

Childhood^{and} communities

THE X CONFERENCE ON CHILDHOOD STUDIES

MAY 15-17 2024 • HELSINKI, FINLAND AND ONLINE



Abstract Book

CHILDHOOD AND COMMUNITIES

THE X CONFERENCE ON CHILDHOOD STUDIES MAY 15 –17, 2024

The main event organized by the Finnish Society for Childhood Studies is the annual/bi-annual Childhood Studies –Conference that was organized for the first time in 2009 in Tampere, Finland.

The X Childhood Studies Conference is held in Helsinki, Finland, in 2024. The X Conference on Childhood Studies in 2024 is organized by the Finnish Society for Childhood Studies, Itla Children's Foundation and The Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki.

The Conference gathered total of 197 participants from which 170 in person and 27 online attendees.

Childhood and Communities

Communities have an essential role in creating children's habitats and well-being in childhood. As a result of the recent pandemic and other ongoing crises, the well-being of children has become a topic of discussion in daycare, schools, spare time, family- and working life, the economy, and security. When facing difficult circumstances and crises we are tackling complex problems that need a systemic and multidisciplinary approach in order to be solved. We need to engage different actors and endorse collective responsibility to support the well-being of individual children and their communities.

The aim of this conference is to bring together scholars from different research fields to share and discuss insights on factors that decrease and increase well-being and resilience in the everyday communal structures in which children live.

The submitted abstracts were to be related to one of these themes:

1. The role of communities in creating children's habitats and well-being in childhood
2. The wellbeing of children in different areas of society; daycare, schools, spare time, family- and working life, the economy and security (etc.)
3. Multidisciplinary work and collective responsibility in supporting the well-being of individual children and their communities in/after crisis
4. Factors that decrease or increase well-being and resilience in the everyday communal structures in which children live
5. Children's role in societies and communities
6. Children's everyday life
7. Other

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PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 15 May 2024

9:00 a.m.	Registration opens (Minerva plaza)
10:00 - 11.00 a.m.	Annual meeting of the The Finnish Society for Childhood Studies (Minerva room k114)
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.	Opening ceremony (Aurora hall 230) Greetings speeches Johanna Mäkelä , Professor of Food culture, Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki Katri Vataja , CEO, the Itla Children's Foundation Elina Stenvall , Chair of the Board, Finnish Society for Childhood Studies Pro Childhood Award
1:30 - 2:30 p.m.	Plenary session I, (Aurora hall 230) Cath Larkins (UK)
2:30 - 3:00p.m.	Coffee
3:00 - 4.00 p.m.	Plenary session II, (Aurora hall 230) Niina Junttila (FIN)
4:15 - 5:15 p.m.	Workshops
6:30 p.m.	Helsinki City reception at The City Hall Ballroom

Thursday, 16 May 2024

9:30 -11:00 a.m.	Workshops
11:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Coffee (Minerva plaza)
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Plenary session III, (Aurora hall 230) Riikka Hohti (FIN)
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Workshops
3:30 - 4:00 p.m.	Coffee (Minerva plaza)
4:00 - 5:30 p.m.	Workshops
7:00 p.m.	Conference dinner (Restaurant Sipuli)

Friday, 17 May 2024

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Workshops
10:15 - 11:15 a.m.	Plenary session IV, (Aurora hall 230) Markus Kaakinen (FIN)
11:15 a.m. - 11:45 p.m.	Coffee (Minerva plaza)
11:45 - 12:45 p.m.	Plenary session V, (Aurora hall 230) Beth Ferholt (USA) and Dr. Smartypants
12:45 - 1:15 p.m.	Closing ceremony, (Aurora hall 230) Music Class 5C from Kaisaniemi Primary School will perform with teacher Santtu Vihunen

PLENARY SESSIONS

Plenary session I

Cath Larkins, Professor of Childhood Studies, Co Director, The Centre for Children and Young People's Participation. School of Health, Social Work and Sport. University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom.

Cath Larkins is a Professor of Childhood Studies, Co Director, The Centre for Children and Young People's Participation in School of Health, Social Work and Sport, University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom.

Prof Cath Larkins innovates in participation, activism and knowledge exchange with children and young people, and their allies, across the UK and Europe. She conducts co-research, particularly with marginalised children and young people which is focused on challenging discrimination and improving policy and practice. Working with a wide range of child and adult colleagues, she co-authors guidance to inspire social change. Her scholarship advance theories and methodologies for participation and citizenship. Her collaborative work with children and young people has led to impact on policy and practice internationally.

Plenary session II

Niina Junttila, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Turku and a Professor of Educational Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

Niina Junttila is a Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Turku and a Professor of Educational Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä. Her research focuses on issues related to the psychosocial well-being, participation, and learning of children and young people. Niina is particularly interested in the antecedents, mechanisms and cost of social outsiderhood, and especially the solutions by which loneliness and ostracisms can be reduced. Currently Niina leads the SRC-funded Right to Belong – tackling Loneliness and Ostracism during Childhood and Youth research consortium, whose aim is to strengthen the community and participation of children and adolescents, and to reduce their feelings of social outsiderhood.

The focus of the presentation is on loneliness and ostracisms as a two interlinked forms of social outsiderhood. All humans have a fundamental need to belong, and anything that threatens accomplishing this may be seen as a threat for equality and existence. Social relations contribute to equality, well-being, health, trust and sustainable societal level security through fulfilment of these needs to belong. The need to belong is not fulfilled for the 15-20% of Finnish children and youth who currently feel lonely and/or ostracized. When prolonged, loneliness results in cognitive overload, deteriorating social functioning and adverse physical and mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, self-harming, and suicidality. Ostracism, as an insidious form of social violence executed by ignoring and excluding individuals or groups by individuals or groups, activates social pain reaction in the brain, and if prolonged, has adverse consequences on child and youth well-being and health including e.g. increased risk for psychiatric disorders, impaired immune functioning and even risk for radicalization and violent acts.

Plenary session III

Riikka Hohti, Finnish Academy Research Fellow at University of Tampere, Finland and Grant-funded researcher, Department of Education, Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science (HELSUS), University of Helsinki, Finland.

Riikka Hohti is Finnish Academy Research Fellow at University of Tampere, Finland and Grant-funded researcher, Department of Education, Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science (HELSUS), University of Helsinki, Finland.

She has written about animal relations, materiality, temporality and affective atmospheres in childhoods. She has developed participatory and post-qualitative methodologies at the intersections of childhood studies and human-animal studies and education. She is Finnish Academy Research Fellow at Tampere University and leads the project Children of the Anthropocene – Environmental atmospheres and multispecies collaborations (Kone Foundation, University of Helsinki).

A planet called childhood – Some exercises in atmospheric, earthly and multispecies research

The term “planetary” is being increasingly used in connection with a range of phenomena: well-being and health, pedagogies, businesses, fields of research, and more. Whatever calls itself planetary, claims some kind of environmental awareness and attention to the relations between human endeavors and un/sustainable environmental processes. At the scholarly level, the planetary dimension is implicated in the Anthropocene, an epoch named after the entanglement of human species with Earth systems.

I borrow the title for this talk from novelist Sirpa Kähkönen to play with the idea of planetary childhood research (which might be at the door). I wish to unleash imagination concerning how childhoods might be affectively and materially composing “the planet”, inasmuch “the planet” could be seen as the material for childhoods, rather than situating childhoods on a planet. I ask, what kinds of materials, affects, or temporalities do we invite in spotlight through the planet talk? And whose childhoods are we talking about then? What kinds of silences and invisibilities do we risk creating by employing the grand frame of the planet and focusing on exclusively human childhoods?

In this talk, I examine childhood communities as multispecies, multitemporal and multinatured. Drawing from colleagues’ and my own ongoing work on other than human animals and environmental atmospheres in the lives of children and young people, I present some exercises in shifting rhythm and scale. I suggest some atmospheric and earthly approaches to research childhoods together with Earth energies, weather phenomena and microbes, and to work towards more than human politics of childhood in the post-Anthropocene.

Plenary session IV

Markus Kaakinen, University Researcher, Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Markus Kaakinen is a University Researcher, Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy, in the University of Helsinki, Finland.

The topic of the presentation: Youth crime, and violence especially, has received a lot of attention in Finland in recent years. The presentation discusses recent youth crime-related phenomena such as the crime drop, street violence and youth street gangs. I will elaborate on the connections and key differences between the phenomena and discuss their significance for Finnish criminal policy and youth crime prevention.

Plenary session V

Beth Ferholt, Associate Professor. Early Childhood Education/Art Education. School of Education. Brooklyn College, New York. and Dr. Smartypants, PH.D. JKLMNOP, Senior member, Puppetry in Practice.

Participatory design research with young children: Playworlds as intergenerational research

How did the young children with whom we work, bring their adult co-researchers to understand that imaginary characters can participate in analysis, grant proposals, and presenting findings through presentations at conferences, and co-writing articles? It took the pandemic remote schooling of 2020 to make their teachers and we university-based researchers, listen closely to what the young children with whom we create and study playworlds, were asking of us. What does it mean to expand our original research teams -- which included those of us studying development and those creating development, university-based researchers and also young children and their teachers -- to include not just the teachers' chosen necessary companions, artists; but also the children's chosen necessary companions, imaginary characters? How does this expansion work and what does it entail? I will argue that the inclusion of this fifth element in our research teams leads to a profound shift in our understanding of what research can be, what development is, and of what inclusion should be (i.e. radical).

ORAL WORKSHOP ABSTRACTS

Educators' responses to young children's grief and grieving in early childhood education and care

Salonen, Eija; Pursi, Annukka; Lipponen, Lasse
University of Helsinki

Our study explores educators' responses to young children's grief and grieving in early childhood education and care (ECEC) drawing on the cultural psychological understanding of emotions (see, e.g., Brinkmann, 2020). We approach grief as a response to the social and emotional losses of everyday life, such as parental absence when starting ECEC. We observed the interactions among children under age three and their educators in flexibly scheduled ECEC in Finland and analyzed the educators' verbal expressions and actions in everyday grieving situations, with a particular interest in the culture-bound understanding behind these responses. The preliminary findings suggest that the educators' responses were shaped by implicit expectations and views concerning the appropriateness of different times and ways of grieving and calming down. In addition, the responses reflected the educators' views on the appropriate ways of comforting grieving children. The educators seemed to perceive grief as an expected and suitable response of young children to the separation from their parents, especially when starting ECEC. In situations of this kind, they mostly responded to a child's grieving with understanding and compassion. However, the educators' verbal responses suggested that a child's grief should eventually turn to adaptation and happiness. Accordingly, they sometimes disregarded or disapproved of grieving that deviated from this norm. Through these findings, this study hopes to shed light on the culture of sorrow and grief in ECEC and contribute to its critical discussion.

Reference

Brinkmann, S. (2020). Learning to grieve: A preliminary analysis. *Culture & Psychology*, 26(3), 469–483.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X19877918>

Children's Voices in Collaborative Planning of Professional Development Workshop with Teachers

Glotov, Sergei; Siry, Christina
University Of Luxembourg

Background aims

The proposed presentation examines the process of co-planning a professional development (PD) module for early childhood teachers (3-6 y.o.) by a team of six primary school teachers and six researchers at the SciTeach Centre (University of Luxembourg). It aims to highlight the value of collaboration with teachers by analysing how they bring the perspectives and voices of children during the co-planning process.

Methods

The research data consist of video recordings of two co-planning sessions that happened in person at the SciTeach Centre and amounted to 4.5 hours of footage. Four teachers and five researchers were present at both meetings. The data analysis was approached using qualitative content analysis in four themes.

Results

Throughout the process of co-planning, the teachers shared the perspectives and voices of their children in ways that can be grouped into four themes: 1. Observations ("It was so much fun seeing the tower fall"), 2. Quotation ("He said it's an Eiffel Tower"), 3. Re-enactment (mimicking a child: "My pig is a princess, she will have a castle"), and 4. Presentation (drawings, photos). With these, the teachers shaped the overall co-generated structure of the PD module.

Conclusions

Braided together, the four themes closely connect the PD module to children's needs, giving insight into children's thinking, experiences, and learning processes, and shaping activities and discussion topics of the module. Hence, through collaboration with teachers, we not only acknowledge children's agency, but also design a contextually-responsive module that supports their well-being and quality education.

Constructing Closeness in Educational Partnerships in Extended Hours Early Childhood Education and Care

Peltoperä, Kaisu; Rautamies, Erja
University of Jyväskylä

This study explores the dynamics of closeness and distance in educational partnerships involving guardians with non-standard working hours. By educational partnerships we refer to the relationship between educators and guardians aimed at benefitting the child as their mutual goal. Thematic interviews were conducted with 31 educators, including 12 teachers and 19 nurses, from extended hours early childhood education and care (ECEC). The data was inductively categorized into five themes. A deeper discourse analysis revealed tensional discourses, indicating the simultaneous construction of both closeness and distance in these partnerships. This led to the formation of four types of tensional discourses that express the dichotomy of closeness and distance in educational partnerships. The first two discourses, 'timing of ECEC and asynchrony' and 'tensional hurry talk', are closely tied to the characteristics of non-standard working hours, extended hours ECEC, and the timing of interactions between educators and guardians. The final two discourses, 'trust and care versus criticism and control' and '(in)equality of the partners', are more associated with the perceived roles of the partners in the educational partnership. These findings provide valuable insights for improving communication and collaboration in educational partnerships in ECEC.

Intergenerational food literacy inspires multi-scale community action for children's convivial futures

Rudolph, Norma
Tampere University

Background

Food is critical to children's habitats and well-being. Hunger is stigmatised. Poverty and food insecurity impact the ability of communities to organise and thrive. Increasing global food insecurity, not only produces hunger and poor health, but extends into habitats through damage to social networks, community spaces, local foodscapes and resources needed for community imagination, action and well-being.

Aims

This project foregrounds childhoods in African and global food sovereignty and agroecology movements. Intergenerational participatory learning and community action for food justice draws on ancestral knowledges and indigenous plants.

Methods

Some practical methodological components have been explored in one rural and one urban community in South Africa. Community entry brings young children, elders, youth (and anyone else who is interested) together to do simple activities related to food (telling stories, cooking, growing, foraging, art, drama and more). Appreciative participatory community learning deploys decolonial (Escobar, 2021; Grosfoguel, 2013) and food regime (Giménez & Shattuck, 2011) theory as well as the Food Ladders framework (Blake, 2019). The Food Ladders approach operates at three levels: responding to immediate shocks and urgent need; building networks of trust and reciprocity; and place-based self-organised community change.

Way forward

Approaches to food support in communities matters. Rather than merely identifying lack of good food in households and then attempting to feed that gap, this place-based approach engages communities appreciatively, actively and with sensitivity to context. This presentation welcomes critique and seeks to inspire and enlist potential partners to create convivial habitats and well-being for children.

Emancipatory intergenerational food literacy sparks collective community action for wellbeing of children and habitats

*Rudolph ,Norma
Tampere University*

Background aims

Global food insecurity produces hunger, poor health and undermines habitats and children's wellbeing through damage to social networks, community spaces, local foodscapes and impacts community capacity to organise and thrive. Most government food policy responds inadequately to symptoms of hunger without addressing the structural root causes of injustice. This presentation describes emancipatory intergenerational food literacy in everyday structures with different actors taking collective responsibility for creating children's habitats and well-being.

Method

Community engagement starts by bringing together young children, elders, youth (and anyone else who is interested) to do simple practical activities. Storytelling and preparing, growing, foraging, storing, (preferably indigenous) food and medicinal plants provide a springboard for community food literacy conversations and action. The asset-based approach uses dialogue, imagination and creativity to generate visions of childhood and society to spark collective action. Feasible actions expressed as visions are prioritised first. Celebrating initial small successes generates energy for change, while more ambitious actions are broken into smaller steps.

Results and conclusions

This emancipatory methodology engages communities appreciatively, actively and with sensitivity to context to solve complex problems emerging from the multifaceted crisis of food, climate, energy, poverty and inequality. Communities tackle immediate needs before moving on to capacity building and later self-organised community change. The decolonial emancipatory paradigm draws on indigenous and tacit knowledges as well as deepening understanding of food regimes and the corporate food system and makes links with other initiatives and broader agroecology and climate justice networks and movements operating locally or accessed digitally.

Childhood affective niche construction: Promoting togetherness, belonging, and agency among children in Montessori-playschools

Rinne, Ida

University Of Jyväskylä, Department Of Social Sciences And Philosophy

Background aims: This presentation examines children's communities as socio-affective niches with a focus on the role of children in constructing, shaping, and maintaining their own niches, the environmental factors that facilitate such activities, and the resulting social and emotional benefits. In the current philosophical discussions on affective scaffolding, children are typically perceived as more or less passive recipients of the scaffolding activities of the caregiver. This presentation aims to expand on these philosophical theorizations by looking into the agency children exhibit in shaping the niches that scaffold their emotional needs and affective states.

Methods: The study employs the analytical framework of cognitive scaffoldings to analyze Montessori playschool environment as social-affective niche, mapping the functional features of affective niches to the key practices and elements within these environments. The purpose is to elucidate how these environments act as niches that scaffold children's experiences of togetherness and belonging.

Results: The analysis reveals that Montessori environments feature various material and social elements that promote children's engagement in niche construction. Additionally, it will be argued that Montessori environments include various environmental arrangements and social practices with scaffolding properties that promote feelings of togetherness and belonging.

Conclusions: These results suggest that actively engineered social niches that allow children as active agents may be especially effective in promoting feelings of togetherness and belonging. Lastly, the presentation discusses the need for further research on effective scaffolding strategies and empirical studies investigating the link between feelings of inclusion and togetherness, and children's active niche construction.

Conceptualising small rural school-community relationships within a divided society: people, meanings, practices and spaces

Bagley, Carl; Fargas Malet, Montserrat
Queen's University Belfast

Small rural schools have often been characterised as being at the heart of their communities. However, there is no clarity on what that means nor on the perceived meaning of 'community' within this context. The findings of the Small School Rural Community Study focused on the relationship between small rural schools and the communities they serve within the post-conflict context of Northern Ireland's religiously divided schooling system. Using survey data and qualitatively derived data from this three-year study, we explore the ways in which community is understood and conceptualised by school principals, staff, parents, pupils and community members, in five case study areas. The findings suggest that community can be conceptualised as having four key dimensions: people; meanings; practices; and spaces. The study found that a range of 'community practices' happened in school and around school, and that these practices had attached meanings, with schools helping to develop a sense of belonging and pride in the community, sometimes even a sense of 'shared space'. Drawing on these key dimensions, the paper provides a theoretical framework of 'community' to expand our understanding of school-community relations and the potential value of small rural schools beyond simply the educational.

The role of communities in risk management of digital sexualized violence against children

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Background: The digitalization of childhood is typically perceived as an inherently global and transnational phenomenon. All around the world children of diverse age groups and social backgrounds have access to the internet and interact with people located in different (national) places. As a globally shared characteristic, the digitalization of childhood has increased so quickly that their parents' generations - albeit 'digital natives' themselves - do not participate in the same online spaces as their children and often do not know about the extent of digitalized violence. Even though the internet is regarded as a global phenomenon, discussing the risks of children's online activities must not negate the role of local communities, which will be shown in this presentation by the example of digital sexualized violence.

Method: Employing qualitative interviews with children and adult 'experts' working on the community level as social workers, police staff or psychotherapists, it will be investigated how online and offline violence is interwoven in bullying, sextortion or sexual abuse among peers and in adults' relations with children, while perpetrator and victim may live in the same community. Moreover, it will be analysed how children refer to offline/online community structures for help and how communities may improve their prevention and support structures to meet the needs of children.

Result/Conclusion: On a theoretical level my analyses aims to improve our understanding about children as social actors in communities, since digitalized violence is an issue they often have more knowledge and experience with than older generations.

Families' dwelling and moving in the compact city: toward more fine-tuned analyses of densification

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Stockholm University

Background aims

The compact city approach is considered the main planning strategy for sustainable urban development, yet the consequences of densification for families is underresearched. The aim of this article is to analyze the different dimensions of density families with children experience in their living environment, in order to develop more fine-grained knowledge on the consequences of densification for families.

Methods

Ethnographic material (field notes from go-alongs) from school journeys with two school age children, are analysed together with interview material with children, young people and parents (53 interviews with 62 research participants) carried out within a project on vertical living.

Results and Conclusions

Our findings suggest that living in the middle of a construction site when neighbourhoods are densified, affects in particular children's mobility. Social density tends to increase experiences of physical density in terms of car traffic, making traffic the most highlighted fear for parents and children in the densified neighbourhoods. In the least dense neighbourhood, the materialized welfare state planning with separated traffic infrastructure, as well diversity in terms of green, social and cultural affordances, support children's interdependent mobilities. We argue that both social and physical qualities of densification and development needs to be considered when discussing the consequences of densification, and relate these to emerging discussion of (the erosion of) the welfare landscape. Neighbourhoods with different degrees of density can illuminate the multi-layeredness of density, and together with qualitative experiences of densification in urban settings, deepen the knowledge of the consequences of densification for families.

Child and youth participation in Multistakeholder Policy Lab exchanges: two case-studies

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Karel De Grote University of Applied Sciences And Arts

Background aims

Deliberative democracy aims to involve a plurality of citizens and stakeholders in political decisions. However, children and young people are traditionally not invited to take part in multistakeholder policy debates (Martin, 2018). Must-a-Lab, a European project in which Policy Labs (PL) are deployed in six cities, bridges that gap, and directly involves children and young people in several workshops about integration policies.

Methods

This paper presents two case-studies and focuses on PL participants' perception of children's and young people's roles in PL deliberations. It focuses on data from Mechelen (Belgium), and Fuenlabrada (Spain) that was collected using questionnaires, individual interviews and focus group discussions.

Results

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data shows that children and young people require time to trust the deliberation processes and the other lab participants, especially policy officers, administrators and representatives of organisations they are not familiar with. They appreciate the use of inclusive language, creative methods and develop strong bonds with facilitators. Other participants of the PL exchanges are highly appreciative of the children's and young people's input, but also highlight the caveat of facilitators and other adults taking over during plenary and small group discussions.

Conclusions

The analysis suggests that multistakeholder, mixed age policy debates can indeed include children and young people as reasoned deliberators, but that successful exchanges rely heavily on facilitation. More research in this domain is needed to fully understand how mixed groups of adults and children can cooperate in participatory policy debates.

Sport-based Icehearts programme targeted at vulnerable children and adolescents: Findings from a 4-year follow-up

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Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare

Background

Icehearts is a Finnish sport-based positive youth development programme targeted at children and adolescents with a higher risk of social marginalization. Team sport is used as a social environment where children – alongside the opportunity to access physical activity – have the possibility to experience a trustworthy relationship with the mentor leading the team, to learn social skills, to make friendships, and to experience a sense of belonging. The Icehearts Longitudinal Study (ILS, 2015-2028) investigates the life course and psychosocial wellbeing of boys participating in the program in five teams and the benefits and outcomes of the program.

Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the impacts of the programme on behavioural and emotional well-being of participating children at a 4-year follow-up.

Methods

Data were collected among parents and teachers of programme participants (n=65) at baseline (age 7) and at 4-year follow-up using Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires. Further, focus group interviews (n=5) were conducted among parents (n=28) of boys participating in the programme.

Results

According to the quantitative data, improvement in prosocial behaviour, as assessed by the teachers, were found among programme participants. In focus groups, parents reported on increased self-esteem, self-confidence, emotional self-regulation, prosocial behaviour, courage and mental well-being among children participating in the programme

Conclusions

The Icehearts programme has potential in promoting prosocial behaviour and mental well-being among socially vulnerable children. The findings highlight the importance of role, skills and mindset of the Icehearts mentor leading the team.

How Executive Functions Contribute to the Matthew Effect in Early Childhood Development: An International Comparison

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Executive functions have been recently found as resilient factors for early children's developmental disadvantages due to low socioeconomic status, though these children have less opportunities to acquire them. Yet, the validity of this conclusion requires further examination with larger sample size and more rigorous analysis methods. With a national-representative datasets in the UK and USA (2577 and 2234, respectively; 49.2% female) from the OECD (IELS datasets), this study examined the role of executive functions in early children with distinct socioeconomic status. Using response surface analysis rather than traditional moderated regression, the study revealed that (1) unexpectedly, the benefits of executive functions was amplified by high socioeconomic status to early numeracy (UK), general cognitive skills, global competence (USA) and literacy (both); and (2) executive functions mediated the associations between socioeconomic status and various early development outcomes. Findings imply a Matthew Effect that compared with low socioeconomic status families, high socioeconomic status families can cultivate early children's executive functions far effectively, and have more abundant resources to optimize its benefits to children's multiple development. Social support is urgent to compensate for the economically disadvantaged children's executive functions acquisition and utilization.

