

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

78th OMEP World Assembly and Conference 2026

“When a Child Speaks...”

Korczak’s Inspirations for Education and Children’s Rights

Poznań, Poland

16–18 July 2026

Oral Sessions Programme

WORKING DRAFT – 14 October 2026



Faculty
of Educational
Studies

Book of Abstracts. Oral Presentations

78th OMEP World Assembly and Conference 2026

"When a Child Speaks... Korczak's Inspirations for Education and Children's Rights"

Poznań, Poland, 16–18 July 2026

Scientific editor: Renata Michalak, Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

Editor: Agnieszka Kozłowska, Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

Conference Chair: Prof. Renata Michalak, President of OMEP Poland

Publisher: Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

Version: working draft, 14 October 2026

DOI: [to be assigned]

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Acknowledgements

The editors wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for their careful double-blind review of the submitted abstracts, as well as the members of the Scientific Committee and the Organising Committee, the session chairs, and all authors and participants who contributed to the conference.

Suggested citation

Michalak, R., & Kozłowska, A. (Eds.). (2026). *Book of abstracts: Oral presentations. 78th OMEP World Assembly and Conference 2026 "When a Child Speaks... Korczak's Inspirations for Education and Children's Rights"*, Poznań, Poland, 16–18 July 2026 (Working draft). Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. [https://doi.org/\[...\]](https://doi.org/[...])

About the Conference

The 78th OMEP World Assembly and Conference was held in Poznań, Poland. The World Assembly of OMEP (World Organization for Early Childhood Education) took place on 14–15 July 2026 and the World Conference on 16–18 July 2026, under the theme “When a Child Speaks... Korczak’s Inspirations for Education and Children’s Rights”. The conference was organised by OMEP, the Polish National Committee of OMEP and the Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland.

Thematic areas of the conference: The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice; Education with Empathy and Without Fear; Play, Creativity, and Expression; Equality, Justice, and Dignity; Education for Sustainability and Peace; Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility; Teachers as Human Rights Defenders.

Keynote speakers: Prof. Laura Lundy; Prof. W. Steven Barnett; Prof. Anna Odrowąż-Coates; Prof. Mercedes Mayol-Lassalle; Dr Mo Adefeso-Olateju; Paulina Boborowska and Karina Wójcik.

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THE CHILD AS A SUBJECT OF RIGHTS AND VOICE

The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice 1	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 14:00–16:00 Room: 3.1 Language: English Chair: Agnieszka Szplit	

1. Children as Knowledge Builders in a Bilingual Environment

Agnieszka Szplit — *Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce, Poland*

Zuzanna Zbróg — *Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce, Poland*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): bilingual education; children's agency; constructivism; multilingualism; early childhood education

Abstract:

Contemporary approaches to early childhood education increasingly emphasize children's agency and their active role in constructing knowledge through experience, interaction and exploration. This perspective is reflected in constructivist theories of learning and in current Polish curriculum reform that highlights children's autonomy, participation and competence development. At the same time, growing linguistic diversity in many European societies has strengthened the importance of multilingual and bilingual educational environments in early childhood education.

This presentation explores how a bilingual preschool environment can foster the development of fundamental and transversal competences while supporting children as active constructors of knowledge. The discussion refers to the assumptions of the new national core curriculum for preschool education currently being developed in Poland, which places stronger emphasis on children's agency, competence development and learning through experience.

The presentation draws on the implementation of the bilingual education method developed by Agnieszka Szplit within the Polish educational program *Dwujęzyczny Przedszkolak*. The method is based on language immersion and the idea of surrounding children with a foreign language in everyday preschool situations such as play, movement activities, routines and collaborative projects.

The paper illustrates how natural exposure to two languages allows children to interpret meaning through context, action and social interaction rather than through direct instruction. In such environments, language becomes a tool for exploring reality, solving problems and building relationships.

Examples from preschool practice demonstrate how bilingual experiences can simultaneously support the development of linguistic, mathematical, motor and digital competences while also strengthening children's cognitive, social and personal skills. The findings suggest that bilingual education embedded in everyday preschool activities can effectively support a constructivist approach to learning and promote children's agency in early childhood education.

2. Where Lines Become Learning: Zentangle and Meaning-Making in Early Childhood

Sandra Hesterman — *Murdoch University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): Zentangle; visual arts; meaning-making; kindergarten; wellbeing

Abstract:

Zentangle is a meditative visual arts practice characterised by the creation of structured, repetitive patterns that form abstract images. While widely adopted as a wellbeing-oriented hobby across age groups, its pedagogical potential within early childhood education remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining the educational benefits of Zentangle for young children in kindergarten settings.

The research was conducted over a ten-month period in two kindergarten classrooms (children aged 3–5 years) at a Western Australian independent community school inspired by the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy. Using a qualitative case study design, data were generated through indoor and outdoor observations, artefact analysis, and teachers' reflections to investigate the learning dispositions, skills, and lived experiences fostered through Zentangle practices.

Findings indicate that Zentangle supported the development of children's fine motor skills and enriched language through culturally and linguistically inclusive meaning-making opportunities. Zentangle also functioned as a form of child-led pedagogical documentation, making children's thinking visible and supporting emerging literacies. The practice provided rich opportunities for children to demonstrate learning aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and principles of children's rights, particularly in relation to communication and having their voices heard (UN, 1989). In summary, the results show that Zentangle offers a valuable, low-cost, and accessible pedagogical approach for supporting early learning.

3. When a Child Feels: Korczak's Bajkoterapia, the Rational Child, and the Design of Rights-Respecting Environments

Basia Vucic — *Tiny Songs*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): Janusz Korczak; bajkoterapia; children's rights; digital play; practitioner research

Abstract:

This paper presents practitioner-research findings from a naturalistic pilot observation of a 47-month-old child engaging with a music-based digital companion designed for parents of infants in the first year of life — directing the play scenario, assigning the adult observer a caregiving role, and navigating the application on her own terms throughout. The observation was conducted with full verbal consent of the child and the parent in a community early childhood setting.¹ It addresses a gap not yet examined systematically in the literature: the absence of a rights-based philosophical framework as a design constraint for environments serving young children.

The paper argues that Janusz Korczak's foundational claim — that the child is already a rational being, not a future citizen in preparation — has direct and largely unrealised implications for early childhood design and practice. This claim constitutes a direct challenge to the dominant theoretical traditions in the field. Where Piaget positions the young child as pre-operational with philosophical capacity as deferred to a later developmental stage, Korczak's rational infant is already in possession of knowledge the adult has not yet learned to receive. Where Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development constructs the adult as the architect of the child's development — scaffolding toward future competence — Korczak insists the child is already fully inhabiting the present. Even Lipman, whose *Philosophy for Children* takes children's philosophical capacity

more seriously than almost any framework in the field, locates that capacity in a structure the adult provides. For Korczak, the child was never outside.

Drawing on Korczak's Bajkoterapia — his practice of story, music, and narrative as emotional stimulus rather than instructional content, built on the premise that the child feels before she speaks or even understands. The paper positions the child's right to the present day as a design imperative rather than a policy aspiration. Where conventional design asks what this child should learn, Bajkoterapia asks what this child already feels. That distinction is the paper's design principle and the philosophical foundation of the application's build used in the observation.

The observation produced three significant findings: navigation of an interface designed for cognitively depleted adults, achieved by a pre-reader without prompting after a single prior exposure; fifteen minutes of sustained engagement across multiple self-directed song selections; and the child's unsolicited inversion of her designed role — entering the application not as its intended recipient but as its author, directing it as caregiver to her dolls within a symbolic play scenario entirely of her own design. This constitutes what the paper identifies, following Korczak, as democratic surplus: the child's use exceeding the institution's intent when the instrument is genuinely legible to her. It is also a precise instance of prefigurative practice — the child was not being prepared to care. She was caring, on her own terms, with a tool that did not stand in her way.

The paper concludes with implications for design, early childhood practice, and rights-based policy — arguing that every environment, digital or otherwise, is already a rights instrument for whoever inhabits it, whether or not its designers acknowledged that obligation. The question is whether it forecloses the child's agency or, as this observation suggests is possible, leaves enough room for her to walk in and make it her own.

It takes a child to raise a village.

¹ The child was present at the time of writing, has been informed of this account in age-appropriate terms, and has given her assent to its use. She has asked to be named at the conference presentation so that she can, in her words, teach the teachers. That request has been honoured.

4. Voice and Natality: Hannah Arendt's Perspectives on New Beginnings in Teachers' Professional Judgments

Geir Aaserud — *OsloMet*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): Hannah Arendt; natality; voice; professional judgment; teachers

Abstract:

This paper explores how Hannah Arendt's concepts of voice and natality can illuminate teachers' professional actions and judgments. For Arendt, natality—the fact that each human being enters the world as a radically new beginning—signals the arrival of a unique voice capable of renewing the shared world. Teachers, as actors within this world, encounter each newcomer as a bearer of unpredictability, originality, and potential. Professional judgment therefore becomes a practice of responding to these new voices while simultaneously caring for the stability of the common world they enter.

Arendt's understanding of judgment is rooted in the interplay between thinking, imagination, and plurality. While thinking is an internal dialogue with oneself, judgment requires the capacity to “think from the standpoint of someone else.” This imaginative movement expands one's own perspective and makes room for

the voices of others. Teachers' judgments thus unfold within a plural space where diverse experiences, narratives, and perspectives intersect. Their actions are shaped by this relational web, through which subjective impressions can become intersubjective understandings.

By integrating Arendt's notion of natality with her ideas on judgment, the paper argues that teachers' professional actions are not merely applications of knowledge or technique, but ethical and relational responses to the newness each child brings. Through their judgments, teachers help weave newcomers into the existing fabric of the world while safeguarding the space in which their unique voices can appear and initiate new beginnings. In this presentation, I discuss how Arendt's perspectives open for a deeper understanding of teachers' pedagogical responsibilities and how their actions are grounded in experience, plurality, and the continual renewal of the shared world.

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5. Listening to Children through Popular Music: Voice, Emotion and Everyday Culture in Early Education

Marta Kondracka-Szala — *University of Wrocław*

Keywords: children's voice; popular music; well-being; early childhood education; war-migrated children

Abstract:

This paper explores popular music as a meaningful space for listening to children's voices and supporting their well-being in early childhood and early primary education. Drawing on a participatory and relational pedagogical perspective inspired by Janusz Korczak and the child rights framework (United Nations, 1989; Lundy, 2007), the study positions children as active subjects who express their emotions, identities, and everyday experiences through musical engagement. In line with socio-cultural theories of play and development (Vygotsky, 1978; Winnicott, 1971), popular music is conceptualised not merely as entertainment but as a culturally embedded medium through which children construct meaning, negotiate relationships, and regulate emotions.

The research is based on a three-month educational project conducted with 40 children aged 7–10, including both Polish children and Ukrainian children with recent war migration experience in a European educational context. The study adopts a qualitative, participatory design informed by the Mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2011), which recognises children as competent meaning-makers and co-constructors of knowledge. The intervention consisted of weekly 90-minute play-based music sessions built around children's self-selected popular music. Activities included collaborative playlist creation, movement and rhythm-based games, singing, improvisation, and guided group reflection. Data were collected through participant observation, reflective field notes, children's verbal and non-verbal expressions, and artefacts such as drawings and playlists with children's commentaries. Particular analytical attention was given to expressions of agency, emotional engagement, peer interaction, and moments of inclusion and exclusion.

The findings indicate that engaging with popular music creates a familiar, emotionally safe, and inclusive environment that supports children's well-being, sense of belonging, and active participation. Several

interrelated processes were identified. First, popular music functioned as a shared cultural resource that reduced linguistic barriers and enabled immediate peer connection. Second, music-based play provided a structured yet flexible space for emotional expression and regulation, particularly for children with experiences of displacement and trauma. Third, opportunities for choice and co-creation strengthened children's sense of agency and recognition, contributing to their active engagement in the learning process. Consistent with research on play, trauma, and resilience (Lester & Russell, 2010; UNICEF, 2018; Panter-Brick et al., 2022), these processes supported the rebuilding of social relationships and the restoration of a sense of normalcy in the school environment. Popular music thus operated as both a communicative and relational medium, fostering inclusion and mutual understanding among children from diverse cultural backgrounds (Marsh, 2017; Campbell & Wiggins, 2013).

The paper argues that engaging with children's everyday musical worlds is not only a pedagogical strategy but also an ethical responsibility aligned with recognising the child as a subject of rights and voice. Integrating culturally relevant musical practices into early education supports empathetic, responsive, and inclusive pedagogies that acknowledge children's lived experiences, including those shaped by migration and crisis. The study highlights the importance of creating educational environments that are grounded in children's everyday cultures and emotional realities, positioning popular music as a valuable resource for well-being-oriented and participatory educational practice. It offers practical implications for educators and teacher education, particularly in culturally diverse and migration-affected contexts, where fostering belonging, agency, and emotional security is essential for children's development and learning.

6. The Project Approach as a Strategy for Children's Empowerment: Insights from Preschools in Reggio Emilia

Aleksandra Maj — *University of Lodz*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): project approach; Reggio Emilia; children's empowerment; participation; preschool

Abstract:

The project approach is widely recognized in early childhood education as a strategy that supports children's empowerment, participation, and active knowledge construction. Rooted in constructivist and socio-cultural perspectives, it offers an alternative to transmissive models of teaching by positioning children as competent, active participants in the learning process.

This presentation is based on a qualitative study of project work implemented in municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. It draws on documentation from 45 projects conducted over 40 years, offering insights into everyday educational practices and how children's participation and agency are fostered.

The presentation focuses on how the project approach enables children's voices, collaboration, and engagement in meaning-making processes. Particular attention is given to the role of teachers in designing pedagogical environments and facilitating children's active involvement.

Selected examples of project work will illustrate how children express their ideas, co-construct knowledge, and participate in shared inquiry. The presentation will also reflect on the conditions that support meaningful participation in early childhood settings.

By sharing these insights, the presentation contributes to ongoing discussions on children's rights, agency, and participation, and invites reflection on how everyday educational practices can support children's voices in early childhood education.

7. "Giving Every Child a Voice" – Collaboration of Educational and Community Environments for the Support and Protection of the Child

Anna Rybińska — AMU, Poznań

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's rights; child protection; cooperation; community; child's voice

Abstract:

"People working together as a group can achieve things that no one could have dreamed of individually." – Franklin D. Roosevelt

The protection and support of children's rights constitute one of the key challenges of contemporary education systems and social policy. Ensuring that every child has the opportunity to express their needs, opinions, and experiences requires not only appropriate legal frameworks but also effective cooperation between the environments that play a crucial role in a child's development. In this context, particular importance is attached to the collaboration between educational institutions, families, and local communities.

The aim of this presentation is to reflect on the role of interdisciplinary and interinstitutional cooperation in supporting and protecting the child, with particular emphasis on creating conditions that enable children's voices to be heard and respected. The first part of the presentation will address selected theoretical perspectives related to children's rights, inclusive education, and participatory approaches in educational practice. Attention will also be paid to the legal and institutional frameworks defining the responsibilities of educational and social institutions in this field, including principles derived from the United Nations system, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Key concepts such as participation, partnership, inclusion, and shared responsibility will be discussed as fundamental elements of a child-centered approach to education and care.

The second part of the presentation will focus on practical solutions and selected models of cooperation between preschool and school environments, families, and representatives of the local community. Special attention will be given to the author's "puzzle model" of collaboration, developed as a result of conducted research, its analysis, and subsequent evaluation. The model conceptualizes cooperation as a dynamic system of interconnected elements, where each participant—teachers, parents, specialists, and local community representatives—contributes specific competencies and perspectives that together create a coherent support network for the child. Such an approach emphasizes the importance of dialogue, mutual trust, clearly defined roles, and shared goals in building sustainable partnerships that strengthen children's well-being and protect their rights.

The presentation will conclude with selected reflections based on research and professional experience, as well as examples of good practices illustrating how collaborative actions can effectively support children's participation and communication. Particular reference will be made to experiences related to the European project Voice Kids, which aims to strengthen children's voices and participation in educational and social

contexts, while promoting inclusive communication and cooperation among key stakeholders involved in the child's developmental environment.

The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice 2	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 14:00–16:00 Room: γ (gamma) Language: English Chairs: Cynthia Adlerstein, Zib Vaghri	

1. Children's Lived Citizenship in the Chilean Constitution-Making: Listening to Early Childhood Voices for a Better Chile

Cynthia Adlerstein — *University of Chile, Faculty of Social Sciences*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): lived citizenship; children's participation; constitution-making; Chile; participatory pedagogies

Abstract:

Research reveals that children are often excluded from public citizenship debates due to assumptions about their perceived immaturity and lack of capacity (Stephen & Gadda, 2017). In the Global South, and particularly Chile, their lived citizenship remains largely unrecognized at constitutional and public policy levels (Adlerstein & Bralic, 2021). However, during the Chilean constitution-making process, the expansion of citizen participation (Heiss, 2024) opened opportunities for ECE professional associations and unions to incorporate participatory pedagogies, enabling children's involvement in a Constituent Assembly Consultation, which resulted in two Popular Initiatives for Constitutional Norms. Unprecedentedly, the citizen voices of Chilean children became equal to those of adult citizens and influenced the public debate on the country's political future (Adlerstein et al, 2022; Hilbink, 2021). Although the two attempts at Chilean Constitution-making failed, for the first time in the country's history, early childhood voices were able to enact meaningful participation in constitutional politics and were acted upon in national democracy, based on ECE teachers' pedagogical collective action (Adlerstein & Barco, 2024).

This paper unpacks the voices of Chilean children, revealing their citizen dreams and proposals for the better Chile they envision. In doing so, it addresses the question of how early childhood citizens' understandings may contribute to democracy and how these relate to those of the adult citizenry involved in the national participatory Constitutional debate.

Methodologically, this study is grounded in a Postqualitative approach (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; St. Pierre, 2019), with fieldwork conducted from November 2021 to July 2022. Participants included 114 ECE teachers and 209 ECE teacher assistants, working in 112 public educational settings, alongside children aged 3 to 6 years, across all regions of Chile within these settings (nurseries, baby rooms, and school classrooms). The study produced data through drawing-based interviews and discussion groups with children, with child-led talk and narratives (Brooks, 2009; Literat, 2013). The data were analyzed using the Constant Comparison Method (Charmaz, 2006) in a three-phase analytical process, allowing for the systematic elicitation of children's voices on a better Chile they envisioned. The first step of open coding resulted in 351 codes related to children's aspirations, proposals, and the agencies involved in building a better Chile. The second phase of axial coding

condensed the latter into 23 topics for a better Chile, which, in a third phase of selective coding, were assembled into a network of seven core dreams contributing to Chilean democracy.

Findings unpack the seven core dreams for a better Chile articulated by early childhood children, highlighting how each one entails aspirations for coexistence with human and non-human others; at the same time, they actively build wellbeing as a common good for all (Adlerstein et al., 2022). The seven dreams are: 1) growing happy, 2) a safe-playful neighborhood, 3) pretty houses and homes, 4) all-be-healthy, 5) clean nature, 6) friends and friendly beings, and 7) a beautiful Chile. These dreams reveal a striking awareness of social conflicts and propose relational solutions that challenge adult and anthropocentric political frameworks. Notably, in all dreams, children's citizen understandings of a better Chile are far from immature and incapable images of social life and politics. Instead, each one involves assemblages of critique and creation materialized in images that interweave feelings, ideas, and multisensory landscapes closely aligned with adult citizens' aspirations.

The paper concludes by discussing how the Chilean Constitution-making process enabled children's lived citizenship through a national Constituent Consultation and the co-construction of two Popular Initiatives for Constitutional Norms, which influenced the country's constitutional politics (Heiss, 2024; Hilbink, 2021). It unpacks how children-citizens and adult-citizenry share social justice values such as care, participation, and solidarity. Likewise, it addresses children's perceived immaturity and lack of capacity, as demonstrated by their conflict awareness regarding access to interspecies health, risky play, and housing. Finally, we call for considering the influence of children's voices in constitutional politics, based on participatory pedagogies that genuinely foreground them to have a meaningful influence in the public realm, thereby empowering children as citizens in the present. In doing so, we advocate for advancing these citizen participation mechanisms of constitutional politics into policy support for the frequently overlooked citizen pedagogies.

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2. Young Children as Decision-Makers: Exploring Participation in Early Childhood Education

Deniz KAHRİMAN PAMUK — *University of Gothenburg*

Yekta Koşan — *Atatürk University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's participation; decision-making; UNCRC; agency; early childhood education

Abstract:

The right of children to express their views on matters affecting them and to have those views taken into account is a fundamental principle of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989). From this perspective, children should be recognized not only as individuals in need of protection but also as active agents capable of contributing to decisions that shape their lives and social environments (Lansdown, 2010). Supporting participation opportunities, particularly in early childhood, enables children to engage as active contributors in both learning processes and broader social and institutional contexts. Such experiences are essential for developing a sense of agency, understanding their impact on their own lives, and acquiring democratic competencies at an early age (Henriksson et al., 2025; Murray, 2025).

However, existing research indicates that children's agency in early childhood education settings is often limited to adult-defined boundaries, and children's perspectives on their everyday experiences remain insufficiently represented in both research and pedagogical practice (Binfield-Skøie, 2025; Correia, Aguiar, & Taelman, 2022).

This study aims to explore the decision-making processes in which young children in Turkey wish to participate and the situations in which they perceive themselves as decision-makers. The research seeks to contribute to pedagogical approaches to child participation in early childhood education by foregrounding children's own perspectives and expectations regarding decision-making processes in both home and school contexts.

The study is grounded in a child rights perspective and draws on Lundy's (2007) model of child participation. Lundy conceptualizes participation through four interrelated components: providing children with a space to express their views, facilitating their voice, ensuring that adults genuinely listen to children (audience), and enabling children's views to influence outcomes. This framework emphasizes that meaningful participation extends beyond offering opportunities to speak; it requires that children's views are genuinely considered in decision-making processes.

A qualitative research design was employed. Semi-structured interviews, adapted to children's developmental levels, were conducted with preschool children in Turkey. Children were asked about the areas in which they would like to make decisions in their daily lives at home and at school, as well as the situations in which they expect their views to be taken into account. The interviews were audio-recorded and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Preliminary findings indicate that children's participation preferences are primarily related to everyday practices. Children expressed a strong desire to be involved in decisions concerning play choices, toy and material preferences, interactions with peers, participation in activities, and certain household routines. At the same time, some children perceived adult authority in decision-making as natural and inevitable, thereby limiting their own participation to specific domains. This suggests that children's participation often occurs within boundaries structured by adults.

The findings highlight the need for more systematic inclusion of children's voices in early childhood education and for the restructuring of pedagogical processes to better support participation. Creating safe and inclusive environments where children can express their views, ensuring that these views have a tangible impact on decision-making, and supporting educators in adopting participatory pedagogical approaches are critical steps.

By focusing on children's own perspectives, this study aims to contribute to the development of child rights-based practices in early childhood education.

3. Children's Voices on Death in ECCE Settings and Resistance to Anthropocentrism: Case Studies from Canada, Japan and Mongolia

Eri Nakamura — *Chiba University*

Paolo Russumanno — *Western University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): death; ECCE; anthropocentrism; rhizome; children's voices

Abstract:

All living beings are bound to encounter death and will eventually experience the event for themselves. In the context of early childhood care and education (ECCE), the experience of witnessing death can be particularly impactful, as it occurs so suddenly and can lead children's imaginations to explore concepts that adults may not anticipate.

In their book *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari used the concepts of the tree and the rhizome to critique structures defined by binary relationships and the totality of one-to-one correspondences between such positions. Just as trees and branches are visualised above ground and roots extend from the trunk, there are power structures that form a tree-like structure with a centre. In contrast, there is the rhizome, where bulbs and underground stems extend in a network beneath the ground, entangled without beginning or end. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988). When viewed as a subterranean world, the rhizome—a networked system extending without end through rhizomes and the 'more-than-human' that surrounds them—namely insects, earthworms, microorganisms, bacteria, fungi, leaf mould and the remains of living beings—blurs the boundary between life and death.

Chakrabarti describes the grave tensions surrounding climate change as the tension between 'our one planet and the many different worlds that we humans — entangled with a variety of nonhuman entities both living and nonliving—make and inhabit', arguing that 'these worlds themselves are also entangled with one another'(2023:X).

In this presentation, the concept of death is not treated as a binary opposition between the living and the non-living (death). Instead, it focuses on how the agency associated with death is entangled with adjacent agency, and how children speak of death. It also examines how educators, in response to children's voices, weave these narratives together. The study seeks to clarify how resistance to anthropocentrism emerges in educators' narratives and how children come to terms with death.

Drawing on the theory of 'Common Worlds' pedagogy and insights from the educational practices of the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network (ECPN) in Canada, this presentation examines how the relationship between children and the 'more-than-human' is explored within ECCE settings. In particular, it examines how discourses surrounding death unfold, drawing on case studies from three countries: Canada, Japan and Mongolia. This study has been approved by the Ethics Review Board at the University of Tokyo.

In this study, data was collected through observations of ECCE practices and semi-structured interviews with early childhood educators, employing a qualitative approach. For data analysis, reference was made to the theory of 'Common Worlds' pedagogy. This approach does not view humans and the 'more-than-human' as a binary opposition, but rather conceives of humans as part of nature, and of children and nature as an

interconnected world. The Common Worlds Research Collective website provides the following explanation: 'By re-situating our lives within indivisible common worlds, our research focuses upon the ways in which our past, present and future lives are entangled with those of other beings, non-living entities, technologies, elements, discourses, forces, and landforms.'

This presentation analyses how young children, educators, and parents articulate 'more-than-human' relationships through the lens of death. By examining case studies from three geographically and culturally diverse regions—Ontario (Canada), mountainous Japan, and rural Mongolia—the study explores how varying climates and lifestyles shape unique perspectives on mortality.

Whether death is a routine part of daily life or a rare, unexpected encounter, these instances serve as a catalyst for children to develop a deeper understanding of their connection to the natural world. Through qualitative narratives and dialogues, the research highlights how these encounters with 'the end' actually help define the complex, entangled roles of humans and the non-human entities surrounding them.

Case Study 1: Ontario, Canada

Survey subjects: Childcare centres and nature-based learning facilities that accept young children during long holidays and at weekends

Survey methods: Observation of childcare practices; semi-structured interviews

The Deer Skull in the Forest Where Coyotes Live

A group of children participating in a summer outdoor education programme for young children discovered a deer skull. This occurred whilst they were walking through a forest containing 12,000 trees. The educator then provided a comprehensive explanation of the circle of life. Furthermore, it was explained that coyotes are resident in the area. This prompted the children to reflect more deeply on the subject.

Harvesting Unripe Tomatoes

A dialogue between a child and an educator at a childcare centre that underscores the significance of instilling a profound appreciation for nature and Indigenous culture in children. The centre's garden features herb and vegetable beds, and the children are free to harvest produce at any time. However, when harvesting is required, they must always ask an educator, 'May I pick this?' and seek permission from the vegetable itself. For instance, they might say to a cucumber, 'Hey, do you mind if we pick you? We'd like to put you in our salad today.' If a tomato is harvested before it is fully ripe for human consumption, rather than being discarded, it is placed on an outdoor board where all the children can see it. After a few days, insects will gather on the tomato; eventually, as it begins to rot, it will give off a smell, attracting microscopic organisms too small to be seen.

Case Study 2: Japan

Subject of study: A village-run nursery in a mountainous area of Japan

Research methods: Observation of childcare practices, semi-structured interviews

The Death of Buyo

It was the morning free play period in the nursery garden. A tree frog that had been discovered in the playground had been carefully transferred to a tank, and several children took turns observing it, adding water, dead leaves and soil to the tank. The frog had been named 'Buyo'. Among them was Child A, who felt a particularly strong attachment to Buyo. They would take it out of the tank, hold it in their hands, gaze at it and stroke it. As the morning's allotted play period came to a close, Buyo remained motionless, still firmly cradled in A's hands.

During afternoon snack time, Buyo was lying motionless on a tissue. The educator informed the class that it might be preferable to relocate Buyo away from the snack table. According to the educator, Child A said, 'I'm taking Buyo home because I'm going to take him to the hospital.' According to accounts from other staff members at the nursery, Buyo the tree frog was not the only one; the third generation of Buyo, or perhaps even more, had interacted with the children and met their end.

Case Study 3: Mongolia

Subject of the survey: Households of herders in remote areas of A Prefecture, Mongolia

Research methods: Family observation, semi-structured interviews

Livestock unable to survive the winter

In rural Mongolia, as early spring approaches, dead water buffalo, sheep and other animals can be found scattered across the ground. Their limbs are pointing skywards, having been left behind by the herd. When driving past them in a four-wheel-drive vehicle, large flocks of vultures, pecking at the carcasses, take flight with their vast wings spread wide.

Livestock are the herders' assets. In autumn, the herder family selects and slaughters adult animals that are weakened and unlikely to survive the winter, for the family's consumption. Notwithstanding, in years where the damage caused by cold and snow is severe, some livestock may perish before the arrival of spring. 'We do not eat animals that have died of natural causes,' they say. 'If they die on the grasslands, we leave them where they are. That way, eagles and birds come to eat them, and the remaining flesh returns to the earth.' Even the young goats and lambs that the children have cherished and looked after are left where they are if they breathe their last on the grasslands.

This qualitative study examines how young children perceive death through case studies in Canada, Japan, and Mongolia, challenging the traditional binary view of "living vs. dead."

Canada: The discovery of a deer skull and the decay of unripe tomatoes shifted children's focus toward the cycle of life. Death was viewed not as an end, but as a connection between species (e.g., deer as coyote sustenance). This fosters a resistance to anthropocentrism, where nature is not seen solely as a resource for humans but as a continuous transition of energy.

Japan: In a nature-rich nursery, children viewed the death of a tree frog with ambiguity rather than grief. By suggesting the frog go to a hospital or viewing it as a pause until the next frog arrived, children treated death as a non-linear process or a temporary state within a larger sequence of life.

Mongolia: In pastoralist communities, children witness the harsh reality of livestock perishing in winter. Whether through slaughter for food or natural death on the grasslands, the remains return to the earth via scavengers and microorganisms. This highlights the fragility of life and reinforces the idea that humans are merely one element in an interconnected "rhizome" of nature.

The study concludes that for children, death is a complex, entangled phenomenon with blurred boundaries. Rather than a finality, death serves as a lens through which children understand the 'more-than-human' world, viewing themselves as part of an inseparable network of living and non-living agents.

4. Voices of Competence: The Narrative Growth of Mandarin-Speaking Children Through the Lens of Janusz Korczak

Fangfang Zhang — Nanjing Normal University

Keywords (assigned by the editors): narrative development; Mandarin-speaking children; Janusz Korczak; child-centred education; preschool children

Abstract:

This study investigates the narrative development of Mandarin-speaking children aged 3 to 6 years through both quantitative and qualitative analyses, framed within the child-centered educational philosophy of Janusz Korczak. A total of 80 children participated, providing personal narratives that were examined for structural, evaluative, and temporal features. Quantitative findings reveal a distinct developmental trajectory. With age, children's narratives become longer and richer, showing increasing proficiency in narrative structure, notably in complicating action, orientation, and evaluation. There is a marked growth in the diversity and frequency of evaluative expressions, and the use of temporal conjunctions becomes more varied and sophisticated. Significant positive correlations were found among narrative structure, evaluation, and temporality, suggesting the three elements develop synchronously and interdependently. Qualitative analysis further validates the quantitative research findings. More importantly, Mandarin-speaking children's narratives are imbued with personal meaning, emotional complexity, and imaginative vitality, capturing moments of pride, expressions of bravery, playful interactions, and familial warmth. And children's accounts of conflict and reconciliation reveal a natural openness and resilience, contrasting with adult tendencies toward grudges and highlighting a philosophy of wisdom. The findings align with Korczak's view of the child as a whole, competent person and affirm the importance of valuing children's voices—not merely as evolving language users, but as individuals making sense of their world through narrative, echoing Korczak's principles of dignity and respect for the child's experience.

5. Drawing Rights: MANGA Breaking 30 Years of CRC Silence in Japan

Kazuhiko Nijima — *Japan Federation of Accredited ECEC Centers*

Kei Kihara — *Japan Federation of Accredited ECEC Centers*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): Convention on the Rights of the Child; manga; nursery schools; Japan; childcare practice

Abstract:

The Japan Federation of Accredited ECEC Centers is an organization of authorized nursery schools in Japan, with approximately 10,000 nursery schools as its member.

In December 2022, the Federation published a book that compiled 47 episodes related to the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" (CRC) that nursery teachers encounter in their daily childcare settings presented in a four-panel comic (MANGA) format.

This book was created in response to the fact that, even more than 30 years has passed after Japan ratified the CRC in 1994, there has been little progress in understanding its existence and content, particularly among nursery teachers.

At the 77th OMEP World Assembly and Conference held in Bologna, Italy, in 2025, the Japan Federation of Accredited ECEC Centers gave an oral presentation on the background of the publication of its book, "Communicating Through Comics: Giving the Life of CRC in

ECEC".

Discussions during the session highlighted a significant gap: while practitioners value the CRC, they often struggle with its practical application. To address this critical challenge of dissemination and understanding, the Federation established the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child Training Package'.

In this presentation, we report on the results of verification and analysis of the contents of this "Training Package," as well as participant reactions and questionnaire responses, to examine existing issues. Furthermore, in preparation for the second edition of "Communicating Through Comics: Utilizing the Convention on the Rights of the Child," we are reaching out to international researchers and childcare practitioners to solicit relevant episodes and experiences.

6. Supporting Independent Learning and Epistemic Curiosity in Children: Contributions of Early STEM Education

Tugba Abanoz — *Ankara University*

Defne Yabaş — *Istanbul Medipol University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): epistemic curiosity; independent learning; early STEM education; self-regulated learning; early childhood

Abstract:

Background and Purpose: Early childhood is recognized as a period of rapid development where children actively acquire foundational concepts and explore their environment. Within this developmental window, epistemic curiosity—the intrinsic motivation to seek new knowledge and resolve gaps in understanding—and independent learning are considered essential competencies. Epistemic curiosity serves as a primary driver for scientific reasoning and cognitive growth, while independent learning (often used interchangeably with self-regulated learning in this context) empowers children to take ownership of their education by setting goals, monitoring their progress, and managing their cognitive and emotional processes. Together, these skills foster a child's intrinsic motivation and provide a basis for scientific thinking and long-term academic success. Despite their established importance, there is a notable gap in research regarding how to effectively nurture these traits within formal early childhood educational settings. Traditional learning environments often prioritize adult-led instruction, yet the literature suggests that children thrive when given autonomy and opportunities for multifaceted, inquiry-based exploration. STEM integration (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach because it is interdisciplinary, hands-on, and aligns with children's natural inclinations toward play and problem-solving. By presenting children with real-world challenges, STEM curricula can potentially ignite curiosity and demand the self-regulatory persistence needed for independent learning. The purpose of this study was to empirically examine the impact of a structured, nine-week integrated early STEM program on children's independent learning skills and epistemic curiosity. The researchers sought to determine whether participation in a curriculum centered on Authentic Problems of Knowledge Society (APOKS) could produce statistically significant improvements in these domains compared to a traditional preschool curriculum. Furthermore, the study aimed to explore the nuances of epistemic curiosity by distinguishing between interest-type (the joy of discovery) and deprivation-type (the drive to reduce uncertainty), while investigating how a child's baseline curiosity levels might moderate the effectiveness of the intervention.

Methodology: The research utilized a pre- and post-test quasi-experimental design involving 29 children (aged 5-6) from a preschool in Antalya, Turkey. The experimental group (n=15) participated in a curriculum based on the Early STEM Integrated Teaching Framework, centered on "Authentic Problems of Knowledge Society" (APOKS). The curriculum featured a narrative about a "Talkative Parrot" and a "Chatter Stork," requiring children to design time-tracking tools and weave scarves while exploring biology, mathematical engineering, and ornithology. Children engaged in activities such as bird watching with magnifying glasses (Week 2), mapping migratory routes (Week 3), measuring using standard and non-standard units (Week 4), and weaving scarves on yogurt-container frames (Week 7). The control group (n=14) followed regular instructional activities. Outcome measures included the Children's Independent Learning Development Checklist (CHILD 3-5), completed by teachers, and the Epistemic Curiosity Scale for Young Children, based on parental observations.

Results: The results of the study highlighted a multifaceted impact on the participating children, characterized primarily by significant gains in curiosity rather than immediate shifts in independent learning behaviors.

Epistemic Curiosity (Total Score): The STEM intervention had a pronounced effect on total epistemic curiosity. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) revealed a significant interaction between group membership and pre-test scores, indicating that the effect of the intervention was not uniform across all children. The model demonstrated an excellent fit, explaining approximately 92% of the variance in post-test curiosity scores.

Compensatory Effect in Curiosity: A critical finding was the "compensatory effect" observed in the experimental group. Children who entered the study with lower baseline curiosity scores benefited the most from the STEM program, showing disproportionately greater gains than their counterparts in the control group. Conversely, for children who already possessed high curiosity, the difference between the experimental and control groups was less pronounced, as the intervention helped "level the playing field" for those starting with deficits.

The program significantly enhanced both sub-types of curiosity. Interest-type curiosity (the positive, enjoyable feeling of learning) was highly responsive to the hands-on, play-based nature of the activities. Deprivation-type curiosity (the drive to resolve uncomfortable gaps in knowledge) was activated by the "Authentic Problem" (APOKS), which transformed uncertainty into manageable problem-solving opportunities.

Independent Learning (CHILD 3-5): In contrast to curiosity, the results for independent learning did not show a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups after controlling for pre-test scores. While the experimental group had a higher post-test mean (M=48.20) compared to the control group (M=42.40), the analysis indicated that pre-test performance was the strongest predictor of post-test performance.

The researchers noted that while motivational states like curiosity can be sparked rapidly by a novel environment, self-regulatory behaviors such as persistence and autonomous task management are more stable and may require longer interventions or more explicit metacognitive strategy instruction to produce measurable change.

Discussion and Implications: These findings highlight the potential of early STEM education to function as an external scaffold for curiosity-driven engagement, particularly benefiting learners who may otherwise show lower spontaneous curiosity. By transforming uncertainty into manageable problem-solving opportunities, well-structured STEM environments can foster foundational skills essential for lifelong learning. Future

research should explore longer-term interventions to determine if extended programs can similarly elevate independent learning and self-regulatory behaviors.

7. Listening With Consequences: Centering Children's Voices in Building GlobalChild, a Comprehensive Child Rights Monitoring indicators

Zib Vaghri — *University of New Brunswick*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): child rights monitoring; indicators; GlobalChild; children's voices; Article 12 UNCRC

Abstract:

Background & Rationale.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes children as rights-holders and guarantees their right to be heard (Article 12). Embedding children's perspectives into monitoring frameworks is therefore a matter of both quality and obligation. GlobalChild is a comprehensive child-rights monitoring platform that operationalizes the CRC through indicators to support implementation and accountability. This presentation highlights how children's views, gathered through a large-scale international initiative called the Global Child Rights Dialogue (GCRD), were systematically integrated into GlobalChild's indicator development.

Methods / Approach.

In partnership with Save the Children, the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast, and Greek collaborators ("Let's Talk About Article 12"), we conducted a large, multi-country consultation with children aged 11–18. Using child-friendly versions of CRC content as engagement tools, facilitators convened workshops across 52 sites in 35 countries, engaging nearly 2,000 children, and captured their experiences and recommendations on how rights should be implemented and measured.

To strengthen meaningful participation and ensure children's influence on decisions, we established a Children's Advisory Group (CAG) at the Centre for Children's Rights. The CAG co-designed and reviewed child-friendly materials, advised on facilitation and ethics, and later received a child-friendly GCRD report showing how their inputs shaped the final indicator sets. This final step created a full feedback loop between children and researchers, aligning with the "Influence" pillar of Lundy's Model of Participation; alongside Space, Voice, and Audience.

All qualitative inputs were thematically analyzed and mapped to GlobalChild indicators; resulting refinements were documented and incorporated into the platform.

Findings / Contributions.

Children's inputs led to concrete refinements of indicators across several CRC domains (e.g., measures of being listened to, trusted adult access, inclusive play and leisure). Incorporating lived experiences made indicators more precise, more measurable in practice, and better aligned with accountability to children. As a by-product, the project generated open child-friendly educational tools (multiple languages) that can be used to build children's capacity for participation.

Conclusion.

Institutionalizing children's participation—through structured mechanisms like the CAG and large-scale dialogues—enhances validity, legitimacy, and impact of child-rights monitoring. This approach operationalizes Article 12 and advances systems that listen to children with consequences for policy and practice.

The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice 3	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 16:30–18:00 Room: 3.1 Language: English Chair: Taketo Yoshida	

1. A Study on the Music Learning Process of Children Aged 5–6 Years

Chenyu Zhao — *Nanjing Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): music learning; complexity theory; embodied experience; children's agency; children aged 5–6

Abstract:

Existing research on early childhood music education has mostly focused on teacher-led instructional design, cognitive skill development and teaching frameworks, with limited attention to children's embodied experiences, meaning-making, and subjective agency in music learning—a core element underpinning the authenticity and depth of children's musical engagement. Most studies center on teachers' instruction rather than children's authentic, emergent learning processes.

