher training, professional identity, school conflicts, ECEC quality

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set F24 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G362, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

CHILDREN'S PATHWAYS AND TRANSITIONS FROM HOME TO SCHOOL

Chaired by Niina Rutanen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Critical review of research and policy on transitions to school from 2000-2025 in Germany

Presenters
Anja Seifert, JLU University, Giessen, Germany
Katrin Velten, Alice Salomon Hochschule, Berlin, Germany

All authors

Anja Seifert, JLU University, Giessen, Germany
Katrin Velten, Alice Salomon Hochschule, Berlin, Germany
Petra Büker, Paderborn University, Germany
Jana Herding, Paderborn University, Germany
Julia Höke, Katholische Hochschule Paderborn, Germany

This literature review gives an overview of significant developments and main research findings on the transition to school in Germany on the basis of key events: PISA 2000, the 2009 ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and recent competence studies. In Germany, kindergarten and primary school belong to separate systems. Empirical data shows persistent social injustice in education, with pupils' success still heavily dependent on their family's socioeconomic and ethnic background (Stanat et al., 2022). The transition to school is viewed as a significant normative event in children's lives, moderated by parents and educators, based on Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological theory and the theory of critical life events (Griebel and Niesel, 2017; Niesel and Griebel, 2005). With the method of a critical document analysis, the chronology of the game changers, relevant transition studies and scientifically supported model projects are presented and analysed. All guidelines for ethical behaviour were observed and no person was harmed. With the document analysis, it was possible to comply with personal rights. The transition to school can be seen as both a success story and a problematic development.
The debate about transition is currently dominated by concerns for children at risk during multiple crises. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fragility of Germany's transition system, risking a regression in quality standards for supporting children and families. Recommendations include maintaining and improving transition quality, fostering cooperation between politics, science, and practice, enhancing inclusive transition concepts, professionalizing educators and teachers, and debating the advantages and disadvantages of separate systems.

Germany, kindergarten, primary school, transition, connectivity

Children's transitions to and during ECEC until school – a longitudinal qualitative inquiry into children's early educational paths

Presenters
Niina Rutanen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

All authors
Niina Rutanen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Mari Vuorisalo, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Jasemin Can, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Kaisa Harju, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Yaiza Lucas Revilla, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding on children's transitions in ECEC on the basis of project Tracing children's socio-spatial relations and lived experiences in early childhood education transitions (2019-2024, University of Jyväskylä JYU, Finland). This project builds on previous studies on transitions as diverse dis/continuities between educational contexts (Fabian, 2012), that include personal processes as well as institutional structuring of transitions (O'Farrelly and Hennessy 2014; Walther et al., 2022). Transitions are explored from relational and spatial perspectives (Raittila et al. 2024), through interactions and practices (Lucas Revilla et al., 2023), children's resources (Can et al., 2024) linked to organization of ECEC (Harju et al., 2024). Based on an interpretative paradigm, and combining a qualitative longitudinal approach and ethnography, five children and their groups were followed from the first entrance to ECEC until school. Exploration focused on the dis/continuities of contexts, re-organization of socio-spatial relations, children's resources, and lived experiences. Data includes observations, video-recordings, and interviews (children, adults). For this synthesis, 17 publications including the main findings will be reviewed applying critical content analysis. The project was reviewed by the research ethics committee (JYU). Informed consents were

acquired from the participants. Children's assent was negotiated in-situ (Rutanen et al., 2021). The project created novel perspectives on transitions. 'Transition space' was constituted in socio-spatial re-organization of relations. Children's contributions and the organization of ECEC and pre-primary education were central in this constitution. The study created practical insights for supporting children's individual processes, but also directed attention to structural invisibilities in transitions.

transitions, space, relational approach, longitudinal study, qualitative inquiry

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Ensuring an Inclusive and Smooth Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School

Presenters
Elisabeth Bjørnestad, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway

All authors
Elisabeth Bjørnestad, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway
Silje Hølland, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway
Cecilie Pedersen Dalland, OsloMet Metropolitan Universtiy, Norway