Keywords: Executive Functions, Socioeconomic Status, Early Development, Educational Inequity

Children's experiences of violence in sports activities

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Every child has the right to participate in sports within a healthy and safe environment, as articulated in Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Nevertheless, research suggests that minor athletes (under 18 years of age) encounter various forms of violence within sports activities. Such violence can be particularly detrimental to children, with effects that may be significant and enduring. Additionally, children may struggle to recognize and respond to violent behaviour. Our study aimed to examine the prevalence, types, and perpetrators of violence among minor athletes in Finnish sports, alongside examining the role of sports regulations and legal remedies in safeguarding child athletes.

To address these objectives, we conducted an online survey involving child athletes (N=3030). Statistical analysis of the survey data was performed using the SPSS program, employing techniques of frequency distributions, cross-tabulation, and the Chi-square test. Furthermore, Finnish sports law and regulation was subjected to legal dogmatic analysis.

The findings revealed that: a) various forms of violence are present in Finnish sports, with emotional violence being the most prevalent; b) children can be both victims and perpetrators of violence in sports; and c) many children choose not to speak about violence, and even when they do, the matter may not be adequately addressed, leading to continued violence. These findings underline the importance of initiatives aimed at fostering openness, equality, ethics, and safety within sports environments.

Ninth Graders' Thoughts on Rainbow Issues– Results from Workshops Given in Schools in Helsinki

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University of Helsinki

Background:

According to studies many young people in western countries identify as part of the 'rainbow community'. Studies also show that LGBTQI+ youth consistently report lower life satisfaction and feel lonelier in schools than other pupils do.

Aims:

Our aim is to study ninth graders' (N=715) attitudes to issues connected to sexual and gender minorities. This is done by analyzing feedback received from the so-called Rainbow Workshops, which the city of Helsinki offered to pupils in grades 6–9 in its schools.

Methods:

Ninth graders' answers to a questionnaire regarding the workshops are analyzed. Some questions are structured, with given answering options, one is open-ended. Answers given on a Likert scale are analyzed by SPSS, whereas the ones formulated by the pupils are analyzed by qualitative content analysis.

Findings:

The pupils' feelings toward the rainbow topic are mixed. The workshops received a mediocre grade, most pupils didn't learn anything new nor wanted to learn more about the topic. Some of the answers are offensive. Many of the pupils who identified as LGBTQI+ youth, found the workshops important, and wanted to more information about the topic. There are clear differences in the answers given by boys and girls.

Conclusions:

The results show that the rainbow topic is both sensitive and common among ninth graders in schools in Helsinki. Young people identifying as part of the rainbow community hope for more discussion and better support. This suggests that strategies regarding LGBTQI+ youth and action plans to support them in schools are needed.

The perfect peer? Ideals concerning children's peer relationships in early childhood education and care

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Children's peer relationships have been identified highly significant to children's wellbeing and have become one central aspect of defining the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC). However, it is not unambiguous or clear, what children's peer relationships in early childhood should ideally look like. Is it desirable, for instance, to have as many friends as possible or as few conflicts as possible? In this study, we ask, what features related to children's peer relationships are seen ideal in Finnish ECEC by staff members of ECEC and by children themselves.

The data used in the study was collected as a part of TUIKKU-project funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland and includes 1) 3–6-years-old children's drawings (qty= 48) of the good things and bad things during their ECEC day, 2) the sociograms of individual children and child groups (qty=20) made by staff members, and 3) individual and pair interviews of ECEC staff (qty=6; approx. 6 hours). Discourse analysis is applied to reveal the underlying assumptions of the "ideal" peer and "ideal" peer relationships presented through linguistic means.

The ideal peer was portrayed as non-loner, fair, "average", confident and as someone who can set boundaries. Ideals serve as substantive models of excellence that can be moral or nonmoral. In educational institution ideals guide actions and thoughts to beneficial directions, which makes exploration of ideals continually topical.

Perspectives on wellbeing in diverse pedagogical contexts: How pedagogues navigate to nourish different children's wellbeing.

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VIA University College

Background

Research on children's wellbeing as well as pedagogical practice are characterized by many and contradictory understandings of the concept of wellbeing (Molbæk et al. 2023). There seems to be a lack of definitions of the concept in research as well as in pedagogical practice. One consequence is obscurity in how to work with wellbeing. Another is non-explicit disagreements about how to understand the wellbeing concept in interprofessional collaborations.

Aim

The projekt aims to explore different pedagogical practices and understandings regarding children's wellbeing in ECEC, school and special education - with the purpose of extending the ability of professionals to act sensitively towards different children in different areas of society.

Research Question: How do pedagogues understand and practice wellbeing? How can pedagogues and researchers through experiments develop pedagogical perspectives on wellbeing that answers to contemporary pedagogical challenges?

Method

Based in design-based research (Barab & Squire, 2004) and in close collaboration with 9 pedagogues and 20 students, design-based experiments are performed including: Place sensitive focus group interviews with pedagogues in 3 different pedagogical contexts; Workshops for collaborative generation of a compass of wellbeing; Further development of the compass in ECEC, school and special education; Evaluation and adjustment of the compass in 20 additional pedagogical institutions.

Result and conclusions

Empirical data from focus group interviews and first workshop will be presented to show how pedagogues understand and work with children's wellbeing in different pedagogical contexts, and to discuss how development of a wellbeing compass could potentially be used to qualify pedagogical practice.

The experiences of participation and sense of belonging among children in an integrated ECEC group

Saariluoma, Lotta
Jyväskylän Yliopisto

In Finland, the subjective right to early childhood education and care (ECEC) protects the equal status of children to receive high-quality, child-participatory, and individually supportive ECEC. Integrated groups in ECEC, where some children receive intensified or special support, and some receive general support, aim to promote equality among children and support their learning. However, there exist sparse studies on how participation and belonging are produced in the everyday life of an integrated child group in ECEC. The lack of knowledge is challenging due to the limited use of such research methods that capture the perspectives of young and non-verbal children. Thus, the present study aims to explore, how children's experiences of participation and sense of belonging are constructed in an integrated child group.

This PhD study investigates children's interpersonal relationships, the operational culture of the group, educators' actions, and the physical and material environment in ECEC. The participants were 12 children and 5 educators. The data of this ethnographic study were collected using mosaic approach, including in-depth observations, interviews, photographs, video data, and visual materials made by children. Qualitative thematic analysis is used in the analyses.

The preliminary results indicate that participation and belonging of all children in the group were constructed in diverse and subtle ways. In addition to educators' actions, the available environments play a significant role in the initiatives and common activities that children create together. The results can help to develop support provided in ECEC and identify mechanisms that enhance or hamper children's participation and belonging.

Implementation and development of pedagogical documentation. Action research with four daycare groups in Finland.

Lindh, Charlotte; Mansikka, Jan - Erik
Helsinki University

Pedagogical documentation was introduced in Finnish early childhood education and care within a new curriculum in 2016. In the curriculum, pedagogical documentation is described as a central method for planning, evaluating, and developing activities. Furthermore, it is also supposed to promote participation among children and adults. The curriculum is ambitious, and teachers report challenges in working with documentation. Within the framework of an action research study, we look at how pedagogical documentation has been understood and implemented in the daily practice of four different daycare groups. We want to get a more nuanced understanding of aspects that hinder or promote the use of pedagogical documentation. We also want to look at the position children have in the process of documentation. The analysis has been inspired by a post-qualitative approach. The results indicate that time frames, affected by organizational structures and leadership, became very significant in the process of developing pedagogical documentation that enhance participation.

Keywords: Pedagogical documentation, Practice-oriented research, Early childhood education and care, Time

Digital portfolios and accountability to parents in Finnish Early Childhood Education

Paakkari, Antti

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This presentation investigates the use of digital portfolios in Finnish Early Childhood Education and Care. The study is part of a larger project focusing on the use of ed-tech and digital assessment tools in ECEC. The study in question is based on interviews of eight Early Childhood Education teachers, three ECEC center directors, and one employee from the municipal administration. Through interviews the presentation investigates how digital portfolios produce a particular relationship between teachers and parents. Even though the portfolios are not officially used as a direct monitoring tool, a feeling of accountability emerges between the teachers and the parents. The presentation shows how the teachers and the ECEC center directors shoulder the portfolios with the hope of making the professionalism of the teachers visible to parents. While the portfolio system is not officially considered an accountability tool, the analysis shows how such properties become attached to it once teachers start to view it as a platform where they can performatively show their professional expertise. The results give insight to the intended and unintended consequences of digital assessment tools in the contexts of Early Childhood.

What is best for children in daycare?

Holmikäri, Johanna; Karlsson, Liisa
University of Helsinki

Professionals want to act in the best interests of the children. Different educational backgrounds and ideas about children and childhood affect what is perceived as best for the child. In my doctoral research, I am interested in how the best early childhood education for children can be pursued multiprofessionally.

The Finnish child barometer asked children what a good life is and what it consists of. In Barometer's introduction to the scientific definition of a good life, it is stated that it cannot be defined from the perspective of only one discipline. When defining the best early childhood education for a child, in addition to multi-perspectives, the children's point of view must also be taken into account.

In the first part of my dissertation research, the children get the opportunity to tell what is best for them in daycare. My research explores the thoughts of children in a group of 4-5 year olds, e.g. about what makes a kindergarten a nice place and what is a nice kindergarten like? My presentation describes the project format data collection, which has been implemented in a kindergarten.

The research methods are narrative and the children get versatile storytelling opportunities. These include pictorial expression, free narration, storytelling, picture narration. The material consists of observation of the functional project and its outputs, interviews with children and narrative material produced with parents. I will share my experiences of data collection and share my observations about what kind of perspectives opened up through the children's stories.

Longitudinal dynamics of children's emotional and behavioural mental health and parent-child conflict: A trait-state perspective

Katsantonis, Ioannis
University Of Cambridge

An important aspect of parenting related to children's mental health is the parent-child relationship. Several studies have examined the links between parent-child conflicting relationships and children's emotional and behavioural mental health. However, a major gap in the literature is the overall focus on personality traits, rather than patterns of adaptive functioning. Additionally, there is an absence of long-term empirical studies exploring the connection between parent-child conflict and children's emotional and behavioural difficulties that disentangle personality traits from processes that take place within parents and children over time. Hence, this study addresses these issues drawing upon a large representative sample of 6056 Irish children (49.31% female). Parents filled in Pianta's Parent-Child Conflict Relationship scale and children were assessed using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire five times (ages 3, 5, 7, 9, 13). Random-intercept cross-lagged panel models (RI-CLPM) were deployed to estimate the longitudinal relations between parent-child conflict and child emotional and behavioural mental health. The results of the RI-CLPMs for emotional and behavioural difficulties revealed that the models fitted very well (CFI and TLI > .95, RMSEA and SRMR < .05). From middle childhood onwards (age 7+), parent-child conflict weakly predicted subsequent within-child increased emotional difficulties. In contrast, greater than usual behavioural difficulties strongly predicted greater than usual conflict across all developmental stages. A reciprocal within-person relation was observed between ages 9 and 13, with greater than usual emotional and behavioural difficulties predicting greater than usual conflict. Overall, the findings provide new insights into the dynamics between parent-child relationships and children's mental wellbeing.

Justice and community based responses to disabilities: Exploring the perspectives of justice involved young people

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Trent University Durham*

Background Aims - Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) states that measures taken against youth should "respond to the needs of young persons with special requirements" (Declaration of Principle, Section 3(c)(iv)). Yet, little is known about how young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are responded to by both the justice system and community agencies. Addressing this research gap is critical given that youth with IDD are overrepresented within the justice system and oftentimes face challenges navigating legal processes. Our presentation draws on research which is being conducted in collaboration with a legal aid clinic in Toronto, Ontario (Justice for Children and Youth).

Methods: Through qualitative interviews with justice-involved young people aged 14-21, our research examines the effectiveness of the YCJA and community-based justice services in providing developmentally appropriate protections to young people with IDD. As our research takes a childhood-centred participatory action research (CCPAR) approach, the interview questions were co-created with a youth advisory board consisting of young people in conflict with the law.

Results: Our presentation will highlight themes that emerged throughout the interviews. We specifically examine whether young people with IDD feel their rights are upheld by the justice system and community agencies. We will also discuss recommendations from young people for creating a more equitable justice experience.

Conclusions: The findings of our study are intended to mobilize knowledge that can inform the justice system and community agencies to more effectively support the well-being of justice-involved young people with IDD.

Child inclusion and care experience in nursing encounters: Children's views by multi-method approach

Ortju, Laura; Karlsson, Liisa; Haaranen, Ari; Kankkunen, Päivi
University Of Eastern Finland

Background and Aim

The inclusion and participation of the patients is important for good quality care and patient's rights, but it has been studied mostly in adults' or young people's health services. Young children's views have not been sufficiently present in health studies. The aim of this study is to describe children's views about nursing encounters in child health clinics.

Methods

Data was collected with children by creative and participatory methods: researcher-initiated role play, stimulated recall interviews, the Storycrafting method, painting, and drawing. The principles of the studies of child perspectives were followed throughout the process. Totally 11 (5-7 years old) children and 12 parents participated. Inductive content analysis and semiotic analysis, peer examination and participant contribution were used in analysis.

Results

As a preliminary results, we assume that relevant issues to children's inclusion and care experience are the encouraging and supportive interaction between a child, a nurse and a parent; the external appearance of the care environment; and enabling play during the nursing encounters.

Conclusions

We state that using creative and participatory methods are applicable to studying children's views in health care. Children should be more actively get involved in studies to learn how health care can be developed into better address children's needs and wishes and to protect children's rights.

A nursing model for enabling the realization of agency of children defined as special

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University Of Turku

Background aims

The purpose of this study was to develop a model of habilitation nursing that enables the realization of agency of children defined as special on the basis of variations in their development. The starting point was the child's right to be heard and taken into account in all matters concerning their own life. The study is based on the perception that children and adults are similar and different at the same time, which means that a common humanity unites the nurse and the child, but the special characteristics of children are also noticed.

Methods

In my four sub-studies I used qualitative methods including case study, metasynthesis and comparative observation studies. The data were produced in two children's neurological wards in different Finnish hospitals. As analyzing methods I content analysis of manifest and latent content and conversation analysis.

Results

The dialogical model of habilitation nursing developed in the study includes theoretical justifications and concrete means for a child perspectives approach that enables the realisation of children's agency. It is essential that the professional's activities are based on a multidimensional understanding of children, adults, and disability, and that the activities are dialogic, in which case the professional does not decide the course of interaction in advance but allows their self to be influenced by the child's verbal and non-verbal communication.

Conclusions

Using the model developed in this study, the child has the opportunity to influence the content of his/her habilitation and can also be encountered through actions.

Rationalising the Critical Need for Kinship Care Support in India: Evidence from the Field

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An estimated 3% of Indian children are looked after by extended families, even when most (81%) have both parents living. These children are deprived of parental care due to continuous exposure to stressors like poverty and migration. According to UN guidelines, these families are 'kinship care' arrangements under the continuum of family-based alternative care options available for children under child-care services. Insights from attachment and ecological systems theories, child rights framework and research evidenced that when looked after by kinship caregivers, children without parental care demonstrate positive outcomes on psycho-social development because they engage in stable, long-term, supportive, and nurturing interactions. Thus, kinship caregivers are preferred to other family-based care arrangements since they can buffer children from the chaos and deprivation resulting from disrupted family systems. However, many kinship caregivers remain under strain because of old age, extreme poverty, and poor health, requiring extended support. In India, no federal laws and policies recognise 'kinship care' as a distinct care model, leaving the caregivers with minimal support. Given the context, the study employs a mixed-method approach, interviewing caregivers (59), social workers (27), and experts (28) to explore kinship caregivers socio-economic profile, motivation to continue looking after children with limited support, the nature of challenges experienced in their everyday life, and the ways to strengthen their ability to provide nurturing care to children. The study findings have the potential to offer insights that are useful in the development of kinship caregiver support intervention and policy formulation.

Dogs, strollers and secret courtyards. Preschool tactics for claiming space in the dense city.

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Uppsala University

In the Nordic countries, childhoods are intimately related to nature and being outdoors. However, urban densification has resulted in shrinking outdoor spaces for play and recreation, including fewer and smaller preschool yards, with consequences for the community, in terms of tension and competition between different interests and urban users. Based on mobile ethnography (Cresswell 2012), this presentation focuses on how inner-city preschools in Stockholm without preschool yards or with just small enclosures, organise and perform everyday outdoor activities in a dense urban environment.

Together with theories of space as co-produced and negotiated (Massey 2005), mobility as interdependent and more-than-human (Cortéz Morales 2021; Ekman Ladru & Gustafson 2020), we draw on De Certeau's theorization of the practices of everyday life (1984) in order to understand the preschool groups' spatial and mobility practices. The analyzes shows how young children and preschool groups engage in tactical manoeuvres of i) using local knowledge and protecting secret places ii) making space for play and learning on the move and iii) creating 'institutional privacy' in public parks. Hereby, signalling ownership of the space through the 'doing of preschool' and temporarily turning the space into a preschool space. This brings to the fore questions of parks as public goods and who has access to these and who not. When authorities do not take responsibility for the provision of preschool yards and spacious enough urban parks and other green and open spaces, preschool groups are left to compete with each other about the space on an everyday basis.

Hong Kong Children's Self-concept, Meaning in Life, and Life satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic

Cao, Xinyi

University Of Cambridge

This study aims to understand Hong Kong children's perception of their meaning in life, self-concept, and satisfaction with life during the COVID-19 period. The study has examined children's meaning in life, self-concept, and life satisfaction explored the relationship among the above variables and tested whether self-concept is a mediator between the relation of meaning in life and satisfaction with life. The questionnaire survey used valid instruments, including the Chinese version of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Zhang et al., 2016), Self-Description Questionnaire I (SDQ-I; Marsh, 1990), and Satisfaction with Life Scale for Children (SWLS-C; Gadermann, Schonert-Reich's, Zumba, 2010). The study investigated 312 primary school students from several Hong Kong schools at the time of the pandemic. The study found that: (1) there are positive correlations among children's perception of meaning in life, self-concept and life satisfaction; (2) Hong Kong children's self-concept is a mediator in the relationship between meaning in life and life satisfaction. The findings suggest that we need to promote children's meaning in life to enhance self-concept and life satisfaction, and it could be conducted through life education and reducing academic pressure. It is also feasible for schools and parents to enhance children's well-being by improving their self-concept in their primary school life so that children can have a more meaningful life to achieve the goal of whole-person development.

Safe spaces in Polish children's COVID-19 pandemic experiences

Maciejewska-Mroczek, Ewa
University Of Warsaw

Background aims

In this paper, I examine Polish children's experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The outburst of the coronavirus pandemic has led to developing special measures, which touched unequally different age groups. New disciplining practices emerged, such as prohibiting children from leaving their house without adult's supervision during the first wave of the pandemic. In the consequence, the crisis challenged and blurred some previously existing space-related boundaries, such as those between home and school, private and public, online and offline, etc. It has also led to redefining of what is safe, and what is not.

Methods

Using data from three research projects conducted during different phases of the COVID-19 pandemic in Poland, I reflect on the children's understandings of what is safe for themselves and for the others. Research was conducted from March 2020 and continued throughout the pandemic crisis in Poland, with participation of children aged 5-9 years. During lockdown, research was conducted in cooperation with teachers.

Results

In my research I obtained a set of rich and varied data about children's experiences during the pandemic in Poland. My analysis focuses on various spaces which enabled or restrained children's play, and on active work of children in finding and creating a safe space.

Conclusions

I argue that in the circumstances in which known-to-date divisions blurred, children's seeking of safe space were the means to deal with the new realities. It was primarily a negotiable space, created through various social practices; above all else through playful activities.

Can We Play? A Conversation About the Balance Between a Play-Based Model and Academics

Swart, Katie; Houser, Katie; White, Kelley
College Of Charleston

Background Aims: Play is essential for young children's learning and wellbeing. However, the current focus on academics in early childhood education has resulted in less emphasis on play as a learning tool. Parent and family beliefs about play are important to consider amid the rising pressures of education and learning. The current study investigated parents' beliefs on the value of play.

Methods: The setting was a play-based, early childhood development center located on a university campus in the southeastern United States. The center utilizes an emergent curriculum and serves as a demonstration program providing students, families, and members of the community the opportunity to experience excellence in practice. Forty-six parents of children who attended the center participated in the study. Participants completed an adapted version of the Parent Play Belief Scale (PPBS) developed by Fogle and Mendez (2006).

Results: Yielding a strong 61% response rate, results indicated parents had overwhelmingly positive perceptions of play as a tool for learning. However, a subsequent study conducted by the same researchers found some parents were not confident a play-based model was effective for preparation into formal schooling.

Conclusions: This study had several implications for practice which informed decision making within the early childhood development center as well as the university's early childhood education coursework. The researchers will share their journey to protect and honor play, as well as provide specific strategies for how they utilize documentation and ongoing communication (i.e. developmental narratives and feedback forms) with families to advocate for play-based learning.

The Social prescribing of Creative Play in the first 1,001 days: Creating an evidence base

Davis, Paige; Reason, Matthew ; Thain, Miranda
University Of Leeds

Background Aims:

Creative play has positive developmental implications in infancy and early childhood in many different cognitive and social domains. One way that creative play can be brought to families with children 0-3-years could be through social prescribing (SP). SP attempts to mediate increasing need for those with psychosocial problems to access non-medical support within the community instead of putting more pressure on the healthcare system. This research examines the first place-based SP creative play programme in the UK looking at; 1) the parent and child experience of the programme, and 2) whether parents see the programme as improving wellbeing for them and their children.

Methods:

A programme evaluation, and a questionnaire study were employed. Evaluation data includes 17 parent questionnaires, nine parent interviews, and researcher and practitioner field notes. Questionnaires gleaned 38 paired reports at baseline and after the SP community intervention using the City Birth Trauma Scale, Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale and reflective functioning Questionnaire. All families were recruited through self or stakeholder referral, in line with the National Health Services SP guidelines.

Results and Conclusions:

Thematic analysis of the evaluation found that the feelings of trust and calm in the SP interventions aided in the delivery of practical parenting knowledge by the facilitator. Analysis of the questionnaires found significant changes in reflective functioning and depression as well as relationships between birth trauma report and parent depression scores. Results are discussed in terms of how this research could offer insight into future curated SP creative play interventions.

Groups of loneliness and ostracism among 5-year-olds: Associations to socioemotional functioning and vocabulary

*Salo, Anne-Elina; Upadaya, Katja; Kalland, Mirjam; Salmela-Aro, Katariina; Lerkkanen, Marja-Kristiina
Universities of Jyväskylä and Turku*

Being included in play and peer interactions helps children meet the fundamental human need to belong. Identifying threats to fulfilling this need in context of early childhood education and care (ECEC) is vital to prevent vicious cycles where the child's development and well-being are compromised. **Methods.** The data comprise two cohorts of 5-year-old Finnish children (N = 31 169; 49.1 % girls). A person-oriented approach was utilized to identify groups of children based on their loneliness and ostracism rated by the teacher. One-Way ANOVA and a Tukey post hoc test were conducted to examine whether the groups would differ with respect to children's emotional, behavioral, and peer relationship difficulties, prosocial behavior, or vocabulary. **Results.** The following groups were identified: 1) Rare threats (80.2 %); 2) Frequently lonely–rarely ostracized (10.5 %); 3) Frequent accumulated threats (7.7 %); and 4) Frequently ostracized–rarely lonely (1.6 %). Children in Group 1 had significantly highest vocabulary, prosocial behavior, and lowest emotional and peer relationship difficulties, children in Group 3 the lowest prosocial behavior, vocabulary, and highest peer relationship difficulties, and children in Group 4 the highest conduct difficulties and hyperactivity. **Conclusions.** The findings deepen our understanding of signs reflecting threats to children's social belonging, and provide insights into potential challenges in identifying loneliness and ostracism. It is vital that teacher education equips ECEC teachers with the knowledge and tools to sensitively address these threats and to help all children build socioemotional skills that they need to be included and to positively include others.

Children's production of place and (third) space during the pandemic: Reflections from the Play Observatory

Potter, John; Cannon, Michelle; Cowan, Kate
University College London

The Play Observatory was a COVID-19 rapid response project funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) exploring children's play experiences during the pandemic through an online survey, case studies and a filmmaking workshop. With access to many of the usual spaces and places of community play unavailable at times during the lockdowns of the pandemic, one of our research foci was on children's resourceful and playful placemaking during the restrictions, as well as their creation of mediated third spaces in their own homes and neighbourhoods. Our presentation centres on survey submissions which reflect children's use of space and place in their play. Images of den-building showed imaginative productions of worlds in the spaces of the home in which children felt secure. Arguably this was to do with the way they used material artefacts to move the locus of control closer to themselves, even as the world seemed out of control for many. In the same way, video clips and films submitted to the Observatory revealed much about everyday life during the pandemic, the third spaces that were enabled and the postdigital worlds of entanglement in which children played. In this presentation, based on work currently in press, we will discuss contributions to the Play Observatory's archive which reveal children's exploration of time, space and placemaking during restrictions associated with the pandemics. In our theorising of how the pandemic influenced play, we offer insights into young people's postdigital and collusive creative practices and their playful imbrication of material and cultural resources.