Grounded in Complexity Theory, this study aims to explore the dynamic, emergent, and relational music learning processes of children aged 5–6 years. Adopting a qualitative research approach, it uses participant observation, in-depth child interviews, and video-elicitation methods to investigate children's music engagement in both teacher-led formal collective activities and child-initiated informal free play, with a core focus on the intrinsic links between the attributes of different activities and the emergence of children's agency and music learning. It integrates experiential learning theory to analyze how children construct musical meaning through the entanglement of body, sound, emotion, and social interaction, addressing the mind-body divide in traditional music education research.

Preliminary findings indicate that children's music learning is a nonlinear, holistic process characterized by spontaneous expression, embodied perception, and creative improvisation. Children's music engagement presents distinct characteristic features and enacting pathways across the two scenarios, with unique forms of embodied and creative expression emerging in each context.

This study illuminates the emergent, relational nature of children's music learning through a complexity perspective. It provides empirical evidence and practical strategies to support teachers in centering children's autonomous expression, listening to their voices in music learning, and fostering learning environments that align with children's developmental needs and active participation rights.

2. Making Children's Voice Actionable: Embodied Refusal, Consent, and Touch in Japan–U.S. Early Childhood Classrooms

Taketo Yoshida — *Hiroshima University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's voice; embodied refusal; consent; touch; comparative ethnography

Abstract:

Children's voice in early childhood education is not limited to speech. Refusals are often quiet and embodied—for example, turning away, freezing, or withdrawing—yet classrooms must respond to these cues while also remaining accountable for safety. This presentation asks: under what interactional conditions do educators treat embodied refusal as legitimate voice, and how do they make it actionable—that is, recognised, taken seriously, and translated into a next move—rather than overridden?

I draw on comparative ethnographic materials from two single sites: a preschool classroom in Japan (Site J; approximately 240 hours, May–June 2025) and a fee-paying, Reggio-inspired private preschool in the United States (Site U; approximately 238 hours, October–November 2025), using de-identified, indexed episodes. I examine how educators close boundary trouble around touch, proximity, and care routines through four recurrent modes: Rule/Ban, Ownership ("your body is yours"), Procedure (ask–wait–check), and Environment/Third-object (reorganising space or materials). I also examine how these modes shift under four forms of boundary strain: exposure, liability, escalation, and consent-legibility.

Three findings follow. First, under escalation and liability strain, closures are often non-negotiable, such as categorical stops or separation, prioritising immediate safety and explanations that can be shared with others. Second, when the central problem is consent-legibility, educators more often sustain procedural work that makes embodied cues actionable by asking, waiting, and revoicing uncertain signals into checkable "yes/no" options. In these moments, autonomy remains inside the sequence rather than becoming a post-hoc moral claim. Third, these shifts are shaped by local accountability arrangements—for example, shared-space supervision, documentation practices, and family-facing explanations—which condition what forms of "voice" can be recognised and acted upon in the moment.

For Topic 1, the contribution is both practical and portable: treat embodied refusal as meaningful participation, and teach repeatable micro-routines that translate voice into action while keeping safety accountable—for example, stop → check → re-entry condition. The presentation offers a vocabulary for designing everyday classroom spaces in which children's rights and voices are not only heard, but acted upon.

3. Hearing the Voice of the Child: A Comparative Study of Teacher-Child Interaction Evaluation from the Perspective of Korczak's Thought on Children's Rights

Jiacheng Shi — *Center for Studies of Education and Psychology of Ethnic Minorities in Southwest China of Southwest University, Chongqing, China*

Yumei Han — *Center for Studies of Education and Psychology of Ethnic Minorities in Southwest China of Southwest University, Chongqing, China*

Xidan Zhao — *affiliation not provided*

Keywords: teacher-child interaction; evaluation comparison; children's rights; Korczak; child's presence

Abstract:

As a key indicator of process quality in early childhood education, teacher-child interaction serves as a core lever and fundamental pathway for implementing a high-quality education system, exerting profound influence on children's development. This study, guided by Korczak's philosophy of "the child as a complete

person," examines the similarities and differences in teacher-child interaction evaluation between Chinese and international contexts from four dimensions: evaluation philosophy, evaluation subjects, evaluation tools, and evaluation content. The findings reveal that, in terms of evaluation philosophy, international teacher-child interaction evaluation adheres to the positivist tradition, emphasizing the measurability of interactions and their function in predicting development; whereas the evolution of China's evaluation philosophy—from the introduction of Western tools to indigenous construction—increasingly values the educational process and children's perspectives, a trajectory that deeply resonates with Korczak's advocacy for "seeing the child." Regarding evaluation subjects, international practices center on professionally certified observers, supplemented by multiple stakeholders; China has shifted from a single subject to diverse participation, integrating self-assessment, others' assessment, and children's perspectives. The Children's Parliament and Peer Court established by Korczak in the orphanage serve as early practical examples of children participating as subjects in educational life. In terms of evaluation tools, internationally, CLASS is mainstream, pursuing fine-grained coding and standardized observation; China follows a path of "application—examination—adaptation," moving from reflection on cultural inappropriateness towards indigenous tool development and AI empowerment. Regardless of the tool, judgments about the quality of teacher-child interaction must be made within specific contextual frameworks—a methodological resonance with Korczak's emphasis on "understanding the unique world of the child." Concerning evaluation content, CLASS's three domains—Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support—constitute the mainstream international framework; China, based on cultural appropriateness, emphasizes respect for children's localized expressions and instructional support for consolidating foundational knowledge. Currently, China's teacher-child interaction evaluation is at a critical stage of cultural reflection and system construction, requiring a dynamic balance between global perspectives and local practices. This paper proposes that China's teacher-child interaction evaluation should cultivate an evaluation philosophy of "the child's presence"—echoing Korczak's assertion that "there are no children, only people"; an evaluation function focused on "teacher growth"; and evaluation content that is "culturally appropriate," seeking balance between technical rationality and meaning-making, so that children's voices are truly heard.

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4. The Invisible Spark – Nurturing Spirituality in Early Childhood (Ages 3–6)

Cristina Chiappa — *OMEP Italy*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): spirituality; early childhood; holistic education; children aged 3–6

Abstract:

This article offers a poetic and pedagogical exploration of childhood spirituality, understood not as adherence to a religious doctrine but as an anthropological dimension and a vital human need. Beginning with an

etymological reflection on the term *spiritus* (breath, life force), it establishes an intrinsic connection between biological life and the invisible energy that animates matter. Within this framework, spirituality in children aged three to six emerges as a “philosophy of the heart”—an innate and profound connection with the living world, experienced primarily through the body and the senses, prior to abstract thought.

Drawing on the work of Maria Montessori and the bioenergetic theory of Alexander Lowen, the article suggests that children are born into a “state of grace” and universal empathy, where no separation exists between self and world. To safeguard this inner light from the pressures of modern life, a pedagogy of wonder is proposed—one grounded in practices that slow down time and nourish inner life. Particular emphasis is placed on the education of silence and the child’s relationship with nature, understood as a primary teacher capable of responding to the child’s innate longing for the infinite through its rhythms and mysteries.

The article further highlights expressive tools as essential channels for the manifestation of the spirit. Free drawing is described as an act of energetic release, allowing deeper layers of the self to emerge without the filter of adult judgment. Similarly, creative movement transforms the body into the protagonist of a poetic, nonverbal narrative. A central role is attributed to the “sacred languages” of childhood—puppetry (including marionettes and shadow play) and music. Through their symbolic nature, these media enable children to externalize the “Big Questions” of existence—fear, meaning, and life itself—while providing a safe emotional distance for exploring the unseen.

In conclusion, inspired by Janusz Korczak, the author calls for a radical shift in the adult perspective: to recognize the child’s right to the integrity of their spiritual life and to their inner secrets. Nurturing childhood spirituality, therefore, does not mean adding knowledge, but preserving an openness to mystery. It is an invitation for adults to “kneel down” and see the world at the child’s level, rediscovering in their own authenticity and in the wonder of everyday life the key to allowing that invisible spark—carried within every child—to flourish.

5. Making Children’s Voices Visible in a UK Montessori Nursery

Sylwia Zywotko — *Manchester Montessori House*

Ellio Markatis — *Manchester Montessori House*

Keywords: Children’s rights, Children’s voice, Participation, Montessori education, Early childhood education, Inclusive practice, MMH

Abstract:

This presentation shares how a Montessori nursery in Manchester, UK – Manchester Montessori House (MMH) – embeds children’s rights into everyday practice through the UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA), with a particular focus on children’s voice and participation.

At MMH, we view children as capable, active participants in their own learning and daily life. This reflects both Montessori principles and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, where children are recognised as individuals with rights, agency and a voice that deserves to be heard. Inspired by Janusz Korczak, who reminded us that children are not future people, but people now, with thoughts, feelings and perspectives that matter, and by the conference theme “When a child speaks...”, our work centres on creating an environment where children’s voices can be expressed and genuinely listened to.

This presentation offers a practical example of how early years settings can move beyond teaching about rights to creating spaces where children's voices are embedded within Montessori practice and everyday nursery life. It will focus on how this work has been documented through a portfolio of photographic evidence, planning and reflections, which we will share as a living example of rights in practice.

Over the course of a year, we linked our planning to specific rights and created opportunities for children to make choices, share ideas, express themselves creatively and become active participants in their wider community. Within our portfolio, children's voices are visible in everyday moments, such as selecting their own work, engaging in conversations, exploring identity and culture, and participating in shared experiences within the nursery and beyond.

Presenters: Sylwia Zywojtko and Ellio Markatis obo MMH team

The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice 4	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 16:30–18:00 Room: γ (gamma) Language: English Chair: Sylwia Jaskulska	

1. Children as Participants in Research and the Rights of the Child

Sylwia Jaskulska — Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan

Keywords (assigned by the editors): research with children; children's rights; participation; research ethics; informed consent

Abstract:

This presentation examines children's participation in educational and social research from a children's rights perspective. Although contemporary research increasingly highlights the importance of including children's voices, their participation often remains limited or mediated by adults. The presentation focuses on the tension between protecting children and recognising their agency.

Particular attention is given to ethical and methodological challenges, such as informed consent, power imbalances, and the risk of reducing children's participation to a symbolic level. The presentation argues for moving beyond procedural ethics towards more participatory approaches that treat children as active contributors rather than passive subjects.

The presentation will include findings from the work of the Team for the Ethics of Social Research Involving Children operating at the Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights in Poland, of which the author is a member.

2. Taking Action in Children's and Youth Councils: Turning Participation into Meaningful and Rights-Based Practice

Marie Van Roost — Karel de Grote University College

Anouk Van Der Wildt — KU Leuven University

An Piessens — Karel de Grote University College

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's councils; youth councils; participation; UNCRC; rights-based practice

Abstract:

More than 30 years after the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children across Europe continue to report that their views are not genuinely taken into account when it comes to decisions that affect their lives (European Commission et al., 2021). Participation is frequently organised through formal structures such as pupil or youth councils, yet these often risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative spaces. Specific groups of children remain underrepresented, and sustainability is fragile when participation depends on individual teachers' engagement or temporary project funding (Unicef & Eurochild, 2019).

The GOTALK project starts from the premise that children are not merely future citizens but citizens of the present. As subjects of rights, they are entitled not only to express their views (Article 12 UNCRC) but also to have these views given due weight in institutional decision-making. This requires more than inviting children to speak; it requires educational systems to create meaningful, structurally embedded spaces where children's voices are listened to, documented, reflected upon, and acted upon.

GOTALK therefore experimented with an rights-based approach to children's and youth councils in Italy and Belgium. Schools and youth centres engaged in a two-year trajectory to transform councils into inclusive, sustainable, and policy-relevant spaces. The approach builds on participation theory (Lundy, 2007), children's rights scholarship (Stalford, Cairns & Marshall, 2017), and pedagogical practices such as pedagogical documentation, the mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2011), and the "living wall" as a dynamic space for collective reflection and transparency.

Central to the project is a shift from participation as an isolated activity toward participation as a school-wide culture and belief system. Inspired by Sinek's (2009) "golden circle", GOTALK works simultaneously on three interconnected levels: (1) concrete actions within the council, (2) organisational procedures and communication flows within the institution, and (3) underlying beliefs about children's competences and their status as rights holders.

This presentation addresses the research question:

How can educational institutions engage in co)creating participatory trajectories that genuinely position children as subjects of rights.

The presentation will share findings from six schools and two youth centres, illustrating how children conceptualise meaningful participation and how institutional structures either enable or constrain their citizenship in the present. It will also introduce a concrete reflection and activity tool that supports schools in critically examining whether and how children's voices are structurally embedded and acted upon. By moving beyond procedural participation toward a rights-based institutional culture, the GOTALK approach offers practical and theoretical insights into how educational systems can create spaces where children's voices truly matter.

Revised Methods Section

This study combines action research in two primary schools, four secondary schools and two youth organisations with narrative analysis of children's perspectives on rights-based participation. The research design aligns with a children's rights approach by positioning children not as research objects but as co-constructors of meaning.

Children's voices were gathered through multiple formats: council meetings, peer-to-peer interviews, group reflections, and pedagogical documentation produced during the participation trajectory. Particular attention was paid to creating safe and inclusive spaces (Lundy, 2007) where children could articulate not only their experiences but also their expectations regarding the institutional response to their input.

Pedagogical documentation played a crucial methodological role. Using a digital Padlet structured around the three levels of the "golden circle" (actions, procedures, belief systems), children and supportive teachers documented decisions, reflections and perceived impacts. The "living wall" functioned as a visible and evolving space within schools and youth centres where ongoing discussions, proposals, feedback loops and policy responses were shared. This transparency enabled collective reflection on whether children's contributions led to tangible change.

Data were analysed using narrative analysis supported by NVivo software.

The analytical framework was structured around three interconnected dimensions of meaningful participation:

Inclusiveness (whose voices are heard and how),

Sustainability (how participation is embedded structurally over time),

Policy impact (how children's views influence decisions).

Italian and Belgian datasets were analysed separately to respect contextual differences, followed by comparative reflection within the international research team.

Importantly, interim analyses were shared with councils in co-reflection sessions inspired by Reggio Emilia's pedagogical approach (Edwards et al., 1993). This iterative process ensured that children's interpretations were not extracted but reintroduced into the institutional dialogue, reinforcing their status as subjects of rights throughout the research process.

Revised Conclusion

Children's narratives demonstrate that meaningful participation extends far beyond being given the floor during council meetings. For them, inclusiveness means not only representation of diverse voices but also recognition, respect and genuine dialogue with adults. It involves shared agenda-setting, transparent communication, and adults who believe in children's competences as present citizens.

Sustainability, in children's understanding, is closely linked to structural embedding. Councils should not depend on the enthusiasm of a single teacher but be integrated into school policy, communication systems and everyday practices. Tools such as the living wall revealed how visibility and feedback loops strengthen children's perception that their voices matter.

Regarding policy impact, children emphasised the importance of / a need for clarity about boundaries. Rather than unlimited influence, they value honest dialogue about what can and cannot change. Explicitly negotiating these boundaries fostered trust and co-responsibility between pupils, teachers and school leaders.

Overall, the findings suggest that educational institutions can only ensure meaningful participation when they move beyond procedural compliance with Article 12 UNCRC toward a deeper cultural shift. Recognising children as subjects of rights requires institutional reflexivity about power, beliefs and decision-making structures.

The GOTALK project offers both empirical insights and a practical reflection tool to support schools and youth organisations in this transformation. By aligning participatory structures with a rights-based vision of children

as citizens of the present, educational systems can create spaces where children's voices are not only heard but actively shape institutional life.

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3. Development and Validation of an App-Based Assessment Tool for Foundational Competencies of Five-Year-Old Children During the Transition to Primary School

Jyeon Lee — *Ewha Womans University*

Soonhwan Kim — *Ewha Womans University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): assessment tool; foundational competencies; transition to primary school; validation; app-based assessment

Abstract:

The aim of this study was to develop an app-based assessment tool to identify young children's foundational competencies during the transition to primary school and to examine its validity and reliability. A preliminary draft was developed through a literature review and discussions with the research team, using the OECD Learning Compass model as the theoretical framework and aligning the tool with the sub-factors of 'basic competencies' in Korea's I-eum Education. This draft was refined into a second version through expert consultation, and a third draft was finalized following a pilot study.

To select the final items, a proportional stratified cluster sampling method based on regional scale was applied, and data were collected from 338 preschool children through an app-based performance assessment. Based on the results of the item analysis, the final assessment tool consisting of 43 items was finalized.

The validity of the tool was examined through confirmatory factor analysis to establish construct validity, expert review in early childhood education and educational technology for content validity, and correlation analysis with the existing ESRA tool for criterion validity. Regarding reliability, internal consistency (Cronbach's α) was .89 overall (.85 for expressive literacy, .89 for expressive numeracy, .83 for self-regulation, and .77 for social-emotional skills), indicating high internal consistency.

The developed scale provides an efficient digital assessment tool that enables active participation by young children while reducing teachers' assessment burden, and it can serve as foundational data to support successful transitions from early childhood education to primary school.

4. When a Child Speaks Through Art: Listening to Children's Voices Through Community-Based Visual Arts in Early Childhood Education

Feng Yang — *Shanghai Minhang Vanke Kindergarten*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): visual arts; community-based education; children's voice; Janusz Korczak; participation

Abstract:

Guided by Janusz Korczak's humanist vision of the child as a person "here and now," this presentation explores how community-based visual arts education can create authentic spaces for children's voice, participation, and rights in early childhood settings. When visual arts are connected to children's real-life environments, artistic expression becomes a meaningful language through which children communicate ideas, emotions, and understandings of their world.

In early childhood education, children's thinking is often expressed beyond words. A rights-based, child-centered approach to visual arts recognizes these expressions as legitimate forms of participation. Through engagement with community resources — such as local artists, cultural spaces, natural environments, and shared community experiences — children are invited to observe, question, select materials, and make choices that shape their artistic processes. For example, children exploring a nearby park used self-selected natural materials to represent places of personal significance, while others reinterpreted local public artworks through drawing, construction, and storytelling.

Inspired by Korczak's ethical commitment to listening to children with respect and responsibility, educators play a crucial role in making children's voices visible. Through pedagogical documentation — including photographs, children's explanations, and shared reflections — educators listen attentively to children's intentions and respond by adjusting materials, questions, and learning pathways. Documentation thus becomes a tool for dialogue rather than a record of outcomes.

Drawing on reflective practice from an early childhood setting, the presentation illustrates how community-engaged visual arts can embody Korczak's legacy today, inviting educators and school leaders to view visual arts education as a democratic and relational practice — ensuring that when a child speaks through images, materials, or actions, their voice is genuinely heard and valued.

5. Children's Perception of the Transition from Family to Kindergarten: A Qualitative Study in the Republic of Croatia

Helena Biskup — *University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education*

Adrijana Višnjić-Jevtić — *University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education*

Keywords: child; kindergarten; parents; teachers, transition

Abstract:

Today, children enter the institutional system of early childhood education and care at an increasingly early age and spend more time within it (Visković & Višnjić Jevtić, 2019). The aim of this study is to examine children's perceptions of the transition from family to kindergarten. The research was conducted using a

qualitative approach, applying semi-structured interviews and participatory methods that included children’s visual and verbal expressions. Thirty children of early and preschool age participated in the study. The research was conducted in accordance with the Ethical Code for Research with Children and is part of a broader research project encompassing the perspectives of all stakeholders involved in the transition process. The scientific contribution of this paper lies in providing insight into children’s perspectives on the transition from family to kindergarten in the Croatian context, thereby addressing a research gap in relation to previous studies that have primarily focused on parents’ and teachers’ perspectives. The results indicate that children experience the transition as an emotionally intense event characterized by a wide range of feelings, from sadness and insecurity to happiness and excitement, which is consistent with previous findings on children’s emotional reactions during transitional periods (Mašković et al., 2018). The findings confirm that each child’s transition experience is individual and unique, influenced by the child’s personal characteristics, previous experiences, and the quality of relationships with parents and teachers. The results further confirm that the transition from family to kindergarten requires systematic support from parents and professionals, as well as the provision of a well-prepared physical and social environment. The importance of sensitive and supportive adult relationships and an individualized approach to each child is emphasized in order to ensure that the transition period is safe and conducive to the child’s holistic development.

REF-PL-01 — The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 16:30–18:00 Room: 4.8 Language: Polish Chair: Agnieszka Iwanicka	

1. Child in the Network: Social Media Age Restrictions and Korczak's Autonomy

Agnieszka Iwanicka — Adam Mickiewicz University, Faculty of Educational Studies

Keywords (assigned by the editors): social media; age restrictions; Janusz Korczak; child autonomy; online safety

Abstract:

The Polish legislative debate (KO bill, January 2026) on banning social media for children under 15 exposes a crisis: 1.4 million children aged 7–12 bypass age restrictions (Gemius, Internet dzieci 2025). Platforms (TikTok, Instagram, Meta) fail to enforce their own terms prohibiting use under 13, exposing the youngest to addictive algorithms (dopamine surges, infinite scrolling), cognitive impairment, cyberbullying (1/5 of children, WHO HBSC 2025), suicidal/pornographic content (50% of primary school pupils, FDDS/Dbam o Mój Zasięg 2025/2026), FOMO-induced anxieties, emotional dysregulation, diminished concentration, and worldview-distorting disinformation. Notably, 68% of 8–15-year-olds exceed 4 hours daily usage (NASK, Nastolatki 3.0, 2025). Young users lack the emotional and cognitive maturity to navigate these environments, neglecting their digital well-being and risking profound mental and physical harm.

Position Statement: Social media inflict irreversible developmental harm on children under 13. Raising the age threshold must integrate robust enforcement mechanisms—systemic digital literacy enhancement for youth and parental training—alongside legal accountability for platform owners. Responsibility for digital initiation lies not solely with platforms but also the state and parents (bolstering parental digital competencies). Korczakian autonomy—the right to voice, error, and co-determination—is not permissiveness but protection

from algorithmic chaos that undermines true agency. As Korczak asserted, “Children have the right to adults who think for them when they cannot yet do so”—such a ban embodies empathetic boundary-setting, fostering long-term autonomy akin to the peer court and rules in his “children's republic.” The right to error excludes addiction experiments; empathy without fear (OMEP Axis 2) demands preemptive action before algorithms devastate emotional and cognitive growth. Just as safeguards against tobacco or alcohol build rather than suppress autonomy, social media bans preserve development children cannot yet comprehend. Children aged 8–12 lack competencies to detect platform traps—empathy thus compels adult intervention, even amid temporary resistance (“children have the right to protection from themselves”). Adults—parents, educators, the state, and platforms—must assume accountability before a mental health crisis engulfs the next generation.

To substantiate these theses, planned research includes:

- Qualitative: focus group interviews with 60 children aged 8–15 from primary schools in Poznań/Greater Poland (semi-structured: risks/benefits of social media, attitudes toward a 15-year minimum age ban and platform fines).
- Quantitative: Diagnostic survey (questionnaire) of 400 parents and 150 teachers.

Anticipated Findings: Risks outweigh benefits; children defend access despite discomfort; adults support platform penalties.

Hybrid recommendations

1. Ban for under-13s with enforceable fines on platforms (Australian model).
2. Media literacy education from age 8.
3. Consultations with 13–15-year-olds (amplifying their voice).
4. Parental digital competency programs (workshops, training, campaigns).

2. Dzieciństwo jako narracja autobiograficzna – korczakowskie korzenie i nie tylko....

Anna Górka-Strzałkowska — *Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej w Warszawie*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): dzieciństwo; autobiografia szkolna; pamiętniki dziecięce; Janusz Korczak; głos dziecka

Abstract:

Tematem wystąpienia są „wspomnienia z maleńkości” – dawny i współczesny głos dziecka o doświadczeniach szkolnych i życiowych. Przywołując pamiętniki dzieci pisane pod opieką Janusza Korczaka – m.in. w Małym Przeglądzie – zestawiam je z autobiografiami szkolnymi współczesnych uczniów, zebranymi w ramach projektu „Dziecięcy trud szkolny – autobiografia szkolna”.

Korczak, jako prekursor dziecięcej podmiotowości, rozumiał, że dzieci mają własny język, logikę przeżywania i prawo do opowiadania swojej wersji rzeczywistości. Pamiętniki jego wychowanków – pełne prostych zdań, ale wielkiej odwagi – odsłaniają nie tylko dziecięce emocje i codzienność, ale też głód sensu, sprawiedliwości, uwagi. Ich głos był słyszalny dzięki dorosłemu, który nie chciał ich poprawiać – ale słuchać.

Współczesne pamiętniki – tworzone przez uczniów klas IV w ramach badania – pokazują podobną potrzebę: dzieci mówią o przemęczeniu, ocenach, braku czasu i zrozumienia, ale też o radości ze spotkań z kolegami,

chwilach luzu i dumie z własnych osiągnięć. Ich trud szkolny nie jest „radzeniem sobie” z programem, lecz codzienną próbą nadania sensu byciu uczniem i byciu sobą w zinstytucjonalizowanej przestrzeni.

Głos dziecka, dawniej i dziś, brzmi inaczej, ale mówi o tym samym – o potrzebie widzialności, wpływu i bycia traktowanym jak ktoś, kto ma coś do powiedzenia. Wystąpienie ukazuje te dziecięce narracje jako cenne źródło wiedzy o tym, co działa (lub nie) w szkole i wychowaniu – oraz jako wezwanie do uważnego słuchania.

3. Children's rights in the poems of Emilia Waśniowska - a teacher and poet from Poznań

Kinga Kuszak — *Wydział Studiów Edukacyjnych UAM*

Katarzyna Sadowska — *Wydział Studiów Edukacyjnych UAM*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): prawa dziecka; Emilia Waśniowska; poezja; Janusz Korczak; językowy obraz świata

Abstract:

Celem wystąpienia jest przedstawienie językowego obrazu praw dziecka oraz postaci Janusza Korczaka w twórczości poznańskiej nauczycielki i poetki Emilii Waśniowskiej.

Autorki posłużyły się metodą analizy źródeł zastanych – wybranych utworów literackich zmarłej artystki.

W wystąpieniu nakreślone zostaną: sylwetka Emilii Waśniowskiej, jej związki z edukacją dzieci i młodzieży oraz sposób postrzegania praw dziecka i postaci Starego Doktora wyrażony w obrazach językowych w różnych okresach twórczości poetki.

4. From voice to influence: Participation of children under three in the light of Janusz Korczak's thought and nursery care standards in Poland

Anna Godlewska-Zaorska — *University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children under three; participation; nursery care standards; Janusz Korczak; Poland

Abstract:

The starting point of the proposed paper is Janusz Korczak's understanding of the child as a person existing "here and now", not as a being merely prepared for future citizenship, but as a subject already present in the social world, entitled to respect, voice, and participation. This perspective directly addresses contemporary questions about how educational and care institutions can create conditions for meaningful participation and genuine recognition of children's voices. In the case of the youngest children, this issue becomes particularly complex, as their participation is too often reduced to passive presence or treated as pre-verbal and therefore impossible to conceptualise in civic terms. Yet, in the light of Korczak's thought, the child is not a "project of a future human being", but a person whose dignity, needs, and perspective require recognition already in childhood. From this perspective, the question of the participation of children under three does not concern whether they are capable of participation, but whether adults and institutions are able to create conditions in which their communications — including non-verbal ones — become socially and organisationally effective.

The aim of the paper is to critically connect Korczak's philosophy of children's rights with the category of participation and with an analysis of current Polish standards of care for children under the age of three. The

empirical basis of the study is a qualitative content analysis of the Regulation of the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy of 13 December 2024 on standards of care provided to children under three years of age, which entered into force on 1 January 2026. The analysis is conducted with the use of three complementary models of participation: Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation, Harry Shier's Pathways to Participation, and Laura Lundy's model encompassing space, voice, audience, and influence. This analytical framework makes it possible to demonstrate that the participation of very young children is not an addition to the quality of care, but one of its most sensitive indicators, revealing whether an institution truly responds to the child or merely manages the child's presence.

The analysis leads to the conclusion that Polish nursery care standards create conditions that are clearly conducive to recognising the child as a subject of rights and voice, yet they do so unevenly. The components of "space" and "voice" are particularly strongly reinforced: the regulation requires that children's individual needs, potential, and interests be taken into account; it calls for the construction of an environment that is emotionally and physically safe, based on respect, subject-oriented treatment, non-directive practices, and support for autonomy; and it emphasises the creation of surroundings that foster speaking, listening, and communication. In nursery practice, these provisions are of considerable significance because they translate into the child's possibility to choose materials, ways of acting, the timing of withdrawal from activity, the pace of transitions, and the manner of entering into relationships. At the same time, the analysis reveals a weakening of the dimensions of "audience" and, above all, "influence": the document does not establish sufficiently precise mechanisms requiring institutions to document how children's communications — including non-verbal ones — change organisational decisions, the arrangement of space, the rhythm of the day, or staff responses. In this sense, the standards protect listening well, but they protect the consequences of listening much less effectively.

When interpreted through the perspectives of Hart, Shier, and Lundy, these findings allow for a more critical conclusion: Polish regulations open a pathway towards authentic participation, but they do not eliminate the risk of tokenism. In a nursery setting, a child may be active, occupied, and seemingly "engaged", while still being deprived of real influence. This becomes especially visible in those areas where the regulation maintains the dominance of organisational logic over the logic of children's participation: in the construction of the daily schedule, in the proceduralisation of everyday life, and in leaving most programmatic decisions on the side of adults. From Korczak's perspective, this problem is not only methodological, but also ethical and political. A child does not become a subject merely because an adult declares respect; rather, subjectivity emerges only when the child's presence produces a real effect within the institution. In relation to the youngest children, this means recognising "micro-participation" as a fully legitimate form of early childhood citizenship: the child co-decides not through verbal debate, but through the agentic shaping of the course of situations. When an adult stops an activity, changes its pace, offers an alternative, rearranges the space, or abandons their own scenario in response to the child's signal, the child's voice is transformed into influence.

The paper therefore advances the argument that the most important contemporary development of Korczak's thought in the field of care for children under three is not merely "listening to children", but institutionally completing the pathway from being heard to co-decision-making. This implies the need to create such procedures, documentation tools, and practices of team reflection in nursery settings that make it possible to capture children's influence in everyday life and transform it into an element of organisational culture. The proposed paper thus contributes to the debate on children's rights not through an abstract appeal to norms, but by showing that the question of the child's civic voice is decided in the smallest situations of everyday life:

at mealtimes, during adaptation, in play, in rest, in touch, in moments of transition, and in the adult's readiness to relinquish domination. In this sense, Korczak remains for contemporary nursery pedagogy not a patron of sentimental humanism, but a radically relevant thinker who demands recognition of the child as a genuine participant in social life from the earliest years.

5. Słuchanie jako przestrzeń dla obywatela współczesności w wychowaniu przedszkolnym

Anna Łukaszewska — *Pomorska Szkoła Wyższa w Starogardzie Gdańskim*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): słuchanie; prawa dziecka; prawo do wypowiedzi; wychowanie przedszkolne; komunikacja podmiotowa

Abstract:

Wiek przedszkolny jest okresem, w którym dynamicznie następuje wielostronny rozwój dziecka, między innymi poznawczy i emocjonalny. Relacje z dorosłymi i rówieśnikami są doskonałym sposobem aby rozwój dziecka wzmacniać. Otaczający i ciekawy świat wzbudza u dzieci potrzebę wypowiadania się, zadawania pytań, rozmowy i związanej z tym uwagi słuchającego, a przede wszystkim dorosłego. W referacie zostanie dokonana analiza zagadnienia praw dziecka w wychowaniu przedszkolnym - szczególnie prawa do wypowiedzi oraz warunków podmiotowej komunikacji. W pierwszej części referatu nastąpi omówienie pojęć: kompetencji poznawczych i emocjonalnych, które determinują postawy dorosłych, podmiotowości jako "gwarantu tożsamości i samodzielności bytowej poznającego "ja"". W drugiej części referatu zostaną przedstawione zapisy oświatowych aktów prawnych respektujących w założeniach prawa dziecka w odniesieniu do ich realizacji w praktyce. Autorka przytoczy także przykłady dobrych praktyk. Referat zakończy się wnioskiem, że podmiotowe traktowanie dziecka wyraża się w wychowaniu przez dialog i szacunek i pomoc w wyrażaniu siebie.

The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice 5	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 09:00–10:30 Room: 3.1 Language: English Chair: Sara Eliasson	

1. Views of Preschoolers on Digital Technologies

Ora Segal Drori — *Levinsky-Wingate Academic College*

Islam Abu Asaad — *Sakhnin College for Teacher Education*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): digital technologies; preschoolers' perspectives; children's voices; research with children; Israel

Abstract:

The present study explored the views of preschoolers in Israel regarding digital technologies in their lives. A review of the existing literature reveals a paucity of studies that specifically explore young children's perspectives on digital technologies.

Due to a growing recognition of the importance of acknowledging children as active participants in the research process, rather than as passive subjects, research is increasingly exploring children's perspectives (Wall & Robinson, 2022). This paradigm shift necessitated the creation of child-centered methodologies that position children as co-constructors of knowledge (Einarsdottir, 2010). This approach is grounded in Article 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which affirms every child's right to freedom of expression, through any medium of their choice—be it artistic, oral, written, or otherwise (United Nations, 1989). It also reflects sociological theories of childhood that conceptualize children as a distinct social group engaged in reciprocal relationships with adults, and democratic principles that emphasize the agency of all social actors to express individual viewpoints (Vandenhoe et al., 2015). Children are thus recognized as competent social agents whose understandings are shaped by personal histories, social interactions, and contextual factors (Corsaro, 2018). Research centering around children's perspectives can uncover priorities and meanings that are often overlooked or underestimated by adults (Clark, 2023).

The Arab population in Israel comprises about 21% of the citizens and is a unique cultural group that speaks Arabic and has a separate education system. In the present study, thirty Arab children from Israel, aged 4 to 6, took part in in-depth interviews about digital technologies in their lives, which included their taking pictures and drawing digital devices at home. The interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Children and their parents assented to participate and they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. The findings yielded information regarding digital devices in children's day-to-day lives, their entertainment and learning purposes, gender differences in use, digital devices as an opportunity for social interactions, and restrictions on use of digital technologies. It is recommended that adults should mediate children's use of digital technologies more effectively and adapt them to the children's views.

2. Growing through Doing: A Ten-Year Practice Exploration on Constructing Multidimensional Regional Learning Spaces in Kindergartens

Li Liu — *Jiulonghu Kindergarten, Jiangning District, Nanjing*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): learning spaces; community-based learning; action research; kindergarten; children's learning circle

Abstract:

Through ten years of action research, our kindergarten has broken through the boundaries of in-kindergarten learning spaces, holding the view that children's real life is the very scene of their learning. We have extended children's learning field to the community in terms of space, relationship and operation mode, and built a rich "3-Kilometer Children's Learning Circle" full of opportunities and challenges, thus forming a multidimensional learning space system centered on the philosophy of "growing through doing". The specific achievements are as follows:

1. Physical Space: Expanded from the kindergarten campus to the surrounding nature and community. With the resources of lakeside wetland parks, neighborhoods, enterprises and universities, we have constructed a multidimensional learning structure of "Classroom—Workshop—Outdoor—Lakeside—Community", which supports children's deep learning in authentic, open, diverse and exploratory environments.
2. Psychological Space: Transformed from teacher-dominated to child-participatory co-construction of space. Through such operational mechanisms as reservation, multi-class mobility, mixed-age grouping, customization

and mentorship, children are motivated to access every space inside and outside the kindergarten, and are empowered with autonomy and creativity to participate in the planning, construction and management of spaces.

3. Relational Space: Shifted from teacher-child interaction to collaborative education among kindergarten, family and community. With a “Growth Mentor Group” consisting of parents, grandparents and community members, we have created an interactive space featured by cooperation, care and creativity. The mentors take a deep part in the “A Day in the Kindergarten” curriculum, focusing on life, conducting exploration and achieving mutual growth together with children.

This practice has fully tapped the resources of kindergartens, families and communities, enriched children’s learning experiences, and provided valuable references for the reconstruction of kindergarten learning spaces.

3. How can children’s experiences fuel child-rights-based innovation?

Martyna Sykta — UNICEF Poland

Keywords (assigned by the editors): child-rights-based innovation; participation; children’s experiences; UNICEF Poland; education

Abstract:

Context and approach

This presentation shares the perspective of UNICEF Poland as a non-governmental humanitarian organisation, specifically its Education and Participation Team, working at the intersection of children’s rights, participation, innovation, social engagement and education. It introduces an emerging, practice-based approach to child-rights-based innovation, developed through involvement of – between other stakeholders – schools, preschools, educators and children across different educational stages, including early childhood education (ECE).

The presentation outlines an approach that is currently being developed within UNICEF Poland and gradually integrated into work with educational institutions. Rather than presenting a finished model or a success story, it reflects an ongoing process – tested and refined through successive projects and initiatives.

At the core of this approach is an “experience loop” – a process of translating children’s lived experiences related to learning, wellbeing, relationships and everyday environments into actions and practices that support the realisation of children’s rights in educational contexts, improving their overall experience of childhood.

The approach is grounded in a ‘children as experts’ approach, which recognises children – including those in early years – as contributors to knowledge about their own lives. Through age-appropriate, play-based and participatory methods, children are engaged as researchers, explorers and co-creators within child rights-based innovation processes. Their experiences are not only expressed but actively interpreted and used as a starting point for change.

This process is supported by interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together perspectives from education, pedagogy, design, culture and social sectors. These cross-sectoral connections enable children’s experiences to be creatively transformed into meaningful responses that can inform educational practice.

Importantly, collecting and working with children's experiences can lead to different pathways of innovation: both 'moderated' innovations developed with professionals and applicable at institutional or system level and bottom-up, practice-based responses emerging in preschools, classrooms and local communities.

Thesis

UNICEF Poland's approach to child-rights-based innovation invites a shift in how children's role is understood – from beneficiaries of education towards active participants whose experiences and perspectives shape how learning environments, relationships and responses to their needs are developed.

From approach to practice: schools and ECE as a sandbox for innovation

UNICEF Poland aims to integrate children's rights into everyday educational and early childhood practice by recognising schools and preschools as spaces where rights are experienced in practice. The approach strengthens the agency of both children and educators, positioning them as partners in shaping environments that support learning, participation and wellbeing.

Educators play a central role in activating the experience loop. Their role extends beyond knowledge transmission towards allyship: facilitating participation, observing and interpreting children's experiences and translating them into pedagogical responses. In this sense, teachers and educators become innovators in everyday practice. UNICEF Poland supports them through toolkits and guidelines that encourage attentiveness, dialogue and observation.

Children, in turn, are invited to reflect on their daily experiences and feelings – through drawing, writing, conversation, cultural probes and gamified tools – and to shape everyday practices by imagining, discussing and communicating ideas for improvement.

Examples of co-created interventions include the creation of regeneration corners, class agreements and student-led presentations with recommendations for school leadership. These small-scale, everyday actions can be understood as micro-innovations – practical responses emerging directly from children's experiences. They are feasible within existing educational structures and can be implemented both in early childhood settings and in schools.

The approach emphasises practicality: educators are encouraged to start with small steps and gradually build more participatory and responsive practices within everyday routines.

Practice-based examples: from experience to innovation in action

The approach is illustrated through several ongoing initiatives developed by UNICEF Poland:

- As part of World Children's Day 2025, playful and age-appropriate tools were used to capture and aggregate children's everyday experiences related to selected child rights, including those of younger children in ECE. These tools enabled children to express how they experience their rights, forming a basis for reflection and action.
- Through collaboration with design students from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, insights gathered during WCD 2025 are translated into design responses that improve children's use of urban space, contributing to more inclusive and child-friendly environments for wellbeing, development and play.
- The initiative "Mam prawo do" supports children in understanding their rights, expressing their ideas and initiating small-scale changes in school and early childhood settings. These changes take the form of everyday improvements co-created with educators and presented to school leadership.

– The programme “Prawa dzieci się liczą”, currently under development, is envisioned as a “laboratory” for connecting children’s experiences across educational stages – including ECE –with participation and influence. It combines elements such as citizen science, creative expression and public dialogue to translate children’s perspectives into practical responses.

Learning, development and children’s agency

Working with children’s experiences in this way supports both participation and learning. Children develop an understanding of their rights in practice, a sense of agency, confidence in expressing their views and early experiences of shared decision-making. They also strengthen collaboration, empathy and communication skills.

These processes enhance learning itself. When children see that their perspectives are taken seriously and lead to change, their engagement increases, relationships become stronger and learning environments become more responsive to their needs – particularly in ECE, where learning is closely linked to play, relationships and everyday experiences.

Play, creativity and expression as mechanisms of innovation

Within this approach, play, creativity, exploration and freedom of expression are not only fundamental rights, but core mechanisms through which children’s experiences are articulated and transformed into innovation.

Especially in early childhood contexts, where children communicate through drawing, storytelling, movement and interaction, these forms of expression provide a foundation for generating new ideas and practices when used intentionally in pedagogy.

Ethical considerations

Working with children’s experiences as a source of innovation requires careful attention to ethics and safeguarding. Participation must be voluntary, developmentally appropriate and supported by educators who ensure a respectful and secure environment.

Conclusion

These reflections highlight the need for systemic solutions that can sustain and scale experience-based innovation over time. Meaningful change requires not only individual initiatives but structures that embed children’s participation into everyday educational practice.