This study explores how the transition from kindergarten to school can be smooth and secure for all children, focusing on supportive processes and practices. Previous research highlights the importance of a successful transition for children's inclusion, wellbeing, and learning (Bjørnestad et al., 2023; 2024; Dockett et al., 2019; Hogsnes, 2019; Schürer et al., 2022). This study builds on these findings by examining specific practices facilitating an inclusive and smooth transition. The study is grounded in the concepts of continuity (social, physical, communicative, philosophical, and structural) as understood by Boyle et al. (2018), Einarsdottir and Sigurdardottir (2023), and Hogsnes (2019; 2024). These frameworks help us understand the multifaceted nature of transitions. The study employs a qualitative research paradigm. Allowing for an in-depth understanding of the transition process, interviews of 22 teachers, 100 group interviews with children, 6 school leaders, and 6 school owners are utilized, The study has an approved GDPR-compliant Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). Information and a consent form were provided to all participants. Children were informed, and consent was re-negotiated during the research. The researcher was trained to "read" the children's non-verbal signals and unease. Successful transitions involve effective information exchange and job shadowing between kindergarten and primary school teachers, strengthening children's social competence and friendships, and using transitional teachers and objects, However, obstacles include significant differences in how municipalities and schools handle transitions, leading to unequal experiences for children. These findings suggest that a more equal transition process and program can benefit all children and secure a child-centered transition.

transition, kindergarten, school, continuity, inclusion

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Symposium Set F25 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | | Room G366, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AND AWARENESS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS

Chaired by Ulrike Beate Mueller, Justus-Liebig-University Gießen, Germany

Students' inclusive competences and attitudes in an international virtual seminar

Presenters
Ulrike Beate Mueller, Justus-Liebig-University Gießen, Germany
Maire Tuul, Tallinn University, Estonia

All authors
Ulrike Beate Mueller, Justus-Liebig-University Gießen, Germany
Maire Tuul, Tallinn University, Estonia
Ene Varik-Maasik, Tallinn University, Estonia

The central research aim of this paper is to investigate early childhood education students' development of inclusive competences and attitudes through a digital international seminar. Previous research findings show that there is a potential of internationalization to support students' competences which are necessary for inclusive education. Studies report that students improve in-depth knowledges, language abilities and intercultural competences, which can be seen as specifically important for working with children from diverse cultural backgrounds (DAAD, 2023b; European Union, 2019; Janert, 2022; Kercher and Schifferings 2019). Ainscow (2020) emphasizes the international tendency to understand inclusion as a broad concept for all learners, encompassing aspects of gender, social class, ethnicity, religion, and ability. The central framework for this paper is the profile for inclusive teacher professional learning of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2022: 22ff.) which particularizes knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills. Following a mixed-method research paradigm, a pre-post survey with 83 German, Estonian and other international students of a seminar addressing inclusive education was conducted in 2024 and analysed quantitatively with qualitative statements for illustration. After being informed, students gave their consent for participation. All data were collected anonymously. Results indicate a positive development of students' attitude towards inclusion and an enhancement of their in-depth knowledge in the field of inclusion. For inclusive education in all countries, especially the use of evidence and inclusion as a principle, are important factors which can "help in determining levers for change" to further develop institutions inclusively (Ainscow, 2020: 8).

professionalization, inclusive education, internationalization@home, Collaborative online international learning, flipped classroom

This application discusses a completed piece of research.

Fostering Inclusive and Intercultural Education: Teacher Training and Socially Competent Robotics in Early Childhood Settings

Presenters
Alessia Bartolini, University of Perugia, Italy

All authors
Alessia Bartolini, University of Perugia, Italy
Maria Filomia, University of Perugia, Italy