Transforming childhood communities through dancing – emergent and intra-active dance pedagogies in early childhood education

Colliander, Tuire

Uniarts Helsinki, Theatre Academy

In my presentation, I will discuss the potential of emergent and intra-active dance pedagogies in supporting the diversity of embodied creativity in childhood communities in the context of early childhood education. I approach the topic from the perspective of a dance pedagogue-dancer-doctoral researcher. The thinking and knowing in my research unfold in and through my artistic-pedagogical practice. My research methodologies are emergent and playful, and I am considering the children and the surrounding circumstances as active and agential co-producers of the pedagogical spaces. My research is based on Barad's agential realism, brought into an early childhood pedagogical context by Lenz Taguchi.

In this study, dance is viewed as a broad and holistic phenomenon that can be integrated in multifaceted ways into early childhood education through the concept of embodied learning. I will discuss the embodied learning events as emergent and intra-active through the concept of assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari) and their entanglements with time, space, bodies, and other materialities, as well as flows of energy and affects. This approach shifts the focus from the individuals towards the constantly changing relations and interdependencies present in childhood communities.

By sharing examples of working with drawing-based methods in dancing, I will argue, how the traditional teacher-student hierarchies and the established roles in the groups of children may transform towards more equally distributed creative agencies with the increased possibilities of reciprocal learning. This might support the openness of childhood communities to diverse, possibly surprising, and creative directions for embodied learning events.

Early childhood education practices during the pandemic: Exploring challenges and innovative practices in Nordic countries

Juutinen, Jaana; Alanko, Anu

Faculty of education and psychology, University of Oulu

Our Nordic research project EXPECT: Exploring practices in early childhood of tomorrow develop resilience in social sustainable childhoods after Covid-19 (funded by Nordforsk, 2023-2026) aims further to deepen knowledge about the experiences and consequences of the pandemic to prepare Nordic early childhood education settings in maintaining social sustainability for future pandemics or crises. We will examine resilience in social sustainability by investigating the social, pedagogical, and psychological prerequisites in the ECEC environment that children experienced during the pandemic.

The project adopts a sequential mixed-methods design. Qualitative and quantitative methods are employed to expand the current understanding of the consequences of the pandemic and what ECEC in the Nordic countries can learn from experiences with the crisis. Empirical research material will be produced through interviews and surveys among educators and parents. Currently, we conduct a systematic scoping review to produce a state-of-the-art of the existing research in the Nordic countries about the experiences of the pandemic in ECEC.

In this paper, we present preliminary findings of the review according to which several critical aspects and success factors can be identified in ECEC practices in Nordic countries during the pandemic. Preliminary finding suggest that educators', leaders', and parents' perspectives are mainly studied but children's own experiences are almost entirely missing from the Nordic research. Even though pandemic has challenged everyday practices in ECEC in many ways, research also shows that educators and leaders have been forced to create new pedagogical solutions, for example, in relation to outdoor pedagogy and using digital technologies.

Creative teaching practices with digital media in vulnerable contexts from a research perspective.

López Fuentes, Ana Virginia
University Of Zaragoza

This paper gathers 14 ethnographic studies in a meta-ethnographic research to generate knowledge on the possibilities of creative teaching practices with digital media from an ethnographic perspective to promote inclusive education. The inconvenience of digital media in some contexts has been made explicit during last years, but also, it has been made known that digital media might have possibilities for giving voice to students, and to contribute to alleviate situations of vulnerability. This research explores common details between the articles using cross-case aggregation, which allows to get to know how digital media contribute to listen to students' voices, interests, and lives inside pre-primary, primary and secondary classrooms in disadvantaged contexts. The study followed the seven phases established by Noblit and Hare in 1988 to synthesize qualitative studies. While some studies portray an instrumental and curricular use of digital media, others reflect on how teachers are using digital media considering students' voices and interests, through knowledge ownership, and promoting interaction between all. Studies show spaces mediated by digital media in which the students find their voices and give voice to their thoughts, feelings, and learnings. The key competencies that are developed through these creative teaching practices refer to the necessary skills to face today's society, such as problem solving, motivation, creative thinking, or empathy. In this context, the study of these practices facilitated by digital media is considered fundamental for the search of inclusion in the current educational framework.

Can a systemic approach enhance multidisciplinary collaboration in child welfare services?

Backman, Ann; Pötzsch, Tobias; Kola, Siv; Julkunen, Ilse; Nylund, Jenny
University of Helsinki

Background aims

Child welfare services in Finland have come under intense scrutiny during the last decade. Solutions to the increasing load of complicated cases and a constant lack of staff have been sought by implementing a systemic approach. The aim of systemic approach was to shift from a bureaucratic social work practice to a more child centered approach, strengthening children's perspectives, where reflection is one key element. The systemic approach embodies a holistic view on the child's development in interaction with its social environment and welfare services. The study focuses on child welfare social services in three newly formed bilingual (Finnish and Swedish) counties.

Methods

This qualitative research draws on data collected through interviews with practitioners and administrators within Child welfare social services, as well as two focus group interviews with professionals who have implemented systemic practices.

Results

Practitioners strongly embrace the systemic approach to work, whereas management support tends to be inconsistent and varying. Systemic practice flourishes through respectful and collaborative interactions, nurturing dialogue and co-creation within the client system. From the practitioners' perspective, the systemic approach has enhanced client participation and provides supportive work structures and environments.

Conclusions

The establishment of wellbeing service counties has introduced new and untried organizational structures and harmonization efforts in child and family social services. This has, to varying degrees, impacted the interpretation and support for the systemic approach in social work services for families with children in these counties. Multidisciplinary collaboration requires a joint understanding of the client system and shared expertise.

At the Margins of Care: Childhood, Adolescence, Substance Abuse and Marginalising Service Systems

Vihreäsalo, Keiju
University Of Helsinki

My paper is based on an ethnographic research conducted in 2022 among homeless, substance-addicted young people in a shelter provided for them. My interviews with these young people revealed that exclusion had started at an early age, before addiction and often as a minor as young as nine years old.

I will examine extreme exclusion linked to substance dependence, with a particular focus on age, childhood, youth, social inclusion and responsibility taken or neglected in care, upbringing and socialisation. Thus, I will examine what happened before and during the early stages of substance abuse. My emphasis is on the active marginalising role that service systems played in the child's history. I discuss responsibility and its polarization in socialising the next generation in the setting of a Nordic welfare state. Addiction work and policy tend to focus on harm reduction and various routes to rehabilitation, paying less attention to early-life trajectories associated with extreme exclusion. Lately, however, there has been a 'prevention turn', with a change in research focus from the emergence and management of existing problems to circumstances in which substance-misuse and the associated exclusion could still be prevented. Thus, my aim is to connect the present and the past, the current young adult and the former child.

Asylum is not a favor and education is a right for all children

Değirmencioğlu, Serdar M.

Goethe University Frankfurt a.M.

In June 2022, Kouros Durmohamadi Bagi obtained excellent scores in the university exams held across Greece. He had arrived in Lesvos with his parents in 2019. With his great success and mastery of the Greek language in only three years, Kouros was exactly the kind of “worthy” refugee conservatives desired.

Mainstream media presented Kouros as a “recognized” refugee and left out the rest. Had Kouros been just an asylum seeker, he would have been excluded from these exams. Kouros himself mentioned the fact that he would have little chance to prepare for the exams, had he and his family stayed in the infamous Moria camp. Mainstream media did not mention the possibility that Kouros and his family might have been pushed back, had they tried the crossing only a year later.

Since it came to power, the current right-wing government has implemented a hardline migration policy. In 2020, the citizenship code was changed to make it more difficult for recognized refugees to become citizens. The same government, however, had no problem granting citizenship to individuals who did not need it.

Today, asylum is often portrayed as a gift, a “favor” at the discretion of the state involved. As such, it can only be conditional and should only be granted to “worthy” individuals. This narrative has to be challenged: Every child and every adult have a “right to flee” and a “right to asylum”. In the context of education, all children have a right to schooling irrespective of their legal status.

Examples and counter-examples of inclusion and sustainability in rural schools through an ethnographic study

Mendívil-Chueca, Amaya; Torres-Sales, Lucía; Vigo-Arazola, Begoña
University Of Zaragoza

In a context characterized by globalization, economic recession and population mobility, international organizations and different studies reinforce the importance of digitalization and creativity for the development of individuals and communities towards a sustainable society, emphasizing situations of social, spatial and diversity disadvantage. This paper, based on a national research project (DESEI. Challenging stigmatisation. Creative and inclusive educational discourses and practices with digital media in schools of special complexity. PID2020-112880RB-I00) addresses this situation. It aims to identify which are the creative teaching practices carried out in schools that enable the participation and development of geographically disadvantaged communities. Using an ethnographic study, based on participant observation, interviews and focus groups, conducted in six schools in one of the regions most affected by population mobility, rurality and aging in Spain and Europe, this paper presents examples and counterexamples of creative teaching practices that contribute to school and community cohesion.

The results show different types of teaching practices carried out in schools with different members of the community: families, elderly people and local entities. These kinds of practices facilitate expression, exchange and dialogue in favor of social cohesion, the revaluation of the territory and the reduction of stereotypes, in addition to generating creative and meaningful learning.

In conclusion, the contribution of the school to the development of the context in which it is located is highlighted, as well as the importance of educational policies taking research into account in order to promote the value of the territory and move towards a sustainable society and education.

Underage activists' experience of intergenerationality

Nekola, Martin; Supa, Marketa
Charles University

Expressing civic views online offers significant benefits for youth, enhancing their sense of agency, purpose, and self-confidence. However, this engagement also exposes them to the risks of exhaustion and harm due to stigmatisation and discrimination from hostile responses. This mixed-method research investigates the role of the social context of online media in the wellbeing of civically active children and youth in Czechia. It aims to balance the understanding of digital engagement empowering potential against its potential drawbacks. Our Q methodology study involved analysing media coverage and online comments about five Czech youth activists, from which 39 statements reflecting public perceptions of youth activism were derived. Then, twenty under-18 activists from organisations like Amnesty International, Fridays for Future, and Most Pride ranked these statements during online interviews, providing deep insights into their beliefs and practices regarding active citizenship. Findings revealed two dominant perspectives on the role of adult allyship in activism. The first, "We are the change," champions youth independence from adult influence in effecting change. The second, "We are in it together," stresses the necessity of adult support and collaboration. All participants firmly denied being manipulated by adults and highlighted their acute awareness of and objections to age-based stereotyping and discrimination. These insights emphasise the critical issues of intergenerational dynamics, ageism, and childism in youth activism, pointing to the importance of fostering environments and relationships that support the wellbeing of young activists. This study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding youth activism in the digital sphere.

Examples and counter-examples of inclusion and sustainability in rural schools through an ethnographic study

Mendívil-Chueca, Amaya; Lasheras-Lalana, Pilar; Torres-Sales, Lucía; Vigo-Arazola, Begoña
University Of Zaragoza

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Ambiguity at play. Creating a third way of living in the transition to compulsory school

Taylor, Shelbi Aris
Södertörns Högskola

Children face many changes in the transition from preschool to compulsory school; shifting identities and new school cultures can dominate experiences in this transitory year (Dockett & Perry, 2022), called the preschool class in Sweden. Working with the transition and adapting to these changes requires competence in what can be considered duelling pedagogical frameworks, creating a sense of liminality and ambiguity for teachers in the preschool class (Ackesjö & Persson, 2019). Through reflexive engagement with teaching practices, this research aims to bring understanding to the tensions and contradictions present for teachers and children experiencing this transition.

Engaging with intergenerational co-constructed, collaborative play (Lindqvist, 1995), the children and teachers move between the borders of imagination and reality, as well as pedagogical frameworks, exploring the sense creation of learning (Hakkarainen, 2004) in the formation of the preschool class's borderland teaching practice. This play allowed the teachers to work with transformative dialogic pedagogy, creating a hybrid third space that incorporates intersubjectivity of teachers and children (Gutiérrez, Rymes & Larsson, 1995). In creating third spaces, knowledge is not just reproduced, but created and interpreted anew together, building up as Kennedy (2006) theorised, a third way of living. Although the preschool class sits in a borderland, analysis of field work and group discussions showed that responses to ambiguity (for example, agency, or even ambivalence), still have the potential to create spaces of meeting and co-construction in the classroom as children and teachers navigate this transition.

Teachers' occupational well- and ill-being in relation to children's social competence in Finnish toddler classrooms

Salminen, Jenni; Pakarinen, Eija; Torppa, Minna; Lerkkanen, Marja-Kristiina
University of Jyväskylä

Background aims: According to job demands-resources model (JDR; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), teachers' occupational well-being fosters teacher motivation and commitment to work with children, whereas teachers' occupational ill-being is negatively reflected in their daily practices with children. However, there is not much understanding on how teacher's occupational well- and ill-being are linked to children's skills in early childhood (see Soininen et al., 2023 as an exception). This study examined to what extent the teachers' occupational well-being and ill-being are associated with children's social competence in Finnish toddler classrooms. Methods: The participants were 42 ECEC teachers and 242 toddlers (114 girls; 128 boys; Mage 2.5 years). Teachers reported their occupational well-being (i.e., self-efficacy; organizational climate, job satisfaction), and ill-being (i.e., teacher stress, emotional exhaustion) in a questionnaire. Teachers also rated children's social competence (i.e., prosocial [i.e., cooperation and empathy] and antisocial [i.e., disruptiveness and impulsivity] behaviors). Data were analysed with the Mplus programme with multilevel and complex models. Results: The results for the occupational well-being showed that teachers' self-efficacy and organizational climate were not directly associated with children's prosocial behavior. However, teachers' they were indirectly positively associated with prosocial behavior via teacher's job satisfaction. The results also showed that teachers' occupational well-being was negatively associated with children's antisocial behavior. Finally, teachers' occupational ill-being was not associated neither with children's prosocial nor antisocial behavior. Conclusions: The results highlight the importance of teachers' occupational well-being for children's social competence in toddler classrooms. The implications for teacher pre- and in-service training will be discussed.

Young children's possibilities for participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Koitto, Emma; Sevón, Eija; Rutanen, Niina
University of Jyväskylä

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, UNICEF, 1989, Articles 12 and 13), every child has the right to express themselves, to be heard and to be considered by adults in matters affecting them. It is generally thought that the concept of participation illustrates and revolves around these rights. Despite the law and the Finnish National Core Curriculum for ECEC, the earlier research shows that participation is not equal between the children in ECEC (Correia et al., 2019; Kirby, 2020). In ECEC, the challenges in social inclusion often concern the children with ethnicity or language different from majority of the group (Arvola et al., 2017; Boldermo & Ødegaard, 2019; Ólofsdóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2021). This study explores young children's possibilities for participation in the daily life of ECEC groups from the point of view of situated inequality (Højholt & Røn Larsen, 2021). The data were collected by observing two groups of children under 3-year-olds and their educators. The data is analyzed using intersectional analysis and situational mapping (see Puroila et al., 2021) to find situational factors and practices that reject or produce inequality of participation. Preliminary observations of the data indicate that practices in connection to rules and norms of daily activities create situations where educators decide by their actions whether to take into account the child's participation. The study informs how inequality is constructed in within the situational culture of ECEC and could be hampered by reconsidering the institutional practices and attitude towards the youngest.

Belonging and children's citizenship. Belonging as social right in support person and support family services

*Kiili, Johanna; Lehto-Lundén, Tiina; Moilanen, Johanna; Svenlin, Anu-Riina
University Of Jyväskylä*

Background and aim

This presentation contemplates how children's social rights of belonging and participation are actualised in support person and support family interventions, which aim to provide extra adult support to children who are clients in child welfare. The lay support is provided by volunteers, who work in co-operation with public sector professionals. Traditionally children's citizenship and their social rights in child welfare services have rest on a family-oriented service model. In the presentation we emphasise that it should be developed in child-centred direction. This would also strengthen children's social rights of belonging and participation as they are important attributes of citizenship.

Methods

The research data comprises workshops involving children, addressing the question: "What issues should professionals ask children about when evaluating supportive relationships?" and observations from the follow-up meetings when stakeholders meet to evaluate the quality of the supportive relationship. Theoretically informed thematical analysis was applied to the data.

Results and conclusions

The research demonstrates that the support person or support family may provide children with new resources and ways of belonging to established parts of society. In the follow-up meetings the adults recognise children's individual participation, but they can be satisfied with very little. Children saying "yes" or "no" is often considered as sufficient participation. The research also indicates that children have no opportunities for collective participation in the context of support person or family services. Thus, efforts are needed to strengthen children's opportunities for collective participation as means of planning child-centred services and strengthening their social rights.

Grounds for taking children into care: A study of social workers' decision-making processes in Finland

Kuronen, Raija
University Of Helsinki

In Finland, social workers have wide discretion to assess a child's situation and the need to take a child into care. The Child Protection Act (417/2007) defines the criteria for issuing care orders, but social workers are responsible for assessing whether the criteria are met. Social workers have a strong influence on decision-making processes even when the decision to take a child into care is made in the administrative court (Kuokka & Pösö 2016).

I am conducting research for my doctoral thesis on how social workers argue their decisions to take a child into care. My intention is to produce information on what reasons are presented as grounds for taking a child into care and how the decisions are justified. My research material consists of 60 documents on taking children into care, which I analyse using Toulmin's (2015 [1958]) argumentation theory.

In this presentation, I focus on the grounds that social workers provide for the claim that a child should be taken into care. I particularly explore the factors that seriously endanger children's health or development.

Based on the preliminary results, I can say that the factors endangering children's health and development are cumulative and occur simultaneous. Their parents may have personal problems, like a substance abuse problem. Parental responsibility and family interaction are lacking, and many children have experienced different types of violence. Children may also experience different kinds of mental and physical health problems, and they thus behave in a way that endangers their health.

Market reforms and schools in rural areas: Possibilities and challenges for a sound community function

Vigo Arrazola ,Begoña; Beach, Dennis

University Of Zaragoza

Based on four ethnographic research projects in Spain from 2008 to 2023, this paper aims to shed light on the impact of market reforms on schools in rural areas in relation to their community function. The research involved in all seven rural schools located in different municipalities and included participant observation, informal conversations, interviews and virtual communication as ways to generate data about how the schools had responded to market reforms and what implications the responses had in terms of the ways in which the schools could and did serve their local communities. Bringing schools closer to their communities and the needs of these communities is one of the challenges of an inclusive just and equitable education system in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The results showed various examples, tensions, challenges, and contradictions from the adoption of market governance and/in the creation of an education market, where some rural schools adopted original values to promote attractiveness and worth whilst others hollowed out the concepts of community identity as a selling point or brand identity. Community had an exchange value in these schools. Using the ethnographic findings published through the projects we try to explore the challenges and implications of market reforms for local schools. The paper makes a methodological and substantive contribution by presenting meta-ethnography as an appropriate methodology for exploring variations in the communal function of rural schools and showing the vertical and horizontal patterns of difference in terms of these relations.

From self-regulation to belonging - experiences of practicing awareness skills

Helminen, Piialiina
University Of Helsinki

Students today have challenges in self-regulation and attentiveness. These challenges affect their social relationships and are connected to negative developments, such as loneliness, bullying and absences.

Practicing awareness skills at school has been found to increase students' self-regulation skills, as well as well-being, learning outcomes and social competence. Next to these positive outcomes, students need to practice self-regulation skills also from the perspective of belonging.

In my PhD study, I examine the impact of an intensive awareness practice period on the self-regulation skills of 1st grade students and their feeling of belonging in their class. To do this, an 8-week intervention was designed based on researched methods and modified for first graders. The intervention was implemented in 4 first grade classes in a Finnish primary school and it consisted of thematical lessons held each week by the researcher. During these lessons the functioning of the brain were discussed and methods to support concentration were practiced. In addition to the lessons, the students practiced calming down with short breathing exercises guided by their teacher every day.

The data of the study consists of interviews, sociograms, surveys, and HTKS tests that were conducted with the students twice, once before and once after the intervention period, and analyzed using statistical and phenomenographical analyses.

In my presentation, I will present the outline of my on-going dissertation research and some preliminary findings of the effects of the 8-week intervention.

Belongingness to Groups, Adolescent Loneliness Trajectories, and their Consequences

Beattie, Marguerite; Kiuru, Noona; Salmela-Aro, Katariina

Background aims

While loneliness for short periods is normal, prolonged loneliness has severe health risks. This study aims to discover what different loneliness trajectories can be found in a cohort of adolescents, how belongingness to different groups may be associated to these trajectories, and how these trajectories are associated with mental, physical, and academic consequences.

Methods

Adolescents (N=2765) born in the year 2000 and attending schools in a Finnish city participated in annual surveys from 2013-2019. We conducted latent profile analyses and equality of means tests to find the number of trajectories and their associations with potential preventive and consequential factors.

Results

Latent profile analyses resulted in six profiles: “Stable high” (4.8%), “Low becomes volatile (8.1%), “Moderates with a 7th-grade peak” (9.3%), “Winding down” (11.9%), “Moderates with a 10th-grade peak” (15.5%), and “Stable low” (50.5%). In general, trajectories that started with high loneliness reported lower belongingness to groups (i.e., friends, school, hobby, home, and society) than trajectories that started with low loneliness. Adolescents following the “Stable high” loneliness trajectory reported the worst mental well-being and school burnout outcomes, but there were no associations with drug use.

Conclusions

Belongingness to friends, school, hobbies, home, and national and international society may be more protective against loneliness than belongingness to religious communities in some areas. It would behoove adolescent health experts to investigate how groups can prevent loneliness and prepare for various prolonged loneliness consequences.

Children in inclusive early education conversations

Viljamaa, Elina; Pihlaja, Päivi; Fonsén, Elina
University of Oulu

The principle of inclusive early childhood education and children's right to support are now clearly stated in National core curriculum for early childhood education and care (Finnish National Agency for Education 2022). This applies to many different actors and causes debate. An understanding of children and childhoods is produced in these discussions. Our question is, how are children located and told in inclusive early childhood education conversations?

Our presentation is related to the ongoing research project "Tensions between inclusion and belonging and ruptures of tensions in early childhood education". The research project examines focus group discussions and interviews collected in the project "The support system and administrative processes in ECE" (2021-2023). A total of 65 people representing different positions when thinking ECE were involved in discussions and interviews. The research material will be analyzed using content analysis and narrative analysis. In our presentation, we use a few examples from our research material to examine the locations defined for children in inclusive early childhood education and the understanding of children and childhood by different actors. Based on preliminary observations, for example, children referred to as "children in need of support" can be multiplied as economic items, as producers of the need for inclusive early childhood education, as enriching early childhood education, or as "educating" other children and adults to face diversity. Our research is funded by Kone Foundation and The Ministry of Education and Culture.

Children as Caravan Leaders of the Community

Plum, Maja; Brown, Rikke; Grumløse, Sine; Schmidt, Lene
University College Absalon

In a Danish context, a new model for school enrollment is being tested these years. Contrary to the dominant practice of starting school in August, the model works with a flexibility in terms of when children make the transition from to school. Thus, some children start in May, others in August and some in November. Rather than standardizing school readiness as a baseline to be met in August, the ambition behind the model is to rework the practice of the school to make it encompass children when they are ready to make the transition.

Based on fieldwork, we explore the way in which children are described as parents and kindergarten teachers join efforts to decide when the child should begin school life: What kind of differentiation is made between the children as they are categorized into three kinds of 'school starters'? And which ideas of community are produced and anticipated as part of this practice?

We pay attention to the term 'caravan leader' as it keeps reappearing in our material. The children who are classified as 'May-starters' are typically anticipated to be caravan leaders, meaning that they are expected to fulfill a role as those engaging the rest of the children into school life as a community centered around the class. This as opposed to 'November starters' who are classified in more individual terms and often as someone in lack of something, prohibiting them from entering the community. Thus, children and community seem to be constructed in certain ways.

Small politics of multispecies death and dying – exploring spaces and materialities of death

Laisi, Inka

University Of Oulu

The doctoral dissertation seeks to understand the processes and politics of multispecies death and dying through spaces and materialities with a focus on the 'small'. The perspective on death is often human-centered and offered by 'expert' adults excluding children from the discussions. The dissertation examines how 'small matters', such as children, other small animals, microbes, or plants, are placed in the necropolitical framework (Mbembe, 2019) of the Anthropocene in order to analyse the politics of death. The research is interdisciplinary and combines perspectives of sociology of childhood, environmental philosophy, and death studies. The data is coproduced together with 7-year-old children and their multispecies families by building communities of philosophical enquiry and enabling open discussions about death and dying. The dissertation is conducted as a part of the Small Matters project in the University of Oulu. As part of the project, the research advances the development of educational support materials for teachers, teacher educators and families about how and when to talk about death and dying with children. The dissertation offers urgently needed insights about living and dying in today's world imbued with concurrent multispecies catastrophes like wars, pandemics and the accumulating ecological disaster.