Such systems need to

- create conditions for meaningful, safe and developmentally appropriate participation of children, including in early childhood education
- support child rights stakeholders, including teachers and educators, in recognising and working with children’s experiences as part of everyday practice
- offer practical, accessible and adaptable ways of turning experiences into ideas and responses
- provide pathways for implementing these ideas and translating them into lasting change

In this approach, innovation is not a singular activity, but an ongoing, practice-based process rooted in children’s right to express their views and influence matters that affect them.

Within UNICEF Poland, this also reflects a shift from one-off actions and campaigns towards more structured, long-term programmes. The aim is to ensure that mechanisms linking children’s experiences with change are embedded in practice, involve different stakeholders and can operate consistently over time.

4. Children Don't Just Need a Voice. They Need Power: Participatory Governance and Community-Building in Democratic Schools in Poland and Abroad

Olga Kulesza — *European Democratic Education Community and Bullerbyn Foundation*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): democratic schools; participatory governance; children's rights; community-building; Janusz Korczak

Abstract:

Contemporary education systems often recognize the importance of children's rights and participation; however, in practice, learners' involvement in decision-making frequently remains limited or symbolic. This presentation will draw on the experience of democratic schools associated with the European Democratic Education Community (EUDEC), as well as practices developed in Polish democratic schools, where children are recognized as full rights holders and active co-creators of school life.

Our approach is rooted in the pedagogical tradition of Janusz Korczak and grounded in the understanding that children's rights are an integral part of human rights. Education should therefore enable the meaningful realization of these rights in everyday experience. As demonstrated by research and long-standing practice within democratic schools in Poland and internationally, a key condition is the creation of structures that allow children to participate in decisions affecting their lives and learning, rather than positioning them merely as recipients of education.

The presentation will introduce concrete organizational and pedagogical practices, including school meetings facilitated by children, shared decision-making regarding the rules and daily functioning of the school, and children growing into taking responsibility for contributing to the community, both individually and in groups. Particular attention will be given to the experiences of younger children under the age of eight, who actively participate in meetings, mediation processes, and community activities, including educational initiatives. In Polish democratic schools, early childhood and primary-aged children constitute approximately 10% of the community, which is typically organized as a mixed-age environment.

The presentation will also address conflict resolution practices based on restorative justice, particularly restorative circles, which replace traditional punitive approaches. These practices support the development of responsibility, empathy, and the ability to take multiple perspectives into account.

The experiences presented demonstrate that children who grow up in environments grounded in trust and shared decision-making naturally develop social and civic competences, including negotiation skills and the capacity to co-create solutions that respond to the needs of different community members. These experiences suggest that children's participation is not only a normative value but a necessary condition for their well-being, intrinsic motivation, and holistic development. Children develop a deeper understanding of their own needs and resources, which in turn support their ability to recognize and respond empathetically to the needs of others.

In this presentation, I will demonstrate that recognizing the child as a rights holder requires not only declarative commitments, but above all a transformation of everyday practices towards shared decision-making, responsibility, and relationships grounded in mutual respect and trust.

5. “You sound angry. Do you feel angry?” – Supporting toddlers’ voices in real life ethical dilemmas

Sara Eliasson — *University of Gothenburg, Sweden*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): toddlers; agency; ethical dilemmas; sociocultural perspective; preschool

Abstract:

This project is underpinned by sociocultural perspectives of children’s agency (Wertsch et al. 1993) where agency is understood as a collaborative and social endeavor broader than the single individual’s actions. Agency is conceptualised as encompassing toddlers’ rights and possibilities to active participation in activities and relations that matter to them and to contribute to, change (cf. Borg & Pramling Samuelsson 2022), and resist (Pramling et al., 2024) these activities and their participation. The presentation focuses toddlers’ (1 – 3 years) communication of their intentions and feelings in interactions in preschool. With the aim of enabling toddlers’ voices and contributions in real life ethical dilemmas and problem solving, this project focuses on how toddlers can be supported in their emotional development, social interactions, and expressing their feelings and intentions through non-verbal and verbal interactions in everyday situations.

This project highlights significant aspects when organising opportunities for toddlers to participate and to voice their opinions, feelings, and intentions. These aspects entail preschool teachers’ approach and organisation of educational settings, encompassing acknowledging feelings as important and valid interactions, a slower pace and active participation in toddlers’ interactions and a specific care towards toddlers’ non-verbal and verbal communication (cf. Quennerstedt et al. 2014). Organisational aspects relate to creating opportunities for interactions, systematic introduction to practical tools for voicing emotions, conflict-solving, supporting speech by using complementary signs, and dramatic play to enact everyday ethical dilemmas and embodied expressions of various feelings.

6. The Enactment of Children’s Right to Leisure and Educational Responses in Kindergarten: An Anthropological Study of Kindergarten L in China

Yuan Zhou — *East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): right to leisure; children’s rights; kindergarten; anthropological study; China

Abstract:

Background

Children’s leisure is not merely the leftover margins of preschool daily arrangements, but an important site where children’s rights are realised and their voices are expressed. However, within highly structured preschool everyday life, these “interstitial moments” are often regarded by teachers as the most chaotic parts of the day and are therefore easily overlooked. From children’s perspective, however, these neglected temporal gaps are precisely the moments they experience as most “leisure-like.”

Objective

This study explores how children’s right to leisure is recognised and enacted in preschool everyday life, and how it may be translated into actionable educational responses. Specifically, it examines the actual conditions

of children’s leisure, children’s lived experiences of leisure, and the educational concerns embedded in preschool leisure life.

Methods

Drawing on the theory of interpretive reconstruction in the new sociology of childhood, this study adopts ethnographic methods, including participant observation and child interviews. The research team conducted six months of fieldwork in a senior preschool class of 5–6-year-old children at Preschool L in China. In this study, children’s leisure in the preschool setting is defined as the moments that children can autonomously appropriate—or actively secure—within the interstices of prescribed routines, together with the activities and experiences that occur in those moments.

Results

The findings show that within seemingly busy preschool everyday life, children, as agentic actors, demonstrate interpretive-reconstructive wisdom in practising their right to leisure. First, children “produce” leisure in the cracks of rules through embodied actions and linguistic strategies. Along the axes of autonomy and participation, their leisure takes the form of a five-level continuum: passive leisure, observational leisure, semi-participatory leisure, strategic leisure, and integrative leisure. Second, children’s leisure experience involves a three-dimensional structure of body, time, and space: bodily experience shifts from being disciplined to embodied awareness, temporal experience shifts from detachment to resonance, and spatial experience shifts from segregation to negotiated co-construction. At the same time, the study identifies three intertwined core concerns in children’s preschool leisure life: scarcity of leisure time, spatial segregation of leisure, and alienation of leisure experience.

Conclusion

Children’s leisure should not be understood as leftover time within preschool daily routines. Educational responses should move beyond an instrumental understanding of leisure and recognise its intrinsic value. The study further calls for a shift from adult control to children’s autonomy, and from spatio-temporal separation to resonance and reflection, so that children’s leisure voices can be genuinely heard and meaningfully responded to in preschool everyday life.

The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice 6	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 09:00–10:30 Room: 4.8 Language: English Chair: Tianyi Ma	

1. Hearing and Echo: A Model of Children's Participation Practice in Drama in Education from Korczak's Perspective

Si Chen — *Soong Ching Ling Kindergarten*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): drama in education; participation; multimodal expression; Janusz Korczak; kindergarten

Abstract:

Korczak's declaration that "There are no children, there are people." establishes the child as a subject of full rights. In kindergarten practice, however, "listening to children" is often narrowed to "listening to children

speak," systematically silencing those less verbally adept. Malaguzzi's poetic assertion that "the child has a hundred languages" is interpreted in this study as children's multimodal self-expression through body, action, facial expression, spatial positioning, and symbolic representation. Drama in Education, with the safe protection of the "Role Cloak" and the multimodal space of the "Dramatic Frame," offers a unique arena for hearing the "hundred languages."

Drawing on a two-year action research study of Drama in Education at Soong Ching Ling Kindergarten, this study constructs an "Expression—Listening—Participation" model of children's participation practice:

Step 1: Five Channels of Children's Multimodal Expression: (1) Body Channel (posture and gesture); (2) Action Channel (meaning constructed through doing); (3) Expression and Voice Channel (paralanguage); (4) Spatial Channel (narrative through position and distance); (5) Symbolic Channel (imaginative transformation of props and signs).

Step 2: Three Strategies for Teachers' Full-Channel Listening: Suspending the "verbal primacy" assumption to open multimodal attention; using the three-step "Describe—Confirm—Extend" method to respond to non-verbal expression; designing low-threshold entry points for silent children (e.g., substituting a role action for a verbal answer).

Step 3: Five-Tier Spectrum of Progressive Realization of Participation Rights. Drawing on Hart's "Ladder of Participation" and Shier's "Pathways to Participation," children's participation rights in Drama in Education unfold across five progressive tiers: (1) Directive Participation: Physical Presence, Sensory Awakening; (2) Selective Participation: Preference Expressed, Partial Empowerment; (3) Negotiative Participation: Opinions Incorporated, Rules Co-Constructed; (4) Creative Participation: Imagination Led, Plots Co-Created; (5) Transferable Participation: Drama Strategies Applied to Real-Life Problem-Solving.

These three steps form a sequential chain: children voice themselves through multimodal channels, teachers capture these signals using full-channel strategies, and children's participation rights are progressively realized along the spectrum. Thus, the triadic "Expression—Listening—Participation" model reveals the pathway for realizing children's participation rights in Drama in Education: every language of the child deserves to be heard, and every act of hearing should transform into an echo of participation. This is both the concrete practice of Korczak's declaration that "There are no children, there are people" in the preschool context, and a feasible ladder for moving "children's voice" from rhetoric to classroom reality.

2. Towards Listening: A Critical Discourse Analysis of China's Early Childhood Education Policy (2012–2022)

Tianyi Ma — *School of Educational Science, South China Normal University, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): critical discourse analysis; early childhood education policy; children's voice; quality standards; China

Abstract:

Responding to the OMEP theme "When a Child Speaks" and Janusz Korczak's educational philosophy, this study conducts a critical discourse analysis of two milestone policy documents defining national quality standards: the Early Learning and Development Guidelines (2012) and the Quality Assessment Guide for Kindergartens (2022). Situated within China's macro-transition towards "high-quality relational development" in early childhood education (ECE), the research utilizes NVivo 12 software and Fairclough's three-dimensional

framework. The study argues that the shift in assessment targets—from children's developmental outcomes to adults' pedagogical processes—represents not merely an iteration of quality paradigms, but a profound reconstruction of national educational structural logic.

Data analysis reveals three core transformations signifying a substantive leap toward child-centeredness:

- (1) Discursive Inversion: A definitive shift from unidirectional disciplinary verbs (e.g., require, cultivate) to bidirectional relational actions (e.g., observe, listen, respond).
- (2) Reconstruction of the "Image of the Child": Children are re-conceptualized from passive carriers of developmental indicators to active creators of play and "citizens of the present" endowed with the right to speak.
- (3) Structural Inversion of Accountability: Quality assessment metrics shift substantively from evaluating children's compliance to scrutinizing adults' listening and interaction quality, accomplishing a de-disciplinary devolution of power.

Ultimately, this decade-long policy evolution does not negate the original child-centered intent of the 2012 Guidelines, but achieves a "de-disciplinary" discursive upgrading. By shedding the inevitable standardization inertia of transitional texts and transferring compliance pressure from children to adults, the state establishes the discursive legitimacy of "listening to children" at the macro-policy level. This trajectory contributes a rigorous, exemplary Chinese paradigm for institutionalizing children's rights within mega-scale education systems.

3. When a Child Speaks, Does Quality Evaluation Listen? Integrating Children's Rights into China's ECCE Quality Assessment Framework

Xidan Zhao — *affiliation not provided*

Yumei Han — *affiliation not provided*

Jiacheng Shi — *Center for Studies of Education and Psychology of Ethnic Minorities in Southwest China of Southwest University, Chongqing, China*

Keywords: Children's rights in quality assessment, ECCE quality evaluation, international comparison, children's voice and agency, fuzzy comprehensive evaluation, SDG 4.2

Abstract:

Janusz Korczak taught us that children are not future citizens but persons here and now—deserving of respect and voice. In his orphanage, he established children's parliaments and peer courts, proving that even the youngest can meaningfully participate in decisions affecting their lives. Yet a critical question persists: when we assess ECCE quality, does our evaluation truly listen to the child? Despite the rights affirmed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, SDG Target 4.2, and the Tashkent Declaration, prevailing quality assessment frameworks—both internationally and in China—remain predominantly constructed from adult perspectives, emphasizing structural indicators while marginalizing children's lived experiences and participatory voices. This study addresses this gap through international comparative analysis. Rights-sensitive quality frameworks from the United States (ECERS-3, CLASS), England (EYFS), Australia (NQS), New Zealand (ERO), and the OECD (Starting Strong) were systematically reviewed to identify how they embed—or fail to embed—children's voice, agency, and well-being as core quality criteria. Informed by this review, a comprehensive assessment model was constructed for the Chinese ECCE context, encompassing four

dimensions—physical environment, care and nurturing, pedagogical quality, and children’s learning and holistic development—with 25 indicators. A fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method was adopted precisely because children’s experiences of quality—belonging, emotional safety, creative expression, and participatory engagement—resist precise quantification. The Analytic Hierarchy Process determined indicator weights through expert consultation, and the model was piloted in public kindergartens in a Chinese city. The findings revealed a telling pattern: structural and material dimensions scored relatively high, while indicators most closely aligned with children’s rights—active participation, creative expression, and holistic development—showed significantly greater room for improvement. This suggests that even in well-resourced settings, children’s voices remain insufficiently centered—echoing Korczak’s insistence that we attend not only to what children say, but to what they experience. This study offers an internationally informed yet culturally responsive model that integrates rights-based principles into quality measurement. The findings suggest that assessment systems should systematically incorporate indicators of children’s participatory experience, and that educator professional development should foreground responsiveness to children’s voices. Quality assessment, reimagined through Korczak’s vision, becomes not merely a technical instrument but an ethical commitment: when a child speaks, our systems should listen.

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4. A Study on Listening to the "Silent Language" of Toddlers in Nursery Classes

Xuxi Sun — *Soong Ching Ling Kindergarten, China Welfare Institute*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): toddlers; nursery education; listening to children; non-verbal communication; China

Abstract:

With the continuous advancement of China’s kindergarten-toddler integration policy, the demand for nursery education for children aged 2–3 has increased significantly. At this age, Children’s expressive language and self-regulation abilities remain at an early developmental stage, and their genuine developmental needs are often difficult to be identified and responded effectively by observation or questioning. How to truly listen to young children, discover their implicit needs, and provide appropriate support has become a key issue in enhancing the quality of toddler childcare.

Grounded in the authentic education context of childcare institutions in China, this study conducted a longitudinal investigation with 20 children aged 2–3 in Shanghai. Employing action research and case study, the research focused on the identification and support of toddlers’ “silent expressions”. Explicit expressions were captured using tools such as emotion boxes, art activities, talking dolls, and teachers’ sticky notes; and

interests were explored by providing diverse play materials and guiding children to use child-friendly cameras for self-documentation; furthermore, an autonomous, open daily living environment that supports expression was created to expand children's ways of communication channels. Ultimately, a multi-dimensional listening and interpreting system for toddlers' "silent language" was constructed.

The findings indicate that child-rights-based listening practice significantly promotes toddlers' emotional adaptation, sense of agency, and social development. The listening methods and support strategies developed in this study can be directly applied in daily caring and education practice, assisting teachers and caregivers in understanding children more accurately, reducing misunderstandings and education anxiety, and provide operable, replicable practical references for frontline nursery teachers to implement life-oriented, refined, and child-centered care and education.

5. From Listening to Empowerment: Kindergarten Practices That Empower Children “Three Types of Decision-Making”

Yalan Yang — *Chengdu Golden Apple Xinmeng Kindergarten*

Keywords: children's rights; three types of decision-making; child participation; kindergarten daily life; empowerment

Abstract:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child grants children the right to participate. Yet, in kindergarten, are children's voices truly heard? When adults monopolize discourse, forming a unidirectional cycle of teacher questions – child answers – teacher evaluation, listening often becomes a mere formality. This study asks: How can systematic empowerment genuinely enable children's voices to influence pedagogical decisions?

Grounded in over two decades of experience in life-oriented education, Chengdu Golden Apple Xinmeng Kindergarten has developed an empowerment framework known as the “Three Types of Decision-Making.” Built on daily life as the primary context, guided by real-world problems, and employing multiple approaches such as culture-building, teachers' reflective journals, interpretation of children's decision-making processes, and analysis of children's portfolios, the framework systematically enables children three types of decision-making power—individual decision-making, co-negotiation of rules, and problem-solving—which respectively support children's sense of agency, belonging, and efficacy. Progressing from the individual to the collective, and from daily routines to public affairs, these three types of decision-making together constitute a complete practical map of children's participation rights.

Individual decision-making empowers children in their daily lives. Teachers employ strategies such as offering limited choices, allowing extended decision-making time, and enabling children to experience natural consequences, thereby supporting children's autonomy in decisions about their daily routines. For example, children independently decide on the content and sequence of their activities during daily routines and play, as well as choosing their playmates, materials, and modes of action.

Co-construction of rules empowers children in classroom governance. Teachers organize collective discussions focused on authentic issues, listen to children's perspectives, and visually represent and document children's ideas, ensuring children's participation in the formulation and revision of classroom rules. For instance, children collaboratively discuss topics such as “how to play safely” and create classroom rule posters, thereby

contributing to environmental improvements. In various thematic exhibitions, children take the lead throughout the entire process—from design and setup to interpretation.

Problem-solving empowers children in public affairs. Through project-based inquiry, teachers reflect on questions directed to children, step back to observe, and provide resources as needed without making decisions on their behalf, thereby ensuring that children's voices are heard, acted upon, and respected as part of their right to participate in decision-making and propose solutions to public issues in the classroom and kindergarten. For example, each year before graduation, senior kindergarten children submit suggestions for kindergarten improvement to the principal, and the administration establishes formal channels to respond to and implement them.

Over twenty years of practical research have benefited teachers and children across more than 40 kindergartens within the Golden Apple Preschool Education Group, offering a feasible, practical framework for translating children's rights from declarations into daily educational practice. This is not merely listening; it is empowerment: enabling children to take true ownership of their own lives.

6. When Children Run Their Own Clubs: Participatory Practice in a Chinese Kindergarten

Yunzhu He — *Mianyang Garden Experimental Kindergarten*

Jinfeng Yuwen — *Shaanxi Wisdom Source Education Technology Co. LTD*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's clubs; participation; child-centredness; kindergarten; China

Abstract:

After more than two decades of curriculum reform, "child-centeredness" has become a core principle in Chinese early childhood education. Concepts such as "listening to children" and "respecting children" have been incorporated into policy documents and widely accepted across the field. However, how to systematically enact children's right to participation in daily practice remains a real challenge for kindergarten practitioners. This presentation presents a ten-year exploration of "Children's Project Clubs" at Mianyang Garden Experimental Kindergarten in Sichuan Province, China—a form of micro-social organization driven by children's interests, centered around authentic tasks, and involving children in the establishment, operation, and management of their own clubs.

In the formation stage of the project clubs, the teacher's core strategy was to share power by first "listening." Children discussed ideas independently, initiated proposals for clubs, and selected their preferred clubs by filling in their own registration forms. This enrollment mechanism went through three rounds of iteration, evolving from on-site queuing, to parent-assisted registration, and finally to children's independent registration. Each adjustment emerged from our efforts to truly hear children's real situations and needs.

In the operation stage, the teacher's strategy was to release power by "waiting a little longer." When the Supervision Club received complaints from peers, teachers restrained their impulse to intervene directly and instead left space for children to discuss possible solutions on their own. The children ultimately developed their own rules, posted them throughout the kindergarten, and even wrote apology letters to classes that had been unfairly penalized.

In the management stage, the teacher's strategy was to empower children by "stepping back". When the president of the Clay Club was impeached by members due to his attitude, the teacher did not act as a judge. Instead, the decision-making power was fully handed back to the club. Through three rounds of negotiation,

the children independently completed both the removal and reinstatement of the club president. Each year, more than 50 project clubs naturally emerge across the kindergarten, covering interest-based, service-oriented, research-based, and integrated types.

Over the past decade, through an ongoing cycle of "practice—reflection—adjustment," our deepest insight has been that the teacher's role transformation—from sharing power, to releasing power, to empowering children—is the key condition for the sustained growth of children's participation capacity. When teachers shift from being decision-makers to creators of enabling conditions, children aged 3 to 6 demonstrate negotiation, planning, and self-management abilities far beyond expectations.

At the same time, we openly acknowledge that tensions remain throughout the practice: Where are the boundaries of teachers' "stepping back"? When some clubs naturally dissolve as children's interests fade, should this be considered "failure" or a normal part of their lifecycle? When club leaders differ greatly in capability, when should teachers intervene? These unresolved questions are precisely what continue to drive our ongoing improvement.

This presentation offers a practice-based case from a kindergarten in western urban China for advancing children's participation rights, and seeks to address a practical question: in the ongoing deepening of child-centered reform in Chinese early childhood education, how can the participation rights of children aged 3 to 6 move from policy discourse into everyday practice? Our answer is simple: if we truly believe that young children are capable, then we must return every possible everyday decision-making opportunity to them.

The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice 7	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 11:00–12:30 Room: 3.1 Language: English Chair: Justyna Kusztal	

1. Organizing Self-Evaluation of Process quality in kindergartens from Child-Oriented Perspective

Ziyi Liu — *School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): self-evaluation; process quality; kindergarten; child perspective; UNCRC

Abstract:

Within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the recognition of children as rights-holders and active agents has become a pivotal focus in the reform of early childhood educational evaluation. The Reggio Emilia approach posits that children possess immense learning potential and are active constructors of their own knowledge. Despite progress, the evaluation of early childhood care and education in China is still characterized by a prevailing "the Discourse of Quality" and an adult-oriented bias. Such evaluations prioritize structural quality and rely on predetermined quantitative metrics to assess compliance, thereby treating children as measurable objects rather than active participants. The evaluation of managerialist tendency not only overlooks children's lived experiences in play and daily life but also fundamentally ignores their role as co-constructors of their own learning. Specifically, the behaviors and subjective experiences in concrete practices of children serve as critical feedback for improving educational quality. Concurrently, Studies indicate that external evaluation often fails to offer ongoing support for school development. The recognition of self-evaluation stems from its role in stimulating critical reflection, a process

essential for the continuous improvement of educational quality. However, much of the current research in China remains confined to theoretical conceptualizations, making them difficult to directly transplant into the educational practices of specific kindergartens. Additionally, research has found that the current practices of self-evaluation in Chinese kindergartens vary significantly in their level of implementation, with most institutions still predominantly relying on external evaluations and having yet to fully recognize the value of self-evaluation in enhancing quality. To effectively institutionalize routine self-evaluation mechanisms, it is imperative to immerse in the field and remain rooted in pedagogical practice. An in-depth exploration of the authentic landscape of kindergarten self-evaluation is essential to distilling operational insights and evidence-based experiences.

Based on this, this study, grounded in Social Constructivism and Fourth-Generation Evaluation theory, selects a public kindergarten in City N, a coastal city in Eastern China. The kindergarten is a premier provincial-level experimental kindergarten, recognized for its pioneering educational philosophy and practices. Adhering to the principle of "holistic child development via comprehensive education," it fosters an environment that respects children's innate creativity and agency. Notably, the kindergarten is actively exploring self-evaluation mechanisms, underpinned by an assessment framework that prioritizes the multidimensional growth of the child. Adopting a case study methodology, the study employs observation methods, interview methods, and physical artifact analysis methods. The study centers on activities such as garden-based teaching and research, curriculum deliberation, and teacher-child interactions. Through coding and analyzing the data, the study delves into exploring the key characteristics of the organization of kindergarten self-evaluation.

The findings aim to delineate an organizational patterns of self-evaluation in kindergarten process quality from child-oriented perspective within the context of Chinese society. In this model, children's authentic manifestations and needs constitute the core evaluative content. Staff members are afforded equitable opportunities to engage in evaluation, leveraging diverse and meticulous process-oriented data to reach consensus through dialogue and negotiation within an atmosphere of trust, openness, and transparency. Ultimately, the study reveals that by participating in campus-based self-evaluation, teachers undergo a reconstruction of their educational philosophies and an optimization of their pedagogical behaviors. This study helps to rectify the cognitive bias held by Chinese kindergartens regarding self-evaluation. It also contributes to diversifying the theoretical perspectives within the field of kindergarten self-evaluation and provides a valuable reference for Chinese kindergartens seeking to explore the kindergarten-based self-evaluation practices.

2. Listening to the Voices of Nature in Childhood: Reflections on Integrated Early Childhood Education Based on the Exploration of Children's Subject Roles

Jianqing Wen — *Shanghai Jing'an District Anqing Kindergarten*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): nature education; integrated early childhood education; children's subjectivity; kindergarten practice

Abstract:

Guided by the exploration of children's subject roles, this paper combines the practice of integrated early childhood education in our kindergarten, focuses on the integration of nature education with two characteristic school-based practices: "Flow Time" and "Appointment Activities", and reflects on the current

misunderstandings of "adult-centeredness" and "homogenization" in integrated early childhood education. Relying on "Flow Time", we break the boundaries of time, space and classes, and endow children with the right of independent choice; through "Appointment Activities", we take children's natural interests as the starting point to support them to independently initiate and implement nature-themed activities. This paper explores the path of integrated early childhood education with the exploration of children's subjectivity as the core and nature education as the carrier, advocates abandoning the traditional adult-led model, builds a platform for children's expression, promotes the transformation of integrated early childhood education from "stage connection" to "subject empowerment", highlights the concept of "child-centeredness", and constructs a child-oriented daily life in the kindergarten.

3. Decision-Making Discourse in the Turkish Animated Series *Pepee*: An Agency-Based Analysis

Melike Yörüko — *Bartın University*

Perihan Ünüvar — *Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): agency; decision-making discourse; animated series; *Pepee*; Türkiye

Abstract:

This study aims to examine how decision-making discourse is constructed in relation to agency representations in *Pepee*, an animated television series for preschool children broadcast on a national public channel in Türkiye. Drawing on Bandura's Agency Theory and Self-Determination Theory, the study analyzes the source of decision-making through four categories: individual agency (decisions produced by an individual regarding their own actions), collective agency (decisions jointly produced by more than one character), external control (decisions arising from external rules or obligations), and authoritative agency (situations in which one actor directs the behavior of others). The study was conducted within a qualitative research framework, and the data source consisted of the twenty most-watched episodes of the *Pepee* series on the YouTube platform. The research data were obtained through document analysis. The unit of analysis was defined as single sentences within the narrative that function as decision-making statements. Characters were classified as children or adults according to their social roles within the narrative. The data were analyzed using descriptive content analysis based on the predetermined agency categories. The findings indicate that the most frequently observed decision type in the series is collective agency, followed respectively by authoritative agency and individual agency. Expressions reflecting external control were found to be relatively limited compared to other decision types. In terms of agency ownership, a considerable proportion of decisions were produced by child characters. When agency relations were examined, the most common interaction pattern was identified as child-to-child decision orientations. These findings suggest that child characters in *Pepee* are represented as active decision-makers and social actors who influence their peers. Furthermore, the predominance of collective decision discourse highlights the emphasis on cooperation, peer interaction, and joint action in early childhood media content, which may also be associated with Türkiye's high-context and relatively collectivist cultural structure.

4. Slow Pedagogy as an Ethical Practice of Children's Rights in an Accelerated World

Kristín Dýrfjörð — *University of Akureyri*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): slow pedagogy; children's rights; Janusz Korczak; ethics; Iceland

Abstract:

Janusz Korczak's insistence on children as people of the present invites us to pause and reconsider what it means to take children seriously in education. His work continues to resonate in a time where childhood is increasingly shaped by speed, structure and expectations of efficiency.

In this presentation, Korczak's ethical perspective is brought into conversation with the idea of slow pedagogy. Drawing on research from Icelandic early childhood settings and teacher education, the presentation explores how time and pace are woven into everyday practices, often in ways that remain unnoticed, yet deeply influential in children's lives.

Questions of time emerge in small, ordinary moments: waiting, transitions, mealtimes and play. In these moments, children's possibilities to participate, to be heard and to belong are constantly negotiated. Voices from educators and student teachers point to a growing tension between a strong commitment to children's well-being and participation, and increasing organisational demands related to documentation, structure and accountability.

Within this landscape, slowing down does not appear as a technique or an additional task, but as a way of attending differently to what is already taking place. It allows educators to remain with children's initiatives, follow processes as they unfold, and create space for relationships, dialogue, and care.

By returning to Korczak in a contemporary context marked by acceleration (Rosa, 2019), and by drawing on perspectives of slow knowledge and stretched time (Clark, 2023), the presentation reflects on a central question: what might it mean, today, to meet children as people whose lives are lived now?

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5. Children's rights in court in the context of Korczak's concept of a child's right to be heard

Justyna Kusztal — *Uniwersytet Jagielloński*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): prawa dziecka; postępowanie sądowe; prawo do bycia wysłuchanym; Janusz Korczak; wymiar sprawiedliwości

Abstract:

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie sytuacji dziecka w postępowaniu sądowym z perspektywy praw dziecka, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem idei Janusza Korczaka. Problematyka praw dziecka w systemie wymiaru sprawiedliwości od wielu lat jest przedmiotem refleksji zarówno w praktyce pedagogicznej, jak i w dyskursie prawnopsycho logicznym. Z pedagogicznego punktu widzenia szczególne znaczenie przypisuje się korczakowskiej koncepcji prawa dziecka do bycia wysłuchanym, rozumianej jako fundamentalna zasada uznania dziecka za podmiot w procedurach sądowych. Prezentacja

konferencyjna będzie czerpać z częściowych ustaleń badań nad przesłuchaniem nieletnich w konflikcie z prawem, przeprowadzonych w ramach międzynarodowej akcji COST *Justice to Youth Language Needs*

(CA22139 Y-JustLang). Analiza materiału badawczego pozwala na identyfikację napięć między formalnymi procedurami prawnymi a rzeczywistą możliwością uwzględnienia głosu dziecka w procesie wymiaru sprawiedliwości.

Wnioski sformułowane na podstawie badania prowadzą do opracowania rekomendacji skierowanych do instytucji i profesjonalistów zaangażowanych w system wymiaru sprawiedliwości dla nieletnich. Zalecenia te koncentrują się na wzmocnieniu realnych warunków ochrony praw dziecka, w tym na zapewnieniu dzieciom rzeczywistej możliwości wyrażania swoich poglądów i odpowiedniego uwzględniania tych poglądów w toku postępowania.

6. Kindergarten Lunch Routines Through the Eyes of 4- to 5-Year-Olds

Yuxin Wu — 华东师范大学

Keywords (assigned by the editors): lunch routines; mosaic approach; children's perspectives; kindergarten; rules

Abstract:

This study adopts a child-centered perspective and employs the mosaic research method to exploration of 4-5-year-old Children's Cognition and Experience of Kindergarten Lunch Routine. The study found that young children can interpret lunch routines as "what to do" and "what not to do," perceiving them as teachers' requirements and safety guarantees. The majority of preschool children comply with rules such as "quiet dining" and "chewing slowly," but experience conflicting experiences regarding fixed seating arrangements and meal rhythm control, including a desire to sit with peers and pressure from prompting. While adhering to rules, young children adapt by using playful expressions or avoiding foods they dislike, demonstrating the interplay between their agency and the rules. The study recommends that teachers respect children's agency, listen to young children's voices, promote the collaborative development of rules, and strike a balance between order and autonomy.

The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice 8	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 14:00–15:30 Room: 4.18 Language: English Chair: Sara Eliasson	

1. "You have to follow my commands, you don't understand anything.", "I understand!" – Children Exercising Agency in Preschool Technology Activities

Sara Eliasson — University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's agency; technology education; preschool; sociocultural perspective; video observation

Abstract:

This study explores children as active contributors in expanding preschool technology activities by contributing to and challenging the technology knowledge. The study is guided by sociocultural perspectives of children's

agency where children are seen as active participants and contributors in democratic and dialogic interactions and negotiations where they share and reshape knowledge mediated by cultural tools (Wertsch et al. 1993). Children's and preschool teachers' interactions during technology activities were explored by means of video observation. Empirical data comprise 234 minutes of video recordings of technology activities involving six children aged 2-5 years and two preschool teachers in two Swedish preschools with a pronounced technology focus. Data were analysed using Socioculturally-informed Interaction Analysis (Wallerstedt et al., 2023) with the aim of exploring how children's agency emerges in interactions and how it shapes the unfolding activities. Two empirical episodes were systematically selected to illustrate how children's initiatives contributed to the technology activity. Throughout the research process, the ethical guidelines issued by The Swedish Research Council (2024) were adhered, with particular sensitivity to research with young children (Quennerstedt et al., 2014).

The results show that when children exercise agency (Pramling et al., 2024) their initiatives either contribute to or challenge the technology knowledge and that both kinds of initiatives led to similar outcomes. These outcomes entail an expanded focus and/or definition of the technology knowledge, as well as further support of children's participation related to technology. The results highlight the preschool teachers' crucial role in interpreting children's non-verbal interactions and identifying the technology knowledge these convey, thereby strengthening children's participation and opportunities to voice their knowledge.

Implications for research and practice include recognising that children's contributing and challenging initiatives as well as their creative and innovative abilities can be understood as technology-related principles which, through children's exercised agency, add breadth and depth to preschool technology activities.

2. Children's Voices and Participation in Nature: Revisiting Korczak's Educational Philosophy in Nature-Based Childcare

Chikako Shibata — Sendai University, Japan / Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine, Japan

Keywords (assigned by the editors): nature-based childcare; Janusz Korczak; children's voices; participation; Great East Japan Earthquake

Abstract:

In March 2011, the author was staying in Poland to study the educational philosophy of Janusz Korczak as part of a master's program at Fukushima University in Japan. While conducting research and standing in front of the Korczak monument in Warsaw, the Great East Japan Earthquake struck Japan. The disaster, followed by the nuclear accident, had profound consequences for communities and children's lives in northeastern Japan. This experience prompted the author to reconsider, within a contemporary social context, Korczak's lifelong commitment to the dignity of the child and the importance of listening to children's voices.

Janusz Korczak (1878–1942), a physician and educator, is widely recognized as one of the pioneers of children's rights. He argued that children should not be viewed merely as "future citizens," but as human beings living in the present. Children possess their own perspectives, emotions, and rights, and their voices deserve to be respected in everyday educational practice.

At the core of Korczak's educational philosophy lies the careful observation of children's lived experiences and a commitment to understanding their expressions with empathy and humility. Children's voices are not expressed solely through language. They also appear through play, emotions, bodily movements, and

interactions with their surrounding environments. Educators must therefore cultivate the sensitivity necessary to recognize these diverse forms of expression.

Korczak also emphasized the importance of educational environments that support children's autonomy, dignity, and sense of belonging. His educational practices included children's self-governance systems, peer courts, and summer camps where children lived and learned together in natural settings. These practices reflected his conviction that natural environments provide rich opportunities for exploration, cooperation, and emotional development.

This study aims to revisit Korczak's educational philosophy from the perspective of contemporary research on nature-based childcare and children's well-being. In particular, it explores how natural environments may function as pedagogical contexts that allow children's voices, agency, and emotional experiences to become visible and meaningful for educators.

Following the Great East Japan Earthquake, several challenges emerged in disaster-affected regions, including increased psychological stress among children, reduced opportunities for outdoor play, and restricted access to natural environments. These conditions highlighted the vulnerability of children's well-being during times of social and environmental crisis. At the same time, they prompted renewed consideration of the potential role of nature-based educational practices.

Based on these concerns, the author conducted an empirical study examining the effects of nature-based childcare on children's well-being. The research was implemented in four public kindergartens in northern Japan and involved 130 children aged five to six years. Using a class-based environmental intervention design, children were allocated to either a nature-based childcare group or a conventional childcare group. The intervention consisted of four nature-based sessions conducted over approximately one month between August and November 2022.

Children in the nature-based childcare group participated in outdoor sessions lasting approximately four hours. Activities included forest exploration, observation of plants and animals, cooperative play in natural environments, and various forms of experiential learning in nature.

The study employed multiple indicators to evaluate children's well-being, including behavioral measures and physiological stress-related indicators. These findings build upon previously published research examining physiological stress responses and gut microbiota in nature-based childcare (Shibata et al., 2025), extending the discussion to educational interpretations of children's behaviors and expressions in natural environments.

The results indicated changes in both behavioral indicators and stress-related markers among children who participated in nature-based activities. In addition, educators' observations suggested that outdoor environments encouraged spontaneous dialogue among children, exploratory behaviors, cooperative play, and richer emotional expression.

These observations provide an opportunity to reconsider what it means to "listen to children." In educational discourse, listening to children is often associated with encouraging verbal participation or dialogue. However, children's voices may also emerge through play, bodily activity, emotional responses, and interactions with the natural world. Natural environments may therefore create conditions that support children's meaningful participation in everyday educational experiences.

The year 2026 marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake. Revisiting Korczak's philosophy in this context offers an opportunity to reflect on how early childhood education can support children's well-being, resilience, and rights in times of social and environmental crisis.

Ultimately, listening to children involves not only hearing their words but also understanding the environments in which their voices emerge. Nature-based childcare therefore represents a promising educational approach that supports children's dignity, nurtures their well-being, and enables educators to more attentively listen to children's voices within everyday educational practice.

Revisiting Korczak's educational philosophy through this research also raises a broader question that Korczak devoted his life to: what does it truly mean to listen to children? Korczak's legacy continues to remind educators and researchers that listening to children requires careful observation of their everyday lives, respect for their dignity, and sensitivity to the environments in which their voices emerge. In this study, natural environments provided opportunities to observe children's expressions, curiosity, and relationships in ways that resonate strongly with Korczak's educational vision.

Korczak's ideas have therefore offered important inspiration for integrating nature-based childcare, medical perspectives on children's well-being, and attentive observation of children's experiences. Continuing this line of inquiry may contribute to deepening our understanding of children's voices and well-being in contemporary societies. In this sense, revisiting Korczak's philosophy is not only an academic exercise but also an ethical commitment to continue questioning how educators and researchers can support children's rights, dignity, and well-being in a changing world.

3. Young Children's Perceptions of "No Kids Zones": Child-Restricted Spaces in South Korea

Mina Kwon — *Ewha Womans University*

Soonhwan Kim — *Ewha Womans University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): No Kids Zones; children's perceptions; child-restricted spaces; South Korea; interviews

Abstract:

This study aimed to explore how young children perceive "No Kids Zones," child-restricted spaces in South Korea, from their own perspectives. The participants were 20 children aged 48–71 months enrolled in Kindergarten B located in City S, South Korea. In-depth interviews were conducted to examine their experiences, feelings, and perceptions regarding No Kids Zones. The findings revealed that young children's perceptions of No Kids Zones were categorized into four themes: understanding them as places with restricted access; expressing negative emotional responses, including feelings of exclusion and sadness; perceiving them as necessary for safety and order; and recognizing the need for self-regulation and patience as part of responsible behavior in public places. These findings suggest that young children hold ambivalent perceptions of No Kids Zones, viewing them as both exclusionary and necessary. This study reflects young children's voices in discussions of No Kids Zones and examines the issue from the perspective of children's rights.

4. Hearing Children with Dignity: The Institutional Positioning of Children's Voice in Chinese Early Childhood Education Policy

Shuang Hu — *East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's voice; early childhood education policy; policy analysis; dignity; China

Abstract:

Children's voice is widely endorsed in early childhood education (ECE), yet it is often unclear what this means in policy terms. References to respecting children, supporting expression, and responding to children's interests do not necessarily indicate that children are institutionally heard. This study explored that issue by examining not simply whether children's voice is present in Chinese ECE policy, but how it is positioned across different policy genres and how it changes as policy moves from curriculum discourse into evaluation, implementation, and supervision.

Methodologically, this study employs a theory-driven qualitative content analysis of six influential Chinese ECE policy texts at both national and local levels. These texts were purposively selected to represent different policy genres. A total of 566 coding units were generated from these texts. As for the coding framework, the study is grounded in a rights-based understanding of participation, drawing on the child's right to be heard and on Lundy's framework of Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence. This perspective makes it possible to move beyond a narrow equation of "voice" with self-expression alone and to examine whether policy provides meaningful opportunities for expression, adequate support, identifiable listeners, and pathways through which children's views may matter institutionally. This study also introduced the concept of institutional positioning to make visible both the presence and the transformation of children's voice in policy texts. Based on this, the study develops a four-layer coding framework. (1) text-type screening, distinguishing direct voice-related clauses, indirectly child-related clauses, and background governance clauses; (2) mechanism analysis, examining expression space, expression support, formal audience, and institutional influence; (3) procedural quality auditing, including respect, child-friendliness, inclusiveness, safety, transparency, and feedback; (4) institutional positioning, identifying whether children's voice is framed primarily as a right, a pedagogical resource, an evaluative evidence source, or an object of governance.

The findings show, first, that children's voice is not absent from Chinese ECE policy, but neither is it developed as a clear and independent policy strand. Most policy clauses do not address children's voice directly; Instead, children's perspectives are embedded within broader concerns such as classroom activity design, teacher-child interaction, learning support, observation, quality monitoring, and institutional regulation. This suggests that the policy treatment of children's voice is predominantly indirect and mediated rather than explicit.