This study examines how a culturally competent robot in early childhood education fosters inclusion and intercultural understanding. It explores teachers' competency development, social robotics' impact, and ethical-pedagogical implications. This research builds on the Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy framework (Paris, 2012; 2017), which promotes the maintenance and appreciation of cultural identities in education. It also connects to studies on social robotics in education (Belpaeme et al., 2018) and teacher professional development in inclusive and multicultural settings (Nigris et al., 2020). The study is grounded in sociocultural theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018). It employs an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to analyze teacher-student-robot interactions. This qualitative research follows a participatory action research (PAR) design. Data are collected through focus groups, classroom observations, and reflective journals of 20 teachers

involved in the SONRIE project. Ethical concerns include ensuring informed consent from all participants, protecting children's privacy, and minimizing potential biases. Ethical concerns include informed consent, children's data protection, and potential bias in AI interactions. Measures align with the EECERA Ethical Code (2024), emphasizing transparency, child safeguarding, and critical AI literacy. Preliminary findings suggest that research-training enhances teachers' intercultural awareness and critical engagement with technology. Initial observations indicate that children interact with the robot in ways that reflect their cultural backgrounds, fostering curiosity and discussion. Findings inform teacher training programs, advocating for AI literacy and inclusive pedagogies. Policymakers can use insights to regulate AI in education, ensuring ethical and culturally responsive implementation.

inclusive education, teacher training, socially competent robotics, intercultural pedagogy, early childhoo education

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

The view of pre-service ECEC teachers on the role of educational inclusion in classrooms working with project approach

Presenters
Elena González-Alfaya, University of Cordoba, Spain

All authors
Elena González-Alfaya, University of Cordoba, Spain
Rosario Merida-Serrano, University of Cordoba, Spain
María Ángeles Olivares-García, University of Cordoba, Spain
Julia Rodríguez-Carrillo, University of Cordoba, Spain

The aim of the research is to know and assess the impact of educational practices in relation to educational inclusion carried out in classrooms that use the project approach for future early childhood education teachers.
This Research is framed within the RIECU Network (Schools, Teacher Training Center and University) (González, et al., 2021), which aims to enhance the acquisition of professional teaching and inclusion competences Research on the project approach (Vergara, 2015) shows how active methodologies in general and the Project approach in particular promote an inclusive learning environment as they allow students to actively participate in their educational process including diverse forms of expression and participation which is crucial for students with Educational Needs (Balongo and Mérida, 2017). The paradigm used in the research is interpretive symbolic (hermeneutic). The methodology used is qualitative and the methods used are mainly the analysis of the portfolios made by the university students and discussion groups. Ethical considerations have been taken into account, such as the anonymous and voluntary participation of the participants, which will be used only for educational purposes, and the return of results. The main conclusion of the work is the preservice teachers' awareness of the need for deep and constant training on Project Base Learning methodology and ECEC because of its respect for children's rights. At the level of practices and policies, results such as this research, encourage educational institutions to offer quality internships, truly respectful of children's rights, that make a difference in training future teachers.

project approach, inclusion, educational practices, teacher training, qualitative research

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Symposium Set F26 | Wednesday 27th August 2025, 14:50 – 16:10 | Room G368, Third Floor, Faculty of Arts

HEALTH, FOOD PRACTICES AND MEASUREMENTS

Chaired by Chiara Dalledonne Vandini, University of Bologna, Italy

Mealtime through children's words. Preliminary results from ON FOODS project

Presenters
Chiara Dalledonne Vandini, University of Bologna, Italy
Arianna Lazzari, University of Bologna, Italy

All authors
Chiara Dalledonne Vandini, University of Bologna, Italy
Arianna Lazzari, University of Bologna, Italy

The aim of this contribution, is to shed light on the “voice” of children and their personal experiences concerning the school canteen for better understanding their experinces and rethinking those educational environments. This focus on the children's point of view stems from the assumption that much research conducted on the canteen concerns the nutritional quality of meals, the impact on nutrition education and the prevention of childhood obesity (Meiklejohn et al., 2016). Less analyzed have been children's “emic” practices during the canteen (Hamilton-Ekeke, Thomas, 2007), capable of grasping how children perceive and experience school lunchtime and food sustainability. Assuming the educational, social, and health dimensions of school meals (Child Guarantee, 2021), the research was designed within a child-centred systemic approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) Participatory action-research was used as methodology to support teachers’ critical reflection, starting from the analysis of children’s perspectives. The data analyzed include children’s drawings, narratives, and participant observations. Since this project targets children (age 3-7) and their families, our priority has always been ensuring the privacy of each participant through data anonymization, according to the EECERA Ethical code. Preliminary findings show that for children lunch is experienced as a moment of intense socialization and free discussion, knowledge, and manifestation of their subjectivities expressed through tastes, disgusts, and ways of organizing the meal itself. Children's voices allow us to interface with a previously unseen dimension of the lunchtime phenomenon, which allow teachers’ to de-construct entrenched institutionalized practice governing school meals and to co-construct an eco-pedagogy capable of increasing children’s agency.