Depending on Peer Community: Youth Wellbeing, Activism and Digital Media

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For youth activists, digital media are a central tool for awareness raising and mobilisation. At the same time, the pressure to be constantly connected, and the negative responses one can encounter through social media, can be significant stressors on youths' wellbeing. This paper discusses the multifaceted role of digital media in youth activists' wellbeing and highlights that the pursuit of wellbeing was mostly in the hands of the youth activists alone, with support from adults or formal institutions. Asking how youth activists experience the relationship between their use of digital media for activism and their subjective wellbeing, we conducted a year-long critical and comparative ethnographic research with the youth-led climate justice movement Fridays For Future (FFF) in Czechia and Hungary; including in-person and online observations and individual and group interviews with the youth activists, most of whom were under-18. On one hand, the youth activists encountered varied psychological, social, and physical challenges connected to digital media use, which caused stress and contributed to burn-out. On the other hand, they individually and collectively developed diverse coping strategies and mechanisms, as well as digital literacy, which were supported by the movement's community of activists. This in turn strengthened their resilience and positively contributed to their wellbeing. Ultimately, the youth activists' wellbeing relied on their own ability to constantly balance between the many challenges encountered and the resources required to deal with these challenges. Our findings carry important implications for supporting youth activists' wellbeing beyond their peer community.

In dialogue with evil: Teachers' moral positions and childhood during the sustainability crisis

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The current sustainability crisis that manifests as, for example, climate change, loss of habitat, and degrading environment entails moral transformation of education including how children and childhood are perceived in educational communities. Amidst this need for change, children are often perceived to illustrate “good” and “innocence” in education and also in relation to such nonhuman entities as animals, nature, and the environment. However, in educational communities, childhood should also be understood and criticized from the perspective of evil to reach more multidimensional and sustainable moral transformation in education. To understand how understandings of evil relating to childhood are currently constructed in educational communities, we explored pre-primary education teachers' engagement with moral positions in joint discussions on children and evil. To study position-taking as a partly communal phenomenon, we interviewed two teachers from the same educational community and applied discourse analysis to detect both shared and individual engagements with the positions. Our results show that the teachers engaged with two distinct moral positions – The Judge, and The Protector. These engagements contributed to both dualistic, opposing and more multidimensional, dialogical, understandings of children in relation to evil. Our findings show that dialogical understandings of children as being simultaneously both potentially evil and innocent can contribute to more multidimensional and sustainable comprehensions of children and their relation to human and nonhuman entities during the sustainability crisis.

Everyday activism in children's lives: Possibilities and spaces of agency in communities

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Conventional forms of activism have been repeatedly criticized for employing strategies that prioritize sophistication over participation, numbers over agency, and even conformity over creativity and a sense of joy. Conventional forms of activism make it very difficult for children and young people in general to participate. In fact, the younger the age, the more difficult it is to take part in such forms of activism.

Everyday activism, in contrast, is a far better option for children whose agency is hardly taken seriously in various disciplines and in public life by public administrators and by adults in general, even in countries where an advanced democracy prevails. More specifically, everyday activism affords more local, more accessible, more routine, more continuous, more affordable possibilities. Everyday activism can help children (and young people in general) redistribute power away from hierarchical structures because it is diverse, bottom-up and creative.

Various grassroots (i.e., community-level) examples, recent and not so recent, and initiatives provide strong support for the preceding arguments. This presentation examines possibilities and spaces of agency in communities to demonstrate the significance of everyday activism in children's lives. Children's efforts regarding climate change deserve urgent attention in relation to the role of communities in creating children's habitats and children's well-being.

Sociopolitical Citizenship as Framework to Decolonize Children's Rights: The Story of Sophie Cruz

Fernandez, Jesica; Salinas, Denise

Santa Clara University

Scholarly Aims

Latinx children are often perceived in deficit ways in the United States. At the México-U.S. border youth represent the largest population of migrants, and many are growing up in mixed-status families (Negrón-Gonzales et al., 2015). These sociopolitical conditions have implications on children's development, self-concepts, and living contexts. Latinx children's wellbeing, and their role in schools, communities and societies, must be considered in relation to citizenship and rights. What does citizenship mean, and how do rights figure in a Latinx child's life?

Methods

A critical discourse analysis methodology will be used to discuss the case study of Sophie Cruz in relation to nurturance and self-determination rights, and what these mean for Latinx children growing up in precarious sociolegal, economic and environmental conditions threatening their wellbeing.

Results

Grounded in a decolonial feminist perspective on children's citizenship, the concept of sociopolitical citizenship (Fernández, 2021) is described as a key result and in relation to Sophie Cruz's life-story. Sophie Cruz demonstrates children's role in shaping communities and society. Latinx youth challenge constructions of citizenship and rights to affirm their relationality, belonging, dignity and humanity as protagonists in societies.

Conclusion

Scholarly discourses often overlook children's voices, yet their lives are deeply impacted by sociolegal discourses. Thus, we must consider rights as practices, principles and values to support children's dignity and power. Decolonial feminist perspectives on children's citizenship and rights as more than nurturance and self-determination are necessary. To decolonize children's rights is to conceptualize rights beyond nations, states, and institutions (Liebel, 2023).

Writing and drawing a future: Finnish children's conceptions of Europe in the early 1990s

Selin, Sinikka

Tampere University

In the early 1990s, Finland grappled with uncertainty due to economic depression and intensifying European integration. The end of the Cold War opened up new possibilities for Finland to engage more extensively in Western cooperation. While the European Communities were primarily focused on economic and political initiatives, they also sought public support. To achieve this, a novel concept of European citizenship was developed, with children and young people playing a crucial role

One significant effort to foster a sense of Europeaness was the organization of an international children's essay and art competition across all European Council countries. Finnish children and young people participated in this competition between 1990 and 1993. This paper analyses the essays and artworks created by children aged 7 to 12. The essays and artworks are carefully contextualized and analyzed using content analysis.

The preliminary findings indicate that the competition organizers achieved their goals to some extent. Although the abstract notion of Europeaness remained foreign to the children, their participation in the competition made the symbols of European countries more familiar. From the children's perspective, Europe was a collection of nations represented by flags and famous landmarks. They exhibited greater familiarity with and interest in Western European countries compared to the former socialist nations of Central Eastern and Eastern Europe. However, European integration also evoked fears. While many essays idealized foreign travel experiences, the ultimate highlight for these young participants was always returning home.

Children ´s participation in more-than-human communities of practice

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Based on a study of rural lifestyles and the agricultural domestic economy in Slovenia, I introduce the concept of more-than-human communities of practice. Drawing from both my earlier child-focused ethnographic research and an ongoing project, I employ diverse research methods, including participatory photography, life-history interviews, memory sharing workshops, walking ethnography, and archive research. These methods allow me to weave together memories from past and contemporary childhood experiences. Expanding on the notion of communities of practice, I delve into how these communities emerge within the context of agricultural domestic economy where cooperation, reciprocity, and care played pivotal roles, emphasizing the centrality of work in sustaining social relations and ties. Beyond its economic aspects, children's participation in work has been also viewed as educational and integral to socialization where work, play, and learning intertwine seamlessly. However, my exploration goes beyond human-centric relationships. Within these communities of practice, work hasn't been solely embedded in social interactions; it has extended to multispecies relationships. By considering the more-than-human relationality—encompassing children, domestic animals, plants, soil, and landscape—I propose that work forms intricate relational networks. Highlighting the interplay between work and more-than-human sociality, leads me to the conceptualization of more-than-human communities of practice.

Children's lives in changing places: centring the voices of young people in addressing their needs

Humphry, Debbie; Jesus Alfaro-Simmonds, Maria; Bond-Taylor, Sue; Hookway, Ben; Lomax, Helen; Percy-Smith, Barry; Percy-Smith, Barry; Smith, Kate; Turner, Wendy

Open University

During discussions about the kinds of multi-disciplinary approaches needed to address children and young people's wellbeing in the UK and beyond, the views of young people themselves can sometimes be absent or undermined. Through participatory action research with young people aged 10-15 in three structurally disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England, our research aims to contribute their voices to these debates. Through engaging young people as co-researchers, we have facilitated them to identify and progress change projects in each site, working with adults in the community to enhance their opportunities, autonomy and wellbeing. The research emerges from inclusive methods aimed at putting young people at the heart of the analysis, whilst situating their experiences within wider social-economic and political contexts. The paper will explore the change projects to consider what the priorities and actions generated by the young people can tell adults (from community members to decision-makers to academics) about how to address the challenges they face and the dreams they have, post pandemic and during a cost-of-living crisis. As such, young people's understandings of their own lives will be centred, recognising the complexities of navigating neighbourhood contexts of poverty, deprivation and violence, yet moving forwards with others through a strong sense of belonging, access to valued local resources and community effort and care.

Children (re-)shaping sustainable urban communities

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Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg

Transforming urban life in a sustainable way has become one of the most dominant guiding principles of urban development. With the aim of creating sustainable neighbourhoods and communities, a key strategy employed by cities is to activate, motivate and educate citizens to take individual responsibility for a sustainable future. In this context children are often put into focus and assigned an important role.

By presenting data from a case study in Berlin, Germany, we discuss how sustainable urban development programmes and projects employ educational strategies that encourage children to individually contribute to a sustainable future. We explore how this creates ambivalent roles for children as the future orientation of sustainability often leads to an ignorance of their present needs and challenges as children growing up in cities. With reference to debates about a post-political city and urban behavioural governance, we ask how these participatory processes provide for genuine opportunities for children to (politically) engage with urban sustainability. Moreover, we explore how children themselves envision sustainable urban futures and examine how these visions contrast with those presented in the urban development strategy papers. We find that although children have a great amount of expert knowledge about their communities and have many ideas about sustainable futures that go well beyond the scope of these strategy papers, their participation is mostly selective and often takes place in pre-arranged settings.

Children in smart communities: between acting responsibly and shouldering responsibility

Ghafoor-Zadeh, Dana; Schreiber, Verena
University Of Education Freiburg

In the pursuit of creating liveable cities, many cities are actively adopting smart urban development strategies. Viewing children as both present and future inhabitants, these strategies emphasize the active involvement and responsibility of children in shaping smart urban communities. In this context children are viewed as key agents in development projects, as they stand to benefit the most from transformative changes (Shtebunaev et al. 2023; van der Graaf 2020).

This presentation is based on a study investigating the role of children in EU Smart City flagship projects, with a specific focus on Vienna. It explores how the imperative for change articulated in smart city initiatives aligns with or deviates from the needs and perspectives of children in a district undergoing an EU smart city project. The analysis reveals an imbalance in the relationship between smart city planners and children, particularly concerning resources, power dynamics, and the mutual benefits derived from their involvement. In planning documents, cities appear to engage children in creating smart urban communities. Simultaneously, children are not merely passive recipients of advocacy, but play an important role in the urban community, both within and beyond of smart city projects.

References

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Studies of Child Perspectives – theory, methodology, and practice

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The presentation articulates the theoretical framework, methodological approaches, and applied practices of the Studies of Child Perspectives (SCP), a research paradigm centered on the children's perspective and participation as a cultural phenomenon. The chief aim is to examine children's views and their ways of operating, acting, as well as the culture and knowledge they produce. It includes listening to children's varied signals and information through multiple methods and analyzing their experiences, actions, values, and the ways of operating and expressing their thoughts.

SCP represents as a holistic approach, which covers the relationships between humans, non-humans entities, artifacts and different phenomena. SCP invariably embraces a communal perspective and a comprehensive, communal, and systemic understanding of the complexities and relational aspects of time, place and space. Furthermore, it focuses on children's lives and childhood as comprehensive phenomena through interdisciplinary research applying multi-method approaches, which can include e.g. playing, narration, movements, dialogue, constructions, photos and drawings.

Researching on children and engaging in activities with them can be justified from several viewpoints: the rights, needs and learning realms, as well as the proactive, listening and sharing realms. These realms are introduced as they present important aspects for why we need to observe and apply children's perspectives. In these realms, the children's participation is the central concept, which is a multi-faceted phenomenon. This presentation discusses the Finnish concept "osallisuus" which involves participation but also play, acting, involvement, feeling and experiencing, relatedness, belongingness, togetherness, inclusion, influencing as well as representation, democracy, organizing and governance.

“Transforming that which transforms it”: Looking into the transformative capacities of habitus in Afghan youth

Hassan, Mehdi
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In this literature review, I apply Bourdieu’s sociological concept of habitus to critically analyze how Afghan youth are active contributors in shaping their own learning in the social spaces they inhabit, as much as they are being shaped by these social spaces (Corsaro, 2014; Selimos, 2017). Bourdieu’s sociological concept of habitus dynamically captures Afghan youth’s long-lasting manners of being, seeing, acting, and thinking that are the outcome of their ongoing socialization; habitus has inventive capacities that respond to the changing present context, to allow youth to transform their own social realities, yet the concept is often misread by many scholars as “overly deterministic” (Bourdieu, 2005; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Wacquant, 2016). I engage with a growing body of international academic literature that appear to significantly undermine the adaptive capacities of Afghan youth’s habitus. Common discourses on Afghan youth often problematically mislabel them as “foreign” and “hopeless” newcomers, who are limited by their traumatic pasts (Rosvall, 2017; Varvin et al., 2022). I argue for the need to shift away from this pervasive deficit lens in the literature on Afghan youth’s habitus, as it poses dangerous consequences in how Afghan youth are treated in transnational contexts. This is especially important to consider in the current Canadian context of Afghan resettlement efforts, as there is also a noticeable absence of Canadian-based studies on Afghan youth’s habitus. I demonstrate the significance of acknowledging the agentic capacities of Afghan youth, along with their current diverse knowledges and experiences (Corsaro, 2014; Wilkinson & Lloyd-Zantiotis, 2017).

The Voice of the Baby: Exploring participatory practices in creative arts

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Queen Margaret University

Background aims: The 'Voice of the Baby' focused on babies' rights (0-3 years old) and was commissioned by Starcatchers, Scotland's Arts and Early Years organisation. The project explored how creative arts practice could enable, support and fulfil babies' UNCRC right to be heard.

Methods: The project had two phases. Phase One investigated existing practice via a literature review, a survey conducted with Scottish-based arts organisations/practitioners, and interviews with Starcatchers artists. In Phase Two, we observed three Starcatchers community projects to learn how artists facilitated babies' participation rights in real life.

Results: The project found that artists engaged in five key practices to enable babies' right to be heard: 1) Curating the space - creating permission for play and creativity; 2) Building sensitive, informed relationships - warm, affectionate interpersonal interactions; 3) Navigating identity of the artist, the space, and the people within it; 4) Respecting and validating the complex communication of babies and; 5) Making time for young children to be heard.

Conclusions: We found that creative arts experiences in communities can facilitate habitats where babies have a voice and influence change. The artists' practices illustrate the power of fluid, relational approaches to children's rights. These practices enabled deep recognition of babies' voices, contributions, influence, and agency in society and community. Artists also encountered tensions, including around the ethos of the artistic space. We argue these tensions are generative for deeper, ongoing reflection on babies' right to be heard in their various communities.

Exploring children's peer relationships in early childhood education and care through video-cued interviews

Koivula, Merja; Hanhikoski, Essi; Laakso, Mari; Palojärvi, Anu; Sevón, Eija
University Of Jyväskylä

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is a significant context for establishing peer relationships (Corsaro, 2000; Köngäs et al., 2022). The children's membership in the ECEC peer group community and constant, ongoing negotiating the dynamics of belonging and exclusion can be regarded as fundamental features of children's peer relationships (Juutinen et al., 2018; Theobald & Danby, 2012). The present study explores what kind of perspectives are narrated regarding children's peer relationships by children, their parents, and the professionals in ECEC. The participants of this qualitative study were children (n=34), parents (n=9) and professionals (n=15) from three ECEC groups. The data were collected by video-cued interviews (Tobin, 2019); a short video, compiled from daily interactions in the group, served as a basis for discussion, and voicing of interpretations and meanings given to the events displayed in video. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) were utilized in analysis. The preliminary findings show that children's attention was drawn first to their friends. They emphasized the significance of joint play and what they liked to do together. Through video, the parents were able to observe children's peer relationships. They appreciated ECEC as enabler of these important relationships. The professionals emphasized relationship skills of children and their emotional competence. They reflected their role as supporters of peer relationships. All participants voiced conflicts and exclusion as challenges of peer relationships. Video-cued interviews enabled participant's reflections and drawing parallels and comparisons between multivocal perspectives on children's peer relationships.

The curated self: An examination of youth identity in online digital images

Moore, Madison
Trent University

Background Aims: With ninety percent of children in Canada engaging in social media applications, social media has become a dominant communicative tool connecting young people to their communities (Schimmele et al., 2021). With the advent of smartphones that have built-in cameras and apps like Instagram that enable users to share images with a vast audience instantly, the act of sharing photos has become an integral part of our daily lives. The aim of this paper is to examine how identity merges with photographic concepts such as authenticity and aesthetics and how images portray a young person's understanding of both their individual and collective selves within online spaces. **Methods:** Various visual-based research methods were used in the implementation of this research, such as photo-elicitation and photovoice, during thirty-four qualitative interviews with Canadian youth. The participants were asked to bring three images they posted on social media platforms from 2020-2022 and were interviewed in depth about these photographs as well as their general interaction with images in digital spaces. **Results:** This paper will present the complex ways in which young people perform their identity visually in digital spaces through actions such as aesthetic choices, managing their visual impressions of “self” in various digital social circles, and connecting with friends and family through photographs. **Conclusions:** Due to the highly visual nature of social media, understanding how youth develop their sense of self and express their identity to their social communities through digital images is essential to examine.

Children's perspectives on online targeted advertisements and their privacy negotiation practices against digital commercial surveillance

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Background

Children actively use various digital platforms, which are characterised by largely invisible user data harvesting for online commercial profiling and targeting. These practices endanger children's rights and privacy. Furthermore, personalised content and advertising can limit children's access to plural perspectives and choices at a life stage when they make crucial life choices.

Aim

This research explores children's awareness of being commercially profiled online, their perspectives on online commercial profiling and targeting, and their privacy negotiation practices in the digital commercial context.

Method

Eight focus group discussions (N=38) with children (13-16 years) in schools across Finland's capital region were conducted between December 2020 and May 2021 and analysed using thematic analysis.

Results

Children deduce that data on demographic details, location, previous online activities and verbal conversations gets used for commercial targeting. Some participants found online profiling privacy-invasive, while few others found it non-disturbing. Some participants found targeted advertisements helpful, few others found them helpful but disturbing. Some felt they encouraged over-consumption, and few thought they restricted access to plural choices and perspectives. Several children found targeted advertisements based on verbal conversations most intrusive. Their privacy negotiation practices involved controlling information shared knowingly, controlling the information given specifically for commercial profiling, multiple ways of using cookies notification and a tactic reflecting a paradoxical view of control.

Conclusions

Most children are aware of digital commercial surveillance, and some take possible steps to counter it. However, educators, policy-makers and corporations must support children better so that children's rights in digital environments can be upheld.

More than Street level – a Foucauldian perspective on Children's Independent Mobility

Freutel-funke, Tabea
University Of Stuttgart

We do not celebrate our children's first walk to the corner store, they don't get a new pair of sneakers for their first time they walk to school alone, but still this transition has an immense and lasting effect on the child's perspective on the world, its position within it as well as on the mobility of the entire family. Ideas about a relational perspective on everyday mobility of children are well established (Nansen et. al, Mikkelsen&Christensen, Kullman). Nevertheless, historical contexts, the built environment as well as legal frameworks and cultural aspects and their impact on today's transition to Children's Independent mobility are widely ignored. Therefore, Tabea chose for her project "Time to walk alone" an alternative theoretical perspective. Working with Foucault's *dispositiv*, she continues a tradition of critical mobility scholars (Manderscheid) in order to add new aspects and insights to the persisting discourse about a simplified linear loss of independence. Based on go along interviews (Kusenbach) with children aged four to fifteen, she reconstructs *dispositivs*, including different forms of data (polaroids, audiofiles, etc.): „Consequently, an analysis of *dispositivs* seeks whenever possible to account for how objects, practices, events and experiences that are usually taken for granted come into existence only in the interaction between the *dispositivs*” (Raffnsøe et al. 2016, S. 279). This approach uncovers multiple unseen relations beyond streetlevel to wider societal changes and enables us to understand everyday mobility better in its complexity and political and societal importance.

Slow violence in the micro-regimes of early childhood education

Paananen, Maiju; Grieshaber, Susan
Tampere University

Background and aims

This paper delves into inequality among children, demonstrating its gradual emergence within the folds of daily routines in early childhood education (ECE). Employing Rob Nixon's (2011) concept of slow violence, our focus is on the cumulative impact of practices involving neglect, exclusion, and marginalization. Synthesizing Nixon's framework with Deleuze (1994) and Guattari's (2000) ideas, we introduce the concept of micro-regimes in early childhood education. This novel approach allows us to comprehend how the intricate interplay of diverse human and non-human elements, spanning various scales, contributes to exclusion and the unfolding of slow violence.

Methods

We present a case study detailing the unintended but excluding practices that Azeeb (pseudonym), aged two, faces within a nursery room. Grounded in ethnographic research conducted at a long day care center in Melbourne, Australia, we unveil a series of systematic exclusionary acts.

Results

The results illuminate the disjunction between normative pedagogical practices and the material realities of the nursery room, leading to an asynchronous rhythm between the paces of the toddler room and Azeeb. This temporal misalignment gives rise to a series of cumulative exclusionary acts, epitomizing the concept of slow violence as it works at the site of a child.

Conclusions

In conclusion, our work emphasizes the importance of scrutinizing the everyday lives of very young children to comprehend the intricacies of exclusion and marginalization. By focusing on micro-regimes producing repetitive exclusionary practices within ECE, we pave the way for a more nuanced understanding of inequalities in early childhood contexts.

Loitering with babies in public space

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Background and aim:

This proposal stems from doctoral research that attends to babies' spatial practices. Following on from Holt and Philo's (2022) suggestion that babies and toddlers are often absent or excluded from public spaces, this paper documents a series of encounters with babies in their local habitats and the affective intensities that are created through the babies' interactions with human and more than human bodies. The aim of this research is to reconfigure public spaces through the space making practices of babies and toddlers.

Method:

This research uses discursive writing practices in an ethnographic study to document entanglements of babies and public space during short explorations of their local community. This writing practice attends to spatial aspects of every day affective moments rather than individual babies' actions to avoid notions of in/competency and presenting individual babies as extra/ordinary. Accepting that the perspectives of babies is always just out of reach to adults, this focus on the affective is an attempt at avoiding mis/representations of babies' experiences.

Results and conclusions:

Through this practice I argue that paying attention to the affective encounters of babies creates a defamiliarization of everyday adult practices. In relation to public space, the research brings attention to the act of loitering and the need for space where babies and their families can linger for longer than is usually comfortable.

Reference: Louise Holt & Christopher Philo (2023) Tiny human geographies: babies and toddlers as non-representational and barely human life?, *Children's Geographies*, 21:5, 819-831, DOI: 10.1080/14733285.2022.2130684

Social justice and equity in Australia's 2022 birth-5 learning framework

Grieshaber, Susan

La Trobe University

Background aims

Early childhood education (ECE), care and development has been declared a national policy priority by all Australian state and territory governments. This priority was reflected in the 2022 update of *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (the Framework)* (Australian Government Department of Education for the Ministerial Council [AG], 2022). The aim was to investigate how socially just and equitable approaches to ECE are reflected in the update.

Methods

A deductive content analysis was undertaken using 13 key terms related to social justice and equity. The aims were to: 1. establish the frequency of the key terms; 2. identify how the key terms are conceptualised, explained, or used; and 3. document changes and implications related to these key terms since the 2009 version.

Results and Discussion

There were significant increases in the frequency of some key terms between the 2009 and 2022 versions e.g., culture and derivatives (cultures/cultural/culturally etc.) was tripled; the use of diversity (diverse/diversity/neurodiverse etc.) was nearly three times that of the 2009 document; equity more than doubled in the 2022 version, and use of the term Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander was more than 12 times the frequency in the 2009 document.

Conclusions

Key terms are rarely defined in the glossary, making meaning elusive and dependent on context. Increased frequencies reflect historical, political, and colonial origins. Considerable strengthening of Indigenous perspectives has occurred, with implications for if, and how the goals will be achieved.