Second, the analysis reveals a clear imbalance in the institutional mechanisms supporting children's voice. Across the six texts, references to expression space and expression support are substantially more common than references to formal audience and institutional influence. In other words, policy is relatively well developed in encouraging children to express themselves and in asking teachers to support such expression, but much less developed in specifying who formally listens to children, how children's views enter decision-making, or how feedback is provided after children's views are expressed. This is an important finding because it suggests that children are more often positioned as participants in educational interaction than as subjects of formally recognized participatory rights.

Third, strong differences emerge across policy genres. In curriculum and developmental guidance texts, children's voice is predominantly framed as a pedagogical resource. Here, children's questioning, choosing, discussing, exploring, and expressing are linked to play, activity design, interaction, and learning support. In operational regulation texts, children's voice is more weakly articulated and is often embedded in broader institutional norms concerning daily routines, order, and organization. In quality evaluation, local implementation, and supervision texts, however, children's voice is more frequently transformed into observable indicators, professional evidence, and governable quality markers.

Fourthly, in the translation of national local policies, children's voices show a clear trend of governance enhancement: compared to national level texts that retain more conceptual and educational expressions, local implementation and supervision texts significantly increase the proportion of scoring standards, implementation procedures, result application, and responsibility for reform, making it easier for children's voices to transform from "ideas/methods" to "evidence/governance" objects.

This study shows that children's voice in Chinese ECE policy is neither simply absent nor fully institutionalized; Rather, it is unevenly distributed and differently positioned across policy genres. Across the six texts, children's voice is most often embedded in broader pedagogical and regulatory discourse rather than developed as an explicit policy strand in its own right. A clear pattern emerges: curriculum and developmental guidance texts are more likely to frame children's voice as a pedagogical resource linked to play, participation, expression, and learning support, whereas evaluation and implementation texts are more likely to translate children's voice into observable indicators, professional evidence, and governable quality markers. At the same time, the policy is considerably stronger in providing opportunities and support for children's expression than in specifying formal audience, institutional influence, transparency, and feedback. In this sense, children in Chinese ECE policy are more often encouraged to speak than institutionally guaranteed to be heard. The study therefore contributes to international debates by showing that the key analytical issue is not whether policy mentions children's voice, but how children's voice is positioned, transformed, and narrowed as policy moves across genres and governance levels. This finding invites renewed international attention to how child-centred policy discourse may coexist with limited procedural realization of children's right to be heard.

5. Researching with Children on their Educational Trajectory through Early Childhood Education

Gabriela Etchebehere — *Universidad de la República*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): research with children; transition to primary school; children's rights; educational trajectories; Uruguay

Abstract:

This paper presents a line of research from the training space "Interventions Promoting Children's Rights" of the Early Childhood and Initial Education Program at the Faculty of Psychology, University of the Republic (Uruguay). It summarizes the results of various studies conducted over several years and in different schools within the framework of interventions focused on the transition from Kindergarten to Primary school. This research incorporates the children's perspective regarding their educational trajectory through Early Childhood Education.

General Objective: To examine the children's perspective on the educational trajectory of 5-year-old groups in Kindergartens in Montevideo.

Specific Objectives

To identify the ideas, life stories, and experiences that children relate concerning their trajectory through the initial level.

To analyze the emotions children are able to identify in relation to their time in kindergarten up to the present.

To understand how boys and girls give meaning to their educational trajectory at the time of graduation and transition to primary school.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology: The study is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) and the concept of child protagonism (Cussianovich, 2001), recognizing children as subjects with progressive autonomy. It frames a paradigm shift by "developing research with children rather than research on children" (Castro et al., 2011). Children are considered active protagonists and co-researchers, recognized as experts and meaning-builders. The methodology employed is participatory action research, using playful conversations and open-ended questions. This approach dialogues with Janusz Korczak's philosophy, ensuring meaningful participation and valuing children's voices.

Results and Conclusions: Recurring results show that children identify aspects of their trajectory from age 3 onwards, including previous institutions (CAIF). They mention bonds, teachers, the relevance of play, and peer interaction as favorite aspects. These investigations demonstrate that a rights-based approach allows access to the child's perspective. Actively listening to them—recognizing them as protagonists and experts in their own lives—enriches our understanding and reveals essential viewpoints to ensure protected educational trajectories and integral development.

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PLAY, CREATIVITY, AND EXPRESSION

Play, Creativity, and Expression 1	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 14:00–16:00 Room: 4.8 Language: English Chair: Iskender Gelir	

1. Digital Data Citizenship: Empowering Preschoolers' Agency through Tablet-Based Risky Play Assessment

Neslihan Tuğçe Özyeter — *Kocaeli University*

Esra Ünlüer — *Kocaeli University*

H. Gözde Ertürk Kara — *Kocaeli University*

Levent Durdu — *Kocaeli University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): digital citizenship; risky play; self-report assessment; child-centred digital design; agency

Abstract:

Research aims

This study examines child-centered digital design as a tool for active digital citizenship. The psychometric properties of the digitized Willingness to Risk in Play Scale–Pictorial (WRiPS-P) were evaluated, exploring how its private self-reporting platform fosters autonomy and bypasses adult-biased risk aversion

Relationship to previous research works

Traditional assessments often rely on adult observations. This research addresses the gap where digital documentation is "about" rather than "by" children, repositioning digital tools as sites for participatory pedagogy

Theoretical and conceptual framework

Grounded in the Sociology of Childhood and Gibson's (1979) Affordances, the concept of "Digital Data Citizenship" is introduced, defining the child's right to own and represent their data. Choice within a digital interface is viewed as a foundational democratic experience.

Paradigm, methodology and methods

Using a quantitative paradigm, the 15-item WRiPS-P was digitized for tablets with introductory verbal instructions and synchronized audio-narrations for each item. To ensure navigational competency, a brief familiarization task was completed. This design facilitated independent navigation regardless of literacy levels. To date, [N=300+] children (aged 4–6) from 'open' and 'gated' neighborhoods have been involved. To maximize agency and minimize social desirability bias, the pace and completion were independently controlled by the children

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval and informed consent were obtained. Beyond confidentiality, children's data ownership was prioritized. Their right to free expression was supported through ongoing assent without adult intervention

Main finding or discussion

The tablet-based WRiPS-P is psychometrically valid. Preliminary results indicate the child-led format effectively captures diverse risk-taking profiles. Neighborhood-type analyses are ongoing.

Implications, practice or policy

This model amplifies the "child's voice" in policy-making, advocating for child-led digital documentation and data-driven policies that prioritize children's rights in restricted urban environments.

2. The effects of integrating gestures into picture book storytelling on preschoolers' symbol recognition and phonological awareness

Chiu-hua Huang — *National Pingtung University, Department of Early Childhood Education*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): gestures; picture books; storytelling; phonological awareness; symbol recognition

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of integrating iconic and beat gestures into picture book storytelling on Taiwanese-Mandarin-speaking preschoolers' symbol recognition and phonological awareness. For Taiwanese children, Mandarin Phonetic Symbols serve as a crucial phonetic bridge to learning Chinese characters. Proficiency in this phonetic system empowers learners to decode pronunciations independently, thereby facilitating subsequent vocabulary acquisition. Many preschools integrate nursery rhymes into daily activities to enhance children's Mandarin Phonetic Symbols and phonological awareness. However, optimizing the effectiveness of these phonological activities often requires a range of multimodal instructional supports, such as gestures and visual aids, to facilitate children's cognitive processing. Teacher gestures provide essential instructional scaffolding for young learners (Goldin-Meadow, 2000). Specifically, iconic gestures facilitate the comprehension of word meaning through semantic representation, while beat gestures enhance learners' phonological learning by emphasizing the rhythmic structure of speech (McNeill, 1992). Both have been shown to promote cognitive development and learning efficiency in preschoolers. This study adopted a mixed-methods research. The quantitative component utilized a quasi-experimental design with pretest and posttest measures to evaluate learning outcomes. The measurement dimensions of the present study include Mandarin Phonetic Symbols recognition and phonological awareness. Complementing the quantitative findings, the qualitative analysis triangulated data from children's artifacts and children's multimodal behaviors during classroom interactions. This approach afforded a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive and embodied learning process. Prior to the formal experiment, informed parental consent was obtained for all participants, and each child completed the PPVT-R (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised). The participants in this experiment were 5-6-year-old preschoolers, with 27 in the experimental group and 29 in the control group. The experimental group incorporated iconic and beat gestures into storytelling to conduct Mandarin Phonetic Symbols and phonological awareness activity. The instructional interventions spanned 12 weeks, with sessions once a week. Conversely, the control group solely engaged in storytelling without any additional interventions. The results indicated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in Mandarin Phonetic Symbol recognition and syllable-level homophone awareness, but there was no difference in rime-level awareness in Chinese characters. Furthermore, qualitative analysis of children's worksheets revealed that two children in the experimental group spontaneously utilized pictorial representations of gestures to express their names. Observations during the activities also showed that children's spontaneous gestures were used to scaffold their own thought processes when expressing ideas. These findings validate the theoretical proposition that gestures serve as a crucial cognitive scaffold for preschoolers, warranting further investigation.

3. Play as a Primary Mode of Expression: Supporting Imagination, Emotional Processing, and Holistic Development

Fadi Bani Mostafa — *National Academy for Childhood Development*

Fatima Boush — *National Academy for Childhood Development*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): play; emotional expression; imagination; emotion regulation; holistic development

Abstract:

Play serves as children's primary mode of expression in early childhood. It allows them to communicate thoughts, emotions, and understandings through symbolic and imaginative activity. In child-led contexts, play supports exploration of roles, scenarios, and social dynamics. This process helps children develop cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills, and innovative thinking within secure and supportive environments.

This synthesis of evidence addresses how play enables emotional expression and emotion regulation. Through arts-based activities such as movement, storytelling, dramatic enactment, and symbolic play, children process complex feelings, develop empathy, and build greater emotional stability. These outcomes are strengthened in settings that value dialogue and mutual respect rather than adult-led direction.

Play also contributes to broader developmental outcomes. It promotes social competence through collaboration, perspective-taking, and negotiation. It strengthens language and motor skills in meaningful contexts. It supports self-regulation through sustained engagement. Cultural integration plays an important role as well. When children engage with stories, music, and traditions from diverse backgrounds, they connect their personal expression to shared heritage and develop a stronger sense of inclusive identity.

Recent research supports these connections. A 2024 meta-analysis found a positive link between pretend play and social competence, with the quality of play, particularly social forms, proving more important than quantity alone (Smits-van der Nat et al., 2024). A 2023 study showed that mature pretend play accounts for about 68 percent of the variance in self-regulation skills during play episodes, especially through role adherence, peer coordination, and emotional control (Bredikyte & Brandisauskiene, 2023).

Together, these findings emphasize the importance of prioritizing high-quality, child-initiated play in educational settings. This approach addresses contemporary constraints on free exploration and advances holistic development. It recognizes children as competent individuals in the present, deserving environments of trust and respect where play functions as an essential pathway for independence, emotional well-being, agency, and full participation in their own growth. Practical recommendations include designing flexible spaces that invite exploration and positioning educators as facilitators who observe and scaffold rather than direct or control, thereby supporting rights-based early education that promotes dignity and nurtures potential across social, emotional, and cognitive domains.

4. The Block Area as a Space for Young Children to express Agency and Creativity

Iskender Gelir — *Sultan Qaboos University*

Muna Al-Siyabi — *Sultan Qaboos University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): block play; agency; creativity; imaginary situations; Oman

Abstract:

Block area is mainly considered a space where children engage in unstructured play with blocks. In this study, we examine imaginary situations in the block area where children engage in a variety of activities, such as engineering and taking on different roles in a preschool setting in Oman. We also investigate how they enact their agency through making choices and using languages. In recent years, there has been considerable scholarly interest in children's agency. We aim to contribute to this discussion by shedding light on children's agency in the block area. Theoretically, our study draws on Vygotsky's (1967) view of play as an imaginary situation. The goal of this study is to contribute to the conference theme "Play, Creativity and Expression" by examining children's agency, creativity and expression in block area. The study adopts a qualitative methodology, including observations and semi-structured interviews. The study includes direct classroom observations conducted by the authors and interviews with six teachers. Children were observed in the block area, which is a designated place in each class. Two children played in the block area on a daily basis. The setting is bilingual (Arabic and English) and includes two classes: one Arabic-medium and one English-medium. Each classroom had three teachers. Our analysis of children's play in the block area shows that children create imaginary situations in which they act as engineers to design templates and construct buildings. The findings also indicate that children exercise their agency by using Arabic as the language of their play in English class.

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5. Listening to Children's Play: The Ontological Significance of Children's Play and Its Educational Implications

Ruichen Li — *Faculty of Education, East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): play; ontology; instrumental rationality; philosophy of education; early childhood education

Abstract:

In contemporary early childhood education, play has become an important form of educational activity, yet it is still frequently understood within a framework of instrumental rationality. First, some parents and teachers mistakenly regard play as an external means of serving knowledge acquisition, ability training, and socialization goals. Second, play is often viewed as a pre-rational, immature, and transitional activity on the way toward the development of rational cognition. Third, when teachers observe and assess play activities, play is often reduced to a process that can be quantified, measured, and evaluated. While such understandings do highlight the functional value of play, they obscure its significance for children's very mode of being and compress the space of imagination, creativity, and expression that play affords. In response, this paper seeks to reinterpret children's play from the perspectives of the phenomenology of play and ontology. Rather than confining play to its instrumental pedagogical value, it examines children's play, on the one hand, as a metaphor for the cosmos from an ontological perspective, and, on the other hand, as an existential mode in which the child is a playful being and play constitutes one of the child's modes of expression.

The paper first traces the intellectual prehistory of the phenomenology of play by analyzing children's play as an ontological metaphor. In ancient Greece, Heraclitus was the first to connect children, play, and the

ontological movement of the cosmos, treating children's play as an important metaphor for grasping cosmic generation and flux. Moreover, children retain an uncultivated, pre-rational state and preserve an interwoven relation between subject and object; in this sense, they are beings especially close to the ontological movement of the cosmos. Children and adults are not two opposing poles, but rather interpenetrate and transform into one another within the movement of the cosmos. In this respect, Heraclitus inaugurated the philosophical proposition of understanding the essence of the cosmos through children's play. In the nineteenth century, Nietzsche inherited Heraclitus's ontological inquiry into children's play and further argued that children's play not only symbolizes the generative process of the cosmos, but also offers the individual an aesthetic perspective for apprehending the world as a whole. At the same time, from the standpoint of ethical value, he described the child as an innocent being endowed with a spirit of free play and a creative instinct, capable of breaking away from old values and creating new ones as a fresh beginning. From this perspective, children's play is no longer merely an activity subordinate to educational goals; rather, it becomes a fundamental way in which children enter the world through imagination, creativity, and multiple forms of expression, and thereby generate meaning.

The paper then clarifies the core content of the phenomenology of play by analyzing children's play in relation to the essence of being. Represented by Heidegger and Fink, the phenomenology of play understands play as a basic mode through which being unfolds and the meaning of the world is generated. Children's play is thus no longer merely a metaphor for cosmic generation, but is endowed with ontological value. Heidegger regards the "playing child" as a concrete manifestation of the essence of being, namely Ereignis, and conceives "world-play" as the unfolding of being. In world-play, each member of the fourfold—earth, sky, divinities, and mortals—mutually yields to the others, conceals its essence, and at the same time discloses that essence within play, thus becoming what it truly is and exhibiting its authentic mode of being. World-play therefore possesses the characteristics of fourfold unity, purposelessness, and generativity. First, children's play embodies an interactive process in which earth, sky, divinities, and mortals are mutually inclusive and unified. As players, children immerse themselves between sky and earth and, through imagination, endow play materials with mythical significance. Second, for Heidegger, the movement of being is like a child playing a board game: children's play is not driven by any external goal, just as the unfolding of being does not obey any predetermined ultimate purpose. Both are processes of free emergence and openness. In this way, Heidegger attempts to use the purposelessness of children's play to deconstruct the teleology of traditional metaphysics. Third, children's play displays a quality of ongoing generativity: world-play and children's play are congruent in that neither is static, but both continuously change and create new possibilities. Heidegger's student Eugen Fink further argues that play concerns the basic mode of human existence. Through embodied movement play and imaginative role-play, children gradually construct their understanding of the world and generate meaningful relations with others, with things, and with the world as a whole. Play, therefore, is not merely a means of promoting learning and development, but an originary way in which children, through body and imagination, understand the world and create meaning.

Finally, the paper explores the pedagogical implications of the phenomenology of play. First, it argues for establishing an ontological orientation toward children's play. Education should move beyond instrumental understandings of play and regard it as the primordial field in which children's being unfolds, meaning is generated, and self-expression emerges. Second, educators should safeguard the time and space necessary for children's play by creating appropriate play environments and avoiding excessive pre-structuring, compression, and regulation, thereby protecting the innocence and creative potential that children reveal in play. Third, in relation to assessment, teachers should shift from observing behavior to listening for meaning,

and from outcome-based evaluation to safeguarding processes of becoming. Rather than stopping at the recording of children's observable actions, teachers should attend to children's imagination, emotions, poetic language, and meaning-making in play. Finally, teachers should move from being mere observers of play to becoming co-present participants, listeners, and supporters of children's play. Through bodily presence, imaginative resonance, and the withdrawal of adult subject-centered control, they can participate in play in ways that make the educational space one in which children's free generation, poetic expression, and the disclosure of the world are protected—one that safeguards the value of children's being and listens to their playful forms of expression.

6. STEM play in the earliest years

Sue Dale Tunnicliffe — *University College London Institute of Education*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): STEM; play; birth to three; science learning; early years

Abstract:

Play is a Right: Not a privilege', (UNESCO Article 31,1989).

Play is instinctive and apprenticeship for adult life. It is children's work (Roth et al 2013 p 13). There is little literature about science (STEM) about learning in the youngest children, birth to three years, which they bring to their formal pre-schooling, often at three years. Practitioners, and parents, could be aware of the STEM learning possibility within the language and culture of these youngest learners. (Tunnicliffe, 2025). Science in action occurs in preschoolers using playground equipment (Tunnicliffe & Gkouskou, 2019). STEM concepts are identifiable in free choice play of these earliest learners, often with 'toys' initiated by their instinctive curiosity and interest in objects and phenomenon and the play is solo. Toys are a genre of

3-D mental model models Gilbert, 2005. p2). Play has been categorised into various genre (for example Weiser, 2022) but Science or STEM play is never a category.

Early Years teachers can build on such existing experiences and understanding facilitating linked experiences recognising the overlap with other topics and skills.

This early solo play interactions of one- and two-year-olds encompass shared skills (Gelman & Brenneman (2004). Many actions are physical science foundational experiences, (Sollis, 2017). Small science' episodes were identified in play at home (Skider and Fleer, 2015 whereas the play observed in this work was of children in a playgroup with no adult assistance other than safety supervision. Parents were onlookers. The children had free choice to chose with what they 'played' from toys and objects available. The children experienced actions and learnt through hands-on actions initiated by them. Each action, or 'move' is a STEM BYTE an "E", Hence in these earliest years the learners experience STEM-E, (Tunnicliffe, 2023). Once the skills of the inquiry and outcomes are recognised and acquired, they merge after mastery to form HOLISTIC STEM in action.

The interrogation, the playing, follows a sequence, summarised in the Play Cycle (Tunnicliffe, 2021). In such inquiry activity, fundamental mathematical ideas, particularly of spatial awareness and number, as well as basic engineering concepts, are learnt in parallel in these free choice interactions.

The earliest learners progress to applying skills and their experiential understanding to problem solving etc, to 'think and do ', the ability to apply knowledge differently in their continuing preschool school years and out of school play

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Play, Creativity, and Expression 2	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 16:30–18:00 Room: 3.3 Language: English Chair: Matteo Corbucci	

1. From Symbolic Mediation to Educational Practice: A Genealogical Perspective on Puppetry in Early Childhood Education in Italy

Matteo Corbucci — *OMEP Italy*

Roma Capitale

University of Rome “Tor Vergata”

Keywords (assigned by the editors): puppetry; symbolic mediation; Maria Signorelli; Mariano Dolci; Italy

Abstract:

This contribution explores the pedagogical value of puppetry as a symbolic device in early childhood education, drawing on a genealogical perspective that connects the artistic-pedagogical work of Maria Signorelli (1908–1992) with the educational practices developed by Mariano Dolci in Italian preschools (1937–2025). The study examines how puppetry has progressively evolved from an artistic and cultural language to a structured educational tool capable of supporting children's emotional expression, narrative competence, and symbolic play.

The research adopts a qualitative interpretative approach based on historical-pedagogical analysis, document review, and the examination of key institutional sources (Istituto di Pedagogia dell'Università di Roma, 1967; Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 1972). The contribution highlights three core dimensions:

1. puppetry as a symbolic mediator enabling children to explore emotions and roles in a protected space;
2. the continuity between Signorelli's cultural vision and Dolci's school-based educational applications;

3. the relevance of puppetry within contemporary early childhood education, including its recognition in international frameworks such as OMEP's global project Creative Expression in Early Childhood Education.

The analysis does not aim to provide an exhaustive monograph on the two figures but to identify essential pedagogical insights that demonstrate the enduring relevance of puppetry as a cultural and educational resource. The findings suggest that puppetry offers a unique combination of symbolic depth, relational potential, and accessibility, making it a powerful tool for educators, particularly in inclusive and community-oriented contexts.

2. Development of an Assessment Tool for Visual-Spatial Skills in Early Childhood Education

Sümeyye ÖCAL — *Kütahya Dumlupınar University*

Zerrin Mercan — *Bartın University*

Ayşenur Gündüz — *Erciyes University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): visual-spatial skills; assessment tool; scale development; early childhood education

Abstract:

Early childhood is a significant period of development in which the bases of lifelong learning are built. The knowledge and experiences gained during this period have a significant influence on the future academic and social development of children. The structure of early childhood education programs is based on planning, implementing, and evaluating these programs, and the role of teachers is significant in the formation of these learning experiences (Kandır et al., 2022). In this context, visual-spatial reasoning, which is described as the capacity to interpret, modify, and utilize visual and spatial information in problem-solving mechanisms, is seen as an essential intellectual capacity that is developed in early childhood (Mercan, 2019).

Visual-spatial skills are also related to different cognitive processes, including spatial relations, mental rotation, and problem-solving. Moreover, these skills are highly related to different academic fields, such as mathematics, geometry, and science (Newcombe et al., 2015; Clements et al., 2018). Although these skills play a significant role in the academic performance of individuals, the tools developed to measure these skills in the literature are mostly related to child performance-based assessments. Moreover, these tools lack the teacher-centered perspective. Furthermore, these tools are also outdated, which necessitates the development of new tools to measure these skills (Raven, 1956; Lohman & Hagen, 2003; Naglieri, 2003). Recent studies emphasize the role of teachers' observations and practices in the assessment of spatial development in children (Pollitt et al., 2020; Bates et al., 2023).

Thus, the purpose of the present study is to create a valid and reliable instrument to assess the level of preschool teachers' visual-spatial perception. The design of the study is grounded in the scale development approach. The initial pool of items consists of 55 items, which were developed according to the relevant literature (Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Liang et al., 2013; Niederhauser & Perkmen, 2008). The content validity was assured through the experts' opinions from nine specialists. The Lawshe technique was used to assess the content validity, according to which the content validity ratios ranged from 0.66 to 1.00 with an overall content validity index of about .89 (Yurdagül, 2005).

The data collection instrument will be completed by preschool teachers from various parts of Türkiye through online and hard copy forms with the help of the snowball sampling method (Naderifar et al., 2017). The

construct validity will be examined through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, while the reliability will be examined through Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlation, and test-retest methods (Field, 2009).

The study is expected to contribute to the literature by providing a comprehensive and teacher-based assessment tool for evaluating visual-spatial perception in early childhood education contexts.

3. Makerspaces in Early Childhood Education: “It Is Possible If...” Exploring Perspectives on the Adaptation of DENEYAP for Young Children

Zerrin Mercan — *Bartın University*

Asiye Parlak Rakap — *Bartın University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): makerspaces; DENEYAP; maker movement; early childhood education; Türkiye

Abstract:

Makerspaces are learning environments emerging from the Maker Movement that emphasize hands-on learning, creativity, collaboration, and innovation. These environments support educational approaches such as learning by doing, inquiry-based learning, and community-oriented knowledge production while fostering key twenty-first century skills including creativity, problem solving, collaboration, and innovation. Within makerspace, learners actively participate in designing, experimenting, producing, and reflecting on their ideas, thereby engaging in meaningful learning processes rather than passively receiving knowledge.

Over the last two decades, makerspaces have increasingly gained attention in educational research and practice. They have been implemented in various educational contexts including schools, museums, libraries, and community learning centers. Many scholars highlight that makerspaces support experiential learning, interdisciplinary thinking, and the development of creativity through open-ended exploration and collaborative problem-solving. Because of these characteristics, makerspaces are often associated with constructivist and socio-constructivist approaches to learning.

Despite the growing interest in makerspaces, most initiatives have been designed primarily for older children and adolescents, typically targeting learners aged ten and above. However, recent research suggests that developmentally appropriate makerspace environments can also be designed for younger children. When adapted to the developmental characteristics of early childhood, such environments may provide young children with opportunities to explore open-ended materials, experiment with ideas, take risks in a supportive learning environment, and engage in meaningful hands-on experiences connected to real-life contexts.

Early childhood education emphasizes play-based learning, curiosity, exploration, and creativity as central elements of children's development. In this sense, the pedagogical principles underlying makerspace such as experimentation, collaborative exploration, and creativity—closely align with the core principles of early childhood education. Therefore, adapting makerspace environments for younger children may provide valuable opportunities to support children's agency, creativity, and problem-solving skills during the early years.

Across many developed countries, collaborative and open-source makerspaces have emerged in educational and community settings. In Türkiye, recent initiatives have also aimed to strengthen educational practices in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, design, and arts. One of the most prominent initiatives is the DENEYAP Program, which was developed within the framework of Türkiye's National Technology Initiative.

DENEYAP offers a structured three-year educational program designed to introduce children aged ten and above to areas such as technology, robotics, design, coding, and innovation through hands-on learning experiences.

Although programs such as DENEYAP provide valuable opportunities for older children to engage in maker-oriented learning environments, limited attention has been given to the possibility of adapting similar environments for younger children in early childhood education. Considering the importance of early experiences in shaping children's creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving skills, exploring the feasibility of makerspace environments for children in early childhood becomes an important area of inquiry.

From the perspective of early childhood education, it is essential to examine whether maker-oriented environments can be designed in ways that are developmentally appropriate, play-based, and responsive to young children's learning needs. Such environments should support exploration, imagination, and collaboration while ensuring that educational practices remain aligned with the developmental characteristics of children in the early years.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the necessity, possibility, and feasibility of adapting DENEYAP-like makerspace environments for children between the ages of two and eight. The study focuses on understanding how makerspace practices may be reinterpreted within the context of early childhood education and whether such environments can be meaningfully integrated into learning experiences for young children.

To address this aim, qualitative data were collected through focus group interviews conducted with professionals working in both maker-oriented learning environments and early childhood education. The participants include two DENEYAP instructors and four early childhood professionals, including two preschool teachers and two early childhood researchers. The data collection process is ongoing and continues in parallel with the data analysis.

Data were collected through open-ended focus group interviews designed to explore participants' perspectives on the relationship between makerspaces and early childhood education. The interview protocol was developed by the researchers and validated through expert feedback to ensure content validity. The questions aimed to examine both the current structure of the DENEYAP program and the characteristics of early childhood education in Türkiye, while also exploring the potential possibilities and challenges of adapting makerspace environments for younger children.

So far, three focus group sessions have been conducted. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Preliminary findings reveal four main themes: developmental appropriateness, collaboration, process- and product-oriented learning, and professional knowledge and experience in working with young children. These themes highlight the importance of adapting makerspace environments to the developmental needs of young learners while maintaining the core principles of creativity, experimentation, and collaborative learning.

The findings suggest that while makerspace environments have traditionally been associated with older learners, many of their underlying pedagogical principles are highly compatible with early childhood education. However, the successful adaptation of such environments requires careful consideration of young children's developmental characteristics, play-based learning approaches, and the professional competencies of educators working with young children.

Furthermore, participants emphasized that makerspace environments for early childhood should prioritize process-oriented exploration rather than product-oriented outcomes. Creating flexible and child-centered learning environments, providing open-ended materials, and supporting collaborative exploration were identified as essential elements for adapting maker-oriented learning experiences for young children.

In this sense, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about innovation and creativity in early childhood education by exploring how maker-oriented learning environments can be reinterpreted and adapted for younger learners. By bringing together perspectives from both early childhood professionals and makerspace instructors, the study aims to provide insights into how interdisciplinary and creative learning environments can be designed in ways that support young children's curiosity, agency, and collaborative learning.

The findings of this study may also contribute to future educational initiatives that seek to integrate creativity, innovation, and hands-on learning experiences into early childhood education. Understanding how makerspace environments can be adapted for younger children may open new possibilities for designing inclusive and developmentally appropriate learning environments that foster curiosity, creativity, and collaboration during the early years.

4. A Play-Based Musical Theatre Intervention for Children Learning Chinese as a Second Language: An Arts-Integrated Multimodal Design and Mixed-Methods Evaluation

Shan Su — *NTHU*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): musical theatre; Chinese as a second language; play-based learning; arts integration; multimodality

Abstract:

This paper presents a play-centered, arts-integrated teaching design that uses musical theatre to support young children learning Chinese as a second language (CSL). In alignment with the OMEP 2026 theme strand "Play, Creativity, and Expression," the study approaches play not as an "extra" activity but as children's primary language for meaning-making, imagination, and participation. The intervention frames musical theatre as a multimodal learning environment in which children communicate through voice, rhythm, movement, gesture, visual cues, and collaborative performance, thereby creating multiple entry points into Chinese language learning.

The teaching design integrates four core components: (1) story-based dramatic play to establish shared context and motivate children's curiosity; (2) rhythmic chanting and expressive "spoken-rhyme" performance to build phonological awareness, prosody, and pronunciation accuracy; (3) singing and classroom instrument accompaniment (Orff-inspired elemental music-making) to support fluency and sustained engagement; and (4) an ensemble musical theatre performance that invites children to express ideas, emotions, and cultural meanings through role-play and collective creation.

Participants were 50 children aged 4–7 learning Chinese as a second language in a summer program context. The intervention was implemented over three weeks (4.5 total instructional hours) in a flexible classroom space designed for movement and performance. Data were collected through (a) children's pre/post oral retell tasks and pronunciation samples, (b) teacher observation rubrics focusing on participation, creativity, and expressive communication, (c) video recordings of rehearsals and the final performance, and (d) short parent feedback questionnaires about children's language use and motivation beyond class. Quantitative analyses

involved descriptive statistics and pre/post comparisons for oral measures, while qualitative analyses used thematic coding of classroom interaction and children’s expressive behaviors (e.g., role uptake, improvisation, collaborative problem-solving, and embodied storytelling).

Findings show that, within a short instructional period, most children increased their ability to comprehend and reproduce key Chinese language content embedded in the story and rhymes, and showed observable improvement in pronunciation when supported by rhythm, gesture, and peer co-performance. Beyond linguistic outcomes, the intervention supported children’s creativity and expression: children actively experimented with voice and movement, negotiated roles, and used playful improvisation to make meaning in Chinese. The study highlights the pedagogical potential of musical theatre as a rights-informed, play-based approach that amplifies children’s voices while supporting early second-language learning through culturally rich, multimodal participation.

Play, Creativity, and Expression 3	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 16:30–18:00 Room: 4.13 Language: English Chair: Jingtao Deng	

1. From Substance Ontology to Relational Realism: A Philosophical Paradigm Reconsidered in Contemporary Children’s Play Research

Yuting Zhang — Nanjing Normal University

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children’s play; relational realism; substance ontology; philosophy; play research

Abstract:

Contemporary research on children’s play remains entrenched within the paradigmatic constraints of substance ontology. This is manifested in the substantivist pursuit of the essence of play, the presupposed fragmentation of the playing subject, the instrumental fixation of the value of play, and the dualistic demarcation of the boundaries of play. The roots of these issues lie in the subject-object epistemology, essentialist modes of thought, and correspondence-based conceptions of truth, which together obscure the holistic, situated, and generative nature of play. The advent of the digital age has further exposed this paradigm to a systemic crisis of interpretation. This study argues that overcoming this impasse requires a paradigm shift grounded in relational realism. Relational realism asserts that “relation is reality,” granting ontological priority to relations over relata—a stance that aligns fundamentally with the nature of children’s play. Accordingly, the ontological status of children’s play can be reconceived from “substantive activity” to “relational reality”; the playing subject, from “substantive individual” to “relational being”; and the value of play, from “inherent attribute” to “relational emergence.” Within this relational framework, dualistic oppositions such as play and learning, freedom and rules, and child autonomy and adult guidance are reconceptualized as mutually constitutive and co-emergent. This paradigmatic shift calls for a fundamental reorientation of research epistemology, a methodological refocusing on relational networks, and a transformation of early childhood practice from substantivist intervention toward relational facilitation. By advancing an ontological renewal in the study of children’s play, this study seeks to address the profound transformations in how play is experienced and understood in the digital era.

2. A study on emotion understanding of color metaphors in sequential image narratives by children aged 3-6 years

Jingtao Deng — *College of Teacher Education, Ningbo University*

Shuaihang Ma — *College of Teacher Education, Ningbo University*

Ying Ma — *College of Teacher Education, Ningbo University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): emotion understanding; colour metaphors; sequential image narratives; preschool children; development

Abstract:

This study investigates the comprehension of emotional color metaphors in sequential image narratives among preschool children (N = 60, aged 3–6 years). The findings reveal significant age-related shifts in how children interpret these metaphors. Specifically, several developmental patterns emerged: negative emotions were more accurately identified than positive ones; explicit emotional cues were more accessible than implicit ones; and color metaphors associated with characters were more easily decoded than those in background elements. Additionally, warm colors facilitated higher levels of comprehension compared to cool colors. A significant positive correlation was observed between the emotional understanding of color metaphors and the mastery of narrative structure. Notably, the results indicate a developmental surge in these interpretive skills starting after the age of four.

3. Culture and Taste: The Cultural Aesthetics Behind Chinese Children's Preferences for Sesame Street Character Images

Jingtao Deng — *College of Teacher Education, Ningbo University*

Jun Hao — *College of Teacher Education, Ningbo University*

Yeh Hsueh — *Counseling, Educational Psychology and Research, The University of Memphis*

Ying Ma — *College of Teacher Education, Ningbo University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): aesthetic preferences; Sesame Street; culture; Chinese preschool children; character images

Abstract:

A study of 1,082 Chinese preschool children (aged 3–6) across five regions (east, west, south, north, and central) examined their preferences for images of 16 Sesame Street Muppets. The results reveal shared aesthetic preferences among children, with key influencing factors being, in order: physical body features, costumes or props, and facial features. Chinese preschool children strongly preferred images that matched their cognitive experiences—realistic and concrete—while rejecting surrealistic depictions that fell outside their aesthetic expectations. Analysis of implicit connotations in character preferences suggests that Chinese children favor images embodying traditional "positive traits" of cultural expression. The subtle influence of "virtue" culture profoundly shapes their aesthetic inclinations. The study indicates that cultural segregation, formed in specific environments, operates through cultural consciousness or self-discipline to shape collective aesthetic tastes within a given regional and contextual group.

4. Action Research on Multisensory Poetry Education for Children Aged 5-6

Shan Cui — *Nanjing Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): poetry education; multisensory learning; aesthetic experience; action research; children aged 5–6

Abstract:

This study addresses the problems of monotonous teaching methods and fragmented multisensory participation in classical poetry teaching for children aged 5-6, and aims to explore a poetry education approach centered on the generation of aesthetic experience from the perspective of multisensory learning. Grounded in traditional Chinese poetry education theory, young children's aesthetic development, embodied cognition theory, and multisensory learning theory, the study conceptualizes poetry education as a continuous process integrating aesthetic perception, aesthetic experience, aesthetic imagination, and aesthetic expression. This study adopts an action research approach and is conducted in a class of children aged 5-6 over a period of 10-12 weeks through three progressive cycles. Observation, children's work analysis, and interviews are used to track and analyze the design, implementation, and refinement of multisensory poetry activities. The findings suggest that multisensory poetry education helps strengthen children's holistic perception of rhythm, imagery, and emotion in poetry, enhances their initiative and sustained engagement, and promotes imaginative connection, individualized expression, and creative externalization in verbal narration, drawing, and movement performance. The study further develops implementation strategies for multisensory poetry education for children aged 5-6, providing practical references for alleviating the tendency toward inappropriate primary school-style instruction in early childhood poetry teaching and for reorienting poetry education toward children's perspectives and aesthetic aims.

Play, Creativity, and Expression 4	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 09:00–10:30 Room: γ (gamma) Language: English Chair: Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson	

1. Being and feeling included in play: a sustainability aspect

Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson — *Gothenburg University*

Ingrid Engdahl — *Stockholm University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): inclusion; play; social sustainability; preschool; competence development

Abstract:

When UNESCO writes about sustainability in education, it is often linked to children's behaviour and emotions, as well as their meaning-making. We will in this article focus on one aspect of social sustainability, that of being included and a part of something in preschool. Data comes from children 4 and 5 years of age in preschools where the preschool teachers for 3.5 years have been involved in competence development about sustainability. Researchers have created tasks for teachers to implement in practice of various kinds (see

further Pramling, et al. 2025). At the end of the in-service programme, we would like to know how the oldest children talked about different aspects of sustainability. This article reports about an aspect of social sustainability. A designed picture was used as the initiator of teacher- child talks. Children's own teachers showed the picture and asked children to talk about it. The talks were transcribed by the teachers and uploaded to a research platform. We have analysed the 128 teacher-child talks, using content analysis, and found a variation in children's views about social inclusion. To our surprise most children talked positively about the situation in the picture, and had many ideas about what was going on. Anyhow on a direct question from the teacher, how the child felt sitting along at the sofa, they admitted that he felt sad. The analyses tell teachers to listen to children before interpreting that someone is alone and not included in play.

2. Early Childhood Music Education in Intercultural Encounters

Biagio Graziano — *OMEP Italy*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): music education; intercultural education; voice; otherness; early childhood

Abstract:

In contemporary early childhood education, the increasing cultural diversity of learning environments calls for pedagogical approaches that move beyond mere multicultural exposure toward meaningful intercultural engagement. Within this framework, music—particularly the human voice—emerges as a primary medium through which young children (0–6 years) can encounter alterity, express identity, and co-construct shared experiences.

This contribution explores the concept of vocal otherness as a pedagogical and relational space in early childhood music education. Drawing on the distinction between multiculturalism (coexistence of cultures) and interculturality (dialogical interaction among cultures), the study proposes a series of practice-based methodologies that foster embodied, inclusive, and creative musical experiences.

The voice, as the first and most accessible instrument, plays a central role in mediating intercultural processes. Through singing, vocal play, and sound exploration, children engage not only with diverse musical repertoires but also with different ways of being, listening, and relating.

3. Fostering space for children's initiatives and ideas in early childhood music education

Daiva Zitkeviciene — *Vytautas Magnus University Education Academy*

Ona Monkeviciene — *Vytautas Magnus University Education Academy*

Birute Autukeviciene — *Vytautas Magnus University Education Academy*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): music education; children's initiatives; creativity; agency; preschool

Abstract:

The aim of the presentation: to reveal the educational ways used by music teachers that create space for pre-school children's active engagement, their initiatives, and emergence of creative ideas.

The relevance of the research problem. Research focused on finding specific ways to help children become active agents of their own learning remains relevant. This is particularly important in the field of early music education, where teacher-directed learning is still prevalent.

Research conducted recently examines learning from the child's perspective. The search for ways of learning such as playful learning (active, engaged, meaningful, socially interactive, iterative, and joyful) (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2020; Kangas et al., 2025), inquiry-based learning (Probine et al., 2024), and embodied learning (Branscombe, 2019) is becoming increasingly relevant, when a child is acknowledged as an active explorer, creator, and co-creator.

Given the specific characteristics of children's learning, scientific research is reconsidering the directions in pre-school pedagogy. A shift towards a new pedagogical approach, i.e., play-responsive teaching, is observed, which involves responsiveness to children's initiatives and interests and proactive action, creating space for new experiences for children that would not be possible without the teacher's initiative (Pramling et al., 2019). Research findings show that learning which supports children's initiatives is characterised by stronger intrinsic motivation; they become initiative-taking and creatively thinking participants in the learning process and deepen their knowledge through spontaneous, creative, and inquiry-based learning situations (Akyol & Erdem, 2021; Kangas et al., 2024).

Revealing the impact of music education on the holistic development of a child (Selmani, 2024), research studies highlight the importance of exploring learning ways in early music education that create space for children's activity and initiative. The teacher becomes a mediator between the listener of a live music concert and the children, communicating through movement and performance, and helping children perceive the structure of music, the arising emotions, dynamic changes, and the performers' creative decisions (Lichtensztajn, 2017). As a facilitator of the musical process, the teacher creates an environment in which children can experiment with sounds, rhythms, and movements; the teacher observes, listens, and supports children's ideas (Veloso & Mota, 2021), offers suggestions that encourage exploration, and nurtures and develops children's spontaneous musical ideas (Nieuwmeijer et al., 2021). Musical games are used to involve children in exploring musical sounds, rhythms, and ways of connecting sound with movement, through which children themselves discover harmonious musical combinations and rhythmic coordination (Pitt, 2024). However, this direction of research remains highly relevant and continues to require further exploration.