school canteen, children's voices, partecipatory research, food education, ecopedagogy

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Nourishing Our Future: Exploring sustainable food practices in Essex early years settings.

Presenters
Kay Aaronricks, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

All authors
Kay Aaronricks, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom
Mitzi Harris, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

The aim of this research was to explore the food provision, environment, experiences and perceptions towards healthy eating for children aged 1 - 5 years in childminding, preschool and day nursery early years settings across Essex. There is a dearth of research on food and nutrition in early years settings, despite the National Child Measurement Programme (2024) demonstrating a rise in obesity among reception aged children. Inadequate funding significantly affects food provision, in October 2024, 54% of households in England reduced their food intake or experienced hunger (JRF, 2025). We brought knowledge and practice together (Schön, 1983) through opportunities to actively engage practitioners, to better understand current societal challenges around nutrition that intersect the areas of early years education and public health (Molina-Azorin and Fetters, 2023). A mixed methods

design contributed quantitative and qualitative insights through a survey, workshops that bought together practitioners from diverse settings to share best practices, and challenges, PhotoVoice and nutritional analysis. The study was approved by the university ethics panel. Particular attention was given to the sharing of setting photos to ensure anonymity and further ethical consent was gained for data collection activities during the NOF conference. Food and nutrition in the early years is complex, reflecting the diversity of the early years sector in England. Significant findings span six areas; guidance, nutritional quality, the food environment, inclusivity, education and sustainability. There is an urgent need for national and local programs to promote a positive, informed relationship with food that addresses the increasing dominance of convenience-driven, highly processed food environments.

healthy eating, food education, nutrition

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.

Diagnostic measurement of health competence in children 4-8 years

Presenters
Judit Podráczky, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA-MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
Judit Finánc, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary
Melinda Csima, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary

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Melinda Csima, Institute of Education, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; MTA MATE Early Childhood Research Group, Hungary

The aim of our presentation is to introduce the tool used for the diagnostic measurement of health competence in the 4–8-year-old age group. The interpretation of the concept of habit and the examination of early childhood habit formation have gained new momentum in international research in recent decades (Gardner, 2014; Gardner et al., 2022). Numerous studies have explored specific areas, particularly nutrition, oral hygiene and physical activity (Finánc et al., 2023). Various health education standards provide guidance on the knowledge, attitudes, and habits children should possess (AAP et al., 2019; WHO, 2021), aiming to identify health priorities. These standards focus on children's health and supporting habits, expanding as they age (NCSHE, 2022). In line with health education standards, we developed a new, story-based tool (150 items) covering nutrition, physical activity, safety, risk-avoidance behaviour, mental health, and hygiene. During the validation process (Podráczky, 2025), children (n=175) were asked to make decisions about situations that were healthy/unhealthy or right/wrong using pictograms. The study followed the EECERA Ethical Code for Early Childhood Researchers (Bertram et al., 2024), with parents' informed consent and children's anonymity preserved. Children participated in the study with motivation and were able to interpret the tasks effectively. Preschoolers have an adequate level of knowledge in the areas of nutrition, hygiene and exercise, while identifying emotions and injury-prone situations posed a challenge for them. The instrument can support teachers in planning the habit formation process with greater intentionality, and can also identify areas that require increased attention.

measurement tool, children aged 4-8, health education, health competence, habit formation

This application discusses an ongoing piece of research and findings may be preliminary/emerging.