The unaccompanied refugee minors' experiences of solidarity in their everyday social life

Badran, Joelle

University of Antwerp

The accommodation of refugees in many European countries has sparked multiple forms of solidarity (Hamann and Karakayali, 2016). While the majority of the research on solidarity is focused on practices among adults, little is known about the social experiences of solidarity among children, particularly unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs) (Kauhanen and Kauko, 2020). Studies with URMs reveal that their basic needs are often provided by the asylum systems in Europe. However, their everyday social experiences and the recognition of their voices and agency as unique individuals are rarely acknowledged, leading to encounters of struggle (Korkiamäki and Gilligan, 2020). Same as any other societal group, URMs experience, and exercise solidarity. This project builds on Axel Honneth's critical theory of recognition formed of three patterns of love, rights, and social esteem (Honneth, 1996). Honneth's theory is fundamentally concerned with social inequalities and social justice and is a valuable approach to examining children's social life experiences of emotional, legal, and social recognition (Thomas, 2012). This project adopts a normative-ethical approach through the lens of the new social studies of childhood that situates children as autonomous and active agents, rather than passive victims (Graham et al., 2017). It draws on ethnographic fieldwork and applies participant observation supplemented by interviews to investigate in an in-depth manner how a group of URMs understands, exercises, and receives the different forms of emotional, legal, and social recognition, and to examine how solidarity practices are revealed and where they lack.

Child participation as a space: Relational narratives from everyday life from early childhood and education

Ylikörkkö, Enni-Mari
University Of Oulu

The presentation is based on the ongoing dissertation on child participation in ECE. Child participation is one core aim in Finnish curriculum and a topical theme in ECE internationally. The many definitions of the concept bring a challenge to the ECE field, and several studies show that the implementation of child participation is often challenging and remains at the level of the rhetoric within ECE settings. A child's perspective has remained marginal, while the majority of previous research explores the phenomenon from an adult-oriented viewpoint as part of the teacher's work or in interaction between the teacher and the child. In my study, I aim to deepen understanding of child participation as an everyday and relational phenomenon in the everyday life of ECE. My dissertation is a narrative childhood study in which I explore child participation from relational, especially spatial perspective. Child participation is conceptualized as a dynamic space emerging within the relationships among children, educators and the ECE environment, extending beyond human relations to material and cultural dimensions. The data consists of small stories based on the video recordings collected from a Finnish kindergarten that provides open ECE. I am a teacher in the data. In the study, I explore the child participation of through different viewpoints of relationships. An analysis is multilayered where narrative approaches are emphasized.

Findings show that child participation as a space is both individual and social in ECE, which includes several tensions from the perspective of both the child and the teacher.

The everyday lives of children who have experienced domestic abuse and social work interventions

Herbert, Brenda

Goldsmiths, University Of London

Background aims

This paper explores the everyday lives of children who have experienced domestic abuse and social work intervention. There is significant literature about domestic abuse and children, but very few studies have been conducted with children themselves (Callaghan, Fellin and Alexander, 2017). Even when research have been carried out with children there is little exploration beyond the remit of their domestic abuse experiences. We know very little about their everyday lives, dreams, aspirations, personhood and how they create liveable lives.

Methodology

This paper is based on an 18-month multimodal ethnography in an inner-city London borough with ten children who had experienced domestic abuse and social care interventions. The ethnography started in February 2020 and continuing throughout the physical restrictions of Covid-19. Methods used to explore the everyday included walking, playing, talking, writing, photography, participation observation, digital and in person methods.

Results

Using multimodal methods the children demonstrated how joy, beauty and love were important aspects of their everyday lives. They showed how they navigated racism, poverty and marginalisation in society to build liveable lives with their families, friends and communities. The children showed themselves in their full humanness and challenged predominant narratives about them being passive and damaged.

Conclusion

The paper demonstrates how in paying close attention to the mundane practices and materiality of everyday life, we can experience how children make sense of their lives and make liveable lives, resulting in children creating knowledge about themselves that is beyond the constraints of domestic abuse and adversity.

Investigating children's environmental agency and consumer practices through their everyday lived experiences

Firinci Orman ,Turkan
Aalto University

Background and Aims:

This paper aims to explore how young people develop critical agency through lived citizenship, interpreting and negotiating the complexities of consumerism and climate change. I analyze the plurality of children's political positioning in the context of everyday activism through four intersecting, interchangeable, and coexisting performative categories: victim, voter, rejecter, and interpreter (see Firinci Orman, 2022). These encompass relational modes of political participation that include formal, non-formal, and informal practices embodied in the everyday lives of youth. These categories highlight the multifaceted character and intergenerational aspect of environmental citizenship formation.

Methods:

Building on digital ethnographic data on children with diverse social positioning from different regions in Turkey, the main data collection methods included digital mapping activity and in-depth online interviews, followed by individual online essay writing and reflection.

Results:

This paper demonstrates how young people in Turkey—where children's political engagements outside formal ways are restricted due to an authoritarian turn—practice their interpretive agency and create youthful ways to enact their environmental subjectivities.

Conclusions:

The paper concludes that children find ways to express their unique environmental selves through small and affordable actions in their everyday practices. By implying a performative understanding of children's political participation and everyday activism, the study shows how proactive the efforts of young individuals are in maintaining connections with people, places, and issues that hold personal significance.

Learning with parents about conversations with young children in their homes and communities.

Morris, Janet
University Of Greenwich

The study aimed to explore conversation with young children in their homes and communities in three locations in England through collaborative research with parents, including the nature and purposes of the conversations and the conditions in which they may thrive or be hindered.

The qualitative, instrumental case study (Yin, 2014) drew upon on a purposive, largely convenience, sample of four parents to explore the conversational environment around three children aged between 3 and 5 years old. Data were collected using qualitative methods, including conversation logs compiled by the collaborating parents using a 'research menu' approach (Flewitt et al., 2018) including written notes, audio and video recordings. Semi structured interviews enabled joint reflection on conversation logs and specific episodes of conversation.

The collaborative process provided insight into children's individual funds of knowledge-based interests (Hedges, 2022). Children talked about matters of 'deep interest' (Hedges, 2022, p.4) including events in their life, popular culture, enquiries, and concerns but also their own ephemeral world of dreams, imagination, and play. The collaborative research enabled the creation of individual thematic maps of the topics of conversation, unique for each child. It conceptualises sustained conversations requiring a 'coming together' of the conversational partners in a Third Space (Bhabba, 1994) enabled by a delicate, shifting ecosystem, vulnerable to influences associated with the conditions pertaining in the child's environment at any particular time. Responsive adults who connect, 'tune in' and share understandings with the children support sustained conversation with implications for children's development, wellbeing and learning.

Children's narrations in their local communities

Peltola, Antonina; Kangas, Jonna; Karlsson, Liisa
University Of Helsinki

Background and aims

Communities influence our personal lives in many ways. Being one of the fundamental features of human life, experiences of communities and sense of belonging have a strong connection to well-being. Even as communities are widely studied in several academic disciplines, less research has been conducted of young children's community experiences. The aim of this study is seeking children's experiences of their local communities by exploring children's narratives of their everyday life.

Methods

60 children aged 2 to 9 participated in this research. Participatory research methods were used including individual interviews, group discussions, drawing and photo-walks. Research data was collected in kindergarten during spring 2023. In addition, ten children participated in photo-walks in their home environment. Narrative approach and Tjora's and Scambler's layers of community were used as analytical tools to analyse children's experiences.

Results

The preliminary results indicate that different research methods explore different aspects of community, and together they offer rich insight to children's community experiences.

Conclusions

Multi-method research approach offers complementary and diverse ways for children to recount their community experiences.

Speculative Practices for Confronting Unspeakability with Art in Early Childhood Education

*Smith, Teresa ; Jobb, Cory
Thompson Rivers University*

Background aims:

Two pedagogists share their processes for engaging young children in ongoing dialogues with art at the Kamloops Art Gallery. Thinking alongside an exhibition entitled *Black Drones in the Hive* by artist Deanna Bowen, we experiment with creating a pedagogical space that invites conversations with children about concepts - 'racism,' 'colour,' and 'anti-Blackness' - that are often unspeakable in early childhood education. We offer our efforts to make these concepts speakable.

Methods: Using pedagogical documentation, including video and audio recording, photography, and collective drawing practices, we trace children's weekly engagements with the exhibition. Resisting superficial engagement, we enact pedagogical practices of return, leaning into tension, and sustaining collective conversations in our curriculum-making practices to center deep attunement to specific artworks.

Results: We carefully craft a story to share with the children based on Deanna Bowen's intentions behind the exhibition. In it, we center a story of Black life in Canada to counter the white-washed history of a peaceful and welcoming Canadian state. In this way, we attempt to reorient our curriculum-making practices towards opening space for difficult conversations, which might create the kinds of dispositions (in both children and educators) necessary for confronting injustice.

Conclusions: Our pedagogical work responds to children's discomfort discussing race, mirroring what Pimental et al., (2023) name "colour-evasiveness." What might become possible when we understand children as always-already implicated in a world shaped by racism? In this paper, we offer returning, leaning into disagreement/discomfort, and speculating collectively as experimental modes for reorienting curriculum-making practices.

Meanings of the place for children's subjective well-being

Honkanen, Kati

University of Eastern Finland

In dissertation research I examine the meanings given to places as producers of subjective well-being by people of different ages, including children. Presentation focuses on well-being-related meanings children give to places in their residential area and what kind of information the visual and verbal qualitative methods form about children's subjective well-being in places.

The research data were produced in three residential areas in city of Lahti during the years 2013–2014. The data produced with the children consisted of drawing group discussions (n=49) and photo elicitation interviews (n=16). The analysis method was inductive content analysis. The results exhibit places in the residential area are important to children's subjective well-being. The meaningful dimensions of a place in terms of well-being are social interaction, meaningful activities and positive emotional experience generated through them. For children, the meaningful aspects of a place are intertwined, while adults structure the meaningful dimensions of a place more separately into the physical, social and psychological environment. The knowledge produced by visual and verbal methods is interactive and bound to place and time. By combining visual and verbal research methods enables to reach children's perspectives.

Especially residential areas classified as challenging, have traditionally been examined through various well-being risk factors. Although it is necessary to identify well-being gaps and risk factors through research, focusing on them may produce negative consequences for the target groups, and stereotypical problem-focused images of certain residential areas may be maintained. In this research, focus has been in the sources and existing manifestations of well-being.

Everyday futures in childhood and adulthood: childhood memory stories and ‘fortune-telling’ as worldly creation

*Rosa Riberio, Camila
Tampere University*

Background aims

This study concerns the temporal problematics arising by inquiring children's everyday life through childhood memory stories. While memory stories of childhood offer nuanced avenues to navigate “the paradoxes of everyday life” (Millei et al., 2022), they are mediated by adult re-telling. Considerations about the legitimacy of childhood experiences storied by adults tackle the differences and tensions between child and adult subjectivities, as self (interior) phenomena. I argue for the fractal correspondence between childhood and adulthood experiences, as worldly instead of interior. These experiences happen in everyday life. Childhood stories written collectively offer powerful mechanisms to study human subjectivity as world-ed phenomena.

Methods

Collective biography” (Millei et al., 2022) and research creation are strategies that, respectively: explore childhood experiences through written stories about moments when 10 artist-participants ‘faced a future’; and deterritorialise the stories by creating a ‘fortune-telling’ deck of cards (drawn from the stories).

Results

I will present 2 ‘fortune-telling’ cards. Each brings a unique image and text opening different kinds of futural affective relations. These new relations accord to those described in the stories but deterritorialise them, de-centering the individual teller’s past and present.

Conclusions

Fractal correspondences benefit from attention to futurity. By ‘facing the future’, either through childhood stories or ‘fortune-telling’ performances, experiences can be conceived not through the prism of human interiority but as a worldly phenomenon.

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A community of their own: Everyday experiences of expatriate children in Finland

Korpela, Mari

Tampere University

Finland, among many other countries, welcomes highly skilled international professionals. In this presentation, I focus on the views and experiences of such professionals' 9-15-year-old children. The talk is based on an extensive ethnographic research project I have conducted in a Finnish international school. I argue that although the children have transnational backgrounds and transnational lifeworlds, they themselves focus very much on their local lives here and now. Communities are made in practices. Consequently, paying ethnographic attention to children's everyday actions is crucial when investigating which communities and relations are important to them and how those are constructed and maintained. School provides the institutional structure and a rigid timeframe that shapes children's everyday lives to a great extent, and adults working in schools can facilitate children's feelings of everyday belonging. At the same time, children's own practices and informal interactions during school days, and on free time, are often much more significant for the children themselves. Paying analytical attention to the mundane everyday practices and playful interactions in the children's lives, has helped me to gain insights into various negotiations and occasions where they (or others) define their position and belonging and where their everyday communities are made.

Understanding legitimation as children's relational agency in peers: exemplifying Chinese Left-behind Children (LBC)

Li, Shichong

University Of Leeds

Chinese LBC are children of migrant parents who migrate for higher-paid jobs in more developed areas and live apart from LBC for more than 3 months in a year. Usually, LBC's grandparents are surrogate parents who take care of them after parental migration. LBC are regarded as vulnerable children who suffer from mental illness, social loneliness, and in need of high-quality childcare and public concerns in prior research. Meanwhile, within the realm of children's agency, one of the prevailing paradigms is viewing children's agency as their ability to make sense of their social network. Hence, by merging the two research focuses together, I argue that there is a lack of attention on Chinese LBC's relational agency in peer relations as disclosing the negative impact of parental migration on LBC is the dominant trend.

This study aims to answer: how do Chinese LBC practice their relational agency when with peers? Data were collected via online interviews, instant messages, and observation of 13 participants' posts on WeChat. Thematic analysis and discourse analysis have been conducted based on collected data.

Findings have shown that Chinese LBC have shown a sense of legitimating their thoughts and actions as their relational agency with peers in both school and family contexts. They actively justify themselves and defend their opinions. They also legitimate their social interactions with peers when encountering conservative social environment involving adults and other children. Hence, LBC's social construction of their relational agency is legitimating themselves in their social encounters with peers.

Children living in remote rural settings engagement in collective time spatial organization of everyday lives

Fridén Syrjäpalo, Linda
Stockholm University

Background and aims:

Studying time spatial organization can show how rural inhabitants deal with issues of inequality in their everyday lives. This paper focuses on the topic of everyday mobility and how temporal hierarchies is part of the construction of a rural identity. In analyzing children's activities in and between different socio-spatial contexts I focus on the organization of rural everyday lives. This paper will exemplify collective coping strategies that families, living in highly car dependent- rural areas in the Swedish north, use to deal with the challenge of rapidly increasing fuel prices due to global events. Also, rural identities will be discussed as something that is constructed and reproduced relationally, in a social, spatial and cultural context within families and among children and youth cultures as a part of an overarching sense of place.

Methods:

This paper draws on empirical data from my ongoing dissertation project with 36 participants, using ethnographically inspired methods including interviews, home visits, mobile methods such as walks and car drives, and informal talk.

Results and Conclusions:

I show two empirical examples of relational rural epistemologies, meaning how relational rurality is applied to children's everyday life in remote areas. First, families with children respond together as a community, by reorganizing their lives and their mobility through collaboration. Second, children create and reproduce rural identities through their daily rhythms and activities which creates collective meaning-making processes in rural areas. These engagements also display resistance to temporal hierarchies in society and the urban norm.

Exploring everyday experiences of school-based spaces in informing wellbeing in a Global South context

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University Of Cambridge

Using Schutz (1970) lifeworld model, this study focuses on the contribution to wellbeing of everyday access and use of school-based leisure spaces among older children in Lahore. Arguably, understanding place-based realities in this spatiotemporal context is best achieved by acknowledging precarity and contextually relevant axes of stratification (Cooper et al., 2021). Through an exploratory model, the significance of spaces in shaping wellbeing through the performance of agency and belonging is discussed.

This qualitative inquiry is based on semi-structured interviews with 22 secondary school students, between ages 15-17 years. A contextually grounded sociological understanding of 'child' is used. The binary of international curriculum and local curriculum school is used as a proxy for socioeconomic class. 5 girls and 7 boys attend the former while 5 girls and 5 boys attend the latter. Inductive thematic analysis was used to explore experience of wellbeing as informed by access to and use of spaces.

School-based spaces were significant for informing wellbeing through leisure activities. Sociocultural understanding determined use. Boys in international curriculum and girls in local curriculum schools explored imaginary mobilities, agency, and sense of belonging. Together these informed their wellbeing. However, for boys in local curriculum and girls in international curriculum schools, use was constrained by resources and authority figures' concerns for violence and morality.

This study contributes to an understanding of children's everyday wellbeing as experienced in spaces of leisure. Through writings on Global South, this study addresses questions of place-based realities embedding a spatiotemporal and sociocultural experience of wellbeing.

Education and Immanence – re-imag(in)ing education as hospitality with Deleuze

Varpanen, Jan
Tampere University

“We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE and nothing else” writes Gilles Deleuze, to remind us that all we have is a life that comes to us as the mysterious yet wonderful question of what to do with it. I call Co-Existential Practices forms of dialogic activity that allow for a shared exploration of the question that life is. In my study, I focus on adult-child play, but some forms of art and existentially weighty conversations are also examples of Co-Existential Practices. Co-Existential Practices are minoritarian parts of education in that they are perceived as educationally valuable but rarely highlighted as the core of education. I argue that educational theories instead tend to equate education with teaching and correspondingly understand education to be concerned with changing the child’s life for the better. I call this the Change-image of education. Because of their commitment to immanence and questioning, Co-Existential Practices require a different image of education, an image that is not based on changing the life of the child for the better but on sharing in on the mystery and wonder of life. I try to create such an image with the help of the notion of hospitality. What I hope to show is that it is possible to ima(gi)ne education as hospitality and that this image is better suited to making sense of the educational value of Co-Existential Practices than the Change-image is.

Creativity as a rhizomatic experience of becoming - a/r/tographic exploration.

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In this presentation we explore the concept of creativity and its significance in the context of education. Guided by the theoretical approach of Vlad Glăveanu and Ronald Beghetto and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari we focus not on the outcome of one's creative work or creative abilities but rather on an individual as a unique being and on a creative experience that "grows" as a rhizome unfolding unpredictably and irregularly in unknown directions. What does creativity consist of as a rhizomatic experience of becoming, and what are the educational implications of this notion?

To answer these questions, we present findings from an a/r/tographic inquiry that combined artistic practice, research practice, and teaching practice, including creation of an installation art together with a 7-years-old boy. The a/r/tographic findings constitute a unique sequence of events and experiences that occurred during the art experiment informing theoretical, artistic, and educational insights on creativity. As a conclusion, we argue that creativity understood as a rhizomatic experience of becoming, as opposed to focusing on innovation or creative products, can transform educational practices into mutual creative learning which continuously challenges the educator who becomes a learner and transcends one's own creativity obstacles.

Keywords: creativity, creative experience, creativity in education, a/r/tography, art-based research

“CHILDREN IN DANGER”: IMAGINARIES ON CHILDREN IN ANTI-GENDER PROJECTS AND THEIR POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IN TURKEY

*Unal Abaday, Didem
University Of Helsinki*

This article examines anti-gender actors' socio-political imaginaries, discourses and policy perspectives that use the trope 'children in danger' as a symbolic site to contest what they call 'gender ideology', a pejorative term used to denote a wide range of feminist and queer principles, namely gender equality politics, reproductive rights, gendered framing of violence against women, and LGBTI+ rights. Focusing on the Turkish case as a social laboratory, the article investigates the wide spectrum of anti-gender meanings, ideological frameworks and policy perspectives developed by various political, religious, civil society actors through the trope of 'children in danger'. Empirically, it first examines the various modalities of the trope 'children as victims of gender ideology' as an affective tool to add urgency, legitimacy, and righteousness to the anti-gender projects. Second, it traces the political implications of the construction of this trope and its policy perspectives especially in the field of education. As a result, it argues that the use of the 'vulnerable child' as an affective metaphor in the anti-gender discourses does not only produce symbolic meanings but also leads to actual policy backlash by a broad constellation of reactionary actors who argue for the dominance of anti-rights perspectives in the education field with alarming levels of political efficacy. It concludes that in the contemporary era there is an increased need to think through the simultaneous processes of crackdown on women's rights, LGBTI+ rights and gender equality on the one hand and children's access to gender-equal education on the other.

Humour in studies with children and its effects on the research process

Ortju, Laura; Stenius, Tuula; Vasenius, Satu; Peltola, Antonina; Piipponen, Oona; Weckström, Elina; Weckström, Elina; Kaitsalmi, Johanna
University Of Eastern Finland

Background and Aim

Children's humour has been studied for decades and found to be original. Still, the manifestations of children's humour in the research process have not been studied before. It is known that the atmosphere of the research situation and the trust between the researcher and the child are important to the children's narrative.

Understanding the nature and meaning of humour can promote the reliability of research and improve the child's position in the process. The aim of this study is to describe what kind of humour there is in research with children and what effects it has for the research process. The study is multidisciplinary and takes place in the field of childhood studies.

Methods

This study consists of a synthesis of analyses of data from six previous studies by authors. Content analysis is used as a common analysis method. Phenomenon of humour is discussed in the interdisciplinary dialogue. All authors have implemented their original studies by following the principles of studies of child perspectives in different fields of science.

Results

As a preliminary assumption, we state that using humour or enabling it in research situations relieves tension between children and the researcher, promotes confidential interaction, and causes children to share more of their views and ideas.

Conclusions

Our conclusion is that humour is beneficial to use in research with children and it will promote the trustworthiness of the research and contribute to children's wellbeing during research.

Representations of children in experts' discourses on the datafication of education

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University Of Jyväskylä

Background and Aims:

In the realm of contemporary formal education, the phenomenon of datafication is on the rise. Learning analytics, well-being apps, and wearable self-tracking devices have become integral to the educational landscape. The datafication of education is often heralded for its promise of precision and accuracy. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that data serve as indicators and partial evidence of the complex "real-life" phenomena they aim to represent. Given this context, critical researchers have questioned how learning, development, well-being, and childhood are portrayed within the digital technologies generating data in educational settings. This study introduces an additional dimension by exploring how children are represented in the discourses surrounding the datafication of education. The study conducted under as part of the Movement for Data Literacy project, funded by the Research Council of Finland.

Methods:

This research employs a critical discourse analysis approach, analyzing interviews with 25 experts in the fields of educational technology, education politics, data justice, and children's rights.

Results and Conclusions:

As the analysis is still in its preliminary stages, definitive results are not yet available. However, initial findings suggest that some pro-datafication discourses tend to view children as "becomings," whose future life should be predicted and managed through the amalgamation of various data sets, including socio-economic variables, health, and learning metrics.

Education is domestication? Centering children as humanimals

Paavilainen, Aleksi
University Of Helsinki

Background aims:

In Childhood studies and Early childhood education and care Anthropocene debates, some argue for de-centering the Child while others call for more rigorous inspection of the Child/the Human in research. In this study, I center children in aiming to understand what kind of humanity Finnish environmentalist early childhood education and care (re)produces.

Methods:

I have done ethnographic participatory observations and interviews in two Finnish environmentalist kindergartens. I conceptualize children as humanimals, emphasizing their simultaneous humanity and animality, and think education as domestication together with the concept of wildness. I take into consideration how 'full' humanity has been historically and culturally made to mean whiteness and binary gender categories. My method is a combination of philosophical and ethnographic analysis.

Results:

I claim that children were constructed and constructed themselves towards 'full' humanity of whiteness and binary genders, but this was not without emergence of alternative, wilder forms of humanimality.

Conclusions:

I argue that centering children in research can enable exploration and critique of human supremacies in education.

How do reach the children`s world using by photo-telling method?

Kyrönlampi, Taina
University Oulu

In this presentation, I discuss how the stories and photos open the world of children`s experiences. I reflect on how my researcher`s position and engagement with children has evolved over two decades and contrast the development of the research method with theory. The initiation of the photo-telling method took place in 2003 when I collected research data for my doctoral dissertation. I interviewed preprimary school-aged children about their everyday life experiences. My wonder and amazement at the transcribed child data led me to phenomenological research philosophers such as Edmund Husserl (1995), Amadeo Giorgini (1994) Martin Heidegger (1991), Emmanuel Levinas (1996), and Finnish philosopher Lauri Rauhala (e.g. 1989; 1990; 2005;2006). With the phenomenological approach, I discovered how it relevant is to develop my research approach and methodology towards a phenomenological research approach in my post-doctoral research. In this presentation, I describe through three stories how a child`s experiences can be manifested through photos and stories. I think that the photos produced by children are connected to their subjective experiences. Photographing and telling about them in a "photo-telling" method can serve as one approach through which children can make their experiences, thoughts and feelings observable and interpretable to others (Kyrönlampi, Uitto & Puroila 2021; Lutrell 2010; Punch, 2002). In relation to Levinas (1996) I ponder how children`s stories carry meaning through the channel of testimony rather than through disclosure. Levinas challenges the assumption that truth is only valid if it is disclosed and unveiled fully.

Inclusion of children attending open meeting places

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Background

Open spaces, which children and parents can freely visit and spend time together, have been seen as a mean to support well-being of children and parents. Participation in open activities are supposed to provide opportunities for meaningful experiences both for children and parents. Although open spaces have existed long time, little is known about children's participation and Inclusion In the community-based activities.