The research methods. To achieve the aim of the study, a qualitative research approach was used. Data were collected through observation of the natural music education process using video recordings. The duration of a single video recording was 25–30 minutes. Criterion-based sampling was applied to select the research participants. Early childhood education institutions were selected based on the following criteria: (a) music teachers who work with children aged 3 to 6 years; (b) teachers who were motivated to participate in the study; and (c) teachers who actively seek teaching approaches that create space for children's initiatives. The research participants included children aged 3–6 years from three early childhood education institutions (six groups in total) and their three music teachers. The data were analysed using the Critical Incident Technique (Butterfield et al., 2005). For an episode observed during the musical activity to be considered a critical incident, it had to demonstrate the following characteristics: (a) children's activity, initiatives, and creative ideas, with the children's perspective clearly visible; (b) a specific way of children's music education applied by the teacher; and (c) the natural character of the educational process. An inductive qualitative critical incident analysis was conducted, identifying the ways used by teachers in children's musical education and examining cases and the nature of children's activity, initiatives, and creative ideas stimulated by these approaches.

The research findings. The study revealed how music teachers create a space for the emergence of children's initiatives and ideas. Only a few of the identified ways are presented below.

Teachers initiate creative activities in which the core idea is generated by the children themselves, who then experiment with it and reflect on the process. Teacher E. invites the children to listen to the song "Lietuva – širdelėje" [Lithuania in the Small Heart] and asks them, after dividing into small groups, to think of ways in which they could accompany the musical piece using musical instruments. One group of children chooses to accompany the piece by playing sticks and triangles while also stamping their feet; another group selects sticks and small drums; a third group uses sticks and small drums as well but also incorporates dance movements. The children accompany the music using eighth and quarter notes, with each group developing a different rhythmic pattern. Moreover, the children in the first group rely on musical memory and imagination; they create the accompaniment in advance and clearly verbalise their idea before performing it. The second group presents their general idea less clearly and develops the accompaniment while the music is playing; in other words, they experience the music and create the accompaniment simultaneously, which later helps them articulate their idea more clearly. The third group devises a way to improvise: one girl becomes the conductor who, while the music is playing, points to the children who should join the accompaniment with drums or sticks, while she herself slowly turns around during a slower musical motif, raising the sticks in her hands upwards.

Similarly, when teacher D. invites the children to create a dance to the music being played, one boy suggests the idea that a child could become a "dance conductor," demonstrating a dance movement while the music is playing. Another child would then take the role of the dance conductor and introduce a new movement, gradually creating a sequence of dance movements. The children performed, remembered, and arranged the movements in sequence, creating a complete dance.

Teachers also initiate active music listening by encouraging children to verbalise their personalised experiences. While listening to the miniature "Pirmosios snaigės" [First Snowflakes] by B. Dvarionas, teacher B. does not reveal the title of the piece beforehand; instead, she invites the children to listen attentively, experience the music, and create their own title for it. Some children attempt to verbalise the movement and transformation of musical imagery they perceived: "The pictures were changing... And the music is a bit like that, that the images are changing" (H., 5.6). Others try to express the aesthetic emotions evoked by the music: "A little heart, because it sounds very beautiful, like a heart" (M., 5.0). A third group derives the title of the piece from the musical instrument and the recognition of its individual sounds: "Maybe the title is Sounds of a Musical Instrument, because I heard different sounds" (K., 5.9).

More examples of ways used by music teachers and the children's initiatives they stimulate will be presented in the conference presentation and in the planned publication.

4. From Role Play to Professional Imagination: A Longitudinal Case Study of a Child's Creativity and Expression in Doctor Play

Tingting Bao — *China Welfare Institute Kindergarten, Shanghai, China*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): role play; creativity; expression; longitudinal case study; kindergarten

Abstract:

Play is an important way for young children to make sense of the world, exercise imagination, and express their experiences, and it serves as a vital pathway for learning and development. Using a longitudinal case study approach, this study focuses on one kindergarten child in a Chinese kindergarten and examines the child's sustained inquiry, creativity, and expression in doctor-themed dramatic play over three years, from the junior to the senior kindergarten level. The findings show that, through repeated engagement in free play and everyday classroom activities, the child continuously accumulated experience related to the theme of "doctor." Through role enactment, material manipulation, plot creation, and peer interaction, the child gradually developed a richer understanding of doctors' work, medical tools, and the division of labor within hospitals, while also extending play-based imagination into the observation, understanding, and representation of real life. The child's understanding of the medical profession evolved from surface-level imitation to active construction, and the child creatively expressed ideas about helping others, responsibility, and the value of professional work through play, eventually forming the aspiration to become an emergency doctor. The study suggests that sufficient play time and sustained dramatic play not only provide space for imagination, creativity, and expression, but also promote experience integration, meaning-making, and deeper learning in early childhood.

5. The Correlation Between Substitution Behaviors and Artistic Creativity in Role-Play Games of Senior Kindergarten Children

Xu Kou — *China Welfare Institute Kindergarten, Shanghai, China*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): role play; substitution behaviour; artistic creativity; kindergarten; observation

Abstract:

Play constitutes the most central and universal form of activity in early childhood, among which role-playing games play a key role as an important carrier for promoting children's social development and the growth of their artistic creativity. This study focuses on the role-playing activities of kindergarten senior-grade children. Through systematic and in-depth observation and analysis, it aims to reveal the internal relationship and interaction mechanism between children's substitute behaviors displayed during role playing games and their artistic creativity, so as to provide operable theoretical references and practical guidelines for art education in preschool education.

The study finds that substitution behavior is essentially a game-based expression of children's artistic creativity. Senior kindergarteners can fully use their creativity to combine, transform, and reconstruct low-structure materials, converting them into various props that align with the needs of game scenarios. This process transforms originally non-artistic materials into artistic representations with symbolic significance.

The flexibility demonstrated by substitution behavior directly reflects the fluency of children's artistic thinking. During role-playing games, senior kindergarteners can actively mobilize their existing artistic creation experience and skills to personally produce the required items, thereby flexibly addressing practical issues such as material shortages. The richer the substitution behaviors exhibited by senior kindergarteners in role-playing games, the greater the quantity and higher the quality of creative proposals they generate in artistic activities.

Furthermore, the spontaneity of senior kindergarteners' substitution behaviors highlights the uniqueness emphasized in artistic creativity. Faced with the same low-structure material, different children often form distinct ideas about its substitution, fully embodying the originality of their artistic expressions.

There is an inherent consistency between substitution behavior in role-playing games and children's artistic creativity. Both require detaching from the physical object itself and using symbols to convey meaning, thereby enabling bidirectional activation and mutual promotion of children's symbolic thinking.

The findings confirm that the substitute behaviors children present in role-playing games are not only a direct and vivid reflection of their artistic creativity, but also construct a real, natural, and interesting practical platform and exploration space for the further exercise and development of children's artistic creativity. Therefore, educators should fully recognize the significant educational value embedded in substitute behaviors during role-playing games, scientifically provide a targeted selection of diverse and open-ended play materials, and actively encourage and support children's independent creative expression and experimentation. By effectively utilizing role-playing games as a platform, children's level of artistic creativity can be effectively promoted and enhanced in an enjoyable and educational process.

Play, Creativity, and Expression 5	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 11:00–12:30 Room: 4.8 Language: English Chair: Maria Stec	

1. A Practical Study on Supporting Children's Caring Thinking in Play From the Perspective of Philosophy for Children

Xuan Zhang — *Shanghai Wunan Kindergarten*

Lihui Zhou — *Shanghai Wunan Kindergarten*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): philosophy for children; caring thinking; play; kindergarten; China

Abstract:

The study aims to explore the effective approaches to support children's caring thinking in play in Chinese preschool settings based on the perspective of philosophy for children. Caring thinking, as an emotional thinking dimension, which is equally important to critical thinking and creative thinking, faces challenges in the practice of philosophy for children in Chinese kindergartens, including the lack of awareness, insufficient approaches and absence of tools to assess children's caring thinking.

To address these issues, the study first theoretically reconstructs the meaning of caring thinking within the context of Chinese philosophy, emphasizing that it serves as an important foundation for children to understand "Tao" (guiding principles of all existence) and become whole person, based on which the study constructs a practical pathway emphasizing the integration of "philosophical immersion" in daily play with structured philosophical inquiry and the generation of topics of inquiry from authentic problems children come across in play. In addition, the study develops the observation scales of caring thinking in play for teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented inquiries and better understand to what extent children's caring thinking develops in play.

2. Toy STORI. 3: Making Lifelong Treasures, Transforming Adults into Lifelong Learners

Kei Kihara — *Forest of Creativity OikeAshita Nursery School*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): musical instruments; toy making; sustainability; consumer culture; nursery school

Abstract:

For more than twenty years, our nursery school has conducted a project in which five-year-old children spend over six months creating their own musical instruments designed for long-term use. This practice emerged as a response to contemporary consumer culture. Rather than falling into cycles of buying and discarding trendy toys, children create musical instruments as toys that can become lifelong treasures. Through this careful process of creating durable instruments, children encounter the concept of ethical consumption in a tangible way.

Listening carefully to children's voices has allowed diverse images of the child to emerge through the project. In recent years, they have made drum sets, pianos, and instruments such as saxophones and horns. While their imaginative capacity is striking, the deeper significance of the project lies in the transformation of the adults involved.

Drawing on Veà Vecchi's concepts of the "aesthetic dimension" and the "ethical community" discussed in *Art and Creativity in Reggio Emilia* (2010), this study views the aesthetic process as one of empathy and connection. For educators, this implies a shift from being knowledge providers to becoming co-researchers who revel in exploring the unknown alongside children.

Our analysis of two decades of practice suggests that the central challenge is not children's capabilities, but the rigidity of adult-created systems. To truly enact a Pedagogy of Listening, educators must cast off entrenched mindsets and structures to find genuine excitement in the uncertainty of creative processes. Supporting children in their journey from consumers to creators ultimately requires adults to cultivate flexible, responsive environments that evolve with the children's diverse inquiries.

3. Phenomenon-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education: How Do Inquiry Ideas Emerge in Children?

Ona Monkevičienė — *Vytautas Magnus University*

Birutė Vitytė — *Vytautas Magnus University*

Monika Kelpšienė — *Vytautas Magnus University*

Jelena Vildžiūnienė — *Vytautas Magnus University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): phenomenon-based learning; inquiry; children's ideas; early childhood education

Abstract:

Aim of the presentation. To reveal how inquiry ideas emerge in three- to five-year-old children within the process of phenomenon-based learning. The study aimed to identify the types of inquiry ideas generated by children themselves, what provokes these ideas and in what ways, and how children communicate these ideas to one another, including how they are enacted in practice.

Phenomenon-based learning in early childhood education. A phenomenon is defined as a real-world occurrence (e.g., magnetism) or an object characterised by specific properties (e.g., water and its states). Phenomenon-based learning is an integrated, contextual approach in which children actively explore real-world phenomena as holistic entities from multiple perspectives, while experiencing and constructing connections across different domains of knowledge (Ferreira, 2021). Phenomenon-based education creates space for the child's agency, their questions, experiences, and discoveries; it is inseparable from the child's natural surrounding environment and is integrative in nature.

Günther-Hanssen (2020), Åkerblom et al. (2019), and Åkerblom and Thorshag (2021) have substantiated the theoretical assumptions underlying the suitability of phenomenon-based education for preschool-aged children.

Posthumanist theory (Barad, as cited in Günther-Hanssen, 2020). Theoretical ideas. Knowing-in-being emerges in relations between human (children, teachers) and non-human (phenomena, objects, materialities). Children's and non-human agency are understood as co-creative. Activities and experiences. Exploratory play with natural phenomena involving bodily sensations. Children learn through interaction with objects, physical forces, and phenomena. Outcome. Emergent science.

Constructivist theory (Piaget, 1971; Åkerblom et al., 2019). Theoretical ideas. The child constructs understanding and theories about the world through interaction with objects and phenomena and by observing the outcomes of these interactions. Children are seen as capable of producing new knowledge about scientific phenomena. Activities and experiences. Development of intuitive concepts that may or may not align with scientific understanding. Outcome. Intuitive science (e.g., intuitive physics).

Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1987; as cited in Åkerblom et al., 2019; Åkerblom & Thorshag, 2021). Theoretical ideas. Everyday, sensory, and spontaneous concepts emerge from children's activities. The sociocultural context and child-teacher interaction are essential, especially through reflection and linguistic mediation linking experience to scientific concepts. Activities and experiences. Teacher-guided, child-responsive activities and reflection extend and refine intuitive understanding, aligning it with scientific explanations. Concepts should be meaningful, developmentally appropriate, and scientifically consistent. Outcome. Transformation of everyday, sensory, and spontaneous concepts into scientific concepts appropriate to the child's level of understanding.

Building on this theoretical approach and an analysis of studies on the organisation of phenomenon-based learning in early childhood education (Fragkiadaki & Ravanis, 2015; Solis et al., 2017; Åkerblom et al., 2019; Günther-Hanssen, 2020; Fleer et al., 2020; Åkerblom & Thorshag, 2021; Ferreira, 2021; Fragkiadaki et al., 2021; Pahl et al., 2022), we identified the following key stages of organising phenomenon-based education:

Stage 1. Selection of phenomena and creation of contexts for inquiry.

A phenomenon is selected that is relevant to children, one they encounter in their everyday activities but do not engage with in depth. The phenomenon should be suitable for embodied learning.

Stage 2. Children's encounter with the phenomenon and embodied experience.

Children engage with the phenomenon (object or process) through exploratory play, for example with physical forces such as gravity, energy, or speed. They experience the phenomenon through bodily sensations (e.g., heaviness and lightness in relation to gravity) and attune their actions and bodies to its properties.

Stage 3. Expression of intuitive understanding in multiple forms.

Children express their intuitive understanding through emotional responses, gestures, drawings, modelling, and everyday or spontaneously emerging sensory concepts. In explaining their experiences, they refine their ideas, thinking, and emerging concepts.

Stage 4. Teacher-guided activities for extending and refining intuitive understanding.

The teacher responds to children's actions and expressions of intuitive understanding by offering materials and activities that deepen their engagement with the phenomenon and gradually orient it towards scientific understanding.

Stage 5. Reflection on experience and articulation of concepts.

The teacher acts as a linguistic mediator, supporting children in linking embodied knowledge with scientifically accurate concepts. These concepts remain close to children's experiential understanding while aligning with scientific perspectives.

The aim of our study was to reveal how various inquiry ideas emerge in children within this phenomenon-based learning process, and what provokes and shapes these ideas

Research methods. A qualitative research approach was employed to achieve the aim of the study. Data were collected through observation of the phenomenon-based learning process using video recordings, each lasting 25–30 minutes. A criterion-based sampling strategy was applied: early childhood education institutions already implementing a phenomenon-based pedagogical approach were selected. In these settings, children engaged with the phenomena of "Footprints" (science and social inquiry) and "Chaos" (integrated artistic inquiry). The research participants included children aged 3–6 from four early childhood education institutions (six groups), eight group teachers, and three arts teachers. Data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), through which children's inquiry ideas related to phenomena were identified, along with the situations that triggered these ideas and the ways in which they were communicated.

Findings. The study revealed a range of ways in which children generate ideas for investigating phenomena. One such way is experimentation through bodily movement, aimed at eliciting a variety of sensory experiences related to the phenomenon. For example, a child slides their feet in a container of paint, then steps out and presses their whole foot onto the surface, walks on tiptoes, or drags their foot across paper, experiencing the sensation of paint covering and leaving the feet, while observing the traces (footprints) produced. Another way involves combining one's own and others' incidental actions with materials into purposeful experimentation. For instance, a girl places a plastic elephant figure into dry sand and observes faint imprints. Noticing another child playing with a water spray, she takes the spray and applies water onto the elephant and the surrounding sand. Lifting the elephant from the wet sand, she observes clearer imprints. She then places the elephant on dry sand again and intentionally repeats the experiment. In addition, the outcomes of incidental actions with materials may become hypotheses that children subsequently test. For example, a boy spontaneously sprays paint of one colour onto his socks, then adds another colour, observing that the paints mix. He infers that spraying colours on top of one another can produce new colours and proceeds to test this hypothesis through active experimentation. Additional ways in which children generate ideas for investigating phenomena will be presented in the conference paper.

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4. From “Living Education” to Children’s Rights: The “6I Empowerment Framework” as a Pathway to Child Agency

Caidi Chen

Kaijing Lyu

Keywords (assigned by the editors): Living Education; Chen Heqin; children’s rights; agency; Janusz Korczak

Abstract:

Grounded in Chen Heqin’s philosophy of “Living Education” and Janusz Korczak’s theory of Children’s Rights, this study introduces the “6I Empowerment Framework.” This localized pedagogical model reimagines children’s agency through six distinct, rights-based learning dimensions, bridging international rights discourse with contextualized practice.

First, through Investigation-Based mixed-age natural play, we uphold the Right to Play. By cultivating diverse environments such as farmyards and orchards, children autonomously lead scientific investigations into the cycles of nature. This self-directed inquiry fosters deep experiential learning and a profound connection with the living world.

Second, via Inspiration-Driven venue exploration, we safeguard the Right to Autonomous Exploration. We have established four specialized children’s museums designed to spark curiosity. These spaces facilitate learning through first-hand manipulation, aligning with principles that prioritize inspiring children’s innate desire to know.

Third, through Interaction-Focused social practice, we champion the Right to Social Participation. Mapping a three-kilometer community radius, we partner with twenty-one local institutions to create authentic experiential excursions. This approach actualizes “Society as a Living Curriculum,” emphasizing meaningful interactions between children and their broader community.

Fourth, utilizing Innovation-Led STEM projects, we support the Right to Holistic Development. Children lead the entire process of design, implementation, and optimization, adhering to the principle of “Labor with

Mind.” This modality integrates knowledge and action through Project-Based Learning, fostering a spirit of innovation and problem-solving.

Fifth, through Interest-Initiated clubs, we ensure theRight to Individualized Development. Responding to authentic student needs, we offer over sixty personalized clubs. Activities are initiated by children’s own passions, allowing them to co-design curricula and achieve growth consistent with Self-Determination Theory.

Finally, via Identity-Building role-playing internships, we secure theRight to Agency and Self-Governance. By establishing authentic on-campus roles, children competitively apply for positions and participate in school management. Transitioning from participants to young leaders, they actively construct their social identity, embodying the principles of Democratic School Governance.

The 6I Empowerment Framework operationalizes the “Living Education” philosophy, ensuring every child’s voice is heard. It offers a robust, replicable Chinese model for implementing Children’s Rights Theory, providing a vibrant paradigm for rights-based early childhood education globally.

5. Giving Children a Voice: Parent-Involved Therapy for Young Children

Maria Stec — *Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland*

Keywords: play therapy; secure attachment; early support; parent–child bonding; parent-involved therapy

Abstract:

The presentation will focus on psychological therapy for young children with developmental difficulties, emphasizing the active involvement of parents in the therapeutic process. I will discuss how the therapeutic setting changes when both the child and the parent are present in the room, and why this is crucial for the mental health of the child and, often, also for the parent. I will present fundamental principles and practical guidelines for conducting therapeutic work with the parent–child dyad. The presentation will also include a case study from my own clinical practice.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND PEACE

Education for Sustainability and Peace 1	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 14:00–16:00 Room: 3.3 Language: English Chair: Anna May Navarrete	

1. Water landscapes and environmental awareness of children in two primary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria

Adefunke Ekine — *Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ijagun, Nigeria*

Favour Suberu — *Youthcare Development and Empowerment Initiative*

Tomigba Adebayo — *University of Ibadan, Ibadan*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): water; environmental awareness; children's perceptions; primary schools; Nigeria

Abstract:

Background: Water is not only a vital ecological resource but also a social and cultural phenomenon and an integral part of the daily life of children. While global discussions on water often focus on scarcity, access, and sustainability, less attention is paid to how children perceive, experience, and create meaning around water in their immediate environments. Beyond its practical functions, water holds emotional and cultural significance that shapes children's understanding of the world. In the face of growing environmental challenges, including climate change and resource inequities, it is essential to move beyond adult-centred narratives and meaningfully engage children in developing sustainable ecological understandings. This project explores the lived experiences, emotions, cultural narratives and daily interactions of children with water, positioning them as active contributors to building knowledge and responsibility for the environment.

Methods: This qualitative, child-centred project examined children's understandings of water through participatory and observational methods. Guided water exploratory walks were conducted to document children's spontaneous interactions, language, and expressions of curiosity. Drawing sessions were used to capture their emotions, values, and water-related concepts, while storytelling activities elicited family experiences, rituals, and cultural stories. Sensory water play provided opportunities to observe children's imaginative engagements. In addition, cultural practices, songs, and local customs involving water were documented to situate children's perspectives in their broader social and cultural context.

Result: The findings reveal that children view water not only as a physical necessity but also as a source of play, creativity, cultural identity, and emotional expression.

Conclusion: The study underlines the value of incorporating sustainability perspectives into early childhood education and highlights the importance of amplifying children's voices in conversations about environmental awareness and future ecological responsibility.

2. Connection with nature in early childhood education: The role of teachers' values and educational practices

Aija Ozola — *Riga Stradins University*

Gunita Delijeva — *Riga Technical University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): nature connection; teachers' values; educational practices; early childhood education; wellbeing

Abstract:

Nature connection is increasingly recognised as an important dimension of children's early development and wellbeing. In early childhood education, experiences in and with nature can support physical activity, sensory engagement, emotional regulation, curiosity, attention, social participation, and environmental responsibility. However, children's opportunities to develop a meaningful relationship with the natural world do not emerge automatically. They are shaped by teachers, who organise learning environments, interpret educational aims, and decide whether nature becomes central or peripheral in daily practice. Teachers' personal values, beliefs, and lived experiences related to nature may therefore influence how often children go outdoors, how nature is framed pedagogically, and whether encounters with nature are treated as routine activity or as meaningful learning experiences.

This study examined nature-based educational practices in early childhood education and their associations with teachers' personal values of nature, nature relatedness, intentional nature exposure, and beliefs about developmental benefits for children. The study was conducted among teachers implementing early childhood education programmes in three Baltic countries. It also drew on broader research on teachers' values, including evidence that explicit and implicit values are meaningfully linked to the ways values are enacted in pedagogical settings.

A cross-sectional online survey was carried out among early childhood teachers across the Baltic region. The survey included the Nature scales from the Teachers' Value Questionnaire and the Early Value Education Scales, the Nature-Relatedness Scale, the Intentional Nature Exposure Scale, and additional outcome indicators concerning educational practice. The focus was not only on whether teachers used outdoor activities, but on how their personal value orientations toward nature related to the diversity and frequency of nature-based educational practices.

The results revealed considerable variation in teachers' engagement in nature-based educational activities. Stronger personal valuing of nature, higher nature relatedness, and more frequent intentional nature exposure were significantly associated with both a greater frequency and a broader range of nature-based educational practices.

These results underline the role of teachers' beliefs in shaping children's opportunities for learning in nature. Nature-based learning is not only a matter of access to outdoor environments, but also a value-informed practice shaped by how teachers perceive and activate the educational potential of nature. Strengthening educators' own connection with nature may therefore be an important pathway for supporting more authentic, confident, and sustained nature-based pedagogy in early childhood education.

3. Fostering Environmental Awareness in Early Childhood Three-Year-Olds in Dialogue with Rice Plant

Aika Shimizu — *Shinsei Nursery School*

Noriko Matunaga — *Shinsei Nursery School*

Yoshie Shiraishi — *Aichi Shukutoku University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): environmental awareness; rice cultivation; three-year-olds; nursery school; Japan

Abstract:

Background

Human life depends on the gifts of nature. At our nursery school, children grow vegetables and crops every year, because we hope children understand to live by eating the bounty of the earth. Last year, our three-year-olds took on a new challenge: they planted rice, cared for it, and harvested and cooked it themselves.

Why rice? In Japan, rice is our staple food. Yet today, global warming and other factors are affecting rice production. There are shortages. Prices have risen. At the same time, there is growing concern about preserving traditional food culture and passing agricultural practices on to the next generation.

Purpose

For three-year-olds, rice is familiar and something they eat every day. and familiar. But growing rice is something entirely new for them. How do they build a relationship with a rice plant and interact with it? What do they feel and think through the process?

The purpose of this study was to examine the significance of crop-growing experiences in early childhood by analyzing the children's own words and expressions.

Method .

1) The rice cycle process: The children planted tiny seeds, cared for the young plants, harvested the rice, and ate it.

2) Listening to the Children's Voices: By the age of three, children can engage in smooth verbal interactions. However, spoken language alone is often not enough for them to fully express their thoughts and feelings. So educators not only observed the children's facial expressions and spontaneous remarks, but also provided opportunities for them to express their ideas through play, such as pretending to be rice plants. The documentation was then used as data to analyze the emotional and cognitive experiences of children throughout the rice cycle.

Findings

The main findings are as follows.

① Affinity to rice ② Sense of responsibility and joy in caring ③ Observation, discovery, and emotional engagement with the rice plants ④ Empathy towards birds during harvest ⑤ Cooking the rice and expressing gratitude ⑥ Reading picture books and role-playing about rice ⑦ Taking care of the rice plants after harvest.,

Conclusion

In early childhood sustainability education, it is considered important to foster children's attachment to and respect for nature, enabling them to understand it not only as knowledge but empathetically through emotions and sensory experiences. Although rice cultivation on the nursery classroom balcony involved only six small buckets, the three-year-old children—who tend to personify plants—developed a special relationship with the rice and cared for it through interaction and dialogue. They experienced joy in seeing the rice grow as a result of their care and also felt a sense of responsibility in fulfilling their assigned duties.

Such experiences are likely to nurture children's closeness to nature, support their understanding of the interrelationship between human life and the global environment, and provide a foundation for

environmentally conscious behavior. Furthermore, these activities may foster appreciation for food, encourage healthy eating habits, and stimulate interest in agriculture.

4. Natural Environment as a Learning Space: Experiential Learning and Children's Participation

Anita Punčuh — *Vrtec pri OŠ Kungota*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): natural environment; experiential learning; forest pedagogy; participation; kindergarten

Abstract:

This paper explores the role of the natural environment as a meaningful learning space in early childhood education, with a focus on experiential learning and children's active participation. Drawing on principles of forest pedagogy and experiential learning theory, the study presents an example of good practice from a kindergarten, where structured activities in a winter forest setting were implemented to support children's holistic development.

The natural environment offers diverse opportunities for exploration, movement, creativity, and social interaction, enabling children to learn through direct experience. Particular attention is given to the winter context, which, despite common perceptions of limitation, provides rich possibilities for investigating natural phenomena such as snow, ice, and seasonal changes. Through observation, play, and inquiry, children develop understanding across multiple curricular domains, including science, mathematics, language, movement, art, and social-emotional development.

The findings indicate that learning in a natural environment enhances children's motivation, supports active engagement, fosters creativity, and deepens understanding of natural processes. Furthermore, children are positioned as active co-creators of the learning process, which strengthens their sense of participation and agency. The involvement of parents and the wider community additionally contributes to a more connected and meaningful educational experience.

The paper highlights the importance of integrating natural environments into early childhood education as a way of promoting holistic development and sustainable learning practices.

5. Exploring definitions of sustainability in early childhood education literature: A focus on professional attitudes and practice

Anna May Navarrete — *University of Gothenburg*

Annika Åkerblom — *Södertörn University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): sustainability; early childhood education for sustainability; literature review; teachers' conceptions; definitions

Abstract:

The notion of sustainability has become central to early childhood education as societies have become increasingly cognizant of the need to address the impact of sustainability issues, even from the earliest years of life. Early childhood education for sustainability has been a growing research field, and this paper presentation aims to examine how the concept of sustainability is explicitly defined in empirical research about preschool

teachers' conceptions and practices on education for sustainability through a scoping review. In particular, it seeks to answer the question: in the past 20 years, what definitions of sustainability are represented in the body of literature about preschool teachers' conceptions and practices on education for sustainability? After initial and full-text screening, 42 citations were included in the study. Among the data charted, the keywords, definitions of sustainability/sustainable development used, and definitions of education for sustainability/sustainable development were analyzed. Preliminary results show that the definitions revolve around 1) meeting the needs of present and future generations; 2) organizing internal features into dimensions; and 3) adopting an orientation of being entangled with the world. Moreover, initial investigation on definitions of education for sustainability/sustainable education found definitions falling into the following categories: 1) dimensions-based; 2) solutions-driven; 3) nature/environment-focused; 4) future-oriented; 5) criticality- and 6) citizenship-motivated. This study has potential implications for discussions on pluralities of meanings within the field of education for sustainability and ways of approaching this plurality in in-service professional development settings.

6. School-Based Practice of a Biodiversity Curriculum to Support the Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School

Fangye Jiang — *Zizhu Primary School Affiliated to East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): biodiversity curriculum; transition to primary school; nature education; inquiry-based learning

Abstract:

To promote the transition of nature education between primary schools and kindergartens, this study takes a biodiversity curriculum as its vehicle and constructs an integrated inquiry-based cultivation system connecting preschool and primary education. The curriculum follows a progressive pathway of guiding observation – inspiring questions – collaborative inquiry: children are first guided to systematically observe different biological groups and perceive biodiversity; they are then encouraged to raise questions related to life phenomena; finally, they are supported in attempting to solve these questions through simple methods such as recording and comparison. In this process, children begin to develop scientific awareness and experience diverse ways of learning, including observation and cooperation. By creating shared ecological areas, organizing mixed-age activities between primary school students and senior kindergarten children, and integrating guidance for observation and inquiry, the curriculum effectively stimulates children's interest in inquiry, fosters preliminary scientific thinking and cooperative ability, and provides an innovative practical model for nature education in the transition from preschool to primary school.

7. Culturally sustaining practice through the lens of education for sustainability: Embedding Mātauranga Māori in early childhood education

Fleur Hohaia-Rollinson — *Te Rito Maioha ECNZ*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): education for sustainability; Mātauranga Māori; culturally sustaining practice; Aotearoa New Zealand; ECE teachers

Abstract:

This presentation reports on findings from a research project exploring ECE teachers' understandings and practices of Education for Sustainability (EfS) in Aotearoa New Zealand. A key finding from the survey data (n184) and three focus group interviews with teachers in a Puna Reo (Kaupapa Māori immersion setting), a coastal kindergarten and a community based Christian setting, showed a shift from traditional environment-focused EfS practices toward more multi-pillared understandings that encompassed environmental, social, cultural, and economic dimensions.

The cultural pillar of sustainability is examined in this presentation through survey and focus group responses that explore how mātauranga Māori (Indigenous knowledge, values, culture, and worldview) is embedded in practice, how it is understood, and what further support is required. Embedding mātauranga Māori is essential to enacting culturally sustaining approaches and authentically realising the bicultural intent of the ECE curriculum, Te Whāriki. Through this enactment, kaiako create learning environments that affirm children's identities, strengthen belonging, and enable culturally grounded ways of learning and being.

The findings show ECE teachers in Aotearoa NZ position mātauranga Māori as a culturally grounded knowledge system that strengthens bicultural practice and provides a foundation to implement EfS that is relational, place-based, and culturally sustaining with a wide range of examples shown in the data, such as using te reo Māori (Māori language), tikanga Māori (traditional practices), kaitiakitanga (guardianship), pūrākau (traditional stories), and localised place-based education. While mātauranga Māori was highly valued, teachers also identified challenges to deepening practice, including a lack of confidence, time pressures, issues of access to resources, and constrained opportunities for sustained and respectful engagement with mana whenua.

This presentation concludes that strengthening mātauranga Māori within EfS requires sustained professional learning and resourcing to support kaiako to enact relational, ethical, and place-based practice that directly supports children's identity, belonging, and culturally grounded learning.

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8. A world we care for and live in peacefully together

Anastasia Kountouroudi

Maria Kopalidou

Paraskevi Akritopoulou

Georgia Akritopoulou

Danai Trigoni

Evangelia Pouliou — *Preschool Education Center "Nipiakos Kipos" / OMEP Central Macedonia*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): sustainability; peace education; early childhood; nature; citizenship

Abstract:

This project belongs to the thematic axis "Education for Sustainability and Peace in Early Childhood," which constitutes a fundamental pillar for shaping active, responsible, and conscientious citizens.

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. In early childhood, this concept is approached through simple, experiential activities related to nature, the environment, and children's everyday life. Caring for plants, saving water and

energy, recycling, and reusing materials are key practices through which children develop ecological awareness and responsibility.

Sustainable living is an extension of the concept of sustainability and concerns the daily choices and habits individuals adopt in order to live with respect for the environment and for other people. Within the context of preschool education, sustainable living is cultivated through activities such as recycling, reusing materials, conserving water and energy, healthy nutrition, and caring for the school environment. Children learn that their everyday actions have an impact and that, even at a young age, they can contribute positively to protecting the planet.

At the same time, peace in education is not limited to the absence of conflict or violence but is connected to the cultivation of a broader culture of peace. A culture of peace includes values, attitudes, and behaviors such as respect for human rights, acceptance of diversity, equality, solidarity, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In early childhood, the culture of peace is built through children's daily interactions, play, cooperation, and communication.

The present educational intervention was implemented within a kindergarten classroom (ages 4–6). The starting point was the reading and exploration of the illustrated book "Peace is...", which presents the concept of peace in a simple and comprehensible way, suitable for preschool children. The book functioned as a stimulus for exploring the concept of Peace through an experiential, collaborative, and interdisciplinary approach. It presents peace not as an abstract or distant idea, but as a way of life and a daily practice related to human relationships, respect, cooperation, and care.

The aim of the project was to cultivate a culture of peace and sustainability in the classroom through experiential activities, strengthening attitudes, values, and skills that promote cooperation, respect, and care for both people and the environment.

Another objective was to organize the creation of a democratic and inclusive learning environment where all children feel safe, accepted, and equal. Through group activities, role-playing, storytelling, discussions, and artistic actions, children learned to express their feelings, listen to others, and resolve disagreements peacefully. At the same time, learning was connected to everyday life and the local community, promoting sustainable living as a way of life.

Objectives

Children were encouraged to understand the concept of peace and its connection to cooperation, justice, and care for the environment. They learned to recognize the importance of nature for life and to adopt sustainable living practices in their daily routines. They developed empathy, conflict-management skills, and cooperation skills. They expressed themselves creatively through oral language, visual arts, dramatic play, movement, etc. They practiced daily responsible and sustainable behaviors. An important goal was also to strengthen their sense of belonging to a group and to cultivate solidarity and respect for diversity.

The introduction concluded with the formulation of a key question:

"How can we make our classroom and school a place of peace and care?"

This question served as a driving force, encouraging children to take an active role in planning and implementing actions that promote sustainable living and a culture of Peace.

The first phase included reflection and definition of the topic through information exchange and the development of questions by both the children and the kindergarten teachers, aiming at understanding and further processing the theme. The storytelling functioned as an emotional and cognitive core, opening a circle

of dialogue in which children were invited to express what “Peace” meant to them. Their initial responses – “to love,” “not to fight,” “to play all together” – formed the basis for gradual deepening, linking peace to cooperation, justice, respect for diversity, and care for nature.

In the second phase, activities of reading engagement, artistic expression, dramatic play, discussion, and cooperative learning were carried out. Children were invited to define, represent, and connect the concept of peace with their daily experiences, interpersonal relationships, the natural environment, and social coexistence. Values such as respect, acceptance of diversity, empathy, cooperation, and care for people and the environment were highlighted as fundamental dimensions of sustainability.

Children did not learn about peace; they learned through practices of peace. They created the “Class Contract,” a jointly shaped framework of rules based on respect and dialogue. They constructed the “Peace Tree,” where each leaf represented an act of kindness or cooperation. Through dramatic play and role enactment, they represented everyday conflicts and searched for peaceful solutions, cultivating mediation skills and active listening. Children connected peace with environmental protection: “when we take care of plants, that is peace,” “when we don’t throw garbage, we help the Earth.” A recycling corner was created, the school garden was cared for, and water-saving practices were adopted, fostering responsibility. Peace emerged as a way of life that connects people with the community and the natural environment.

At the end of the project, children shared what they liked, what they learned, and what they felt. They began using words such as cooperation, respect, help, and care. Each child presented their own artistic creation. The teachers highlighted the positive elements, strengthening children’s self-esteem and pride in their participation. Finally, a small “guide of good practices” was created and posted in a visible place in the classroom.

The evaluation was formative and qualitative: recording verbal expressions and observing interactions. Gradually, a reduction in conflicts was observed, along with increased willingness to cooperate and take initiatives of care toward others and the environment. When the kindergarten functions as a community of democracy, dialogue, and participation, children experience daily the values they are invited to adopt.

In conclusion, education for sustainability, sustainable living, and a culture of peace in early childhood constitutes a dynamic and necessary pedagogical approach. Through experiential experiences and cooperative relationships, children lay the foundations for a way of life that promotes respect, solidarity, and responsibility, contributing to the creation of a more peaceful and sustainable society.

We, the educators, played a decisive role, acting as role models of sustainable and peaceful behavior. We encouraged cooperation, dialogue, and mutual respect, integrating the principles of sustainability and the culture of peace into all aspects of the educational program. The classroom was transformed into a small community where children learned to coexist, care for the space and others, and undertake responsible roles. We acted as facilitators, strengthening autonomy and reflection.

Education for Sustainability and Peace 2	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 16:30–18:00 Room: 4.18 Language: English Chairs: Isabel Wullschleger, Magdalena Tomczak Stenström	

1. Parents As Gatekeepers to the Four Pillars of Sustainability

Havva Ayça Alan — *Independent Researcher*

Şule Alıcı — *Kırşehir Ahi Evran Üniversitesi*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): parents; education for sustainability; ecological approach; four pillars of sustainability; early childhood

Abstract:

Based on ECEfS's adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach (McCrea & Littledyke, 2015), parents are a key component of a child's microsystem. In other words, parents' views, perspectives, attitudes, and behaviours related to EfS impact a child's health, well-being, and everyday life, as well as the learning environments at home. Further, parents as the initial role-models of young children and partners in education are significant figures for ECEfS (Cappellaro & Yazıcı, 2020; Ewert et al., 2005; Musser & Diamond, 1999). However, this field of study remains understudied (Biber & Börekci, 2024; Borg et al., 2017). Therefore, this research aims to extend existing literature and explore parents' sustainability engagement in terms of environmental, socio-cultural, economic, and political aspects (UNESCO, 2005). Before conducting the study, approval of the ethical board was received, and parents' informed consent was obtained. In this study, a mixed-methods research design was used. The participants were the parents of early childhood children. Two data collection instruments were used. One of them was a questionnaire developed by Borg et al. (2017). In this questionnaire, parents' environment-related practice and sustainability-related discussions with their children were investigated. However, Borg et al. (2017) focused on three aspects of sustainability at this questionnaire. Thus, we developed the other instrument, an interview protocol, encompassing four pillars of sustainability to attain extended and rich data. The data collection and analysis process continues. Preliminary results indicate that the majority of the parents did not prefer to use public transportation and did not recycle regularly. When it comes to talking with children, parents give importance to solving daily problems, sharing resources with others, and everyday economic issues. All in all, due to parents' direct effect on children's views, perspective, attitude, and behaviour, EfS for parents could be designed to enhance their sustainability engagement in terms of environmental, socio-cultural, economic, and political aspects.

2. Sustainability Vision in Preschool Mathematics Education

İkbal Tuba ŞAHİN-SAK — *Van Yüzüncü Yıl University*

Reyhan Tekin Sitrava — *Kırıkkale University*

Betül Kübra Şahin-Yonca — *Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi*

Ramazan Sak — *Van Yüzüncü Yıl University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): education for sustainable development; mathematics education; preschool; Türkiye

Abstract:

Even though early childhood education and education for sustainable development have important goals both nationally and internationally, and there has been a lot of awareness about this lately, early childhood education practices in Türkiye sometimes seem to struggle with fully adopting teaching methods that match these goals. From the perspective of education for sustainable development, early childhood education should aim to go beyond academic skills and instill in children a sense of global citizenship and ecological

responsibility. To this end, a dynamic process should be adopted; education for sustainable development should be a tool that embraces an interdisciplinary perspective, and should continuously analyze cultural and social change. So, a guiding approach should be used in all early childhood education activities, including math, to not only teach basic math skills but also to help children learn about living ethically and sustainably. This study aims to identify the current methods and techniques employed by preschool teachers in Türkiye for mathematics education and also, the study will analyze teachers' awareness, views, and needs regarding the integration of the 7R principles (respect, rethink, reflect, reduce, reuse, recycle, and redistribute), which are foundational to sustainable living, into their mathematics teaching practices. It focuses on the thematic area of Education for Sustainability and Peace to uncover the challenges teachers face in this process. Planning and carrying out math activities based on the 7R principles can be considered a way to understand universal rules while also keeping ethical values in mind, creating a complete teaching approach that helps kids grow their thinking skills through math and their emotional skills through the 7R principles. The participants of this qualitative study, planned within the scope of this aim, consisted of 20 preschool teachers—19 women and 1 man, working in state and private preschool education institutions in Türkiye. Seven of the teachers work in private schools and 13 in public schools. Their experience ranges from 1 to 17 years, and the age group they work with ranges from 3 to 6 years. The study data was collected using a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. The data analysis resulted in three main themes: (1) Current mathematics applications, (2) 7R Awareness, and (3) Needs and obstacles regarding the implementation of 7R-based mathematics activities.