Aim

The study focuses on inclusion of children attending open meeting places together with parents. We ask what kind of opportunities for participation open meeting places provide for children. Further, we ask what kind of mechanisms are related to Inclusion of children.

Method

Data was collected from parents (n=19) in seven focus group interviews in spring 2023. Interviews were conducted through Teams, transcribed verbatim and anonymized. Thematic analysis was used in qualitative analysis of the data.

Conclusions

Preliminary findings suggest that open spaces can play a central role in providing children opportunities for inclusion and participation. Open places provide multiple opportunities for playing, moving, peer relations as well as community of caring and supportive adults. Results are discussed in relation to children's personal, relational and collective needs.

ONLINE WORKSHOP ABSTRACTS

Shared narratives: building classroom communities through multimodal storytelling

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University Of British Columbia

Background aims: Focusing on community building, this study views learning, literacy, and multimodal storytelling as communal activities and “a sharing of the culture” (Bruner, 1986). It adopts sociocultural, learner-centered, and culturally-sustained pedagogy approaches to explore how students’ multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) are developed through multimodality and how promoting sustained classroom conversations (i.e., facilitating dialogue and multimodal classroom exchanges) (Luke, 2013) create a supportive classroom climate, cultivating classroom communities and wellbeing (Rovai, 2002).

Methods: This ethnographic case-study (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) follows a culturally and linguistically diverse grade 4/5 classroom in Vancouver, Canada for a year. It adopts a multi-method data-generation approach (i.e., ethnographic observations, informal interviews, surveys, digital recordings, and multimodal artifacts), and uses thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2012) and combined frameworks (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Mavers, 2010; Rose, 2023) to examine multimodal data.

Results: The contributions are threefold: 1) illuminate what children from diverse backgrounds bring to classroom storytelling practices; 2) understand collaborative practices, how individual competences are combined, and how diversity can be built on and honoured through multimodal storytelling; and 3) reveal how collective meaning-making impacts social relationships and classroom community.

Conclusions: There is a gap in connecting language and literacy education and classroom community well-being with children's literature and stories (Arizpe & Styles, 2015; Garner & Parker, 2018; Harper, 2016). This study bridges this gap by demonstrating how multimodal storytelling can be incorporated into classrooms to foster collaboration and community-building, thereby creating a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all students.

All About My Neighbourhood: Place, community, identity and belonging in London childhoods, past and present

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The University of Sheffield

Background aims

Children's sense of identity and belonging develops through everyday entanglements with space, place and community. Our paper reports an ongoing archival research project centred on essays written in 1954-55 by schoolchildren in the London Borough of Camberwell for a competition set by the Borough Libraries. We explore how these elements feature in the children's descriptions of the overlapping physical, social and cultural landscapes of their geographically and temporally situated childhoods, and the impact they have on the children's emergent relationships with self and community.

Methods

Applying a posthumanist lens (Barad, 2007), we analyse how these essays reflect their child authors' situated knowing-doing-feeling. Growing up in the post-war period of economic austerity, in a landscape marked by the physical and social scars of war, these child authors articulate, and emerge from, complex entanglements with the human and the more-than-human, which we set out to map.

Results

Examining specific examples from the essays, we argue that children's representations of their neighbourhoods, and the meanings they make from the tangible and intangible cultural landscapes they encounter and participate within, have much to tell us about the emplaced, embodied and affective experience of community, identity and belonging.

Conclusions

Bringing these essays from children from the 1950s into dialogue with their contemporary counterparts has the potential to 'reanimate' the archive (Mills, 2013), to invite creative, multimodal responses that capture and represent diverse childhoods in these same spaces today, and to spark intergenerational dialogue, connection and wellbeing involving children and their communities.

The Social prescribing of Creative Play in the first 1,001 days: Creating an evidence base

Davis, Paige
University Of Leeds

Background Aims:

Creative play has positive developmental implications in infancy and early childhood in many different cognitive and social domains. One way that creative play can be brought to families with children 0-3-years could be through social prescribing (SP). SP attempts to mediate increasing need for those with psychosocial problems to access non-medical support within the community instead of putting more pressure on the healthcare system. This research examines the first place-based SP creative play programme in the UK looking at; 1) the parent and child experience of the programme, and 2) whether parents see the programme as improving wellbeing for them and their children.

Methods:

A programme evaluation, and a questionnaire study were employed. Evaluation data includes 17 parent questionnaires, nine parent interviews, and researcher and practitioner field notes. Questionnaires gleaned 38 paired reports at baseline and after the SP community intervention using the City Birth Trauma Scale, Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale and reflective functioning Questionnaire. All families were recruited through self or stakeholder referral, in line with the National Health Services SP guidelines.

Results and Conclusions:

Thematic analysis of the evaluation found that the feelings of trust and calm in the SP interventions aided in the delivery of practical parenting knowledge by the facilitator. Analysis of the questionnaires found significant changes in reflective functioning and depression as well as relationships between birth trauma report and parent depression scores. Results are discussed in terms of how this research could offer insight into future curated SP creative play interventions.

Childhood after Chernobyl: Materiality and generational relations in/after crisis

Yakovlyeva, Vita

Toronto Metropolitan University; Government Of Alberta

In conversation with Peter Kraftl's *After Childhood*, I question linear temporal and material orderings in the world of children in Ukraine during and after Chernobyl nuclear explosion. I draw on what is only a smidgen of data, and attempt to demonstrate how the event of Chernobyl affects childhood experience and its representation, specifically in relation to adults and environment.

I apply a classic cultural anthropology concept of co-figuration as traced through generational temporality in the work of Margaret Mead (1970) and Karen Barad's performative understanding of social relations (2003; 2007) to argue that childhood after Chernobyl assists thinking of children after childhood in several ways. Firstly, because it negates certainty of universal knowledge and its authority habitually embodied by adults. Secondly, because it aids the understanding of matter as both social and material production.

Student voices in the classroom: from institutional representation to creative meaning.

Moreno-Pinillos, Cristina

University Of Zaragoza

Inclusion, the development of educational technologies, creativity and student participation in school have been identified as ways to achieve inclusive education (UNESCO, 2020). As Spanish schools have embraced greater diversity, there has been a challenge in teaching practices (Ball, 2003). In this context, different research shows the value of practices that focus on student voices (Craft and Jeffrey, 2004; Vigo-Arrazola, 2021). However, few studies have considered students' voices and their participation in school life in spaces considered to be 'disadvantaged' due to socio-economic or geographical issues (Apple, 2009).

In this sense, it is of interest to know how students' voices are present in classrooms located in disadvantaged spaces, challenging the culture of homogenisation and curricular closure. Based on the information gathered in the context of a national R+D+i project entitled 'Challenging stigmatisation. Discourses and creative and inclusive educational practices in "schools of special complexity" (PID2020-112880RB- I00)', we use ethnographic study based on participant observation, interviews, informal conversations in 2 schools of special complexity located in rural areas of Spain.

The results allow us to identify teaching practices that recognise and incorporate students' lives, favouring a relationship between the school curriculum and local culture (Budnik et al., 2021), producing a transformation in the curriculum (Lozano-Díaz, 2014). However, the trend to recognise voices from a symbolic and democratised approach is also identified (Apple, 2009; Charteris and Smardon, 2019; Seale, 2016). The paper presents an analysis of opportunity and tensions in the participating educational settings regarding the incorporation of student voices.

First Communion Preparation Courses: Exploring Children's Roles in Religious Transformation

Andreatta, Claudia

IUSVE - Istituto Universitario Salesiano Venezia

Traditionally, sociological attention to the religious lives of children has been scarce. However, a better knowledge of children's religiosity can have consequences to understand religious transformation in the transition to pre-adolescence and adolescence itself. Moreover, it is crucial to give voice to children in order to describe the processes of re-interpretation and individualization of religious practice, which usually occur in the context of religious socialization such as families and peer cultures. This can help to comprehend what lies behind the increasing loss of centrality of religion in daily life and the changing perception of the Catholic Church, especially among young people.

The research aims to explore this topic and intend to enable children as actors in the studies of religious practices as well. The results of actively listening to children will also be presented as a driver to understand the participation of families in the Christian community, offering new opportunities for dialogue and mutual understanding. The research presents the results from a participant observation conducted in two parishes in Venice during children's First Communion preparation courses. Not only the process of individualization of belief became evident already in children, but also it was important to recognise that children have reinterpreted the traditions of Christian rituals, the way of considering the sacraments, in the way they pray, their commitment to Christian values and beliefs. Lastly questioning and doubting some mysteries of the Gospel they heard, children influenced a lot the way adults reflect on their religious experience and on their values.

Policy advice for child and youth policy - for, with or by young people?

Betz, Tanja

Mainz University

Scientific policy advice has been gaining in importance for decades. At the same time, participatory policy advice, which is based on various forms of expertise that can be of scientific and non-scientific origin, is spreading (Weingart 2015). This can be seen as a reaction to the demands of organized civil society, which "wants to make its interests and concerns heard and actively participate in political decision-making processes" (Glaab 2016, p. 2). Accordingly, many expert groups are made up of representatives from academia, interest groups and experts from administration, politics and business (Siefken 2016). However, "the existing forms of policy advice are almost exclusively open to adults and are organized in complex negotiation formats that are particularly demanding or hardly accessible to young people" (BJK 2019, p. 7). Still, there is a lack of knowledge about whether and how young people themselves imagine policy advice - especially in the policy fields of childhood and youth - and what perspectives they themselves have on their participation in policy advice and corresponding expert groups.

The paper will present the results of an explorative, standardized survey of N = 1,206 14-21-year-olds, informed by the sociology of knowledge and childhood theory, from the joint project "4th Rhineland-Palatinate Child and Youth Report", which is currently being carried out at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and elsewhere. The paper provides initial insights into the perspectives of young people on policy advice and the positions of "young" experts in expert commissions in the policy fields of childhood and youth.

Children's dreams to play together is transformative: A participatory research in a forgotten community

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Queen Margaret University

Background and aims: Play is recognised as a right for every child (UNCRC, 1989), being critical for children and communities' wellbeing and inclusion. Nonetheless, children's play in deprived neighbourhoods may be at risk, generating inequalities and exclusion. Yet, little is known about what play looks like in deprived areas. This study aimed to understand children's and community members' perspectives for developing a play-friendly community in a neighbourhood labelled as socio-economically deprived in Scotland.

Methods: A child and community-based ethnographic participatory research was conducted. We employed art-based, creative, and participatory methods. Children participated as decision-makers, and they decided to create a puppet show and two songs to convey their perspectives for a better place to play.

Results: This research found that play is "dying" in a forgotten community, showing the absences and exclusions of people in public spaces, entangled in the complexities of community geopolitics. With this scenario, children expressed their dreams to play together in their village, and their desire to make other children join the project. This mobilised children and others in the community to come together in a collective process of playing to improve their community, co-creating a transformative process. This led to the creation of community events, publication of the films (puppet show and song), the production of a collaborative report and raising awareness in the community.

Conclusions: Collective play for children and communities is pivotal. Children as human right defenders and agents of change can mobilise play equality in deprived communities, catalysing solidarity, hope and resilience.

Imagined Communities in the Diaspora: Children's Quest for Belonging in Contemporary South-Asian Canadian Literature

Chakravorty, Mayurika
Carleton University

Central to the quest for belonging in the diaspora is the construction of imagined communities (Anderson). While the questions of home, identity, and belonging are critical in diaspora literature, the experiences of children and their representations in children's literature are often subsumed under the larger narratives of marginalization, discrimination, and assimilation of the adult migrant. Drawing on the scholarship on transnational communities, migrancy, child agentism, and decolonial methodologies, including the works of Stuart Hall, Benedict Anderson, Gloria Anzaldua, and Philip Nel, this paper focuses on children's books by the contemporary Canadian authors of South Asian origin. It argues that migrant children, who are usually afforded merely the role of cultural translators in diasporic narratives, occupy a distinct position in building new communities as well as transnational and intersectional solidarities as they negotiate histories and geographies of power in the diaspora. In this they differ from the first generation of migrants whose community or collective selfhood is ineluctably linked to the notion of a fixed origin (Hall). Instead, the migrant youth writers of the second generation cultivate an 'empathetic imagination' in the understanding of displacement (Nel) with transformative potential for both migrant and host communities. This paper analyses selected children's books and demonstrates how, in their bold and radical treatment of issues like gender fluidity, cultural hybridity, and religious and ethnic diversities, they present powerful narratives that envision new transnational communities and intersectional solidarities that run contrapuntal to the marginalization, bigotry, and forced assimilation in the diaspora.

Intergenerational Perspectives and Experiences on Children's Use of Digital Tools in Turkey: Contrasts and Intersections

Yilmaz, Ayse

Bahcesehir University

Today, technology, an essential component of social life, has evolved into a primary socialization space for children growing up in the digital era. The digital realm, once perceived as distinct from the physical world by previous generations, now intertwines seamlessly with reality for children. Indeed, for many children, the digital world plays a central role in their social interactions and socialization.

This study involves 30 secondary school children aged 11-13 and their parents. Through regular online meetings with the children, I examined their usage patterns across various social platforms to understand their experiences with digital tools and technologies. Subsequently, separate meetings were conducted with parents to explore their perspectives and experiences. Finally, children and parents convened to collectively discuss their findings.

The research indicates stark disparities between the experiences of secondary school children and their parents, with minimal overlap. Therefore, the paper aims to highlight these divergent experiences within the children's digital world. Additionally, it underscores the potential for intergenerational communication to enhance understanding between adults and children regarding digital tools and socialization methods, thus fostering stronger intergenerational interaction.

TikTok as a new form of community of practice: Informal learning through shared and sharing practices

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Education*

Background & aims: This presentation explores the informal and accidental learning taking place on TikTok social media platform among children and young people. TikTok has rapidly become one of the most popular platforms worldwide, especially for those aged between 11 and 24. The study examines the learning ecology developed on the platform and applies the concept of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) in a flexible manner.

Methods: The paper draws data from an ethnographic study, in which we worked with 19 participants aged between 11 and 24 years old in Spain over a school year. We followed their activities on TikTok and conducted interviews monthly.

Results: Children and young people use TikTok for entertainment, not for connecting with friends as on other platforms. TikTok emerges as a broad and fluid community where users pursue their interests, constantly learning from each other and from the platform itself. They learn to interpret and create multimodal discourse and engage with algorithmic functions embedded in the platform, however with different degrees and ways of engagement as well as of critical consciousness.

Conclusions: TikTok showcases a new form of community and social practice where: 1) accidental learning is integral; 2) the community is not fixed but fluid, and 3) Artificial Intelligence is an essential actor, mediating the learning processes. The study provides insights into the evolving nature of digital communities and learning practices among young people. It also underlines the need to promote critical digital literacy and well-being in such engagements.

Nation, nature and childhood in five curricula: Towards Earthly education

*Andersen, Camilla Eline; Hopkins, Lucy; Millei, Zsuzsa; Gawlicz, Katarzyna; Ekman Ladru, Danielle
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences*

This paper explores the relations between nation, nature and childhood in five early childhood education curricula in the Nordic, post-socialist and settler-colonial states with a view on the role education plays in the face of the climate crisis. The authors identify three interconnecting themes in which nation, nature and childhood are entangled in these curricula: 1) national nature as an object of learning; 2) nature and home/birth land and Country; and 3) stewardship for national nature. Exploring these themes from the perspective of alternative pedagogies developed to address the child nature relations during the epoch of the Anthropocene, we argue that these notions in the curricula are no longer tenable.

Exploring the connections between nation, childhood and nature in curricula is crucial, as it challenges us to rethink the role that education must play in how we address climate change. Education provides an important platform for the socialisation of the next generation of humans on Earth, constructing relations, perspectives, values, emotions and identities that bind nation and nature together. Based on our explorations we call for new ways of conceptualising nation, nature and child relations with attentiveness to the Earth, the living ecosystem sustaining life.

Exploring everyday experiences of school-based spaces in informing wellbeing in a Global South context

Maqpool, Irum
University Of Cambridge

Using Schutz (1970) lifeworld model, this study focuses on the contribution to wellbeing of everyday access and use of school-based leisure spaces among older children in Lahore. Arguably, understanding place-based realities in this spatiotemporal context is best achieved by acknowledging precarity and contextually relevant axes of stratification (Cooper et al., 2021). Through an exploratory model, the significance of spaces in shaping wellbeing through the performance of agency and belonging is discussed.

This qualitative inquiry is based on semi-structured interviews with 22 secondary school students, between ages 15-17 years. A contextually grounded sociological understanding of 'child' is used. The binary of international curriculum and local curriculum school is used as a proxy for socioeconomic class. 5 girls and 7 boys attend the former while 5 girls and 5 boys attend the latter. Inductive thematic analysis was used to explore experience of wellbeing as informed by access to and use of spaces.

School-based spaces were significant for informing wellbeing through leisure activities. Sociocultural understanding determined use. Boys in international curriculum and girls in local curriculum schools explored imaginary mobilities, agency, and sense of belonging. Together these informed their wellbeing. However, for boys in local curriculum and girls in international curriculum schools, use was constrained by resources and authority figures' concerns for violence and morality.

This study contributes to an understanding of children's everyday wellbeing as experienced in spaces of leisure. Through writings on Global South, this study addresses questions of place-based realities embedding a spatiotemporal and sociocultural experience of wellbeing.

POSTER ABSTRACTS

Parent-School Relationships in the Context of Somali Children's Primary Education in Finland

Abeywickrama Goonetilleke, Sanuja; de Felice, Gloria ; Kim, Sunhwa ; Zhou, Cindy ; Dang Toan, Minh Chi ; Rangel, Natalia
University of Helsinki

While one of the largest immigrant-origin (IO) groups in Finland, Somali-Finnish students are an academically low-performing group. Research in various contexts show that parental engagement (PE) can make an observable difference in mitigating students' negative academic experiences and outcomes. Factors such as a mother's involvement and the value a family places on education can help students succeed in academics. Parent-school relationships (PSR) are emphasized in the national curriculum as an essential component of PE, which in turn contributes to students' educational success. However, very little is currently known about how IO parents in Finland view their roles in supporting their children's education. A key barrier to effective PSR is the lack of language proficiency in an IO context. While translation services are available, misunderstandings can occur due to cultural differences and language nuances. There also appears to be a contrast in how school personnel and parents perceive and report on IO student inclusion. Therefore, we combine a literature review with a proposed exploratory, qualitative study to understand and document Somali immigrant parents' perceptions of their own roles and the roles of school personnel in their children's primary education.

Beliefs about Gender and Mathematics in Kindergarten Children

Angulo, Macarena; del Río, Francisca
Universidad Diego Portales

Mathematical skills serve as a crucial predictor of academic success, but international standardized tests have evidenced gender gaps in maths in different countries. In Chile, the results of the latest assessment reveal its existence, for the first time, in fourth grade. As neuroscience suggests men and women share a similar biological foundation for mathematical achievement, the causes of the gender gap in mathematics are rooted in beliefs associating mathematics more with masculinity than femininity. This bias results in unequal opportunities for mathematical learning.

Gender and mathematics beliefs have been identified in teachers, families, and also in Chilean children as young as 5 years old; very early compared to other countries. Studies on beliefs, particularly regarding gender and mathematics, in Chilean preschool children are scarce. Through implicit and explicit stereotype tests, the existing studies have shown stereotypes linking mathematics to masculinity, with key aspects requiring further exploration. Namely, variations by gender and socioeconomical status (SES).

In this context, this qualitative project aims to analyze kindergarten children's beliefs about gender and mathematics in a high SES school and a low SES school. Using a Mosaic Approach, this research will investigate these beliefs through individual artistic activities (drawing), group activities involving reading a short story and collaborative artistic work (drawing, modeling with clay or other materials), and individual interviews where children will articulate the meaning behind their artistic works. This qualitative proposal will portray preschool children's experiences, interests and values, to understand their role in the reproduction/transformation of gender gaps in mathematics achievement.

The Youth for Justice Project: Engaging Young People in Environmental and Racial Justice Art-Advocacy

*Fernandez, Jesica; de la Lima, Maria ; Ramirez, Jacqueline ; Orozco-Plata, Ashley
Santa Clara University*

Scholarly Aims

This poster will describe the curriculum and process that Youth for Justice Project (YJP) facilitates to support youth learning, leadership and action via art-advocacy on environmental wellbeing. The YJP is an afterschool program that supports youth academic enrichment and engagement via art-advocacy projects on topics of environmental and racial justice, which are important for children's wellbeing. Serving youth between the ages of 10-15, YJP provides opportunities for students from low-income families to develop their critical thinking and leadership to create change in their school and communities. Most youth in YJP live in under-resourced neighborhoods with food and housing insecurities, environmental toxicity, and limited safe accessible recreational areas.

Methods

YJP engages ethnography as a methodology. We conduct participant-observations and produce written fieldnotes of weekly afterschool program sessions with the youth. The fieldnotes are thematically analyzed to discern themes on youth sociopolitical citizenship, critical thinking, civic engagement and wellbeing.

Results

The preliminary results from YJP are two. First, youth understand climate change as related to environmental injustices, which are disproportionately experienced by low-income and often racialized groups. Youth described connections between environmental and racial justices. Second, curricula that integrate creativity, self-expression and imagination with social action can support youth in creating art that can advocate for social change.

Conclusion

When youth are provided with enriching learning opportunities that are connected to their lives, interests, hopes and dreams they are encouraged to learn and develop their leadership to lead change in their schools and neighborhoods for the better.

Adaptation of preschool children in a situation of forced migration at Cyprus.

Lapkina, Natalia

Artisannation, Education Reserch

Currently, a significant number of families find themselves in a situation of forced relocation and migration; children have moved to another country with their parents.

Most often, the child turns out to be the most unprotected in this process, no one asks his wishes, children do not have time to prepare and understand what is happening.

In another country a child has to adapt to a new language, a new culture and a new education system.

Preschool children, when their parents are significant adults, spend a lot of time in kindergartens in completely new conditions.

The language barrier, the difference in cultural code and the peculiarities of developmental psychology make the process of forced adaptation extremely difficult and can significantly worsen the child's well-being.

This report examines the process of adaptation in kindergartens of the Republic of Cyprus for children 2-5 years old who came from Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia.

Using the example of the adaptation program of the nursery school FanSchool, 58 children were observed from September 2023 to January 2024. A Diary of individual adaptation of the child and family to new educational realities was specially developed

The method of adaptation of children, the approach to adaptation through an Adaptation Diary and special training for teachers and parents will be presented as possible ways to solve this social problem.

School-based physical activity promotion and mental health among children and adolescents: a systematic review

*Viskari, Tia; Koivumäki, Terhi; Appelqvist-Schmidlechner, Kaija; Ståhl, Timo; Fröjd, Sari
Tampere University*

Background and aims

Mental health and low levels of physical activity (PA) are current issues concerning the health of children and adolescents. The aim of this systematic review was to investigate the effects of the school-based PA promotion on mental health among children and adolescents.

Methods

A search was conducted using six electronic databases. Scientific articles since January 2012, investigating associations between school-based PA promotion with a duration of at least nine months and mental health among 7–16-year-old children and adolescents were included.

Results

A total of 31 articles describing 27 studies were included. Internalizing symptoms were measured in eight, externalizing symptoms in six, positive mental health in 22, and social outcomes in 12 studies. Majority of the studies found no effect on internalizing symptoms. Regarding externalizing symptoms and positive mental health, mixed results were found. However, majority of the studies found positive effects on social outcomes. Regarding the type of PA promotion, environmental modifications and PA promotion implemented by an external actor outside the school staff were found effective. PA promotion implemented by school staff, without any specific protocol, had no effect on mental health, while PA promotion implemented by school staff, following a specific, predefined protocol, showed mixed results.

Conclusions

Findings suggest that school-based PA promotion is associated with the social dimension of mental health among children and adolescents. Environmental modifications and PA promotion implemented by an external actor outside the school staff were the most beneficial types of PA promotion for mental health.

SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS

The lives of Nordic children are documented in early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Bernstorff, Benedicte

UC SYD, Institut for pædagogik

Symposium: Disentangling documentation and assessment practices in early childhood education related to the child's well-being

Documentation is often described as a prerequisite for the functioning of educational institutions and seen as an institutional actor. The outset of documentation practices is aimed to increase the well-being and learning of an individual child as well as planning the high-quality education and effective support. At the more general level, documentation is said to increase the quality of ECEC. As documentation has also other function in ECEC, it develops for example "a local normal" through the pedagogical interpretations. This means that documentation is understood as having consequences. As Nordic ECEC emphasizes holistic assessment, documentation practices focusing on individual children creates contradictions and dilemmas. Even though documentation is sometimes approached as a neutral recording of facts, the critical approaches to documentation have arisen, pointing out the consequential nature of documentation and the potential power it possesses in educational institutions. In this symposium, we will critically examine the predominant understandings of documentation in Nordic ECEC from the perspectives of current research (Poikola et al.), pedagogues' practices guided by the assessment tools (Bernstorff et al.), and the child's right to be heard (Franck). After these three presentations from Finland, Denmark, and Norway, we will invite the participants to join a concluding discussion on how children are represented through these contemporary documentation practices and what are the potential consequences for the child's well-being.