3. Eco-Innovative Learning for Sustainability, and Peace: Insights from Preservice Teachers in Oman

Ilyas Karadeniz — *Sultan Qaboos University, Faculty of Education*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): sustainability; peace education; STEAM; preservice teachers; Oman

Abstract:

This study explores how sustainability and peace education can be meaningfully integrated into STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) through eco-innovative learning experiences in preservice teacher education. Drawing on Janusz Korczak's vision of respecting children as competent, rights-bearing individuals whose voices must be heard and valued, the study emphasizes the role of education in fostering environments where children's agency, participation, and well-being are central to sustainable and peaceful futures.

In response to the limited integration of sustainability, peace, and children's rights perspectives in teacher education programs, this research examines how preservice teachers at Sultan Qaboos University in the Sultanate of Oman can be prepared to design learning experiences that empower young children as active contributors to their communities. The study involved approximately 42 preservice teachers enrolled in Educational Curriculum for Primary Science and Mathematics and Development of Scientific and Mathematical Concepts and Skills courses. Participants specialized in Primary Education and Early Childhood Education, offering a rich context for embedding interdisciplinary, child-centered approaches.

Using a qualitative design, data were collected through focus group interviews and reflective journals during an 8–10-week intervention. The intervention engaged participants in hands-on, inquiry-based STEAM activities

connected to real-life sustainability and peace challenges, such as designing solar-powered solutions, creating recycling-based engineering projects, and developing art-science exhibits that amplify children's voices on environmental care, fairness, and coexistence.

Thematic analysis revealed three key themes. First, recognizing children's voices in sustainability and peace education, where participants reconceptualized children as active agents capable of expressing ideas and solutions related to environmental and social issues. Second, developing eco-innovative, rights-based pedagogies, highlighting the integration of collaboration, empathy, participation, and ethical responsibility within STEAM teaching practices. Third, negotiating challenges in implementing child-centered sustainability education, including tensions between traditional curricula and participatory, experiential approaches, alongside opportunities to create inclusive learning environments that reflect children's rights and diverse perspectives.

The findings highlight the importance of reorienting teacher education toward pedagogies that honor children's voices while addressing global challenges of sustainability and peace. By connecting eco-innovative STEAM practices with Korczak's philosophy of children's rights, the study positions preservice teachers as facilitators of transformative learning environments where young children are empowered to speak, act, and contribute to a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world.

4. Towards an ecological-ethical learning theory for early childhood education

Isabel Wulschleger — *University of Cologne*

Keywords: climate crisis, vulnerability, emotions, sustainability, responsive environmental education, aesthetics, phenomenology, learning theory, negativity

Abstract:

This lecture explores aspects of an ecological-ethical theory of learning in early childhood (part of my postdoctoral research project). Considering multiple crises, political and social uncertainties, existing approaches to learning theory are expanded to take account of the crisis-related dimensions of climate change and eco-social instabilities, and to make these relevant to early childhood education.

Firstly, the lecture explores what it means for young children to engage with themselves and the world in the face of the climate crisis. Learning with and in the climate crisis probably means confronting (implicitly or explicitly) threats and uncertainties, fragility and vulnerability, or allowing oneself to be absorbed by them. The paper outlines how the concept of the "negativity of learning" (e.g. Mitgutsch, 2008; Buck 1989 and Meyer-Drawe 2008 as cited in Brinkmann, 2016; Wulschleger, 2025) is discussed in relation to education and learning in the climate crisis. As well as how the educational perspective on the phenomenon of learning in early childhood can be reframed.

In the spirit of "acknowledging our vulnerability" (Pelluchon, 2024, p. 99), the aim is to contextualise fundamental learning experiences in the present, drawing, amongst other things, on "Emotions within sustainability-related transformative learning" (Grund et al., 2024, p. 307) and "Learning to become with the world" (Common Worlds Research Collective, 2020). Based on the premise that learning is not an isolated, individually plannable endeavour or a sovereign act, aspects of the relational, situational, pathic and responsive are highlighted and situated within the tension between freedom and planetary boundaries, between self-determination and ecological-ethical requirements.

Secondly, this section examines various concepts for educational practice therefore: The focus is on ways of addressing the “Great Acceleration” in the Anthropocene (McNeill & Engelke, 2016) through “collective reconnections, re-orientations or re-linkages with a changing world” and jointly developing “cultural resilience” (Klepacki & Jörissen, 2023, p. 172). Or, through aesthetic practices, finding ways for children to engage with crises, take a stand, express themselves creatively and reflect on different ways of perceiving the world (Wullschlegel & Peuke, 2026). Or – as researchers in Australia demonstrate – practising and cultivating sensory relationships with our environment, a “(re)turn” to an “aesthetic of relation and coexistence” (Rousell & Williams, 2020, p. 1605), in order to forge new connections through aesthetic experiences. So that the aim is to “establish an ecological aesthetics of contemporary childhood which refuses the Western bifurcation of culture from nature, body from environment, and art from life” (Rousell & Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, 2023, p. 95).

This outline oscillates between, on the one hand, phenomenologically oriented learning theories that emphasise negativity and highlight the momentum of fragility as a formative bodily experience, and, on the other hand, current (anthropological) definitions of “catastrophe education” (“Katastrophenbildung”, Schmidt et al., 2026) and “Responsive Environmental Education” (Worster & Whitten, 2020). Thus, in the spirit of “Education for Sustainability and Peace”, “responsibility for others and for the planet” (OMEP-Abstract Topic No. 5) and contribute to the further development of scientific and ethical-practical discourse regarding sustainable “learning and living in the face of the climate crisis” (cf. Bilgi et al., 2025) in early childhood education.

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5. Promote Biophilia - Counteract Biophobia Outdoor education that strengthens children's connection to nature and builds a sustainable future in urbanized cities

Magdalena Tomczak Stenström — *The preschools department, City of Malmö*

Ingrid Bogren — *The preschools department, City of Malmö*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): biophilia; biophobia; outdoor education; nature connection; urban environments

Abstract:

Biophilia

The human relationship with nature has its roots in Homo sapiens evolutionary history, a dependence on natural systems, both past and present, for our survival. This genetic predisposition, referred to as the Biophilia Hypothesis and it explains the human tendency to move toward and immerse oneself in nature. (Leopold, 1989; Wilson, 1984). Nature is, for many, a source of recovery and well-being and research shows that early and recurring nature experiences are crucial for developing Biophilia, that is a positive, empathetic, and sustainable relationship with nature. Contact with nature has also well documented health benefits, such as reduced stress and improved academic performance among children.

Biophobia

In a time marked by rapid urbanization, increasing screen use (AI), and global societal challenges, children's everyday lives risk losing contact with nature. New research shows that there is a growing share of people who experience negative emotions such as fear, discomfort, or even disgust. This creates conditions such as reduced understanding, reduced sense of safety and a reduced relationship with the living world, it challenges the image of humans as being nature-loving. The phenomenon Biophobia is now being highlighted in new research from Lund University (Anna Wilkens). The study summarizes nearly 200 scientific articles from different research fields from around the world, for example Sweden, Japan, and the United States. The study shows that negative emotions can cause people to miss out on nature's health benefits and may also contribute to attitudes and behaviors that hinder nature's conservation and sustainability. The consequences of reduced contact with nature can be extensive, including decreased well-being and physical health (Shanahan 2015).

The trend can be reversed

J. Kjellberg Jensen (Lund University) believes that early contact with nature can counteract Biophobia and an important measure is to increase our exposure to nature, for example by developing green spaces and strengthening biodiversity in cities, which can give children positive nature experiences early in life. Biophobia is broad and requires a varied toolbox. Outdoor education therefore becomes a powerful pedagogical strategy to strengthen children's well-being, creativity, existential security, and their ability to understand sustainability issues, especially in urbanized cities. Nine years ago, the City of Malmö launched a unique project that directly addresses these challenges, a place called The Bookgarden, an authentic natural environment outside the city for the preschools.

Education for Sustainability and Peace 3	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 09:00–10:30 Room: 3.3 Language: English Chair: Mari Mori	

1. Resonance and Alternative Perspectives Revealed through Japanese translation of the ECE Academy: Dialogue from the Japanese OMEP members

Mari Mori — *Kobe Shinwa University*

Yoshie Shiraishi — *Shukutoku University*

Kei Kihara — *OikeAshita Nursery School*

Miyoshi Shirota — *Waseda University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): ECE Academy; education for sustainability; translation; Japan; OMEP

Abstract:

This exploratory study aims to examine and identify, within the context of Japanese early childhood education and care, the relevance and challenges of the ECE academy app as revealed through interpretations of its Japanese translation.

The background of the study is as follows; we, the researchers of the study think it is important to practice of education on sustainability from early childhood, and it is evident that the ECE Academy app serves as a valuable tool for everyone involved with children—including ECEC practitioners and pre-service/in-service educators — to learn about the value and practice of ESD (Education for Sustainable Development). The Japanese National Committee of OMEP formed a research team (seven members) in 2024 to explore EC Academy app (its text was provided by edChild) to translate into Japanese and its applicability in the Japanese context. During the process, we found that merely converting English text into Japanese sentences was insufficient; consideration must be given to the cultural context of Japanese society and the context of early childhood education and care.

The theoretical framework of this study draws on discourses about ESD, SDGs, the Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC), pedagogical bilingualism (Engelman and Kenklies, 2023) [1], and the issue of “linguistic homogeneity”(Sousa and Moss, 2022) [2]. Qualitative interpretive research guides this study.

We, the seven members, through the public call by the Japanese National Committee of OMEP, held a total of 11 online meetings from September 2024 to February 2026. We shared the interpretations of the meaning behind the Japanese translations of the eight ECE academy modules to deepen understanding, whilst simultaneously clarifying commonalities and challenges within the Japanese context through the discussion.

The process of translating into Japanese has revealed the following points: 1) It provided an opportunity to reaffirm the distinctive features of Japanese ECCE practice. Traditionally, Japan has placed the importance of significance on nature experiences within the practice. This is considered as linking to the seven “Re”s of ESD – such as lifestyle, culture of food – which foster sustainable lifestyles. Moreover, the practices involving collaboration with local communities, such as participation in traditional local festivals and inter-generational exchanges, are also encouraged. 2) On the other hand, it was shared among the researchers that enhancing perspectives and awareness by connecting with international concepts and terminology presented in each module and the “Glossary” remains a future challenge. This concerns the view of children as members of

society and related practices, such as promoting civic awareness from early childhood and engaging in economic activities.

The ECE Academy app, when installed on mobile phones or computers, can be used anytime, anywhere, making ESD more accessible to ECCE practitioners and related professionals. However, having reviewed the Japanese translation and its content, it is necessary to consider how the content and its application can resonate with each specific ECCE setting and culture. We reviewed the Japanese translation and discussing the content. In future, we believe mutual learning is vital, that is, facilitating the group study sessions and seminars for ECCE practitioner, as well as having opportunities to listen to children's voices. In addition, we expect for fostering active dialogue, as expanding ESD initiatives unique to Japan and within each specific context, while referencing the principles and practices outlined in each module of ECE Academy.

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2. DIALOGUE BETWEEN CREATION OF “MINIATURE-EARTH” and SUSTAINABLE LEARNING

Shiori Nanao — *Bambini Nursery School / Seiryō Gakuen School*

Yoshinari Inukai — *Bambini Nursery School / Seiryō Gakuen School*

Mari Mori — *Kobe Shinwa University*

Momoko Akahane — *Bambini Nursery School / Seiryō Gakuen School*

Nozomi Ariyama — *Bambini Nursery School / Seiryō Gakuen School*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): sustainability; ecological systems theory; project work; nursery school; Japan

Abstract:

The exploratory study aims to illustrate and identify how the project of “Miniature-Earth” of 4-year-olds have brought the children and teachers to heighten their awareness of making earth sustainable from their everyday lives at nursery school in Japan.

The framework of the study is recognized and embedded the Bronfenbrenner(1992) [1]'s ecological systems theory, Vygotsky(1978) [2]'s socio-cultural theory, and respecting the hundred languages of children (Malaguzzi, in Edwards, et. al., 2011) [3] with UN(2003)'s SDGs [4] . Qualitative interpretive research guides this study.

The project, “Miniature-Earth” was derived from the experience of seeing the withered flowers. The children and teachers were discouraged by seeing the withered flowers, and they wondered and raised questions, such as “where these withered flowers would go?, ” “ Are the flowers really died?” The question has led to make the “Miniature-Earth” (2026) [5] which is the globe-shaped-container: An environmental system enabling the children to experience nature in the palm of your hand. The creation of the “Miniature-Earth” invited the children to observe carefully the life of flowers and insects. Moreover, the children have heightened their awareness of the “cycle of life,” through the relationship between insects and plants/flowers. In other words, the children have learned the relationship in terms of the woodlice (dangomushi in Japanese) excrement makes excellent compost (organic fertilizer) for plants and flowers. Moreover, the curiosity of the children has

expanded for wondering the origin of earth, such as earthquake, volcano and so on. Furthermore, the children have made and drew their images of Earth by using of various materials (e.g. crayons, painting, clay, natural and recycle materials).

The study was carried out following the ethical codes of the Japan Society of Research on ECCE, including receiving informed verbal consents of the children to participate in and having the permission for presenting at the OMEP world conference in 2026.

The emerging findings suggest the project, "Miniature-Earth" are the significant elements for supporting young children's creativity thinking and caring for the earth. The study implies on valuing for questioning and wondering of the children would bring the sustainable learning for their loving earth. The further study is needed to deepen and seeking the children's perceptions on earth.

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3. Building a City, Playing Shadows: Fostering ESD and Cultural Agency through Authentic Scenario Creation in a Chinese Bilingual Kindergarten

Shiyu He — SHANGHAI QINGPU WORLD FOREIGN LANGUAGE KINDERGARTEN

Keywords (assigned by the editors): education for sustainable development; cultural agency; bilingual kindergarten; shadow puppetry; China

Abstract:

This study draws on innovative practices at a bilingual kindergarten in China to actively address OMEP's key focus on "early implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)" and "children as cultural actors". Through two in-depth inquiry-based cases—"Shadow Puppetry" and "Traffic Town"—we systematically illustrate how educators create authentic, culturally rooted scenarios that bridge tradition and modernity, while constructing progressive, removable interactive scaffolds to support children in moving from perception and understanding to active creation within play and projects. In the shadow puppetry project, children are not only experiencers of intangible cultural heritage but also adapters of stories, explorers of light and shadow, and collaborative performers. In the Traffic Town project, children take on the role of urban planners, developing systemic thinking and social responsibility toward sustainable communities as they tackle issues like traffic congestion and design eco-friendly routes. This research aims to demonstrate that through culturally infused scenario creation and empowering educational scaffolding, early childhood education can effectively enable children to grow into active inheritors of culture and young change makers for a sustainable future, offering a concrete practical model from China for the global goal of "nurturing agentic children".

4. Reconsidering Sustainability in Early Childhood Art: A Study of Practice and Agency

Tulin Guler Yildiz — *Hacettepe University*

Cansu Yildiz Tasdemir — *Sağlık Bilimleri University*

Yekta Kosan — *Atatürk University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): sustainability; art education; agency; early childhood education

Abstract:

Early childhood for sustainability (ECEfS) plays a significant role in developing children's awareness of environmental, social, and economic responsibilities. Art activities, in particular, are powerful pedagogical tools that allow children to express their creativity, learn through experience, and connect with their environment (O’Gorman, 2014; Boyd, 2020). In this context, art education provides opportunities to support children’s skills across all pillars of sustainability, while also fostering child agency in relation to the socio-cultural dimension of sustainability (Cevher Kalburan & Güngör, 2019; McNichol et al., 2011). However, the literature reveals that art activities in early childhood are mostly teacher-directed and outcome-oriented (Fox & Schirrmacher, 2012).

This study aims to examine art activities conducted in early childhood education settings within the context of sustainability. Using a qualitative research design, the study involved 13 semi-structured observations and teacher interviews during the data collection process. Classroom observations were conducted in three classrooms across two schools; interviews were also conducted with three teachers. Prior to the research process, ethical committee approval was obtained, and data were collected based on the voluntary participation of teachers. Teacher interviews have been completed, and the analysis process is ongoing. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis methods within the framework of child agency dimensions to understand children's participation and decision-making in the activity processes.

The initial findings of the research are based on observational data. The findings show that art activities are largely teacher-centered and product-oriented. It was observed that children are largely directed to produce predetermined artworks, with limited opportunities to make decisions during the process and limited engagement in creative, open-ended practices. The low level of active participation of children in material selection, technique determination, and product design processes indicates that child agency is limited.

In terms of the environmental pillar of sustainability, the findings reveal that disposable materials are widely used in art activities. The preference for plastic and disposable products, the limited recycling and reuse practices, and the lack of waste separation are noteworthy. Furthermore, it was observed that children were not included in waste management processes and that the activities were not linked to environmental awareness.

In terms of economic pillar of sustainability, it was determined that materials mostly consist of ready-made and purchased products, and that practices aimed at the common and conscious use of resources are limited. It was observed that practices for the recycling of materials and the prevention of waste are not sufficiently developed.

In terms of socio-cultural aspects, it was determined that values related to sustainability, such as cooperation, taking responsibility, and sensitivity, are reflected in art activities to a limited extent. The exclusion of children from cleaning, organizing, and material management processes limits the experience of sustainable behaviors. Furthermore, the lack of connection between activities and daily life emerges as a factor hindering the deepening of sustainability awareness.

In conclusion, the initial findings of the research indicate that art activities in early childhood education need to be restructured from a sustainability perspective. Accordingly, it is recommended to develop open-ended and process-oriented art activities that support children's active participation in decision-making processes; to increase the use of recycled and natural materials; and to ensure children's active participation in waste management and resource utilization processes. This study aims to contribute to the literature on the relationship between art and sustainability in early childhood education.

Education for Sustainability and Peace 4	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 11:00–12:30 Room: 3.3 Language: English Chair: Siew Chin Ng	

1. Textures, Dawn, Dusk: Building Authentic Relationships Through Attentive Listening Within Urbanized Places

Siew Chin Ng — *Singapore University of Social Sciences*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): environmental education; attentive listening; urban nature; relationships; early childhood

Abstract:

Current environmental education typically explores issues relating to recycling or sustaining the world's natural resources. This presentation aims to address the gap in how opportunities can be provided for children to listen attentively while building bonds with the natural environments within urbanized landscapes. Thinking with developmental and anthropocentric framings, early childhood educators often view themselves as the knowledge bearer, which brings forth a need to re-consider how we are affected by the interconnection among the broader worldly relationships with both humans and non-humans (Arndt et al., 2020). This further connects to Latour's (2004) idea of learning to be affected by the world consisting of both humans and more-than-human, as well as to position humans from acting on nature to entangling with nature. Situated within postfoundational lens, an emerging theoretical framework for early years' education is the Common Worlds framework which underlines the relations between human and more-than-human worlds (Common Worlds Research Collective, 2020; Taylor, 2017). The Common Worlds resources which urbanised landscapes might consider are the community facilities and settings which Chaudhury et al. (2015) described as public open spaces including parks, green spaces, sidewalks, plazas, playgrounds, shopping malls and community centres. Easily accessible to the public, these spaces can foster the engagement of individuals and groups in the neighbourhood community environment, and in turn support social connectedness within the community members (Lachowycz & Jones, 2013). As opportunities and connections could be influenced by aspects related to educators' beliefs, practices and barriers (e.g., Ernst, 2014), as well as educators' own outdoor experiences (e.g., Bilton, 2020), this qualitative study will focus on educators' explorations following the Common Worlds framework in urbanized places. The presentation reports findings based on pedagogical conversations with six early educators of children in six Kindergarten (five- to six-year-olds) classrooms across four preschools in Singapore. Analyses reveal that educators directed their attention to the often-overlooked aspects when considering the Common Worlds perspectives, which conjured ten key encounters. This presentation will share key encounters to illustrate educators' connections to urbanized natural landscape which occurred

when they simply pass-by these places, including noticing various textures observed in the natural environment, as well as reflecting on their feelings evoked by being with dawn and dusk within the urbanized landscapes. Attentive listening within places was demonstrated by the educators as they engage with the community settings comprising of natural environmental within urbanized landscapes. This form of listening comprised of stimulation of senses, bodily interactions with agentic aspects of nature, stop-and-feel experience, as well as place-sit engagement. The findings underlined the importance of exploring everyday places for outdoor-related professional learning programmes, with the aim of appreciating and bonding with our common worlds. Ultimately, this presentation intends to highlight these professional learning instances that will translate to the provision of similar opportunities for young children in order to build authentic relationships with the natural environments. This will nurture responsibility, care, and love for others including plants, animals, places, thereby inculcating values that will contribute to environmental awareness and sustainable living.

2. Insight into Social and Cultural Sustainability Integration in ECE: Rights of the Child

Sule Alici — Kirsehir Ahi Evran University

Keywords (assigned by the editors): social sustainability; cultural sustainability; pre-service teacher education; children's rights; ECE

Abstract:

Despite significant research and initiatives aimed at supporting pre-service teacher education targeting education for sustainability (EfS), universities have largely failed in their primary role in higher education, which is to enlighten university students and transform them into active citizens with a more sustainable lifestyle (Davis & Davis, 2020). Compared to the field of teacher education in general, early childhood pre-service teacher education (ECPTe) internationally lags behind in the number of publications on ECPTe and in identifying the best pedagogies, approaches, and content for next steps (Davis, 2015; Davis & Davis, 2020). However, courses in ECPTe are designed to provide future educators with the knowledge, understanding, values, and skills necessary to integrate EfS into learning and teaching in their future classrooms (Evans et al., 2016). This study examined an ECPT's daily and monthly plans and practices regarding the rights of the child (RotC) as part of her teaching practice-compulsory course throughout the spring semester last year. Action research, a qualitative research method, was used. The participant of this study was an ECPT in the final year of undergraduate education. Data were collected through two different interview protocols, online feedback meetings, and ECPT's documents and products. Data were analyzed by open-coding, content analysis, and comparative analysis methods. The results indicated that although she was aware of EfS and its practices, before the course, she had prejudices about whether 4-5-year-old children could understand RotC and put them into practice in their lives. After the course, she stated that children were already being prepared for RotC if the teacher was knowledgeable about how to start and was aware of pedagogies, approaches, and content related to EfS. In conclusion, teaching practice courses could be redesigned to encourage ECPTs to implement what they experience in EfS throughout their education with effective mentoring.

3. The relationship between sustainable environmental behaviors and emotional intelligence of pre-service early childhood teachers

Sümeyye Öcal — Kütahya Dumlupınar University

Gözdenur Işıkcı Başkaya — *Maltepe University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): sustainable environmental behaviours; emotional intelligence; pre-service teachers; early childhood education

Abstract:

Sustainability has become a central concern due to increasing environmental problems such as climate change and resource shortage. In response to these global challenges, fostering sustainable environmental behaviors has gained increasing importance in promoting responsible interaction with the environment. Sustainable environmental behaviors refers to actions with multidimensional aspects such as the use of eco-friendly products, sustainable consumption habits, environmental participation and activism, and the efficient use of natural resources. Learning these behaviours requires a holistic approach that goes beyond knowledge acquisition. Instead, these behaviours are acquired when individuals accumulate personal experiences, making affective learning an essential component of environmental education (Başal et al., 2015). The framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also emphasizes key affective competencies in education for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2021). These affective competencies include empathy toward other people and the planet, motivation to lead change, and the development of sustainability-oriented values and attitudes. In this context, emotional intelligence could emerge as a key factor that could play a significant role in fostering such sustainability-related behaviors. Emotional intelligence is a concept that encompasses multiple skills such as understanding oneself and others, establishing relationships with them, regulating one's emotions, adapting to change, and solving personal and interpersonal problems (Bar-On et al., 2003).

It is argued that understanding other people and developing empathy may serve as a foundation for understanding and caring for the planet. This perspective highlights the importance of competencies embedded within emotional intelligence. For instance, empathy, ethical reasoning, and psychological resilience—all of which fall within the scope of emotional intelligence—are regarded as essential for transformative environmental education (Nufaila et al., 2025). Recently, the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainability has become a focus of interest among researchers. However, due to its relatively recent emergence, significant gaps in the integration of sustainability within the context of early childhood education still persist (Arlemalm-Hagsér & Davis, 2014).

Preschool years are critical for developing environmental awareness and fostering positive attitudes toward the environment (Smith, 2001). Early childhood teachers model sustainable behaviors for children while also shaping and delivering the educational experiences that cultivate these values. Understanding the possible factors that influence preschool teachers' own sustainable environmental behaviors becomes essential since this would likely have a direct influence on their modeling role. In this regard, emotional intelligence becomes a possible factor that might influence preschool teachers' sustainable environmental behaviors since this would include empathy, emotional regulation, and ethical competencies. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between sustainable environmental behavior of pre-service early childhood teachers and their emotional intelligence.

This study employs a quantitative correlational research design. The participants consist of pre-service early childhood teachers. Data collection is currently underway using two validated measurement tools. Sustainable environmental behavior is being evaluated using the Sustainable Environmental Behavior Scale, which includes 24 items across five domains: environmental participation and activism, responsible use of natural resources, green chemistry and eco-friendly products, digital environmental awareness and behaviours, and sustainable consumption habits. Additionally, emotional intelligence is being measured with Revised Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale. The scale consists of 41 items rated on a five-point Likert scale.

The data collection procedure is still ongoing. Upon completion of data collection, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis will be conducted to examine the relationship between the two variables. The results of this study will suggest insights towards early childhood teacher education programs. Particularly given that emotional intelligence is a developable skill, revising educational programs in this direction would be beneficial for the internalization of sustainable environmental behaviors.

4. Sustainability and peace from the children's perspective: The Mosaic Approach

Ümmühan Akpınar Afşin — *Bartın University*

Bilal Afşin — *Ministry of National Education*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): Mosaic Approach; sustainability; peace; children's perspectives; Janusz Korczak

Abstract:

In today's moral climate, the responsibility of addressing ethics and ethics education is a challenging task for conscientious educators. Educators are searching for educational solutions that will rescue today's world from feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. In this process, the example set by Korczak's educational practice creates an inspiring model for school life that transcends the boundaries of time and space and touches on our need to believe in the responsibility to strive and fight for a better world, even if it seems like an unattainable goal. In this context, within the scope of education for sustainability and peace, a broad preschool period of 36-72 months was studied. The case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. With this method, the children's perceptions of sustainability and peace were sought to be deeply understood and developed. The Mosaic approach, developed by Clark and Moss, which follows a "multi-method" approach to better understand the world of young children, was used as the data collection tool. Accordingly, interview, observation, and picture analysis techniques were used together in the research. Separate forms and coding keys were prepared for all these techniques. Observation was used to follow the child's natural flow; interviews were used to learn the child's views on the subject by chatting with them; and picture analysis was used to hear the child's voice through the pictures they drew on the subject. Data diversification was used to increase the validity and reliability of the research. As part of the research, children first visited a children's library and participated in an interactive book reading activity on the topic of sustainability and peace. Based on the books read, drama, art, and play activities involving imagining a more livable world were carried out with the children. In the drama activity, each child portrayed a living creature in their environment and took measures to protect it from possible dangers. In the art activity, the children chose an ecosystem of their choice from their surroundings and drew and colored the creatures living there. Afterwards, the children were interviewed about their drawings. In the following days, families were invited to the school and the children's drawings were exhibited. The children also told their families the stories behind

their drawings. After the art activity, the children came together with university students in a game activity and played traditional group games under the theme of peace, respecting each other's rights. Subsequently, on suitable days, the children participated in a tree planting activity in the kindergarten garden, explored aquatic life in the pond area on the university campus, and visited an animal shelter to feed the animals. The children were observed during the activities, individual interviews were conducted with them after the activities, and their drawings were analyzed. The data obtained was examined using multiple data tools to explore the children's views on environmental awareness, sustainable living, a culture of peace, and a sense of responsibility towards living beings and the planet. The research data was analyzed using the content analysis method with the MAXQUDA program. The results of the research revealed that children's awareness of environmental protection and development; the rights of living beings, including humans, plants, and animals; establishing a compassionate bond with the planet; and developing important awareness about the future through this compassionate bond led them to express valuable opinions on the subject.

5. 70% Curriculum in Nature: Actualizing Children's Developmental Rights through Practice and Exploration

Wen Xu — *Heqin Kindergarten, Shaoxing, Zhejiang, China*

Hongwei Zeng — *Heqin Kindergarten, Shaoxing, Zhejiang, China*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): nature curriculum; children's rights; agency; Heqin Kindergarten; China

Abstract:

Grounded in the belief that nature is the primary catalyst for awakening children's voice and realizing their developmental rights, Heqin Kindergarten has pioneered the "70% Curriculum in Nature" over three decades. This paper explores how natural learning environments serve as a context for actualizing Janusz Korczak's Children's Rights Theory within a Chinese early childhood setting.

First, by co-constructing natural learning environments, we safeguard children's right to agency and participation. Responding to children's intrinsic desire to connect with nature, teachers and children collaboratively designed 146 accessible spaces, including "Water Conservation Zones," "Ecological Farms," and "Four-Season Orchards." Children exercise genuine ownership by voting on crop varieties, planning pathway renovations, and dictating play facility requirements, while adults provide scaffolding for safety and technical needs.

Second, through co-creating natural learning activities, we uphold the right to exploration and inquiry. Guided by Chen Heqin's "Living Education" philosophy—emphasizing "Learning by Doing"—we implement immersive experiences such as agricultural cultivation, embodied aesthetic education, and nature-based project inquiry. By utilizing question walls and dialogic teaching, we uncover children's authentic curiosities, empowering them to direct the pace and trajectory of their own investigations.

Third, by providing diverse platforms for expression, we protect the right to be heard. Adopting a "One Child, One Strategy" approach, we establish multifaceted venues like "Talent Showcase Stations" and "Growth Story Sessions." Whether through nature painting, sculpting, drama, or oral storytelling, every child is supported in documenting discoveries and articulating thoughts according to their unique strengths.

This paradigm demonstrates how developmental rights can be contextualized within local pedagogical practices. By ensuring children's voices are authentically respected in nature-based education, this model

offers a replicable framework for global discourse on rights-based early childhood education, bridging Eastern wisdom with universal human rights principles.

Education for Sustainability and Peace 5	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 14:00–15:30 Room: 3.3 Language: English Chairs: Mie Oba, Ewelina Łobodziec-Kargin	

1. Creative and Collaborative Learning Environments Accessibility for Makers: The Context of Şanlıurfa

Zerrin Mercan — *Bartın University*

Büşra Vural Şenel — *Harran University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): maker workshops; accessibility; makers; early childhood; Şanlıurfa

Abstract:

The purpose of this case study, which employs a qualitative research approach, is to investigate early childhood children's access to maker workshops and the institutional, cultural and sustainable elements that influence this access. The study compares how children between the ages of 0 and 8 may attend maker workshops in various institutional structures (such as libraries and non-governmental organizations) in Şanlıurfa, Türkiye. Managers and field supervisors from various organizations participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used to choose participants in line with the study's goal. Participants had to meet two primary requirements: they had to be employed by the organization for at least a year and be familiar with the functioning and access policies of the relevant maker workshop. The research data was collected during the spring semester of 2025-2026 after obtaining the necessary ethical permissions. Data was gathered through interviews with managers of various institutions that include makerspaces and through relevant documents. In this context, a "Manager Interview Form" created by the researchers was used. This form includes interview questions used in a semi-structured interview technique. The interview questions focus on the accessibility of maker workshops, the institutional, cultural and sustainable factors affecting access, and the similarities and differences between institutions. In addition to the interviews, the document review method was used to assess updated institutional documents (such as signing circulars and photos of makerspaces) from the pertinent institutions over the previous six months or one year. The themes of sustainability, inclusive education, culture, and equitable educational opportunity all addressed the research findings.

2. Practice of Integrated Care-and-Education Cultivation Based on a Nature Curriculum: A Seed Curriculum Case

Zhen Xu — *ZiZhu Kindergarten attached to East China Normal University, Shanghai*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): nature curriculum; seed curriculum; integrated care and education; nursery-kindergarten continuity; children aged 0–6

Abstract:

To address the discontinuity between nursery and kindergarten education and to implement the philosophy of nature-based education, this study uses a seed curriculum as a vehicle to construct an integrated nature education system for children from nursery to kindergarten. In accordance with the physical and psychological developmental 规律 of children aged 0–6, the curriculum establishes tiered developmental goals of “sensory experience–observation and inquiry–creative expression.” For nursery children, the curriculum focuses on sensory perception of seeds and simple caregiving experiences; for children in the junior kindergarten class, it emphasizes observation of seed growth and preliminary recording; for children in the middle and senior kindergarten classes, it further explores the conditions for seed growth and the mysteries of life. By creating a shared natural planting environment, designing mixed-age interactive activities, and connecting curriculum implementation pathways across age groups, the curriculum effectively stimulates children’s interest in nature inquiry and fosters an awareness of care for life, providing a practical model for the implementation of integrated nature education in early childhood care and education.

3. Representations of Human–Farm Animal Relations in Polish Early Childhood Education Textbooks in the Context of Anthropocene Challenges

Ewelina Łobodziec-Kargin — *Adam Mickiewicz University*

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

[Abstract to be supplied.]

4. Efforts to Build a Culture of Peace to Protect Children’s Rights: Reports from Ukraine, Slovakia, and Japan

Mie Oba — *Fukuyama City University, OMEP Japan*

Tatiana Kovalova — *OMEP Ukraine*

Jarka Kreskociova — *OMEP Slovakia*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): culture of peace; children’s rights; war; Ukraine; Japan

Abstract:

It is precisely during early childhood that children have the right to have their lives and development protected and to grow up in safety (1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). However, wars continue to rage around the world, and children continue to live in harsh and unstable environments (UNHCR Press Release, 20 February 2026).

This presentation highlights initiatives from Ukraine that continue to explore various activities, believing in children’s innate capacity to thrive despite wartime hardships, as well as efforts to support these initiatives. We also discuss supports provided through toy library activities in Slovakia and the ongoing exhibition of Ukrainian children’s artwork in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, starting in 2022.

Children should live and grow up in a safe environment, fostering their humanity within a culture of peace that acknowledges and respects their differences.

Chieko Kiriake, a 96-year-old survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bombing, appeals, “We must never repeat wars or conflicts that destroy children’s futures.” (Lecture “My Experience of the Atomic Bombing,” Fukuyama Human Rights and Peace Museum, February 22, 2026)

We hope that our presentation will serve as inspiration to rally global efforts and spread the message of building a culture of peaceful coexistence that protects children’s rights and their early years across the world.

FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility 1	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 16:30–18:00 Room: 4.14 Language: English Chair: Camila Hirsch	

1. From Family Stories to Intercultural Citizenship: Children's Voices on Migration and Identity

Camila Hirsch — OMEP Argentina / Pestalozzi Schule Buenos Aires

Keywords (assigned by the editors): intercultural citizenship; migration; identity; family stories; kindergarten

Abstract:

This paper presents a pedagogical experience developed in the Kindergarten of Pestalozzi School (Buenos Aires, Argentina) within the framework of the commemoration of 200 years of German immigration to Argentina (1825–2025). The anniversary, embraced by the Argentine-German school network as an opportunity to revisit identity, memory, and intercultural coexistence, invited schools to explore the guiding question: “Where do we come from?” / “Woher kommen wir?”

At Pestalozzi School, this proposal was addressed through a pedagogy of memory, migration, and identity grounded in a human rights perspective. Recognizing that immigration can be an abstract concept for young children, the project was designed around children's concrete experiences and family narratives. Through a participatory inquiry approach, families were invited to share stories of origin, migration trajectories, photographs, meaningful objects, languages, and traditions. These materials were integrated into the curriculum as legitimate sources of knowledge, enabling children to explore concepts such as journey, arrival, belonging, cultural diversity, and community life.

The project included collective dialogue, visual and audiovisual documentation, the creation of maps of origin, and systematic pedagogical documentation of children's questions and reflections. Rather than focusing on historical abstraction, the work emphasized concrete and relatable milestones that allowed children to recognize themselves within family narratives. In doing so, immigration was approached not as distant history but as a situated human experience shaped by decisions, efforts, dreams, and intergenerational continuity.

The experience is deeply connected to the historical identity of Pestalozzi School, founded in 1934 as a humanistic and anti-fascist institution that welcomed Jewish children fleeing National Socialism while affirming principles of dignity, non-discrimination, and intercultural coexistence. Inspired by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and resonating with Janusz Korczak's conception of the child as a full subject of rights, the project situates early childhood education as a space for constructing identity, dignity, and participation.

Aligned with the OMEP 2026 Congress theme, “When a Child Speaks... Korczak's Inspirations for Education and Children's Rights,” this experience particularly contributes to the strands Families, Communities and Shared Responsibility and The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice. By recognizing families as carriers of cultural memory and children as active meaning-makers, the project demonstrates how early childhood education can foster intercultural citizenship and a culture of peace in contexts marked by migration and diversity.

2. Family-School Collaboration: Building the New Education Ecosystem

Cui Gu — *Dezhou Best Resource Import & Export Co.,Ltd*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): family-school collaboration; education ecosystem; kindergarten; parents; trust

Abstract:

Education is never a solitary endeavor by either families or kindergartens. Instead, it is a collaborative journey where families and kindergartens work together in harmony in the same direction. Only by working in the same direction and building an open, inclusive, warm, and cooperative education ecosystem through love and trust, we can undertake the responsibilities of nurturing, assisting, and educating children shoulder to shoulder, allowing every child to thrive under the nourishment of the collaboration between families and kindergartens!

The kindergarten where my children attend - Dezhou Yuehua Kindergarten, has been dedicated to researching, building and promoting this new education ecosystem for many years. As a parent, I am fortunate to be a co-creator, beneficiary and promoter of this new education ecosystem. I deeply feel how wonderful this education ecosystem is! This education ecosystem is also extremely important for kindergartens, teachers, parents, children, social development and the education industry as a whole!

At this conference, I would like to present myself as a parent, from a parent's perspective, and with the title "Family-School Collaboration: Building the New Education Ecosystem", to share the Chinese educational story with the world and with the global communities! And then there will be more and more children, adults, society learn and draw strength and wisdom from it.

3. Screen Dependency in Children Aged 3–6: Status, Influencing Factors, and Intervention Strategies

Gang Wu — *(affiliation?)*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): screen dependency; children aged 3–6; influencing factors; parents; intervention strategies

Abstract:

Against the backdrop of the increasing prevalence of screen exposure in the digital age, this study focuses on screen dependency behaviors among children aged 3–6 and aims to explore their current status and underlying influencing mechanisms. A total of 319 parents from H County, H City were surveyed using the Chinese Preschool Screen Dependency Behavior Scale (CPSD), complemented by semi-structured interviews with eight parents. The data were analyzed using SPSS 27.0 through descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA.

The results indicate that: (1) children in H County generally exhibit a moderate-to-high level of screen dependency, with withdrawal obstacles being the most prominent dimension; (2) significant differences are observed across residential location and caregiving patterns, with higher levels of dependency found among rural children and those in skip-generation households; (3) parental screen use behaviors and the effectiveness of household rule enforcement serve as key familial predictors of children's screen dependency; and (4) caregiver companionship duration plays a significant moderating role.

Further analysis reveals that children's screen dependency behavior results from the combined effects of family upbringing practices, individual developmental characteristics, and disparities in urban-rural environmental resources. Accordingly, this study proposes a systematic intervention framework encompassing family-based regulation, home-kindergarten collaboration, and broader social support, aiming to promote healthy screen use habits and support children's holistic development.

4. Relationship between Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Physical Fitness Performance in Children

Hui Shine Lin — *Division of Kinesiology, School of Public Health, LKS Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong*

Ming Fai Parco Siu — *Division of Kinesiology, School of Public Health, LKS Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): special educational needs; physical fitness; physical activity; children; inclusion

Abstract:

Introduction: Physical inactivity is a significant issue for children with special educational needs (SEN). SEN can include a variety of needs, such as cognitive or educational impairments and physical or mental disabilities, but it seems that children with SEN, regardless of the type, encounter some common barriers when participating in physical activity (e.g., lack of knowledge and skills, inadequate facilities, and cost). Previous studies focus on measuring cardiorespiratory fitness and body composition outcomes, and this study has a more comprehensive measure with a multicomponent construct for physical fitness for children with SEN.

Methodology: 66 children (aged 4 to 6 years old) were randomly selected from the KID-FIT study in Hong Kong, which investigated the efficacy of a preschool-based physical activity intervention on improving physical fitness and health in preschoolers. The presence of SEN in these children was confirmed by hospital medical records. The 20-metre shuttle-run test assessed cardiorespiratory fitness, the 4x10-metre shuttle run test assessed agility, the balance beam assessed balance, the sit-and-reach test assessed flexibility, and the handgrip assessed handgrip muscle strength. Outcomes were measured at baseline (before children began upper kindergarten K3 year).

Results: The preliminary analysis included 66 children, 13 of whom had SEN, which included Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), dyslexia, and speech disorder. Children with SEN were found to have performed significantly worse in assessments of both cardiorespiratory fitness ($p < 0.001$) and balance ($p = 0.028$). Therefore, there were no significant differences in the performances of children with SEN and children without SEN in measurements of agility, flexibility and handgrip muscle strength.

Conclusions: The results suggest to researchers and clinicians that SEN children require greater focus to improve their physical abilities, and enhances the evidence for parents of children with SEN on which specific aspects of physical fitness should be improved. These results suggest the designs of physical fitness interventions for children with SEN should pay particular attention to improving cardiorespiratory fitness and balance.