Approaches to Documentation in Early Childhood Education Research: Meta-Narrative Review

Lee, Nicholas

University Of Eastern Finland

This presentation is part of the symposium 'Disentangling documentation and assessment practices in early childhood education related to the child's well-being'. Documentation is entrenched with all the levels of society. From the perspective of the everyday life of children, early childhood education plays an important role of what is documented on children (Esser, 2015) while documents are also shaping the actions of professionals and the lives of children in educational institutions (Alasuutari et al., 2014). Documentation and collection of data in education is often utilized to ensure children's well-being, participation, and right to adequate education (UNCRPD; UNCRC). However, in research, documentation itself as a phenomenon is approached in multiple ways. In this review article, we investigate how documentation has been approached in early childhood education research. By applying the meta-narrative review protocol (Greenhalgh et al., 2005), we seek to illuminate the contrasting and complementary ways to study documentation in early childhood. We have searched for research on documentation in early childhood education (children under eight years of age). In the presentation, we will identify the approaches on documentation research in early childhood research (Greenhalgh et al., 2005) by asking:

1. How is documentation conceptualized within these documentation research approaches?
2. What kind of studies are conducted (methodologically and thematically)?
3. What has not yet been asked or studied?

As a results, by summarizing the approaches of documentation research in early childhood in over-arching narratives, we will be able to highlight how these approaches can inform the future research on documentation.

Theme group 4. Factors that decrease or increase well-being and resilience in the everyday communal structures in which children live

The divided child's well-being – when children are reduced to data in assessment tools

Franck, Karianne

UC SYD, Institut for pædagogik

This abstract belongs to the symposium “Disentangling documentation and assessment practices in early childhood education related to the child’s well-being”.

Assessment tools focusing on the child’s individual competences are widely used in Danish early childhood and care (ECEC) settings to assure identifying children at risk. The individual focus contrasts with Nordic pedagogical tradition viewing the child holistically (e.g. Kampmann, 2000). The study aims to examine consequences for children when early interventions are mediated through assessment tools. The empirical data comes from an institutional ethnographic fieldwork over the period 2022-2023; conducted as observations and interviews in two ECEC settings and the municipal administration in a middle-sized Danish municipality (Smith, 2005). The analysis demonstrates assessment tools as both helpful and problematic for pedagogues to assess children. Problematics arise, partly because children’s continuously development reduce their assessment score to be a snapshot; partly because assessment tool guidelines cause some children being assessed challenged without being observed challenged, meanwhile other children's challenges are not the focus of the assessment tool. The findings illustrate the importance of the problematics for children at risk because the targeted pedagogical efforts and allocation of extra resources in ECEC settings depend on the child's assessment score. The study discusses how assessment tools contribute towards a dividing understanding of the child as both a data-doppelganger (Pierlejewsky, 2019) and a real child. The findings critically argue that when resource allocation and pedagogical practice are focused on the data-doppelganger, other contexts are made invisible, which risks decreasing the well-being of the child.

Theme group 4. Factors that decrease or increase well-being and resilience in the everyday communal structures in which children live

Young children's right to be heard in special education assessments and documents.

Poikola, Mirva; Franck, Karianne; Heiskanen, Noora
Queen Maud University College Of Early Childhood Education

This presentation is part of the symposium "Disentangling documentation and assessment practices in early childhood education related to the child's well-being". As fulfillment of children's rights can be considered an important component of children's wellbeing (Tisdall, 2015), this study aims to explore the realization of young children's right to be heard (UNCR, Article 12) in special education documents. The purpose is to stimulate discussions on potential barriers to hear children with special educational support in ECEC. The data-material consists of expert assessment documents and individual education plans belonging to 17 children (age 2-6). The children were allocated 1-10 hours of special educational support primarily related to challenges with language and behavior. Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) and elements from critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992) I explore whether and how the documents include attempts to hear children's views and perspectives. The findings illustrate a lack of explicit hearing of children, and unclear and ambiguous attempts to represent children's views by proxy. The expert assessment documents contain several descriptions of children's behavior and emotional expressions. However, analysis reveal that descriptions function as illustrations of deficiencies and challenges, potentially objectifying the child as a case. At the same time, recommendations for support in everyday ECEC highlight the need for professionals to listen to children. The study discusses how assessments and documentation practices become a barrier for listening to children. The findings urge for a reassessment of professionals' authoritative expertise and reducing the dominant focus on children's challenges within special education documents.

Child bodies in a bacterial world: A new imperative for childhood studies

Alminde, Sarah; Warming, Hanne
Tampere University

All bodies – child, animal, plant - are symbiotic partners in a microbial world as well as bodies-as-ecosystems (McFall-Ngai, 2017). The child body-as-ecosystem consists of human cells which are tenfold outnumbered by a vast number of microbial organisms (such as bacteria, fungi or protozoa) (Margulis and Sagan, 2002). Instead of thinking microbes as disease-causing, what if we take seriously the body's microbial constitution in a bacterial world? The concept, body-as-ecosystem, highlights entanglements with other organisms, toxicities and the artificial world and how they create environments for one another. This concept challenges simplistic notions of the child as a unitary (mostly social) subject characterized by boundedness and finitude, exemplified in childhood studies through the image of the agentic child.

In this symposium, 5 scholars address the following questions by grounding their responses in their respective fields and research interests: How does the concept of body-as-ecosystem contribute to research in your research or field? How does such a concept open up our senses to the surprising processes around us that would not be possible otherwise? The scholars are: Tuure Tammi (multispecies communities); Nick Lee (childhood as re-indigenisation); Sarah Alminde and Hanne Warming (children in vulnerable position) and Asta Breinholt (social stratification).

Discussant: Riikka Hohti, University of Helsinki / University of Tampere, Finland

How a particular social origin is reproduced while others are not: A microbial perspective

Millei, Zsuzsa; Spyrou, Spyros
Roskilde University

The key questions within social stratification are what reproduces socioeconomic status and what creates social mobility. Childhood has been center stage for understanding these mechanisms. One strand of social stratification research shows that everyday parenting practices differ by socioeconomic status, and that these parenting practices in turn nurture different skills not equally valued by schools and other institutions (e.g., Calarco 2014; Lareau 2011). Meanwhile another strand of research shows that socioeconomic status is both a determinant and an outcome of health (Harris and McDade 2018). For instance, childhood health affects later socioeconomic achievement (Smith 2009). I argue that social stratification research may gain new responses to these questions of social reproduction and social mobility by including new insights on the role of microbiota. Emerging research suggests that the gut microbiome may mediate the relationship between socioeconomic status and health (Amato et al. 2021). The composition of our gut microbiome is associated with socioeconomic status for both children and adults, and the gut microbiome is playing an important role in diseases like depression, anxiety, diabetes, asthma, obesity, and allergies (Amato et al. 2021). Moreover, early childhood is formative to the gut microbiome (Amato et al. 2021). Therefore, I suggest a new research agenda asking: (1) what everyday practices account for different compositions of the gut microbiota in childhood? (2) how are these everyday practices embedded in larger structures of social inequality? Answering these questions may help us understand why some children reproduce their social origin while others don't.

This abstract is part of a symposium: Child bodies in a bacterial world: A new imperative for childhood studies.

The microbial childhoods of children in vulnerable positions: profound entanglements

*Vuorisalo, Mari; Ukkonen-Mikkola, Tuulikki
Roskilde University*

Drawing on examples from our research on children in vulnerable positions, e.g. children experiencing conflict in relation to parental separation and children in out-of-home care, this presentation will elaborate and discuss how the microbial lens and the concept of body-as-ecosystem poses new questions and contributes to this fields of research.

In research as well as in praxis regarding children in vulnerable positions (e.g. children living in more than one home) there is often a narrow focus on children's lives as particularly shaped by their relations to what is regarded as crucial (human) others. Further children and families are often perceived as independent units- the object of research and social interventions. The microbial lens offers new ways of thinking about this. Firstly, as a productive metaphor for the profound entanglement encouraging us to leave the individual behind and understand the child as continuously part of mutable (microbial) context. Secondly, as a very concrete understanding of children's lives and relations as being affected by more-than humans: microbes, materiality, spaces, animals. This poses interesting new questions. E.g. how does the microbial life thrive in the changing environment moving between homes? and what does this mean for our understanding of thriving? Further, what does it means to be in a vulnerable position? Since vulnerability with the microbial lens could be linked to environments and lifestyles that reduce microbial diversity and/or the entanglements of this and other vulnerabilities.

Symposium: Child bodies in a bacterial world: A new imperative for childhood studies

Childhoods, Ecosystems and Value

Tammi, Tuure

University Of Warwick

Lee, Nicholas

University Of Warwick

For 'Childhoods Bodies in a Bacterial World' Symposium

Childhood studies has often touched on alternate visions of the child as 'human becoming' and 'human being'. But if the body is an ecosystem, then whether children are 'agentic', 'developing', or both, children are intrinsically 'more than human'. A picture of human lives as permanent, dynamic, multispecies biological entanglement that links the body intimately with the proximate living world raises interesting questions about how childhoods can be imagined. This presentation follows Walkerdine (1909) in framing childhoods as fictions, lived as fact and imbued with fantasy. It asks what the body-as-ecosystem does to dominant narratives that shape childhoods and childhood research in the global North and that generate the value of children in different ways. First, a 'human becoming' always was a figure in the process of leaving the significance of embodiment behind, to no longer be just a lifeform but, above that, a member of society. Second, framing children as agentic is a way of affording them the dignity of members of society who have already left, the condition of their embodiment to be ignored lest it mark them as too 'immature' for social participation. Leaving and ignoring have been routes to higher status. So how can researchers, children and others imagine young human lives when there is no way to leave the ecosystems that can no longer be ignored? How can childhoods then be valued? This presentation sketches two linked possibilities – childhood as re-indigenisation and childhood as sensory cultivation.

Aerial contact zones – On the child, the microbe, and the air

Rutanen, Niina

University Of Oulu

This presentation discusses how a focus on microbes can allow paying attention to materiality differently through an example of a study that started with an interest on children's participation and agency in a context where their school was found to have mold problems. In the course of this study, it became increasingly difficult to focus solely on the 'cultural' portion of the phenomenon. Mapping how buildings started to rot led to observations on how mold was entangled in the everyday life of one school. The concept of assemblage was used to pay attention to ways in which buildings and bodies were being co-produced through intermingling of material practices of building, maintenance and schooling, economic and political processes, flows of water and air, and microbial life. One of the shifts that took place during the inquiry is discussed in more detail through introducing the concept of 'aerial contact zones' which calls for paying attention to air and asks: what we are in the air. It asks about the situated metabolic processes and exposures between diverse human and more-than-human bodies while also pointing towards technological, political, economic, biological and cultural forces hanging in and moving the air. Air ceases to be merely a substance or mediator between bodies, but more an entanglement through which bodies stretch through and effectuate one another. What various bodies take from and bring into these zones is a complex and political issue that matters greatly also to children.

Adults and children as co-designers of communities, including scientific communities

Ferholt, Beth

Brooklyn College, The City University of New York

This symposium includes four papers that are united both by their focus on the role of communities in creating children's habitats and well-being; and in their efforts to support and study the adult-child joint creation of communities, including scientific communities. Each of these papers is looking for new ways to center "the other" through methods that allow us to see understudied phenomena and people: Black caregivers, sustainability work in India, young children's math expertise, the wisdom of teachers in training, etc. Each of these papers is also working to change systems that have been taken for granted in terms of how we teach, learn, and understand teachers and learners. It is particularly generative to present these multiple studies in dialogue because they were all developed through a collaborative effort to bridge theory and practice to imagine other worlds. The four papers are written by doctoral students at The Graduate Center who attended one of a series of sister courses that have been taking place at the University of Helsinki and The Graduate Center since 2019. The next course in the series is titled "The Role of Theory and Concepts in Ethnographic and Arts-Based Research". These courses have been designed with the explicit goal of fostering the inclusion in scientific processes of young children, as well as their teachers, artists, and the imaginary characters with whom young children and their teachers live and work; and of supporting the creation of communities that include these participants as designers of habitats and activities.

From Stress to Wellness: How the African American Childcare Workforce Identify and Survive Work-Related Stress

Crosby, Jillian
Cuny Graduate Center

The work of an infant/toddler teacher can be both rewarding and overwhelming. Children under three require a unique combination of education and care that caters to their basic needs while intentionally facilitating learning through play, imagination, and scaffolding experiences. A review of the literature confirms that childcare stress erodes teachers' mental health and wellness (Carson et al, 2016). Families rely on the childcare community to support the education and well-being of their young, so researchers must consider the health and well-being of the childcare workforce and their impact on care.

This participatory design research examines the stressors of the African American childcare workforce and modes of resilience in managing their intersecting realities as teachers and women of color. Using social media posts, interviews, and surveys, a qualitative analysis captures how African American preservice and practicing infant/toddler teachers identify stress, and the techniques used to sustain health and wellness.

The findings highlight the hard-earned knowledge and wisdom of the early childhood teachers themselves, who deem trusting relationships with families, communication and support as key to combating caregiver stress.

This study will fill the gap in the existing literature by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the African American caregiver experience, addressing underrepresentation, informing practice and policy, and advocating for equitable, high-quality childcare spaces. By centering African American caregivers, who account for half of the US childcare workforce (Berkeley & Berkeley, 2022), this research aims to illustrate how resilience contributes to or creates constructive resistance to systems of harm in educational spaces.

Interrupting Educational Enclosures Through A Multi-Racial International Teacher Education Collective

Sugarman, Kushya
Cuny Graduate Center

Many children and teachers experience formal schooling as an enclosed space “that negates alternative social visions” (Sojoyner, 2017, p. 455). In this vein, scholars in the Black Radical Tradition have investigated school refusal (Sojoyner, 2017), Black Education Spaces (Warren & Coles, 2020), and positive adult-youth relationships (Warren et al., 2022). Findings suggests that when teachers reconceptualize childhood, adults and children can build more liberatory educational structures together. Yet, research has not sufficiently investigated how teachers learn to read school and children differently. In this work, I use participatory design methods (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016) to consider how elementary teachers begin to imagine otherworlds with children and each other.

Our research group - The Emergent Teacher Education Collective (TETEC) - is composed of myself, four novice teachers (my former education students) and a Brazilian post-doctoral student. TETEC meets once per month to: (1) reflect on our teaching, (2) complete a play-based, creative activity, and (3) discuss the group's progress. I code and analyze the meeting transcript using Abductive analysis (Timmermans & Tavory, 2022). Then, we meet again to continue coding and analysis, and plan for the next meeting.

Our work has led to changes in the group's conception of teaching-learning, education and childhood. For instance, through images, stories and collective analysis, we grappled with children's seemingly antisocial behaviors, and began to understand children as creative, “carers” rather than workers (Luttrell, 2019). This study sheds light on collaborative methods that reframe the teacher-student relationship, trouble enclosures and increase teacher and student well-being.

The Dialogic of Being Within Nature as Teacher | Researchers

Alexakos, Dimitris; Morris, Eden
Cuny Graduate Center

This presentation presents two, interrelated pilot studies. In both studies, our research began through our being phenomenologically oriented teacher | researchers who were considering this question: How can we collaborate with and listen to our experiences with nature? These studies share their use of authentic inquiry (Alexakos 2015), in this case our listening to and respect for unconventional research partners: young children and nature. Our studies came to consider how “being” (Heidegger, 1962; see Ferholt et al., in press) can be explored, to support the well-being of young children, by adults and children working closely over time with nature. Entering into dialogue with nature encouraged us to reimagine the traditional classroom (Rogoff 2016) and the teaching and exploration of mathematics. Our method and subject were closely related and required our being in nature to study nature, a multimodal experience that was autoethnographic and included art making (Pink 2011), mediation, and play.

In our studies, we created a unique framework to include children in the exploration of nature built on the dialogic relationships between humans and nature. In the first study, experiencing nature supported a triadic relationship that exists between the student, teacher and learning material (Miyazaki, 2019) in the context of teaching mathematics. The second study offered a heuristic (Tobin & Alexakos, 2021) and ceremony for entering into dialogue with the moon and trees. Our preliminary findings show that experiences of being in the world outside the traditional classroom can be a part of adult and child learning processes.

Authoring Science Education as an Agentic Tool for Environmental Activism, from Bangalore to the Bronx

Mampilly, Shobita

Urban Education, The Graduate Center, City University Of New York

My work examines environmental sustainability projects that engage communities to solve health and environmental challenges through self development and academic collaboration. Science education is the agentic development tool applied to regenerate healthy, local ecosystems through play and collaboration (taict.org/projects).

The Anonymous Indian Charitable Trust (TAICT), is a non-profit group that has developed The Ecogram Project in the village of Betahalasuru, a landfill area of Bengaluru City's urban waste. Twelve years of work with government, corporations, local schools and families has finally transformed this village to a zero- waste community, spearheaded by women, mostly mothers. Research includes interviews with stakeholders to understand how knowledge of waste management empowers youth to sustainability action. With access to policy, social media campaigns, and curriculum, I examine the intersection of existing national and state policies with local panchayat (village governance) practices, and within schools and homes. Interviews with girls, mothers and teachers (women) are conducted on-site through immersion at restored lake bodies, butterfly gardens, homes, schools and the Ecogram site.

Betahalsuru is thriving again with native species, documented by a younger generation experiencing the power of agency nourished through curriculum integration, field experience and community service. This model can transfer to global communities that face similar environmental crises now and, in the future, particularly in the Bronx borough of New York City, a similar urban waste dumping ground. Understanding the transformation of wasteland to flourishing ecosystems in urban India, I will share this educational practice in my Bronx high school classrooms.

Early childhood education and care and integration: Multiple understandings of ECEC childhoods

Lyndelse, Lærke

Stockholm University

Good quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is often regarded as a crucial aspect of children's educational opportunities, yet the societal role of preschool as regards integration of migrant children has long been below the radar of academic debates both in Nordic countries and internationally. This session bring together varying theoretical perspectives and empirical investigations to generate new knowledge about the integration of the youngest citizens via ECEC and how it effects ECEC childhoods. In the session researchers from Germany, Sweden and Finland will come together to present investigations about how ECEC and integration play out on national and local policy levels, as well as in children's everyday lives in varying ECEC practices. In addition, the role of pedagogues will be included. The five presentations will address aspects of integration and ECEC childhoods in relation to: language, culture, agency, othering, nature, everyday nationalism, national policy strategies, local policy strategies, access barriers, inequality, free play, shadowing, peripheral participation, and affordances.

Presentations in the session:

Antonia Scholtz, Deutsches Jugendinstitut: Migrant children in German ECEC: Structures, inequality and access barriers

Charlotte Löthman, Linköping University: Does free play enable integration of newly arrived children in Swedish preschools?

Anne-Li Lindgren, Stockholm University & Tünde Puskás, Linköping University: Swedish ECEC and integration: State initiatives and local strategies

Danielle Ekman Ladru, Stockholm University & Zsuzsa Millei, University of Tampere: Teaching nature and nation in the Swedish mobile preschool

Anne Harju, Malmö University & Annika Åkerbolm, Gothenburg University: The double task of Swedish early childhood education

Teaching nature and nation in the Swedish mobile preschool

Westerling, Allan; Juhl, Pernille

Stockholm University

Ideas of nature, nation and childhood are intertwined in Nordic early childhood education. We explore in ethnographic data the ways nature is taught in Swedish mobile preschools. We show how everyday nationalism manifests in the teaching practices of 'good' pedagogy in nature. We argue that depending on who is teaching and learning, various constructions of nationhood emerge enabling the re-imagination of a single national imaginary to a plural one.

This presentation is part of a self-organized symposium to the X Conference on Childhood Studies, May 15-17, University of Helsinki. Theme 5. Children's role in societies and communities

"Early childhood education and care and integration: Multiple understandings of ECEC childhoods"

Organizers: Anne-Li Lindgren & Tünde Puskás

The double task of Swedish early childhood education

Sevon, Eija; Koivula, Merja

Malmö university

Session: ECEC and integration

The focus of the presentation is on contradictions expressed in ideas and practices concerning migrant children in the Swedish early childhood education (ECE), which has a dual meaning. On the one hand ECE is referred to as a mediator of dominant culture, language and imagined nationality, and on the other hand, it is seen as a promoter of values such as multiculturalism and acceptance of difference (Åkerblom and Harju 2021). The aim is to present results from a study where this tension has been in focus, by looking at how language and culture is expressed around the migrant child. The results are based on an analysis of curriculum and ECE practice (pedagogues talk about their work with migrant children), with Basil Bernstein's (1971, 2000) concepts of classification, framing and pedagogic modalities. The analysis shows, in line with other studies, that the purpose of the ECE differs, depending on who is to be educated and why (Gilliam & Gullöv 2017; Lunneblad 2017; Harju et al. 2021). The children in Swedish ECE are thus categorized into two different but unified groups, receiving different kinds of pedagogies. The pedagogy aiming at freedom and agency, which could be described as the national pedagogy for children who have the right kind of national identity and language; the competent Swedish preschool child. The 'other', migrant, child receiving a controlled pedagogy aiming to compensate for something perceived as missing, that is, the 'right' kind of national capital.

Does free play enable integration of newly arrived children in Swedish preschools?

Stegeager, Simone

Linköpings universitet

Symposium: Early childhood education and care and integration: Multiple understandings of ECEC childhoods.

The aim of this study is to shed light on the integrative potential of free play. Free play is considered important for newly arrived children's language development and cultural socialization. At the same time, studies indicate, that they risk becoming marginalized in their peer group (Cekaite & Edvaldsson 2017).

Participation in society's social and cultural arenas are crucial for integration in order to make society's resources accessible to all and to enable all to contribute with reference to their individual perspectives (Gustavsson and Miller 2020; Penninx 2019). To examine newly arrived children's participation in free play, we employ the concepts of peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger 1991) and affordances (Gibson 1979). The study is based on ethnographic fieldwork in two preschools and in-depth analyses of video-recordings of free play (Davies 2008; Jordan and Henderson 1995).

Preliminary findings show that newly arrived children participate in free play in different terms than their Swedish speaking peers and make use of strategies such as shadowing peers' play in majority language, observing peers' play through shadowing teachers, playing solo in mother tongue and playing with peers in minority language. While some of these strategies have integrative affordances, others rather counteract integration. The findings also indicate that the social and linguistic boundaries that structure peer play are at times maintained by the preschool practitioners. Thus, we need to problematize preschool practitioners' role in integrating newcomer children within early childhood education.

Swedish ECEC and integration: State initiatives and local strategies

Sevon, Eija; Juhl, Pernille; Westerling, Allan; Alasuutari, Maarit; Stegeager, Simone; Lyndelse, Lærke Marie; Koivula, Merja
Stockholm University

This presentation is part of the self-organized symposium: Early childhood education and care and integration: Multiple understandings of ECEC childhoods

This presentation focuses on ECEC in Sweden, highlighting its significance as a publicly financed institution with a strong emphasis on quality preschool education for all children, and for newly arrived children in particular. It focuses on the developments that have unfolded over the past five years regarding preschool and integration, implementing a new part of the school law (SFS 2022:833) to reach out to children born abroad and children with both parents born abroad, who have been in Sweden for a maximum of five years, and offer a place in ECEC for 15 hours a week free of charge. We identify key actors in the politics of ECEC and integration, and trace how the new law came to be via negotiations about how and why the law was needed. In addition, we have followed how a selection of municipalities implements the new law.

Migrant children in ECEC in Germany: Local structures, inequality and access barriers

Scholz, Antonia
Deutsches Jugendinstitut

Equal access to early childhood education and care (ECEC) is crucial for migrant children with regard both to their personal development and language development. Even though there is a universal entitlement to ECEC in Germany, migrant children are still less often enrolled than native children. While research has often focused on national policies, empirical evidence is lacking on how equal access to services is ensured for them on a local level. The presentation aims at exploring potential access barriers for migrants and the role of local authorities in increasing or reducing these inequalities.

The presentation draws on statistical data on migrant children in German ECEC and on qualitative case studies carried out in the Equal Access Study (Menzel/Scholz 2022). Semi-structured expert interviews were conducted with local ECEC authorities in municipalities in Germany, Sweden and Canada. This presentation is based on interview data from two German municipalities that have been analysed by using qualitative content analysis. Findings show that there are (still) potential barriers in ECEC access for children from migrant families. Drawing on a multidimensional understanding of access (Vandenbroeck/Lazzari 2014), we see that availability of places still represents a major challenge for local steering. Against this background, accessibility and adequacy of universal services for migrant children are neglected by the local authorities.