Funding acknowledgements: This research was supported by the Research Impact Fund (R7024-20).

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5. Development of Online Platform-Based Content for Early Childhood Development Support

Il Sun Choi — *Gyeongin National University of Education*

Young Ah Kim — *Soongeui Women's University*

Hyung Mee Kim — *Korean Bible University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): online platform; early childhood development support; developmental screening; parents; South Korea

Abstract:

Currently in South Korea, the decline in the birth rate is accelerating every year, leading to heightened interest in the development of young children. Accordingly, the government developed the developmental screening test (Korean Developmental Screening Test for Infants & Children: K-DST) to conduct health checkups starting from nine months of age, enabling the early detection of young children with developmental difficulties (Ministry of Health and Welfare, Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, 2017). Recent health checkup results show that the percentage of young children recommended for in-depth evaluation due to developmental delays compared to their peers increased from 2.22% in 2019 to 2.44% in 2021, 3.3% in 2023, and 7.3% in 2025 (National Health Insurance Service, 2024). As the number of young children with developmental difficulties increases, there is a need to establish a online platform that allows teachers and parents to easily access information when needed, thereby efficiently supporting their children's development in their daily lives.

Therefore, an young children development support platform performing the following functions has been developed. First, by providing a developmental screening tool for infants and young children aged 12 months to 5 years, teachers can complete the screening based on behaviors observed during daily routines at daycare centers and kindergartens, while parents can do so based on behaviors observed at home. This provides screening results by each developmental area and enables the identification of infants and toddlers at risk for developmental disabilities. Second, based on the screening results, specific plans are provided to teachers and parents to implement play activities in daily life that intensively promote delayed development and identify developmental domains requiring support. Third, the platform system allows for the re-administration of the screening after implementing developmental support in daily life for a certain period, thereby enabling the verification of patterns of developmental changes of infants and young children. Both the screening tool and the play activities for developmental support are organized into seven age groups ranging from 12 months to 5 years, providing applicable information for both teachers and parents and facilitating efficient developmental support for infants and young children.

Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility 2	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 09:00–10:30 Room: 4.14 Language: English Chair: Lidia Wiśniewska-Nogaj	

1. A Case Study on Constructing a Home–School–Health Support System for Preschool Children with Autism from the Perspective of Inclusive Education

Li Yingning — *Nanjing Normal University*

Du Yueyan — *Nanjing Normal University*

Chen Lei — *Nanjing Qingxiucheng Kindergarten*

Wang Ting — *Tami (Tell Me) Children’s Rehabilitation Center*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): autism; inclusive education; home–school–rehabilitation collaboration; preschool; support system

Abstract:

Within the ongoing advancement of inclusive education, we see how vital it is to develop a well-functioning home–kindergarten–rehabilitation (HKR) collaborative support system for young children with special educational needs in preschool settings. Yet in current practice, we have observed recurrent challenges: support systems are often fragmented and collaborative efforts tend to remain formalistic. Resources from rehabilitation institutions, kindergartens, and families are not effectively integrated, which constrains the potential to maximise educational outcomes.

Focusing on a family of a child with autism as a single case, this study explores how HKR collaboration can be forged into a coherent, child-centred support system that enhances educational effectiveness. Grounded in the principles of inclusive education and ecological systems theory, we emphasise that support must be deeply embedded in the child’s real-life contexts and shaped by individual differences. In response to disconnections and role ambiguities frequently found in HKR collaboration, we propose a pathway for reconstructing the support system along three interrelated levels.

At the micro level, we advocate establishing direct point-to-point partnerships between rehabilitation teachers and kindergarten teachers, with relevant information made transparently accessible to parents. This step seeks to position families as informed participants rather than peripheral recipients of intervention decisions. At the meso level, kindergartens and rehabilitation institutions should develop regular, institutionalised collaboration mechanisms: rehabilitation teachers engage in periodic observations within kindergarten classrooms, while kindergarten teachers take part in learning exchanges inside rehabilitation settings; importantly, parents are granted rights to participate reciprocally in activities on both sides. At the macro level, we call for promoting a multi-stakeholder database platform, enabling schools, rehabilitation institutions, and families to share information and case records, thereby facilitating the circulation and accumulation of intervention data and co-constructed decision-making.

Together, the three parties can form a dynamic, cyclical support network of “assessment – connection – collaboration – reflection”, keeping the child’s needs and progress firmly at the centre. This pathway marks a shift from predominantly one-way intervention models toward genuinely collaborative engagement among

multiple actors. By refining the tripartite support among rehabilitation services, kindergartens, and families, we aim to elevate the quality of inclusive education for young children with special needs and to safeguard their holistic development. We contend that this approach carries significant value both theoretically, in extending conceptual frameworks for HKR collaboration, and practically, in informing policy and practice innovations within early childhood special education.

2. Information Overload and Parental Burnout — Conclusions from Research on Parents of Young Children

Lidia Wiśniewska-Nogaj — *Institute of Educational Sciences, Nicolaus Copernicus University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): information overload; parental burnout; engaged parenting; parents of young children

Abstract:

The social, cultural and technological changes witnessed in recent years have affected numerous areas of life, including parenting. One of them concerns the promotion of engaged parenting.

The engaged parents consciously plan parenting against the background of other developmental tasks, prepare for it and actively work towards the child, e.g. by choosing different activities for the child (Godawa, 2022). They adapt their actions and activities to the child's developmental capabilities and ensure a balance between support and independence (Bakiera, 2013). Supportive, positive communication and a valuable relationship with the child are also important for an engaged parent. The spread of the idea of engaged parenting has certain consequences for parents. This model requires devoting considerable time and attention to raising a child, as well as caring for their development and well-being, which puts a lot of pressure on parents (Godawa, 2022). It is associated not only with the need for a high degree of attentiveness, openness and responsiveness, but also with the requirement to continuously improve one's own competences and further training (Wiśniewska-Nogaj, 2025). An involved parent is also a parent with, among other things, up-to-date knowledge of child development, recommendations issued, but also specific trends. Parents are constantly developing and furthering their education (Bakiera, 2014). It can be assumed that nowadays, the main source of information, also in parenting, is the Internet. This entails not only a number of opportunities, but also risks, such as information overload. This phenomenon is associated with such a large volume of information (including its variability, inconsistency and even contradiction or difficulty in assessing its reliability) that it exceeds a person's cognitive resources or digital competence (Wiśniewska-Nogaj, 2025). Information overload is treated as a form of cognitive, sensory and communication overload (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). This condition affects, for instance, a decline in information processing skills, poorer decision-making, and an increase in negative emotional states (Glatz & Lippold, 2023). It can be considered a risk factor for the development of parental burnout.

Addressing the phenomenon of parental burnout scientifically stems from the assumption that any role that is meaningful to a person and requires a substantial investment of resources (e.g. time, emotions) is so taxing that it can lead to burnout (Bianchi et al., 2014; Schitteck et al., 2024). Parental burnout is a syndrome of parental exhaustion resulting from exposure to prolonged stress and lack of an adequate support system. It is associated with a lack of resources to cope with the daily challenges of parenting (Roskam et al., 2021).

Ample evidence shows that parental burnout has a detrimental effect on parents' well-being and behaviour towards their children. Burned-out parents display higher levels of parental violence and parental neglect (Roskam et al., 2018; Roskam et al., 2021). Furthermore, parental burnout can lead to suicidal ideation and escape ideation among parents, as well as psychological forms of escape such as alcohol use and potential excessive use of new technologies. It also increases conflicts among couples (both in intensity and frequency) (Mikolajczak & Roskam, 2018). The negative effects are causal, meaning that if parental burnout is treated, the symptoms decrease.

The aim of the study was to look for relationships between parental burnout and information overload in the group of parents of young children. The study was conducted on 600 parents, including 200 parents of young children. Several methods were used to measure parental burnout, parenting competencies, coping styles and anxiety. The study was founded by MINIATURA 9 grant.

The aim of the presentation is to show the main research findings, focusing on parents of young children and to show practical implications for building interventions for parents.

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3. The Influencing Factors of Family Digital-Intelligent Environment on Young Children's Resilience: The Mediating Role of Parent-Child Relationship

Lili Cao — *Nanjing Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): resilience; family digital environment; parent-child relationship; young children; mediation analysis

Abstract:

Numerous studies have confirmed that resilience is a dynamic adaptive ability for children to cope with challenges and resist risks. As the core context for early childhood development, the family serves as a critical foundation for the cultivation of children's resilience. However, the digital intelligence era has profoundly reshaped family environments, presenting a complex landscape where both risk and protective factors coexist

in the development of children's resilience[1].Existing research has revealed the dual effects of family digital technology on young children's resilience: factors such as reduced parent-child interaction and the restructuring of family relationships constitute potential risks that hinder resilience development. Meanwhile, the convenience of remote connection enabled by digital technology acts as an important protective factor supporting young children's resilience. Previous studies have tended to focus only on the influence of a single family factor on resilience. This study regards the family as an ecosystem and adopts a mixed-methods approach based on the above factors[2]. Specifically, quantitative surveys are used to accurately assess young children's resilience levels, and in-depth interviews are conducted to understand the actual operation of the family digital ecosystem. This study further explores the intrinsic relationship between the two and ultimately constructs the specific mechanism through which the digital ecosystem of the home influences the development of young children's resilience. The findings can provide empirical evidence for promoting young children's resilience and mitigating associated risks.

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4. Who Pays for Childhood? The Dual Logic of Motherhood Penalty and Utilitarian Education: An Empirical Analysis Based on the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS)

LuoJia Song — *East China Normal University, Faculty of Education*

Zhihong Zuo — *East China Normal University, Faculty of Education*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): motherhood penalty; childcare; preschool education; gender division of labour; China Family Panel Studies

Abstract:

At the preschool education stage, the question of "who pays for childhood" has become an increasingly salient structural issue. Within the family, path dependence in traditional gender division of labor continues to shift childcare responsibilities disproportionately toward mothers, who invest substantially more time in daily caregiving tasks such as school pick-ups and routine care. Within the educational environment, academic competition pressure is being systematically transmitted to younger age groups, and the utilitarian orientation of kindergarten education subjects young children to academic demands prematurely. Yet, few empirical studies have drawn on nationally representative data to examine the motherhood penalty and utilitarian education faced by preschool children. This study utilizes data from the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) to investigate this question through two dimensions: maternal caregiving burden and kindergarten academic tasks.

The study employs CFPS data from 2020 (1,091 children aged 3–6) and 2022 (1,224 children aged 3–6). Using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and regression analysis, it examines the current state of motherhood penalty and utilitarian education by analyzing children's school pick-up arrangements, public versus private kindergarten attendance, homework assignments, extracurricular training participation, and maternal employment status.

The results reveal the following. Regarding the motherhood penalty, mothers are significantly more likely than fathers or other caregivers to be responsible for picking up children from school (for instance, in the 2022 survey, 45% of children were picked up by their mothers, compared to only 7% by their fathers). Likewise,

mothers are significantly more likely than fathers to be full-time caregivers without paid employment (for example, in the 2022 survey, 42% of mothers were not working, compared to only 14% of fathers). Longitudinal analysis from 2020 to 2022 further indicates that maternal non-employment was significantly higher in 2022 than in 2020, and maternal non-employment status in 2020 significantly and positively predicted maternal non-employment status in 2022. Regarding utilitarian education, approximately half of the preschool children had homework assignments to complete, and private kindergartens were significantly more likely than public kindergartens to assign homework (for instance, in the 2022 survey, 63% of children in private kindergartens had homework, compared to 47% in public kindergartens). Moreover, when homework was assigned, parents were significantly more likely to enroll their children in extracurricular tutoring classes, thereby exacerbating the burden of utilitarian education. Longitudinal analysis from 2020 to 2022 shows that for the same children, the incidence of homework assignments increased significantly in 2022 compared to 2020, with an additional 26% of children required to complete homework, indicating a growing burden. Furthermore, children's participation in talent or skill training in 2020 significantly and positively predicted their participation in 2022, revealing the persistence of extracurricular training over time.

These findings collectively demonstrate that, within the family, the motherhood penalty—manifested through daily school pick-ups and career interruptions—constitutes the primary mechanism through which the costs of early childhood care are absorbed. Concurrently, within the educational sphere, utilitarian practices embodied in written homework and extracurricular training systematically extend academic competition pressure downward to ever-younger ages. The ultimate "payer" for childhood is neither the child's own volition nor solely the family or the kindergarten, but rather a structural consequence driven by the dual logics of gender norms and educational marketization. This study provides nationwide empirical evidence for understanding motherhood penalty and utilitarian education in China's preschool education stage and suggests that policy efforts should simultaneously address gender-based support for family caregiving and the rectification of preschool education content.

5. Building a Home-School Community in Toddler Classes under the Framework of Collaborative Education

Dan Cheng — *China Welfare Institute Nursery*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): home-school community; toddlers; collaborative education; families; nursery

Abstract:

In the early stages of children's development, families and early childhood institutions jointly undertake the responsibility of education and care. They have common goals but different tasks, requiring integration and collaboration to form an early childhood education community.

This study focuses on toddlers at the China Welfare Institute Nursery, along with their families and teachers, to explore practices in developing a home-school community. Focusing on three key dimensions (i.e., consultation and communication, collaborative co-education, and interactive participation), the study seeks to effectively implement and optimize various practices. It further refines and systematizes relevant methods and strategies to strengthen the connection between families and early childhood institutions, and to explore practical pathways for improving the quality of early childhood care and education for toddlers.

1. Analyzing Parent-Educator Communication in Greek Infant Day Care Centers: Investigating Frequency, Modes, and Context

Marina Konstantinidou — *International Hellenic University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): parent-educator communication; professional co-parenting; infant day care; ECEC; Greece

Abstract:

The present research paper, which is part of a PhD thesis in progress, explores the dynamics of parent with preschool teacher's communication within the framework of "professional co-parenting" in Greek Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centers. The study focuses specifically on infancy (0-3 years), a developmental period that has not been adequately studied in Greece. The choice of this age group is based on the fact that infants have not yet sufficiently mastered communication through speech, so they are unable to transfer their daily experiences or needs. Therefore, the quality of communication between adults becomes the primary channel for ensuring the well-being of the child and the continuity of care.

Utilizing Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory, research examines the functioning of the mesosystem through quantitative methodology. To ensure the validity of the results, the random sampling method was used, gathering data from 152 preschool teachers and 154 parents of infants. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire that assesses frequency, duration, content and means of communication (digital vs. face-to-face).

Preliminary findings indicate a prevalence of informal, short-duration exchanges during drop-off and pick-up times, with an emphasis on functional needs (nutrition, sleep) versus all-round development. The paper argues that since infants cannot "talk about themselves", the establishment of a deep, two-way cooperation is necessary. Suggestions are provided for professional training and institutionalization of communication spaces to support the full development of infants.

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2. "Kids in Action, Villages in Motion": Exploration and Practice of the New-Era Rural Kindergarten Education Paradigm in China

Miao Chen — *affiliation not provided*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): rural kindergartens; rural revitalization; children's agency; community; China

Abstract:

In the context of China's rural revitalization strategy, kindergartens in villages carry the expectations of society and parents for rural children. Wenzhou, a coastal city in southeastern China, has put forward and shared the idea of “Kids in action, villages in motion” , which enables young children to take on the role of master of villages. Through three main forms—Playing and learning through visiting different rural areas, Bringing harmonious vibes to various neighboring countrysides, and promoting the mutual relationships among rural neighbors, the notion of playing, learning, and experiencing are truly and concretely carried out.

By opening gates, children step into mountains, fields, villages, and neighborhoods, transforming village scenes into their own functional playrooms. By independently choosing playgrounds, content, and companions, they create a vivid “picture” of both education and entertainment by village excursion.

By connecting with inheritors of intangible cultural heritage, farming artisans, and others, children could study and absorb traditional culture in their own ways, while also motivating villagers to learn together, carrying forward Chinese culture as well as creating neighborly ties.

Taking on the role of “master of village”, Children could integrate themselves with rural cultural life events such as “Neighborhood Festivals.” And this process may even have an impact on village governance and decision-making about publicly spatial transformation.

A child-centered mechanism, namely “Tonghao United Association”, has been established to build a collaborative education system of “kindergarten–family–village”. Through initiatives such as the Rural Teacher Voyage Program and favorable teacher policies, the entire village is mobilized to nurture a new generation of rural children who possess deep attachment to their homeland, a spirit of inquiry, and strong adaptability to every possible life conditions.

3. Engaging Teacher Candidates and Young Children in Service-Learning: Outcomes of Shared Responsibility

Miranda Lin — *Illinois State University*

Noel Reidy — *Illinois State University*

Mussarath Mehedi — *Illinois State University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): service-learning; teacher candidates; shared responsibility; university–community partnership; young children

Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to highlight the importance of shared responsibility between the university and the community, namely, teacher candidates and young children who collaborate in service-learning projects, and their impact on college students and children who are involved in the process. Service-learning as a pedagogy has been deemed a high-impact practice in education at all levels for decades (Kaye, 2010). However, research on service-learning among children or at the primary school level remains limited in the literature, even though several investigations of service-learning in early education have emerged (e.g., Chiva-Bartoll et al., 2020). This study explores the outcomes of children collaborating with college students while creating service projects to benefit their communities. Research questions constructed for this study are: 1) What are the outcomes of engaging teacher candidates in service-learning, and what are the outcomes of engaging young children in service-learning? Altogether, fifty-two preservice teachers and forty-seven children were recruited to participate in this study.

Data from this study were collected from two groups of preservice teachers who collaborated with children to create service-learning projects that benefit their community in 2023 and 2024. Using pre- and post-program reflections and group reports, the study explores what the college students and the young children learned throughout the projects. Findings indicate that, beyond meeting critical community needs, college students reported increased self-efficacy, patience, greater confidence, and many of the skills needed for their future career pathways as a result of leading after-school clubs. Meanwhile, young children learned social interaction, collaboration, and critical thinking. Findings from this study affirm previous research demonstrating positive outcomes from service projects when young children and teacher candidates share responsibilities to benefit their community (e.g., Fair & Delaplane, 2014; 2015; Khirtani et al., 2020).

4. Nurturing Parent-Child Interactions in the Digital Age: Parental Phubbing, Shared Phone Use, and Non-Digital Distractions

Patricia Hok Sei Ng — *Department of Early Childhood Education, The Education University of Hong Kong*

Eva Yi Hung Lau — *Department of Early Childhood Education, The Education University of Hong Kong*

Chun Bun Lam — *Centre for Child and Family Science, The Education University of Hong Kong*

Jesus Alfonso D. Datu — *Centre for Advancement in Inclusive and Special Education, The University of Hong Kong*

Jian Bin Li — *Department of Early Childhood Education, The Education University of Hong Kong*

Kai Tak Poon — *Department of Psychology, The Education University of Hong Kong*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): parental phubbing; parent-child interaction; smartphone use; responsive caregiving; experimental study

Abstract:

Young children have the right to responsive caregiving that supports their socioemotional development and early learning. In today's connected world, parental "phubbing" (ignoring the child while absorbed in smartphone use) threatens this right by reducing warm, attentive interactions. While previous research links parental phubbing to adverse socioemotional outcomes and problematic media use in children, causal evidence distinguishing different forms of parental distractions remains scarce. This experimental study examines how digital and non-digital distractions affect parent-child interactions in Hong Kong. A total of 227 parent-child dyads (children aged 4-7 years) from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds were randomly assigned to one of four conditions during a joint card game: solo phone use, shared phone use, paper-based distraction, or no distraction. Video recordings were coded for parental verbal and non-verbal scaffolding, parental and child affect, and child inappropriate behaviors. Non-parametric analyses revealed that the control condition yielded the highest levels of parental scaffolding and positive affect, and the fewest child inappropriate behaviors. Both solo and shared phone use significantly reduced parental scaffolding and positive affect compared with the control. Notably, shared phone use showed a striking trade-off: it resulted in the least scaffolding, yet children displayed fewer inappropriate behaviors than in the solo phone condition, suggesting transparency mitigates feelings of neglect. These findings offer practical insights for families and early childhood educators navigating digital interruptions. Understanding how varied smartphone uses shape parent-child experiences can inform parent education and home-school partnerships that uphold children's right to quality interaction and socioemotional well-being in the digital age.

5. From Training to Transformation: How Positive Solutions for Families Shapes Parenting Practices and Family Well-Being

Patricia Matus-Amat — *Community College of Denver*

Daniel Limache — *Community College of Denver*

Alison Hargarten — *Healthy Child Care Colorado*

Robin Levy — *Healthy Child Care Colorado*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): parent education; Positive Solutions for Families; parenting practices; family well-being; mixed methods

Abstract:

This presentation examines the impact of the Positive Solutions for Families (PSF) program on caregiver perspectives, parenting practices, and family dynamics using a mixed-methods approach. PSF is an evidence-based parent education series designed to strengthen parent-child relationships and promote children's social-emotional development. To ensure equitable access, the training was delivered in English, Spanish, and Arabic, engaging families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Data were collected through surveys administered immediately following the completion of the PSF training, complemented by qualitative reflections that captured caregivers' perceptions of learning, behavior change, and family interactions. A 4 to 6 month follow-up survey was also administered to assess the sustainability of outcomes, examine shifts over time, and identify ongoing challenges in the application of PSF strategies. Quantitative data were analyzed to identify patterns of change in parenting confidence, behavior guidance practices, and relational outcomes, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to deepen understanding of caregivers lived experiences.

Results indicate significant improvements in caregivers' use of positive behavior support strategies, including enhanced communication, increased use of positive reinforcement, and more consistent, developmentally appropriate responses to challenging behavior. Qualitative findings reveal a notable shift in caregiver mindset, with participants moving from deficit-based interpretations of children's behavior toward strength-based, reflective, and relational approaches. Follow-up data suggest that many of these changes were sustained over time, while also highlighting contextual factors and barriers that influenced implementation across family settings.

This presentation will provide a detailed analysis of quantitative and qualitative findings, with attention to the role of culturally and linguistically responsive delivery in supporting family engagement and outcomes. Implications for early childhood practice, family support programming, and future research on the long-term effectiveness of parent education interventions will be discussed.

6. United Integration, Synchronized Growth and Jointed Creation: The Family-School-Community Collaborative Education Practice of Dezhou Yuehua Kindergarten

Xiaoyan Sun — *Dezhou Yuehua Kindergarten*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): family-school-community collaboration; ecosystem theory; children's rights; kindergarten; China

Abstract:

Children's development is the shared responsibility of the whole society. Based on the ecosystem theory and the perspective of children's rights, Family-School-Community Collaboration is not only an educational theory but also a value orientation that emphasizes systematicness, situationality, and cultural significance. Over the past 22 years, Dezhou Yuehua Kindergarten has explored and established a Family-School-Community Collaborative Education Model of United Integration-Synchronized Growth - Jointed Creation, aiming to create a supportive and coherent life growth ecosystem for children.

"United Integration" is based on love and professionalism, breaking down the boundaries between families and schools, strengthens the reliable relationships, and ensures the stability of children's development.

"Synchronized Growth" focuses on the self-awareness and adults' self-improvement, and empowers parents and teachers to become spiritual sources of high energy, to influence children by adults' wonderful lives status.

"Jointed Creation" promotes the expansion of education from kindergartens to communities, and transforms kindergartens into "spiritual and cultural highlands" through diverse practical activities, and integrates social educational resources and power.

This model aims to achieve a transformation from "teaching children" to "adults' self-improvement", to build an educational community where the values of families, kindergartens, and society are in harmony and lives inspire each other ultimately. When children live in an ecosystem surrounded by understanding, respect, and wonderful lives status, "Teaching without Teaching" will emerge and develop naturally. This model provides a Chinese solution for Family-School-Community Collaborative Education in the field of early childhood education.

Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility 4	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 14:00–15:30 Room: 4.14 Language: English Chair: Paulette Luff	

1. The Place of Grandparents within a Relational Ecology of Children's Rights

Paulette Luff — *OMEP UK / Anglia Ruskin University*

Daniela Mangione — *Anglia Ruskin University*

Luisa Mascoli — *Anglia Ruskin University*

Mallika Kanyal — *University of the Arts*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): grandparents; children's rights; relational ecology; Janusz Korczak; intergenerational relationships

Abstract:

In this paper we argue that grandparents are uniquely placed to listen to and advocate for their grandchildren but are sometimes underestimated when considering which adults uphold Children's Rights. Drawing inspiration from Korczak's love and respect for children and the relational ecology of Children's Rights, we view rights as located within and dependent upon nurturing relationships in social context. Our discussion draws from two sources. The first is a participatory project with grandparent co-researchers, undertaken in the south of Italy where intergenerational family relationships are traditionally strong. The second is an autoethnographic account with insights from the lived experience of a grandmother in England. Examples

from both sources are used to support a thematic discussion about the potential of grandparents for listening to and understanding their grandchildren. The four themes to be discussed are: i) grandchildren being loved unconditionally; ii) playful intergenerational interactions; iii) protection of grandchildren and their families; and iv) the community around the child. For each of these we show how participatory practices are enacted in everyday interactions between grandparents and grandchildren. We frame grandparents as part of the ecology that enables Children's Rights to be enjoyed from day-to-day and consider how grandparents' responsibilities and contributions to Children's Rights could be further recognised in policy, practice and research.

2. Equity, Inclusivity, and Sustainability: The Policy Logic and Practical Implications of Shanghai's "Baby House" Community Childcare Services

Sihan Liu — *East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): community childcare; Baby House; childcare policy; equity; Shanghai

Abstract:

Against the backdrop of China's severe low birth rate, Shanghai launched its "Baby House" community childcare service. Designed for families with children aged 1 to 3, the program offers convenient, community-based, free or affordable temporary childcare services right in their neighborhoods, addressing the practical challenges parents face—such as lack of time to care for their children and a shortage of scientific parenting knowledge. As a megacity with a population of 25 million, Shanghai has, through institutional innovation, established a community childcare system in a remarkably short timeframe (from a pilot program in 2022 to full coverage by 2026) that alleviates fertility anxiety, empowers women's employment, and is fiscally sustainable.

Shanghai's "Baby House" community childcare services serve as a pioneering exploration in alleviating parenting pressures and building a fair and high-quality childbirth support system. Therefore, this paper will introduce the content of Shanghai's community childcare services and, through policy analysis and field research, systematically examine the policy guidance, current implementation status, and existing challenges of these services. The findings reveal that Shanghai's community childcare service policies have clear objectives and sound top-level design, providing a solid foundation for the implementation of "Baby House"; Regarding the current implementation status, the three-tier government structure (municipal, district, and subdistrict offices) and relevant functional departments have established clear divisions of labor and hierarchical coordination, resulting in a well-developed and feasible community childcare project system. Additionally, the core beneficiary groups express overall satisfaction. However, Shanghai's "Baby House" community childcare services still face challenges such as significant quality disparities across administrative regions and constraints imposed by traditional family childcare attitudes, indicating room for improvement.

This study offers a comprehensive overview of Shanghai's childcare services from multiple perspectives, including policy formulation, implementation, and feedback from service recipients. It provides a balanced model of "government leadership combined with market and social collaboration" for other nations, demonstrates the refined governance of a "megacity" in addressing low birth rates and family pressures, and responds to the global public values of "equity" and "inclusivity." Amid the global trend of low birth rates, it offers insights and references for countries worldwide.

3. Empowering Parents through Digital Innovation to Transform Early Childhood Education

Tsendsuren Tumee — *UNICEF Mongolia Country Office*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): digital innovation; parent empowerment; home-based early childhood education; nomadic communities; Mongolia

Abstract:

Ensuring equitable access to quality early childhood education (ECE) remains a challenge in Mongolia, particularly for children living in remote rural and nomadic herder communities. Geographic isolation, seasonal migration, and climate-related disruptions often limit young children's participation in center-based preschool services. To address these barriers, the Government of Mongolia, with support from the UNICEF, has implemented innovative community-based and home-based ECE approaches that strengthen the role of families and communities in early learning.

One such approach is the Teacher with a Tablet initiative, which enables trained visiting teachers to deliver home-based early learning support to young children and their parents in remote areas. Through tablet-assisted teaching materials, structured home visits, and parental guidance, the initiative promotes interactive learning activities that parents can facilitate at home. This model not only expands access to early learning opportunities but also empowers parents as active partners in their children's development.

Local governments, bagh (community)-level service providers, and community members play an important role in identifying families, coordinating outreach, and supporting inclusive participation of children from herder households, ethnic minority groups, and children with disabilities. By combining digital tools, teacher support, and community engagement, the initiative strengthens shared responsibility for early childhood development.

This experience demonstrates how family-centred and community-supported approaches can complement formal preschool systems to reach the most marginalised children. It underscores the importance of partnerships among government, communities, and development partners to ensure resilient and inclusive ECE delivery in geographically dispersed, climate-vulnerable contexts.

4. The Promotive Role of Parenting Styles and Home Learning Activities in School Readiness Among Children Aged 3–5: A Study on the Construction of a Home-School Community

Wenting Lu — *China Welfare Institute Nursery*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): parenting styles; home learning activities; school readiness; children aged 3–5; home-school community

Abstract:

Parenting styles and home learning activities are key proximal factors influencing school readiness among children aged 3–5. Existing research has shown that indicators of family socioeconomic status, such as parents' educational attainment and occupation, indirectly affect multiple dimensions of children's development—including cognition, social-emotional competence, motor skills, and executive functioning—through parenting behaviors and the home learning environment. However, how to translate these findings into effective

educational practice remains an important issue that urgently needs to be addressed in the field of early childhood education.

Grounded in ecological systems theory and the family investment model, this study examined 565 children aged 3–5. Children’s school readiness was assessed using the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA), which covers six dimensions: early mathematics, early literacy, social-emotional competence, motor skills, executive functioning, and approaches to learning. Parents reported on their parenting styles and home learning activities, including home reading and mathematics activities. Correlation analysis, regression analysis, and mediation analysis were employed to investigate the mechanisms through which parenting styles and learning activities influence children’s school readiness.

The findings indicate that: (1) authoritative parenting and home reading activities significantly and positively predict children’s early mathematics, early literacy, motor skills, executive functioning, and approaches to learning; (2) home reading activities play an independent mediating role in the relationship between parents’ educational attainment and children’s school readiness; and (3) authoritative parenting and home reading activities form a chain mediating pathway, whereby parenting style promotes children’s school readiness through its influence on home learning activities.

Based on these findings—that parenting styles and learning activities significantly promote school readiness among children aged 3–5—this study further proposes a practical pathway for constructing a “home–school community”. Centered on the collaborative partnership between kindergartens and families, the home–school community seeks to enhance children’s school readiness by improving the quality of parenting, optimizing the home learning environment, and strengthening communication and resource sharing between home and school, thereby creating a synergistic educational force. The study recommends that kindergartens establish systematic home–school co-education mechanisms and regularly provide parenting guidance and training for parents; that families actively engage in parent–child reading and learning activities and cultivate a positive home learning atmosphere; and that both sides work collaboratively to build a supportive educational ecosystem that lays a solid foundation for children’s successful transition to primary school.

TEACHERS AS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Teachers as Human Rights Defenders 1	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 14:00–16:00 Room: 4.13 Language: English Chair: Ann Farrell	

1. The Classroom Needs Them: Centering Refugee and Immigrant Adults in the Early Childhood Educator Workforce Through Culturally Responsive Postsecondary Support

Deborah Young — *Community College of Denver*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): refugee and immigrant educators; early childhood workforce; culturally responsive support; postsecondary education

Abstract:

Research confirms what families have always known; children thrive when their teachers share their language, culture, and lived experience. Yet the pathways into ECE credentialing and degrees remain challenging to refugee and immigrants, particularly those whose first language is not the host's country's language. This presentation examines how the Empowering Communities Globally Pamoja Workforce program identifies and addresses gaps and barriers for entering college. We start with a four-month workforce readiness upskill/reskill/newskill readiness program. We use a cohort-based, heart-language support model that combines comprehensive college navigation support, academic in-class interpretation, homework support in heart languages, peer learning communities of three to four students, SMART goal planning.

Many of our students come from collective societies where learning, decision-making, and problem-solving are communal by nature. The U.S. college system is built on assumptions of individualism and independent navigation. Academic advising, financial aid counseling, and student support services are designed for students who advocate for themselves, manage systems alone, and move through institutions as individuals. For refugee and immigrant adult learners, this mismatch is not a personal deficit, it is a structural barrier. The ECG Pamoja Workforce program addresses this directly by working alongside academic advisors, financial aid staff, and student support services to build culturally and linguistically responsive approaches across these systems. Using trauma-informed frameworks, we support students together, in small groups, so that the collective strength they bring is honored, and so that institutional staff are equipped to meet the students with understanding rather than assumptions.

A defining dimension of our work is also its commitment to systems change in partnership with the Community College of Denver. Together, the program and College Board leadership are working to include support for interpretation. U.S. government education rules mandate interpreter services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. There is no equivalent requirement exists for students whose primary language is not English. While philanthropic grants currently bridge this gap for enrolled students, ECG Pamoja Workforce and CCD are advocating for institutional policy change that would make interpreter access a funded right rather than a charitable gift, for multilingual learners.

Achieving a 96% retention and completion rate among approximately 150 students per semester, this program demonstrates that stackable credentials leading to degrees with culturally and linguistically responsive practices, we can transform the systems to become more inclusive. The early childhood field needs a workforce that reflects the children it serves.

This brief presentation will outline the core steps and components of our model, share what we have learned through honest reflection and forward-facing failure, and explore how we continue to grow and scale each semester. We believe that transparency about what has not worked is just as important as celebrating what has.

2. Advancing teachers as human rights advocates in Papua New Guinea: National professional development of early grades teachers within Partnerships for Improving Education

Ann Farrell — *Queensland University of Technology*

Marie White — *Queensland University of Technology*

Julie Davis — *Queensland University of Technology*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): teachers as human rights advocates; teacher professional development; early grades; rights-based education; Papua New Guinea

Abstract:

This presentation examines how teacher education reform for early grades teachers in Papua New Guinea positions teachers as frontline human rights advocates through the Partnerships for Improving Education (PIE) program. Grounded in a rights-based approach to education, the initiative recognises quality early education, not only as a national development priority, but as a fundamental human right aligned with global commitments to inclusive and equitable learning.

In developing and geographically diverse contexts such as Papua New Guinea, significant challenges including remoteness, linguistic diversity, gender inequities, and limited infrastructure disproportionately affect young children's access to quality early learning. The PIE program, in collaboration with an Australian university, responds by strengthening early grades teacher education through collaborative partnerships among higher education institutes, education authorities, communities, and international partners. The program goes beyond the key priority of teacher skill development, to see teachers as advocates for children's rights to quality learning in their classrooms and communities.

The conceptual framework draws on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Sustainable Development Goal 4, emphasising equity, inclusion, participation, and protection. Within this framework, teachers are understood as key human rights advocates who can advance children's rights to safety, belonging, language, culture, and active participation in learning.

This presentation examines the reform agenda, partnership structures and curriculum development from the perspectives of the co-designers of the program from an Australian university. The session emphasises that sustainable improvements in early grades education require systemic partnerships that embed human rights principles into teacher education. For OMEP's global early childhood community, the Papua New Guinea experience offers transferable lessons: teacher education must move beyond skill development toward ethical commitment; partnerships must value local knowledge and culture; and early grades teachers within their school communities must be recognised as key contributors to every child's right to quality education.

3. International study tours as catalysts for teachers as human rights defenders in early childhood education in Papua New Guinea

Kym Simoncini — *OMEP Australia*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): study tours; professional learning; teachers as human rights defenders; early childhood education; Papua New Guinea

Abstract:

This paper reports on a professional learning initiative that brought eight higher education lecturers and Department of Education personnel from Papua New Guinea to Cairns, Australia, to explore how interconnected community settings can support young children's education, care and wellbeing. Framed by rights-based and socio-cultural perspectives aligned with OMEP's commitment to education for sustainable development, social justice and community participation, the study tour intentionally included not only early childhood education and care centres but also library music, play and reading sessions, kindy gym, community playgroups and public playgrounds to foreground children's everyday environments and relationships. The qualitative study investigates how this immersive experience shaped participants' thinking, teaching practices and advocacy for early childhood in PNG six months after their return. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews conducted under university ethics approval and analysed thematically to illuminate shifts in participants' understandings of children's rights to play, learning and participation, and their own identities as advocates. Emerging findings suggest that participants reimagined early childhood provision as a shared responsibility across families, communities and services; began integrating more play-based, community-connected practices into teacher education; and strengthened their advocacy for policies that value local culture, partnerships and sustainable support for young children and their families. The paper argues that carefully designed international study tours can be a powerful strategy for building early childhood leadership and advocacy capacity in Majority World contexts, resonating with OMEP's focus on collaboration, equity and the realisation of children's rights.

4. Working Together for the Benefit of All: Fostering Professional Learning Communities as Human Rights Defenders in Early Childhood Education

Chih-hsiu Ou — *National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences*

Shu-chi Chen — *University of Taipei*

Keywords: human rights defenders, early childhood education, professional learning community, staff team

Abstract:

Purpose

This study reconceptualizes early childhood educators as Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). It investigates how preschool teachers, driven by a commitment to social justice and equal respect, navigate complex professional negotiations to safeguard every child's right to active learning and community participation. The research focuses on the transformative journey of translating "rights-based beliefs" into concrete pedagogical actions that dismantle barriers to inclusion.

Methodology and Collaborative Advocacy

Employing a collaborative action research (CAR) framework, the study examines two professional learning communities (Inclusion and Community Engagement):

- (1) Philosophical Grounding: Teachers first articulate their stance on children's agency and their role as defenders of equitable participation.
- (2) The Action Cycle as Advocacy: Through the "Opening a Shop" and "Exploring our Community" projects, teams engage in cycles of "Planning, Action, Observation, and Review." These cycles serve as a mechanism to evaluate whether children's voices are authentically listened to and acted upon.
- (3) Collaborative Documentation: Staff teams filmed "miniature defense" of children's rights, documenting how teachers actively adjust the environment and curriculum to ensure that all children can meaningfully participate in their preschool life, and that no one is excluded.
- (4) Critical Dialogue: Researchers and teachers co-analyze these records to reflect on the power dynamics between teacher authority and child agency.

Key Findings

Findings reveal that acting as HRDs necessitates "Radical Negotiation," a process of constantly challenging standardized norms to implement tiered support. Collective consensus is redefined as a commitment to the "I'm OK, You're OK" philosophy, balancing teacher well-being with advocacy for children's rights.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that when teachers view themselves as Human Rights Defenders, the "practice-reflection" cycle becomes a tool for social change. It strengthens the consistency between democratic ideals and classroom reality, offering a replicable model for fostering inclusive citizenship in early childhood education.

5. What does ethical leadership look like? Understanding the epistemological foundations of ethics from the perceptions of kindergarten teachers

Chrysa Keung — *Education University of Hong Kong*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): ethical leadership; kindergarten teachers; ethics; teacher perceptions; early childhood education

Abstract:

Introduction

Ethical leadership has long been a focus in leadership theory, which guides teachers in making professional decisions and corresponding agentic actions (Ahmed, 2025; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brownlee et al., 2010). In the face of the unprecedented changes, it is indispensable for early childhood teachers to maintain a strong ethical foundation when working with vulnerable children and their families (Gamarra & Giroto, 2021; Keung, 2025). These leaders prioritise students' well-being by demonstrating alternative and progressive thinking in their care and practices (Haslip & Donaldson, 2020; Robinson & Curry, 2005). Their agentic actions serve as a foundation that reflects moral qualities such as virtue, openness, kindness, compassion, and integrity (Kuusisto & Lamminmaki-Vartia, 2012). When we perceive that an ethical leader embodies a set of values and moral principles, Lawton and Páez (2015) propose a framework encompassing three dimensions: Virtues, Purposes,

and Practices. Their framework addresses key questions about how leaders are defined and characterised, and how they execute their ethical roles. Although there are various conceptualisations of ethical leadership, specific agentic practices along with ethical principles can be identified, including virtue, deontology, consequentialism, and communitarianism. These principles lead to ethical leaders who make morally sound, contextually relevant decisions that reflect the needs and goals of their schools (Campbell, 2014; Nicholson et al., 2018).

Methodology

This study seeks to identify the epistemological foundations by exploring kindergarten teachers' perceptions of ethical leadership qualities. To do so, we collected interview data from 18 head and classroom teachers across eight kindergartens in Hong Kong. Prior to the interviews, the study obtained written consent from each participating teacher and informed them of the research purpose. Each interview was conducted online and lasted an average of 60 minutes. We used an epistemological approach, collecting data through two interview questions. They are: (a) Could you share your understanding of "ethical leadership"? and (b) In your teaching career, have you worked with colleagues whom you considered to be ethical leaders? During data collection, the researchers asked follow-up interview questions, for example, asking participants to describe the behaviours of such leaders and provide specific examples to illustrate their observations. This could help the researchers to clarify the case and deepen their understanding of the participating teachers' perspectives. In the data analysis stage, all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were subsequently analysed to identify recurring themes and categorised according to various ethical principles. This thematic analysis allows the researchers to distill insights on how kindergarten teachers conceptualise ethical leadership and the epistemological beliefs that shape their understandings. This study has received approval from the research ethics committee of the researcher's affiliated university.