Depending on the context, local ECEC authorities may engage differently in promoting equal access. We need a better understanding of the institutional interplay of ECEC and integration, and to what extent migrant families' needs are met.

Considering children's wellbeing and development in Danish and Finnish early childhood education and care policies

Löthman, Charlotte
University Of Jyväskylä

Children's wellbeing in early childhood is a multifaceted phenomenon defined and researched from various perspectives. In the Nordic countries, early childhood education and care (ECEC) forms a significant growth environment for most children besides their home. Since ECEC professionals and parents only have partial insight into the contexts children move across (Kousholt, 2011), collaboration between these two environments is crucial from the perspective of children and their wellbeing.

In Finland, the Act on ECEC (540/2018) and the core curriculum guidelines (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022) emphasize parental participation and collaboration between parents and professionals. Parents are, for example, entitled to participate in and influence the planning, implementation and evaluation of their child's ECEC. An important means in this is the child's ECEC plan document that is drafted for each child in ECEC. The child's views must also be taken into account when drafting the plan.

In Denmark, the compound nature of children's everyday lives in ECEC and at home has historically been pivotal in collaboration between parents and professionals (Dencik, 2005; Højholt, 2001). However, a recent reform of the Danish ECEC Act stipulates that professionals must now cooperate with parents about their children's learning environment and that parents must support learning programs introduced by local authorities. Consequently, children's learning and skills are politically defined as a mandatory focus for home-ECEC collaboration.

The symposium explores/discusses what meanings parent-ECEC collaboration and the child as its focus receive in the policy contexts of Finland and Denmark by applying different data sets.

Theme group 2. The wellbeing of children in different areas of society; daycare, schools, spare time, family- and working life, the economy and security (etc.)

Situated meanings of early learning agendas in Danish ECEC

Lindgren, Anne-li; Puskás, Tünde
Roskilde University

Background: The aim of the paper is to explore the situated meanings of early learning agendas currently being introduced and promoted in Danish ECEC by transnational organizations as EU and OECD. Learning agendas are part of institutional welfare agendas aiming at ensuring children's wellbeing. In Denmark, institutional agendas challenge a long, historic pedagogical tradition emphasizing a child-centered approach, and children's right to play and to influence their everyday lives. We focus on institutional agendas and practice in ECEC centers.

Methods: We approach everyday life from three different perspectives: children, and professionals. This design contributes by employing an agentic stance and conceptualizes children and professionals as subjects actively contributing to co-creating, transforming and translating policies in everyday life.

Results: Our approach, informed by social psychological traditions, enables us to include both structure and agency. Thus, we are able to situate children's and professional's perspectives in the social practice of ECEC.

Conclusion: A central point is that the differences in the way the institutional agendas are perceived cannot be reduced to different personal opinions but rather as related to the different positions in social practices children, and professionals take part from, and the different tasks and interests they pursue in relation to children's communities.

This is part of the symposium titled: Considering children's wellbeing and development in Danish and Finnish early childhood education and care policies, submitted by Eija Sevon.

Theme group 2. The wellbeing of children in different areas of society; daycare, schools, spare time, family- and working life, the economy and security (etc.)

Negotiating responsibility in a shared care arrangement - between parents and ECEC professionals

*Ekman Ladru, Danielle; Millei, Zsuzsa ; Andersen , Camilla Eline; Gawlicz, Katarzyna ; Gustafson, Katarina ; Lappalainen, Sirpa
Roskilde University*

This paper focuses on parents' daily collaboration with ECEC professionals. Based on preliminary findings from my ongoing Ph.D. study, I illuminate how parents negotiate tasks and responsibilities for their child(ren) in encounters with ECEC-professionals.

For a year, I have conducted ethnographic field study designed as participant observations of 10 parents in two ECEC contexts. Furthermore, I have interviewed parents and ECEC-professionals, using life mode interviews. To understand the shared care between parents and ECEC-professionals I draw on the concept 'chains of care' as it contributes with an understanding of the collaboration, where parents and ECEC-professionals each are considered to comprise one part of a chain of care in the child's life, while emphasizing that parents bear the overall responsibility for each link between the parts of the chain as well as the chain as a whole, even when leaving the child in daycare.

To examine how parents take up and negotiate responsibility in ECEC, this paper takes its departure in empirical data reporting from a parent council meeting where several parents and ECEC-professionals participate. At the meeting, the focus is on the food policy in the ECEC and the children's packed lunch they bring from home. Using the packed lunch as an example of division of labor, I present and discuss my preliminary analysis on how parents negotiate responsibility with the ECEC-professionals and how parents are expected to support an institutional agenda to make the pedagogical practice easier by adhering to the specific 'packed lunch policy' set by the ECEC-professionals.

Theme group 2. The wellbeing of children in different areas of society; daycare, schools, spare time, family- and working life, the economy and security (etc.)

Young children's collective pursues of learning in ECEC

Lindgren, Anne-li; Puskás, Tünde
Roskilde University

In this presentation, I want to present preliminary findings from an ongoing Ph.D.-study, concerning young children's perspectives on learning activities and environments in and across ECEC and family life. Since a lot of research into young children's learning and development focus on distributed parts of learning processes and is done in experimental settings, we don't know much about young children's active efforts to pursue and actively participate in learning activities in their everyday lives. Especially, there is a lack of knowledge on ways young children collectively pursue, transform, and take up learning environments and activities within their everyday lives in and across ECEC and family contexts.

The presentation draws on an ethnographic field study, exploring learning environments and activities from young children's perspectives. I have followed 6 children (age 11 month-3 years), from two different nurseries located in different municipalities, throughout one year of their lives in nursery and their families, by actively participating in their everyday lives.

My preliminary analysis has drawn my attention to the significance of the young children's collective pursues of learning activities and how participating in, exploring and transforming different activities together with other children seems especially meaningful and significant to the children's learning- and developmental processes, from their perspectives. I will discuss this by presenting empirical examples, which points to the meaning of collective activities and through examples reflect on how this aligns with some of the institutional agendas present in adult-directed activities and political agendas on behalf of the children.

Governing children and parents through the individual early childhood education and care plan

Harju, Anne; Åkerblom, Annika
University of Jyväskylä

The child's early childhood education and care (ECEC) plan was introduced to the Finnish ECEC in 2003 when the first core curriculum guidelines were published. Although drafting the plan was not obligatory, it was soon implemented in Finnish ECEC. Since the beginning, the child's ECEC plan has been composed in a meeting with the child's parent(s). Thus, it forms a central means of cooperation between home and ECEC. At the same time, children's ECEC plans form the basis for planning the education of the child group. In 2015, the ECEC plan became a statutory practice that inscribes what the ECEC professionals will do to support the child. A national model document was also designed for the ECEC plan.

The study considers how the child's ECEC plan has evolved and changed in 20 years, drawing on the author's previous studies of ECEC plans (e.g. Alasuutari, 2010) and the ECEC plan document data collected in the evaluation research of the national two-year pre-primary education experiment in Finland. The study examines how the goal setting of the plan has perhaps changed and what the potential changes entail in terms of the governance of children and parents. The study is based the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1991, 2007; Rose, 1999) that underlines the notion of power as associated with knowledge. In the study, ECEC as an institution, with its dominant knowledges, discourses, practices, and material environment, is seen as a technology of government that aims at subjectifying its actors in a particular manner

Empowering parents in collaboration between parents and early childhood education and care institution?

Bernstorff, Benedicte; Heiskanen, Noora; Poikola, Mirva; Franck, Karianne

Background: Families and ECEC are meaningful communities for children today in Finland. Parental involvement has recently been a debated research topic in the field of ECEC, although not conceptually clearly defined (Devlieghere et al., 2022). According to the Finnish Early Childhood Education Act (540/2018, § 21), the child's guardians have the opportunity to participate and influence the planning, implementation and evaluation of their child's ECEC. Although parental participation and collaboration between parents and professionals are prescribed in the Act on ECEC (540/2018) and National Core Curriculum in ECEC (EDUFI, 2022), very little is known how parents view their collaboration with ECEC. Often parents remain without 'voice' in their collaboration with ECEC professionals.

Method: This presentation aims to illuminate how parents describe the collaboration between them and ECEC professionals. The data are collected in Enhancing emotion skills and participation in ECEC -project and consist of parents' written survey answers to the question of how collaboration between them and ECEC professionals could be improved and eight parents' video-cued interviews. The data is analysed with a frame analysis focusing on the meanings parents construct in relation to collaboration between them and the ECEC institution.

Results: Preliminary findings show that collaboration between parents and ECEC institution is described through different frames in which the meanings given to collaboration differed. Conclusions: Different frames found in this study suggest the questions related to institutional dominance, the child's wellbeing and development, and scope as important dimensions of collaboration.

What do a handful of soil, the forest, or some invisible creatures have to do with the health of our and our children's bodies and minds?

Eva, Bubla

Microbial Futures Lab is a traveling laboratory, a constantly expanding collection of future medicines, treatments, rites and narratives reflecting on the well-being of human and more-than-human lifeforms. The human / child body consists of human cells which are tenfold outnumbered by a vast number of microbial organisms (such as bacteria, fungi or protozoa) (Margulis and Sagan, 2002). Instead of thinking of microbes as disease-causing, what if we take seriously the body's microbial constitution in a bacterial world? Thinking of the human / child body in this way challenges simplistic notions of the child as a unitary (mostly social) subject characterized by boundedness and finitude, exemplified in childhood studies through the image of the agentic child. All bodies are interconnected microbial ecosystems, living and breathing habitats of tiny organisms: bodies of cities, bodies of waters, air, soil, and our own human bodies are inseparable. How can we imagine the medicines of the future in a world where our and our children's present relationship with the environment is typically defined by rituals of disinfection, fighting bacteria and viruses? What speculative visions of the future, of humanmicrobes or microbialhumans, old-new rites, treatments and medicines can we imagine if we look at the concept of health in a holistic way, if we understand it as the mutual well-being of symbiotically living human and more-than-human lifeforms?

During the workshop, you will get introduced to some key elements of the Lab's collection, as well as the stories related to them. You will travel through time and space, encapsulated landscapes and extraterrestrial drops, and will investigate the present and future of your own environment to come up with new rites and medicines for a healthy ecosystem of human / child and more-than-human lifeforms.

The project is rooted in the collaboration with the researchers of the Microbial Childhood Collaboratory (MCC) at Tampere University, Finland.

Playworlds, Immersive Learning Adventures, The Necessary Spaces: Children's agency and active participation in communities

Kliemann, Francine
Platô Cultural

The symposium seeks to explore the shared principles and practical applications of Playworlds, Immersive Learning Adventures and The Necessary Spaces in developing children's agency and active participation in their communities through play and art-based approaches. Imagination and play are viewed not merely as a tool for creative expression but as a catalyst for profound educational change, where children take ownership of their learning process and understand their active role in producing knowledge and culture. These approaches are designed to create 'liminal spaces' for teachers and students to play together, creating a sense of seeing the everyday as the magical, the mythical and the imaginative. Agency starts with imagination (Vygotsky, 2004; Rainio, 2010).

The symposium will consist of three papers:

- Playworlds as international resistance work in the face of restrictions on children's right to play by Anna Pauliina Rainio and Beth Ferholt
- The necessary space for childhood agency and adult co-creation of a bespoke future by Simon Sharkey
- Empowering agency through immersive learning adventures by Marcia Donadel and Francine Kliemann

Through a structured format, introduction to the foundational principles of the three approaches will be introduced, providing a comprehensive understanding of their theoretical underpinnings. Following this, the panellists will engage in a dynamic dialogue, comparing and contrasting the real-world implementations. Case studies, successes, and challenges will be discussed to illuminate the transformative potential embedded in these innovative pedagogical approaches. This panel invites educators, researchers, and practitioners to join the intersection of the approaches, shaping the future landscape of transformative education.

Empowering agency through immersive learning adventures

Donadel, Marcia; Kliemann, Francine
Platô Cultural

In the context of meaningful learning experiences with positive implications for life trajectories, the teaching and learning approach known as "immersive learning adventures" integrates immersive theatre, new technologies, and gamification with social and environmental themes. We will discuss The School of the (Im)Possible as a study case of an educational experience which fosters children's agency in their communities and immerses them in artistic-pedagogical narratives, positioning them as protagonists in a journey that spans the curriculum and is embedded within formal education. As students progress, they recognize their potential as transformative agents of society, exercising age-appropriate competencies and skills. We will explore the multifaceted dimensions of agency in immersive learning adventures, focusing on empowering children to contribute positively to their communities. Motivations are cultivated to develop learning and participation, instilling values, attitudes, and behaviours essential for personal and societal growth. Through a lens of life skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, resilience, and community engagement, students extend their learning beyond the classroom, developing Inner Development Goals (IDGs) and exploring the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We propose reflections on how participants apply insights to real-world situations, inspiring behavioural change within their communities or schools. A key focus is bridging the digital and real worlds, emphasising student agency in enacting change. Exploring the role of technology in immersive learning adventures is pivotal, facilitating dialogue between imaginative and real-world experiences. Digital technologies offer expanded narrative possibilities, enriching the learning environment with layers of reality and new possibilities for learning through imagination and play.

Playworlds as international resistance work in the face of restrictions on children's right to play

Ferholt, Beth; Sugarman, Kushya; Mampilly, Shobita; Morris, Eden; Alexkakos, Dimitris; Crosby, Jillian

This abstract belongs to a symposium "Playworlds, Immersive Learning Adventures, The Necessary Space: Children's and adults' agency and active participation in communities".

Time and space for play are withheld from many children, and from some groups of children more than others, today. This presentation offers a critical discussion of playworlds (Lindqvist, 1995), an international resistance work, which has been developed in many educational settings, in the face of the restriction of the right to play. Playworlds are an adult-child joint play activity, most recently understood to be a way of being (The Playworld of Creative Research, 2021). They are designed to include all who wish to join and to support all participants in feeling welcomed, valued, cared for, and caring for others and the world (e.g., Ferholt and Lecusay, 2010; Ferholt and Rainio, 2016; Lecusay et. al., 2022; Rainio et al., 2021). In several instances in several different nations, and over significant time periods, playworlds have helped to sustain time and space for play in schools, preschools, and other settings (Ferholt, 2009; 2019; Nilsson et al., 2018; Rainio, 2010).

We discuss how sustaining time and space for play is crucial in dealing with and overcoming contradictions that are prevalent in the modern education system (Rainio, 2010; Rainio, Mälkki & Mäkinen, 2021). The playworlds that will be discussed all derived from playworld work in Finland and in Sweden, but are taking place in the US and Serbia as well as in Nordic countries, and are influenced by Japanese playworlds as well.

Constituting childhoods and children's everyday lives in early childhood education and care transitions

Harju, Kaisa; Rutanen, Niina; Vuorisalo, Mari; Paananen, Maiju

Early educational transitions from home to early childhood education and care (ECEC), during the years in ECEC, and finally, in transition to school both characterize and diversify children's educational paths. Transitions are processes experienced and constituted individually by each child. They are also constituted by diverse socio-spatial arrangements, structures, and practices within the institutions. Transitions strengthen children's bonds through shared processes and experiences, but also challenge children's belonging in changing educational institutions and communities. This symposium on transitions brings together three papers based on Trace in ECEC – Tracing children's socio-spatial relations and lived experiences in early childhood education transitions - project at the University of Jyväskylä (Research Council of Finland, 2019-2024). The aim of this symposium is to both broaden the view on transitions as socio-spatial processes constituted by diverse relations and, also, reflect on what is essential for children's communities and for the development of inclusive transition practices in ECEC.

The first paper will focus on how educators reflect on child's first transition, constructing views on childhood and young transitioning child. The second paper will shed light on the role of the institutional structures and practices constituting children's transitions during the years in ECEC and contemplate the main messages that can be derived to practice development. The third paper will focus on transition to pre-primary education exploring how transitions are constructed and lived through daily relations and social action between children and educators. The symposium highlights the multiplicities of discursive and socio-spatial relations in constituting children's everyday lives.

How do teachers construct childhood at the beginning of the early childhood education path?

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The start of early childhood education is a significant point in the life of a small child. The child enters institutional education and a community, where childhood is defined in a new way by new adults and peers. New spaces are opened for everyday life physically but also socially and culturally. Due to many changes, starting early childhood education and care (ECEC) can be stressful and challenging. Adult support and careful preparation of the start are of primary importance for children's well-being. The start is a process constructed in relations. The start is also one of the key points on a child's educational path. Therefore, it is important to look at how childhood in early childhood education is defined.

The aim of this presentation is to describe how ECEC teachers discuss small children and particularly to create knowledge on how they construct childhood when the child is entering the ECEC. In the discourse analysis, we utilize interview data collected in two points: before the child has started in ECEC and after six months attending. In the presentation we will consider how teachers define the child as a beginner in ECEC and how these definitions construct the institutional childhood and children's everyday life in ECEC. We will also reflect what kind of space will be constructed for the small beginners in the teachers' talk.

The presentation is part of the symposium "Constituting childhoods and children's everyday lives in early childhood education and care transitions" chaired by Niina Rutanen.

Constitution of children's transitions and early educational pathways within early childhood education and care institutions

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Symposium: Constituting childhoods and children's everyday lives in early childhood education and care transitions

This presentation discusses about dissertation study that focuses on transitions that shape children's early educational pathways in early childhood education and care (ECEC). Special focus is on transitions within and between ECEC centres that emerge during the children's years in ECEC. The aim is to examine, how children's transitions within ECEC are socio-spatially constituted in relation to the organisation of ECEC.

Main data of this study is educators' and parents' semi-structured interviews. The entirety of the dissertation has followed ideas of institutional ethnography: identifying the experience and institutional processes shaping those experiences and analytically describing how these processes are shaping those experiences. Fabian's (2012) discontinuity conceptualisation, Lefebvre's triad (1991) and patterns of relationality (Settersten et al. 2022) have been used as analytical tools to trace, identify and describe the experiences and the operation of institutional processes.

In ECEC children experience transitions constituted by various combinations of intertwining dis-/continuities. To approach the child's perspective, it is crucial to understand that children's transitions are not always identifiable from the structural perspective. In ECEC especially children's transitions within centres are constituted in relation to other transitions and used as practical tools to meet the requirements of ECEC legislation.

To identify emerging transitions, the processual and relational nature of transitions must be acknowledged. As well their relation to the operation of the framing institution and context must be understood to use them as pedagogical links shaping children's early educational pathways.

Constituting childhoods and children's everyday lives in early childhood education and care transitions

Rainio, Anna Pauliina; Ferholt, Beth; Avramovic, Masa; Taylor, Shelbi
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This presentation is based on empirical research on transitions from early childhood education and care (later ECEC) to pre-primary education. The presentation aims to describe how transitions to pre-primary education are constructed and lived through daily relations and social action between children and educators. We use the concepts of transitional resources and inter-generational relations to understand how the transitions are produced and what this process means for children from their perspective.

The ethnographic data was collected at five pre-primary education settings as a part of a larger longitudinal research project called Trace In ECEC (Tracing children's socio-spatial relations and lived experiences in early childhood education transitions). The results indicate that the transitions from ECEC to pre-primary education and children's transitional resources vary depending on how the pre-primary education is organized (i.e. school or ECEC context). The variable contexts of transitions and contextually constructed inter-generational relations together produce diverse resources and relations for transferring children, which again leads to diverse experiences and starting points to the transitions from children's perspectives. By identifying diverse starting points to the transitions, we can support more children by recognizing what diverse contexts require from the children and at the same time, how children manage changes during the transition through their transitional resources.

Theme group 2. The wellbeing of children in different areas of society; daycare, schools, spare time, family- and working life, the economy and security (etc.)

Well-being in times of loss: How Ukrainian refugee children talk about their emotions

Ramos, Anne Carolina; Magyar-Haas, Veronika
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Russia's war against Ukraine led to countless deaths and suffering as well as one of the biggest refugee crises of our time. Switzerland took in more than 70'000 Ukrainian refugees, including many children. The aim of the talk is to show how these children feel, how they experience fleeing and how they deal emotionally with what they have experienced.

Methods: The presentation is based on data from the SNSF project «WoKidS: Children's well-being in German-speaking Switzerland». The study uses qualitative methods to find out what children aged 8–14 (n=80) understand by well-being. Within this framework, semi-narrative interviews (based on drawings and egocentric networks) and a focus group were conducted with 23 Ukrainian children using the guidelines of the multinational network «Children's Understandings of Well-being». These interviews form the basis of our analyses. The results explicitly illustrate children's perspectives on how war changes their family relationships and brings new challenges. We will show how children address what they have lost, what they miss, what they long for, and what strategies they develop to handle losses, such as home, personal belongings, family, friends, and pets, who stayed behind.

Conclusions: Drawing on empirical data and emotion-sociological perspectives, we demonstrate which emotions –such as fear, uncertainty, loneliness– refugee children show and hide and how they deal with them. The focus is on the importance of family and friendship relationships, language, community and the environment in which they now live. With this perspective we shed light on the connection between vulnerability and children's agency.

Childhood in refuge. Experience of forced migration from the perspectives of children

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The presentation refers to preliminary results of a research project titled “Childhood in refuge. Experience of forced migration from the perspectives of children and their grown-up caretakers”, being carried out in years 2023-2025, funded by internal grant of the University of Lodz, Poland. The aim of the project is to fill the gap in knowledge on childhood in the situation of forced migration. Theoretical, methodological and ethical framework for the study is the paradigm of new sociology of children and childhood.

In my presentation, I will share results of the project’s first activity: literature review concerning forced migration as experience of children, with special focus on the children in refuge who arrived in Poland in the consequence of the crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border (which started in the summer 2021) and as the aftermath of war started by Russian aggression in Ukraine (since February 24, 2022). The situation of the two groups is different: as the Ukrainian refugees (mostly women and children) were given a lot of compassion and attention, and massive institutional support were provided to secure their needs, at the same time the refugees trespassing the so-called “green border” between Poland and Belarus, coming from Middle East, were either being pushed-back, or put in refugee centers, where they stay for a long time, isolated and excluded, in poor living conditions. The two very different positions of children belonging to the two groups lead not only to practical/organizational challenges, but also to methodological and ethical struggles in field work.

“Lifeful Pedagogy” as a way of supporting children’s participation and well-being within community in crisis

Avramović, Maša

Södertörn University

This presentation offers two examples of multidisciplinary pedagogical and therapeutic approach of working with children in refugee camps on “the Balkan Route” and in local communities in Syria, aimed to support children’s rights and capacities to create empowering and transformative relations within their everyday worlds. Through the readings of philosophy, pedagogical theory, and gestalt play therapy (Bergson, 1998; Marjanovic, 1987; Oaklander, 2021), children’s participation is accounted as ‘taking part in action’ and creation of relations with(in) the world, while well-being is seen a quality of those relations which enhance children’s capacities for being, belonging, and taking action in the world.

Participatory observation of children’s life-living in the community of one refugee camp and children’s “safe space” showed that children, although living in highly regulated contexts, were actively seeking opportunities to playfully engage within their environment through senses and body movements, perceptions and memories, emotions, imagination, creation and expression, relations with others.

Respecting these creative capacities as a ground for children’s abilities to influence their conditions within macro structures where they had very little power, a pedagogical and therapeutic approach of “lifeful pedagogy” has been created, including various explorative methods.

This presentation shows how providing safe and inviting place and time for children to participate in exploration and creation of empowering relations can generate hope for life of potentials, here and now, without losing sight of the necessity of macro political actions to improve living conditions for children and their communities in/after crisis.

Theme group 2. The wellbeing of children in different areas of society; daycare, schools, spare time, family- and working life, the economy and security (etc.)

Bringing the perspective of children under 6 years into the community politics

Magyar-Haas, Veronika; Ramos, Anne Carolina
University of Fribourg

In addition to children's right to participation, it is also a political and social concern of democratically constituted societies to involve children in public affairs and decision-making processes that affect them. The presentation is based on a study commissioned by the Youth Welfare Office of the Canton of Fribourg (Switzerland), which aimed to explore the subjective well-being of children under the age of six and their opportunities for participation—with the intention of finding out children's views on their environment and what they would need to feel better in it.

Methods: The study was embedded in a qualitative-interpretative research paradigm. Interviews were conducted with 16 children aged 2–6 years in their favourite places following a guide used by the multinational network «Children's Understandings of Well-being» (Fattore et al., 2019). This guide was adapted considerably and designed in a playful way (cf. Coyne et al., 2021). The transcribed data was analysed using grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).

Results: The presentation shows the issues in which children under 6 see themselves involved (holiday planning, leisure activities) and the importance of language, space, and artefacts in this context. The ways in which children name and communicate their politically and educationally relevant needs, such as safe routes to the playground, self-determined spaces, frequent contact with friends, etc., will be illustrated.

Conclusion: The study is based on participation theory perspectives and shows what is important to children at an early age, where they feel involved and how they want to participate in the design of public spaces.