Findings and discussions

Most participating teachers emphasised virtue ethics, which is rooted in the leader's personal conduct. Leadership practices are characterised by several key qualities, including fairness, kindness, integrity, and honesty. They also mentioned that ethical leadership entails treating all individuals equitably. Other participating teachers noted that ethical leaders' decision making grounded in kindness and care, demonstrating empathy and genuine concern for both society and individuals. However, exercising these qualities can be particularly challenging for ethical leaders when tasked with creating an environment that accommodates diverse stakeholders. In addition to virtue ethics, some participating teachers mentioned deontological ethics, which encompasses duty, adherence to rules, and responsibilities. Their perspective is grounded in Immanuel Kant's deontology, which focuses on the inherent rightness of actions and commitments to principles regardless of consequences. This can be described as a strong sense of responsibility, in which they are committed to their moral beliefs by doing good every day. In some cases, participating teachers illustrated that ethical leaders do not strictly adhere to established rules or regulations. Instead, their actions are guided by their values and judgment. These underlying practices require ethical leaders to respond flexibly to specific situations, particularly when there may be no clear-cut answers. This reflects consequentialism, referring to the ethical principle that focuses on the outcomes of actions to maximise positive impacts on diverse groups. While some participating teachers observed that the behaviour of ethical leaders prioritises the collective interests of the kindergarten over personal gain. This demonstrates that ethical leadership extends beyond the classroom, enabling teacher leaders to balance the needs of all stakeholders in decision-making. Their practices emphasise educational values and collective well-being, aligning with the ethical principle of communitarianism.

Implications

The analysis indicates that teacher perceptions are linked to their epistemological beliefs, which can be reflected in ethical principles. Based on this, ongoing dialogue and reflection are crucial to teacher professionalism in upholding ethical values. Future studies can explore training and professional development opportunities to strengthen kindergarten teachers' ethical leadership skills for addressing workplace dilemmas and enhancing their agency. Understanding the epistemological foundations will enable school leaders, educators, researchers, and policymakers to engage teachers in ethical action. When teacher leaders act ethically, they can exert the agentic influence to nurture an environment where staff and students feel valued and respected.

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6. The Pedagogical Coordinator as a Liminal Professional Supporting Educators' Agency and the Quality of ECEC Services

Edoardo Maresca — *Sapienza University of Rome*

Keywords: pedagogical coordination; leadership; liminality; ECEC quality; comparative policy

Abstract:

This contribution presents the preliminary results of a PhD research project on pedagogical coordination in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services. The study explores the pedagogical coordinator as a liminal professional, operating in the spaces between educational teams, organisational structures, and policy frameworks.

Drawing on a systematic international literature review and a comparative analysis of regulatory frameworks in five countries (Italy, UK, Norway, Finland and Germany), the research conceptualizes pedagogical coordination as a boundary-crossing practice that sustains coherence, reflection, and shared meaning-making within ECEC services. The analysis highlights how coordinators inhabit an intermediate and often ambiguous space that enables translation, negotiation, and relational leadership across micro (educators' practices), meso (service organisation), and macro (governance and policy) systems.

The comparative findings identify structural and cultural factors that shape the coordinator's role, recognising this liminal positioning as a transformative opportunity to support educators' professional agency, foster children's holistic development, and sustain quality within ECEC services.

Teachers as Human Rights Defenders 2	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 16:30–18:00 Room: 2.3 Language: English Chair: Fang Wang	

1. Bridging Children's Rights and Early Childhood Teacher Education: A Comparative Perspective

Adrijana Višnjić-Jevtić

Ingibjorg Ósk Sigurðardóttir

Rita Melia

Višnja Rajić

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's rights; initial teacher education; early childhood teacher education; comparative study

Abstract:

Teachers and caregivers are the living link between children's rights principles and everyday educational practice. In early childhood education, educators act not only as facilitators of learning but also as mentors, advocates, and ethical leaders who support children's dignity, participation, and well-being. Preparing teachers to enact this role is therefore a key responsibility of initial teacher education (ITE).

While scholarship on children's rights education has grown, its intersection with ITE—particularly in early childhood contexts—remains underexplored (Quennerstedt, 2016). Research highlights persistent gaps between policy commitments to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and their translation into teacher preparation programmes, with student teachers often lacking knowledge of and confidence in rights-based approaches (Višnjić-Jevtić & Rajić, 2024).

This comparative study examines how children's rights are addressed in early childhood ITE programmes in Iceland, Ireland, and Croatia. The research draws on a rights-based education framework anchored in the UNCRC, positioning teachers as key mediators of rights realisation in practice (Lundy, 2007). Using an interpretive qualitative approach, the study includes four focus groups with student teachers in Iceland, Ireland, and Croatia to explore their perspectives on how children's rights and the UNCRC are addressed within their initial teacher education programmes. The discussions aim to capture student teachers' experiences, perceived preparedness, and confidence in applying rights-based approaches in early childhood education, as well as their views on how teacher education can better support educators in promoting and safeguarding children's rights in practice.

2. The Resilience of Early Childhood Myths: Are Critical Thinking Standards Enough for Prospective Stakeholders?

Asude Balaban Dağal — *Marmara University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): early childhood myths; misconceptions; critical thinking; prospective teachers; child development

Abstract:

Culturally transmitted myths and misconceptions regarding early childhood mostly stand in opposition to scientifically accepted knowledge. When these traditional child-rearing beliefs inform pedagogical practices, they pose a significant risk of hindering optimal child development. The accepted principles regarding children's education and development, embedded in early childhood myths, may influence professionals' decision-making when working with young children. Addressing this issue, the present study aims to examine the relationship between the prevalence of belief in early childhood myths and the critical thinking standards of prospective early childhood stakeholders.

This study utilized a correlational research design and drew a sample of 321 undergraduate students from the Early Childhood Education, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, and Child Development departments at various public and private universities in Istanbul. Data were collected through face-to-face and digital modalities, using a Personal Information Form, the Early Childhood Myths Scale, and the Critical Thinking Standards Scale for Teacher Candidates. Correlational analyses revealed no statistically significant association between the participants' adherence to early childhood myths and their critical thinking standards ($p > .05$). However, adherence to these myths varied significantly based on university type, academic program, and grade level ($p < .05$). These results indicate that culturally internalized childhood myths, acquired prior to formal education, are highly resistant to general critical thinking skills. In other words, the critical thinking practices fostered in higher education may be insufficient to prompt students to question and transform the traditional, unscientific notions adopted during their early years. Re-evaluating these persistent childhood myths is vital for fostering evidence-based practices among future early childhood stakeholders.

3. Beyond the Classroom: An Autoethnographic Study on the Professional Transformation of Out-of-School Learning Practices

Huriye Arıcı — *Necmettin Erbakan University*

Mehmet Mart — *Necmettin Erbakan University*

Ufuk Keleş — *Bahçeşehir University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): out-of-school learning; autoethnography; preschool education; professional transformation

Abstract:

Out-of-school learning is a learning approach that supports the multifaceted development of children by offering them rich learning experiences beyond the school walls. This study aims to examine out-of-school learning activities implemented in preschool education based on the researcher's childhood experiences, teaching, and administrative processes. The research utilized an autoethnography design, a qualitative research method. Autoethnography is an approach that allows individuals to make sense of their own experiences within a social and cultural context, and the researcher is the participant in the study. This method allows for an in-depth examination of the researcher's experiences from both individual and professional perspectives.

The data collection process was carried out through documents and observations obtained by the researcher from various sources. In this process, the researcher systematically recorded her own experiences through personal diaries and professional recollections. In addition, field notes on out-of-school learning activities, field trip plans, visual documents of the activities, and children's activity outcomes were used in the data collection process. Personal diaries contain the researcher's daily observations, planning processes of out-of-school learning, difficulties encountered, and decisions made during the implementation processes. Field notes embody children's behaviours, social interactions, and the level of participation in the learning process observed during the implementation of the activities. Field trip plans include the processes and administrative arrangements in the preparation phases of out-of-school learning activities. In addition, the activity products created by the children before or after the application were used as an important data source in evaluating the learning outcomes.

All this data reveals the pedagogical and administrative dimensions of the out-of-school learning process in a holistic way. The collected data have been analysed using thematic analysis. Themes have been developed based on the researcher's professional recollections, learning processes, and interaction patterns. The resulting themes are structured to reveal the multi-dimensional nature of out-of-school learning practices. In this context, the planning and preparation processes of out-of-school learning activities reveal the pedagogical and administrative dimensions of the activities, while the teacher and administrator perspectives reflect the experiences and decision-making processes in the implementation of the practices.

Furthermore, professional transformation reveals the perspective gained by the researcher during the transition from teaching to administration and its impact on the practices. The study includes child and parent experiences, participation in learning processes, social interaction, and feedback dimensions. Finally, it includes evaluation processes of out-of-school learning practices, learning outcomes of activities, and findings on implementation results. The findings show that out-of-school learning practices are not only activity-focused but are also influenced by multidimensional factors such as administrative arrangements, permission processes, safety measures, and interaction with the social environment. The researcher's professional transformation between teaching and administrative experiences directly affects the way the practices are implemented, the children's learning experiences, and the feedback parents receive from the process. This situation necessitates meticulous planning of out-of-school learning from both pedagogical and administrative perspectives. This study aims to offer practical suggestions for school administrators and teachers on planning out-of-school learning activities in a more systematic, safe, and pedagogically effective way. It also aims to contribute to the literature by presenting a unique example of the limited number of studies conducted using the autoethnography method in the field of preschool education.

4. Transforming ECCE Practice for Sustainable Development: Through Pedagogical Accompaniment

Mikiko Tabu — *Seitoku University*

Eri Nakamura — *Chiba University*

Sachiko Nozawa — *CEDEP, University of Tokyo*

Sachiko Asai — *University of Tokyo*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): education for sustainable development; pedagogical accompaniment; ECCE practice; Japan

Abstract:

The era of climate change demands a new relationship between humanity and nature. Education is expected to provide the power to transform this relationship. Within Japan's early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector, Education for Sustainable Development initiatives are gaining momentum. However, it has been pointed out that these efforts often remain confined to nature experience activities, making it difficult to achieve transformative change. This stems from the sector's history, deeply influenced by both the longstanding tradition of valuing connections with nature and the powerful impact of Froebel's concept of "nurturing through nature".

In recent years, a theoretical foundation that could be collectively termed 'post-anthropocentrism' has emerged, particularly in the Nordic, North American and Oceanian regions. This underpins the pursuit of practices that teach us to live in the world alongside others, including nature, rather than merely objectifying and understanding the world.

This presentation reports on an initiative by a group of researchers who are exploring how researchers and educators can better nurture children's potential, agency and sense of belonging to the world, thereby creating a world in which humans and non-humans can thrive together.

Inspired by the work of the 'Early Childhood Pedagogy Network' in British Columbia, Canada, and the 'Reggio Emilia Institute' in Sweden, and having obtained approval from the Ethics Review Committee of the University of Tokyo, a project striving for practical change was launched. Here, a few current examples of this work will be presented. They are illustrative cases where it was observed that ECCE practices gradually changed when individuals with advanced pedagogical expertise joined the nursery and worked alongside the educators.

As regards the recent effects of climate change in Japan, the weather has generally become more extreme, with natural disasters such as heatwaves, strong winds, torrential rain and heavy snowfall occurring more frequently and on a larger scale. Furthermore, in some areas, outdoor activities have been restricted due to wildlife such as bears, wild boar and monkeys increasingly entering human living areas. Looking at demographic trends, the number of births has been declining for many years; in regions experiencing population decline, ECCE facilities are increasingly expected to play a diverse range of roles as valuable community assets.

Case 1: This nursery has become the only facility in this increasingly depopulated village, and all the children born in this local authority attend it. It boasts a spacious site with varying elevations and rich vegetation. Nevertheless, there was a period when the children were not allowed to leave the large courtyard-like outdoor space surrounded by the nursery buildings, due to sightings of wild bears in the vicinity, and human casualties reported in neighbouring areas. The nursery educators have started 'Nursery grounds reform' project with children, parents, alumni, and local residents, with a hope to transform the nursery into a community gathering place. Pedagogy researchers regularly visit the nursery, meeting with educators and listening to their perspectives. Together, they are striving to transform outdoor spaces into places that offer a more meaningful experiences for everyone involved. At the same time, they are exploring new ways of engaging with the wildlife inhabiting the surrounding environment.

Case 2: This nursery opened in 2023 on the third floor of a large building in central Tokyo, amidst a cluster of office towers. It is one of several operated by an organisation promoting 'Reggio Emilia-inspired-practice', which holds fostering connections with the local community as one of the core educational principles. However, it faces challenging environment to put this principal into practice. The nursery educators are currently exploring how to build relationships with the local community, whilst receiving advice and support

from the ‘pedagogical partner’, a professional equivalent to the Pedagogista in Reggio Emilia; she visits the nursery to work alongside the educators, enhancing meaningful experiences for both children and adults whilst also serving as a link between the nursery, children and the local community. The “Art Walk”, jointly organised by this nursery and local businesses, is one example of an initiative that makes the most of this area’s environment, which is dotted with numerous galleries. END

5. Biases in Preschool Teachers’ Cognition of Self-Evaluation and Pathways for Reconstruction: A Sociological Perspective

Fang Wang — *Department of Early Childhood Education, East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): teacher self-evaluation; preschool teachers; professional development; sociological perspective; teacher subjectivity

Abstract:

As a key dimension and profound imperative of preschool teachers’ professional development, self-evaluation is a process of value judgment through which teachers actively transform themselves and construct the spiritual worlds of both self and others; in essence, it is bound up with the development of teacher subjectivity. From a sociological perspective, this paper systematically examines the biases embedded in preschool teachers’ cognition of self-evaluation and their causes, and, drawing on Foucault’s theory of “technologies of the self” and social cognitive theory, proposes pathways for reconstructing teachers’ cognition of self-evaluation. The study argues that although self-evaluation is widely regarded as a crucial mechanism for promoting teachers’ professional development, in practice teachers’ understanding and enactment of it are marked by pervasive deviations. Most notably, they are excessively dependent on the logic of external evaluation, with the result that self-evaluation is alienated into a managerial tool and departs from its essential nature as a practice of self-formation.

At the level of theoretical construction, the paper introduces Foucault’s analysis of the transformation of forms of power and points out that the shift from disciplinary power to biopower has made the “self” a key vehicle through which power operates. Foucault’s later notion of technologies of the self emphasizes that individuals actively constitute themselves through self-technologies and thereby loosen their dependence on external systems of judgment. As a typical form of technology of the self, self-evaluation should possess three normative characteristics. First, its fundamental purpose should be the achievement and cultivation of the self. Second, its mode of practice should not be fixed or externally prescribed. Third, the process of self-evaluation should be agentic, enabling teachers to consciously and appropriately organize the relationship between internal and external resources.

Based on an analysis of 976 questionnaire responses collected from teachers in Beijing and Shandong, China, the study used a Constant Sum Scale to measure teachers’ cognitive orientations toward self-evaluation. The results show that scores on all dimensions were above the theoretical neutral value, indicating that teachers generally regard self-evaluation as an externally driven managerial tool rather than a reflective practice serving subject construction. This bias is manifested in three major misconceptions. The first is the “confusion of subjecthood,” in which teachers habitually cede evaluative authority to administrators or senior teachers, revealing a weak sense of agency. The second is the “fetters of form,” whereby self-evaluation is confined to periodic, specially designated tasks, crowding out opportunities for immediate reflection emerging from

pedagogical situations. The third is “inertial thinking,” in which teachers rely heavily on external indicators and superior guidance, weakening the perspective and voice of the self.

From the perspective of social cognitive theory, this paper treats teachers’ cognitive orientations toward self-evaluation as a broad form of bias and analyzes its causes at the cognitive, affective, and institutional levels. At the cognitive level, the assimilative effect of external evaluation has produced a fixed schema in which “evaluation equals appraisal,” while the pull of group cognition and polarization effects further consolidate this bias. At the affective level, dependence on the sense of security provided by external evaluation, together with a lack of professional self-confidence, leads teachers to project their trust onto supposedly “objective” standards, thereby distorting their understanding of the nature of self-evaluation. At the institutional level, external evaluation mechanisms centered on quantitative indicators have been internalized as habitual obedience, while policies on self-evaluation lack clear institutional support. Meanwhile, hierarchical management structures embed self-evaluation within a top-down framework of power, reducing teachers to passive implementers.

Under biased cognition, self-evaluation places teachers in a threefold predicament. First, there is a “loss of meaning”: dominated by instrumental rationality, self-evaluation loses its core significance in fostering professional self-awareness and value identity. Second, there is the “concealment of the self”: teachers’ reflective capacities and self-consciousness are eroded, leaving them in a state of self-loss. Third, there is the “fragmentation of the community”: professional dialogue and collaboration are inhibited, and the teacher community degenerates into a loose collection of individuals executing external directives.

On the basis of the above analysis, this study proposes three developmental pathways. First, it calls for a return to technologies of the self by affirming teachers’ subject position and genuinely devolving evaluative power to them. Second, it advocates cross-group dialogue and the creation of multiple platforms through which heterogeneous perspectives can be introduced so that bias may be corrected through cognitive interaction. Third, it urges a move beyond the myth of scientism and a recovery of the legitimate value of subjective experience, so that evaluative standards may shift from external regulation to internally generated practical wisdom. Ultimately, the study calls for self-evaluation to be reconstituted as an ethical practice of care of the self, thereby enabling the genuine restoration of professional autonomy.

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Teachers as Human Rights Defenders 3	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 09:00–10:30 Room: 4.13 Language: English Chair: Weronika Klon	

1. Awareness—Seeing Every Child Truly

Dongmei Wang — *Dezhou Yuehua Kindergarten*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): teacher awareness; mindful education; child-centredness; natural education; early childhood education

Abstract:

The core mission of contemporary early childhood education is to return to child-centeredness and see the true existence of every life. Teachers' awareness is the fundamental prerequisite to achieve this goal. Following the author's presentation on natural education practices in person at the 65th OMEP World Assembly in 2013, this report puts forward a brand-new core theme for the international community: Teacher Awareness and Mindful Education.

Based on the reality of early childhood education in China and decades of educational reform and practical research, the author proposes a mindful education concept centered on non-discriminatory awareness. It advocates that teachers start from self-awareness, let go of judgment, control and inertia, and accompany children's growth in a sober, equal and gentle state. Practices have proved that improving teachers' awareness can significantly enhance teacher-child relationships, respect children's rights, and return education to the essence of life.

The author is the founder of the Kindergarten of Dezhou Yuehua School in China. For 22 years, she has been committed to the cultivation and development of awareness among teachers. This sharing aims to convey original educational wisdom from China to global colleagues: Awareness is not a skill, but a compulsory course for teachers. It is the key force to protect children's nature and promote the high-quality development of early childhood education.

2. How to Defend Children's Rights in Daily Life: A Practical Case from China

Yuewei Wang — *Dezhou Yuehua Kindergarten*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's rights; daily practice; teacher awareness; action research; kindergarten

Abstract:

Defending children's rights should be integrated into every aspect of educators' daily interactions with children. The teachers research group, named "Our Children and I" at the Kindergarten of Yuehua School in Dezhou, China, has spent two years to explore how teachers can transform the defense of children's rights into natural actions through enhanced awareness in daily practice, using action research methods. During the two years research, through continuous awareness exercises, teachers "saw" those quiet and marginalized children who are often overlooked, which is the starting point for defending children's rights to be understood and respected. Through collaborative interpretation of real cases, teachers reinterpreted children's behaviors from "problems" to "languages", thus transforming teachers from behavior controllers to interpreters of children's true intentions. Through self-awareness, teachers constantly examined themselves internally and corrected their own perceptions and behaviors, to reduce unconscious harm to children's rights at the root.

When educators involved children's daily lives with awareness, defending children's rights is no longer an additional burden but a natural quality internalized in responsive educational relationships. Defending

children's rights begins with educators truly seeing and understanding every child - this is the best response to Mr. Korczak's statement that "children are not future adults but exist in the present."

This report will demonstrate how teachers can reconstruct their understanding of children through awareness exercises and naturally grow into daily defenders of children's rights in the process.

3. Practice Pathways for Teachers to Safeguard Children's Rights from the Perspective of Ecological Education

Mei Zhu Chen — *affiliation to be confirmed*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's rights; ecological education; teachers; practice pathways; early childhood education

Abstract:

The realization of children's rights is a fundamental indicator of educational equity and societal progress. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes children as subjects of rights, mandating that all stakeholders uphold their rights to survival, development, protection, and participation. As primary companions and educational guides in children's daily lives, teachers are the most pivotal agents in the practical realization of these rights; their actions directly determine the quality of rights implementation. Situated within the authentic educational context of a "macro-ecological education" curriculum, this study explores the role and practical strategies of preschool teachers as "guardians of children's rights." It argues that within an ecological framework that utilizes nature and society as educational contexts, teachers must transcend their traditional role as knowledge transmitters to become profound protectors of children's rights to survival, development, and participation. Through observation and reflection on PBL activities in kindergartens, this study proposes that the core of safeguarding rights lies in establishing a teacher-child relationship characterized by "reciprocal recognition." This means teachers are responsible not only for creating a protective physical and emotional environment but also for respecting children's rights to expression, experimentation, and autonomy during curriculum decision-making and activity implementation. The study concludes that high-quality, kindergarten-based curricula are crucial arenas for the enactment of children's rights. Only by embodying the principles of listening, respect, and support through their professional expertise can teachers truly empower children, enabling them to become dignified and capable subjects in their own independent explorations.

4. Teachers' Collaborative Reflection and Professional Rights in Kindergarten Self-Evaluation: Conditions for Hearing Children's Voices

Yingqi Wu — *School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University*

Keywords: Kindergarten self-evaluation, teachers' collaborative reflection, teachers' professional rights, children's voices

Abstract:

Educator Janusz Korczak inspires us that respect for children is inseparable from respect for teachers. However, in many kindergartens in China, self-evaluation has gradually become a documentation activity in

response to external supervision, positioning teachers as passive "form-fillers" rather than reflective practitioners within managerial tasks. This instrumental approach weakens teachers' rights to speak, think, and collaborate, thereby undermining their capacity to listen to children, understand children's experiences, and defend children's rights.

Therefore, grounded in Sociocultural Theory and Constructivism, this study adopts a qualitative case study approach, selecting a public kindergarten in N City of China as the research site. Through one semester of non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and text analysis related to care and education practices, data will be collected to explore how kindergarten self-evaluation, when truly focused on everyday care and education practices, can transcend being merely a managerial task and transform into a process of professional meaning-making for teachers. By examining the micro-mechanisms of teachers' collaborative reflection, this study investigates three dimensions: motivations for collaborative reflection, cognitive changes in understanding practice, and the effectiveness of social interaction. It also seeks to explore key factors that promote or constrain deep collaborative reflection, providing a basis for constructing a self-evaluation mechanism that supports deep professional inquiry.

Preliminary findings from the study reveal three typical patterns of collaborative teacher reflection: surface-level information sharing, passive responding, and deep meaning negotiation. Reflection is shaped by both external pressures and internal professional motivations. However, cognitive change often remains at the level of technical problem-solving or interpretive understanding, with limited critical reflection. In addition, face-saving norms and hierarchical relations frequently inhibit authentic dialogue. The depth of reflection is jointly shaped by macro-level policy orientations, meso-level organizational conditions, and micro-level interactional dynamics.

This study argues that authentic kindergarten self-evaluation is not merely a managerial procedure but a defense of teachers' professional rights. Only when teachers are granted the professional right and space to think critically, express themselves authentically, and construct knowledge collaboratively can they become reflective practitioners and defenders of rights who truly listen to and respond to children's voices.

5. PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY AND RESILIENCE, AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS - RESEARCH REPORT

Weronika Klon — *Faculty of Educational Studies AMU*

Katarzyna Waszyńska — *Faculty of Educational Studies AMU*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): psychological flexibility; resilience; job satisfaction; teachers; quantitative research

Abstract:

The presentation explores resilience, psychological flexibility and job satisfaction as variables important for understanding the professional functioning of teachers. In this research, a quantitative model was adopted and the level of psychological flexibility, resilience and job satisfaction among teachers was measured by the following questionnaires: AAQ II, KOP-26, and SSP. Then, correlations between these variables were checked. As the results of the analyses showed, the first two factors entered into a statistically significant correlation with each other but not with the job satisfaction level. This shows that job satisfaction may be a very different type of phenomenon from the other two. This may also be related to the characteristics of the job satisfaction

scale used or to the need to take a closer look at the way of operationalising this phenomenon and the need to understand its nature in the changing social reality.

EDUCATION WITH EMPATHY AND WITHOUT FEAR

Education with Empathy and Without Fear 1	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 11:00–12:30 Room: 4.18 Language: English Chair: Anna Mańkowska	

1. How to tell a good story? The Psychoeducational and Therapeutic Functions of Storytelling

Anna Mańkowska — Adam Mickiewicz University

Keywords (assigned by the editors): storytelling; fairy tales; psychoeducation; therapeutic functions; child development

Abstract:

Storytelling and fairy tales have long been recognized as powerful cultural tools that support children's development. In recent years, interdisciplinary research in developmental psychology, neuroscience, and education has provided new insights into the mechanisms through which narratives influence cognitive, emotional, and social functioning. This paper explores the psychoeducational and therapeutic potential of storytelling in childhood and adolescence.

The aim of the study is to present theoretically grounded and empirically informed arguments supporting the use of stories and fairy tales as effective tools for fostering emotional regulation, cognitive development, and social competence. Drawing on findings from developmental psychology and neuroscience, the paper examines the neurobiological mechanisms involved in narrative processing, including the impact of storytelling on brain activity, the nervous system, and hormonal regulation associated with emotional engagement and stress reduction.

Particular attention is devoted to the developmental appropriateness of different narrative forms. The paper discusses how specific types of stories correspond with various stages of psychological development in children and adolescents, and how narratives contribute to shaping moral reasoning, emotional resilience, and social understanding. Furthermore, the analysis highlights the role of storytelling in promoting mental well-being and supporting social education.

In addition to the theoretical discussion, the paper offers practical guidelines for educators, therapists, and other professionals working with children. These recommendations address the effective selection, adaptation, and delivery of stories in educational and therapeutic contexts. The study argues that narrative-based practices can serve as a valuable interdisciplinary tool that integrates educational, psychological, and therapeutic perspectives in supporting children's holistic development.

2. The Hope is in the Teachers – How Teachers are Developing Prosocial Dispositions in Young Children by Helping Them Become Empathetic

Krystyna Nowak-Fabrykowski — Central Michigan University

Keywords (assigned by the editors): empathy; prosocial dispositions; teachers' practices; young children

Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to investigate the best practices that teachers of young children use to stimulate empathy. Hoffman (4) defines empathy as an active response more appropriate to another's situation than to one's own. Da Silva et al.(2) note that empathy can be observed from infancy. Piaget (5) emphasized that, for the child, even theoretical moral reflection constitutes a progressive conscious realization of moral activity; however, the relationship between thought and action remains far from clear. In the American education system, the pressures of national academic standards and on preparation for assessment requirements, rather than implementing character education (Bramwell 1), even though NAEYC always stressed the importance of intentionally teaching and modeling social and emotional skills (Duren 3).

The data collection, which sought information on teachers' practices, included sending a survey to 199 early childhood teachers in the Midwest of the United States.

An analysis of these research findings demonstrated that teachers focus on developing social-emotional skills by building a trusting community, taking pride in the group's interests, and fostering a sense of safety and helpfulness.

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3. Localized Revision and Application of the DECA-P2 in the Digital-Intelligent Era

Hailun Wei — *Nanjing Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): DECA-P2; psychological resilience; assessment; preschool children; localization

Abstract:

Numerous international studies have shown that psychological resilience is a core competency for preschool children to achieve positive adaptation to adversity, as well as a key literacy for lifelong learning and a core meta-skill for coping with future development. Its scientific assessment constitutes an essential prerequisite for the cultivation and educational intervention of psychological resilience in early childhood (Academic America, 2026; World Economic Forum, 2023) . This study undertakes two core research efforts focusing on the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment for Preschoolers, Second Edition (DECA-P2)(LeBuffe & Naglieri, 2012; Ji et al.2015). First, grounded in the Chinese sociocultural context and the new developmental characteristics of preschool children in the digital and intelligent era, a systematic era-adaptive and localized revision of the DECA-P2 was conducted. A Chinese revised version of the DECA-P2 aligned with the developmental traits of Chinese 3- to 6-year-old children was developed through standardized psychometric procedures. Second, a stratified cluster sampling method was adopted to investigate the current status of psychological resilience among 3,000 3- to 6-year-old children in eastern, central and western China. Integrating the dual-subject evaluation perspective of parents and teachers, the study explored the regional, age and gender differences in the development of preschool children's psychological resilience, and

constructed nationally representative norms for both the parent and teacher versions. The research findings can provide empirical evidence for the scientific assessment and early identification of psychological resilience in early childhood, and support the implementation of preschool education practice centered on children's development.

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4. Teacher–Child Interactions in Daily Routines and Children’s Social-Emotional Development: Evidence from Chinese Kindergartens

Lin Li — *East China Normal University*

Liping Peng — *East China Normal University*

Ting Li — *East China Normal University*

Hang Jiang — *East China Normal University*

Jianing Li — *East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): teacher–child interactions; daily routines; social-emotional development; kindergarten; China

Abstract:

This study examined how the quality of teacher–child interactions during daily kindergarten routines—mealtime, toileting, and transitions—relates to young children’s social-emotional well-being and development. Daily routines are often treated as caregiving moments; however, they can also serve as important relational and educational spaces in which children experience emotional support, participation, regulation, and a sense of belonging. A one-group pretest–posttest longitudinal design was employed. Data were collected from 150 children aged 3–6 and 35 teachers in three kindergartens in Shanghai, China, using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS Pre-K) and the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA).

The results showed that teachers’ interaction quality in mealtime, toileting, and transition contexts, as well as their overall CLASS scores, improved significantly from baseline to posttest. Children’s total DECA scores also increased significantly. In addition, posttest DECA scores showed a substantial classroom-level clustering effect, with an intraclass correlation coefficient [ICC(1)] of 0.466, indicating that children’s social-emotional development was shaped not only by individual factors but also by the shared classroom environment. After controlling for gender, age in months, baseline DECA scores, and teachers’ overall posttest CLASS scores, changes in teacher–child interactions during daily routines significantly improved the explanatory power of the regression model. Improvement in mealtime interactions significantly and positively predicted children’s posttest DECA scores, whereas improvement in transition interactions showed a significant negative association. Improvement in toileting interactions was not statistically significant.

These findings suggest that daily routines should not be viewed as peripheral to early childhood education. Rather, they are meaningful pedagogical spaces in which emotionally supportive interactions can promote

children's social-emotional well-being. The study highlights the importance of strengthening empathy-based, relationship-focused practice in everyday kindergarten routines.

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EQUALITY, JUSTICE, AND DIGNITY

Equality, Justice, and Dignity 1	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 11:00–12:30 Room: 4.13 Language: English Chairs: Anette Hellman, Ingrid Engdahl	

1. Strengthening Prevention and Response to School-Related Gender-Based Violence Through Training and School-Based Reporting Systems in Oyo State, Nigeria

Adefunke Ekine — *Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ijagun, Nigeria*

Oluwatoyin Adebayo — *Youthcare Development and Empowerment Initiative*

Oyeteju Odufuwa — *University of Ibadan, Ibadan*

Keywords: School-related gender-based violence; teacher training; reporting mechanisms; child protection; primary schools; Nigeria

Abstract:

Background

School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) remains a persistent challenge in primary schools across West Africa, undermining children's safety, learning outcomes, and well-being. While awareness of SRGBV is increasing, many school systems continue to struggle with weak prevention structures, limited teacher capacity to respond appropriately, and the absence of safe, child-friendly reporting mechanisms. In Nigeria, SRGBV is often underreported due to fear of victimisation, lack of confidentiality, and unclear referral pathways. Addressing these gaps requires interventions that move beyond awareness to strengthen school-level response systems. This paper presents lessons from a school-based intervention in Oyo State, Nigeria, with a specific focus on the design of training interventions and the establishment of reporting mechanisms for SRGBV prevention and response.

Objectives

The intervention aimed to design and implement a structured, child-centred training model that strengthens teachers' capacity to prevent and respond to SRGBV while empowering pupils to recognise and report abuse, and establish safe, accessible, and supervised reporting mechanisms within primary schools to improve disclosure and response to SRGBV incidents.

Methodology

The project adopted a two-pronged intervention approach implemented across 20 public primary schools in 5 Local Government Areas of the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State. The primary schools were randomly selected. Overall, 854 pupils on primary 4,5 &6 and 136 teachers were trained in the selected schools between February and March 2025. Training was delivered to teachers and pupils using age-appropriate, participatory methods. Teachers were trained first to ensure institutional readiness and buy-in before pupil engagement. Training content focused on recognising different forms of SRGBV, positive discipline, survivor-centred responses, confidentiality, and referral procedures. Pupil sessions emphasised personal safety, boundaries, recognising inappropriate behaviour, and trusted reporting pathways.

To complement the training, school-based reporting systems were introduced. These included anonymous reporting lock boxes placed in each of primary 4,5&6 classrooms within the reach of the pupils. Also, a non-anonymous reporting registers managed by the class teachers in each of the class in all the 20 schools. Clear

guidance was provided on how reports would be reviewed, documented, and referred to appropriate child protection actors.. Baseline data collection involving teachers and pupils was conducted to inform intervention design and assess existing knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to SRGBV.

Key Findings / Results

The training design proved effective in improving teacher cooperation and responsiveness. Training teachers ahead of pupil engagement increased ownership, reduced resistance, and improved adherence to child protection principles during implementation. Interactive and scenario-based training methods enhanced understanding of appropriate responses to disclosure and reduced tendencies toward victim-blaming.

Findings when comparing endline data from schools who received the training with other schools where only baseline and endline data was collected showed that the intervention decreased SRGBV and the results are driven largely by pupils' perceptions of other pupils' experience of SRGBV. Findings also showed an evolving mindset from teachers on SRGBV response and prevention.

The introduction of structured reporting mechanisms increased pupils' confidence in speaking up about unsafe experiences. Anonymous reporting channels were particularly important for younger pupils and those fearful of retaliation. The presence of supervised, non-anonymous registers allowed schools to document cases systematically and initiate referrals where necessary. However, the intervention also revealed the need for continuous mentoring of teachers to ensure consistency in handling reports and maintaining confidentiality.

Conclusions and Implications

This intervention demonstrates that well-designed training combined with safe, school-based reporting mechanisms can significantly strengthen SRGBV prevention and response in primary schools. Prioritising teacher training before pupil engagement fosters accountability and creates a safer environment for disclosure. Anonymous and supervised reporting systems help overcome barriers to reporting and support early intervention.

The findings underscore the need to institutionalise SRGBV training within teacher training colleges and continuous professional development programmes. Clear referral pathways linking schools to child protection services are essential for sustainability. Evidence from this intervention provides practical guidance for policymakers, education authorities, and practitioners seeking to scale school-based SRGBV response models across similar contexts in West and Central Africa.

2. Tracing children's rights and dignity: Policies in Aotearoa New Zealand, Sweden, and Türkiye

Angel Chan — *University of Auckland*

Anette Hellman — *University of Gothenburg*

Deniz Kahrman-Pamuk — *Mersin University*

Ingrid Engdahl — *Stockholm University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's rights; dignity; education policy; Aotearoa New Zealand; Sweden; Türkiye

Abstract:

We are facing multiple crises in a complex world (UNICEF, 2023, 2025). Our presentation will argue that the notion of "children's rights", as established by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), is no longer adequate in preparing children to develop critical dispositions to not only survive

but thrive in this unpredictable and increasingly undemocratic world. We will draw on key theoretical perspectives from the work of Janusz Korczak (2018), childism (e.g., Wall, 2024), and Julie Davis' (2014) five dimensions of rights model to scrutinise how early childhood education and care (ECEC) policies in Aotearoa New Zealand, Sweden, and Türkiye honour respect for children's rights and dignity, and also to inform pedagogical recommendations.

As the neoliberal engine increasingly drives aspects of our lives, we share concerns about children's ECEC experiences in our countries. Our national curricula express noble aspirations to foster democracy and respect for children's rights and dignity, such as the principle of empowerment in Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017), the EC curriculum of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the continued focus on democratic values, children's rights and participation, alongside the first explicit inclusion of sustainable development in the Swedish and Turkish curricula (Kahriman-Pamuk & Borg, 2025). Yet, current neoliberal-driven policies are eroding commitments to democracy and adults' responsibility in ECEC to foster equality and equity. Policies, for example, that consider ECEC to be a profit-making business and encourage the construction of "mega preschools", as well as those that loosen teacher qualification requirements, clearly signal a regression in commitment to providing rights-based ECEC learning environments and quality ECEC experiences for the youngest members of our societies. Against this backdrop, our presentation will: 1) critique how these policies significantly weaken the role of ECEC in honouring children's dignity and their agentic participation rights; 2) recommend theory-informed pedagogies that promote collective social and ecological responsibilities, and a fair and just society in which future generations respectfully co-exist.

3. Exploring the benefits of literature for children with learning difficulties: a practical intervention in an early years setting

Eleni Alifieraki — OMEP UK

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's literature; learning difficulties; literacy development; early years intervention

Abstract:

The first five years in a child's life are the most crucial for literacy development, therefore for future learning and future school success. Consequently, the exposure of the preschool child to a variety of written language use situations always remains of a significant importance. That presumes an environment rich in reading stimuli of any kind and also books which arouse interest, attract attention, strengthen a love for reading and support child's lifelong relationship with learning.

Picture books represent the most important educational tool for preschool age for a number of reasons. The first contact with the world of books, so with the world of literature, affects literacy, language acquisition, but also the future attitude towards reading. Moreover, that regards special groups of pupils, as for example, special educational needs, intercultural education, multilingual education.

This presentation focuses on how literature can be beneficial for pupils with learning difficulties in a preschool setting. It consists in an early childhood teacher's personal reflection on a specific intervention designed for preschool children with learning difficulties, a program implemented in class that uses literature as a tool for supporting learning and especially literacy and language improvement.

Specifically, it aims to highlight the contribution of teaching literature in preschool age and to raise awareness of the use of literature as an educational tool in case of learning difficulties. Furthermore, to share teaching ideas for including children with learning difficulties through literature activities, to suggest teaching methods and techniques. Hopefully, this presentation from its practical point of view would open a dialogue with the teachers / practitioners from different countries. Reflecting on those matters, exchanging ideas and enriching our teaching should have as a result to enhance positive attitudes to learning and academic progress for our pupils.

4. Leading for social justice: Building children's equality and dignity in early childhood education

Leanne Gibbs — *Charles Sturt University, Australia*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): social justice; leadership; equality; dignity; early childhood education

Abstract:

Around the world, young children experience inequalities based on gender, culture, class, and ability. These inequalities shape access to education and opportunities for participation, often reinforcing cycles of disadvantage. Early childhood education (ECE) has the potential to disrupt these patterns by promoting fairness, respect, and inclusion from the earliest years. This presentation explores how leadership in ECE can make this happen by embedding social justice principles into everyday practice.

This work draws on more than a decade of qualitative research investigating how leadership develops as a socially-just practice. Three major studies were conducted across ECE sites with leaders in Australia, generated through observations, interviews, dialogic cafés, and document analysis.

Two theoretical frameworks guided the research: complexity leadership theory, which views leadership as adaptive and emergent within dynamic environments, and the theory of practice architectures, which illuminates the cultural, material, and social structures that enable and constrain practice. These frameworks position leadership not as a hierarchical role but as a collective, morally informed praxis that responds to complexity while upholding children's rights.

Key findings across the studies reveal that leadership enabled children's rights to protection, provision, and participation.

Protection: Leaders worked to keep children safe and respected. They used professional language and knowledge of children's rights to advocate for vulnerable children and embedded discourses of the 'competent child' in curriculum and policy conversations.

Provision: Leaders acted to ensure all children could access education, even when families faced financial or social challenges. They navigated complex funding systems and demonstrated empathy and persistence to uphold children's right to education.

Participation: Leaders supported children's voices in decisions that affected them, including curriculum design and social issues such as climate change. Authentic engagement with children's concerns was enabled through resources, time, and trust in educators' pedagogical judgment.

These practices were supported by organisational cultures that valued trust, equity, and social justice. Professional learning opportunities, inclusive policies, and collaborative decision-making also played a role.

Leadership was not simply about managing compliance; it was about moral purpose and collective responsibility.

Why does this matter now?

The world faces multiple and interconnected crises: wars and forced displacement, economic and social inequalities, threats to democracy, ecological degradation, and the rapid transformation of digital cultures. In this context, socially-just leadership in ECE is essential. Education must nurture humanity, empathy, and justice, building societies based on peace, solidarity, and sustainability.

Janusz Korczak's humanist vision offers a powerful reminder of this imperative. Korczak saw the child not as a future citizen, but as a person capable, thinking, feeling, and deserving of respect. He insisted that every child has the right to be heard, to participate, and to be treated with dignity. Leadership that embraces these principles can transform ECE into a space where equality and justice are lived realities, not abstract ideals.

Implications for policy and practice

ECE organisations should move beyond narrow, rule-based leadership models. They need to develop leaders who can balance administrative responsibilities with advocacy for fairness and inclusion. Professional learning should integrate social justice principles and encourage all educators to lead. By doing this, ECE can become a powerful space for equality and dignity, ensuring that education remains a force for justice in the lives of young children and their communities.

5. Discursive construction of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity in the textbooks of primary education: children's discursive agency and polysemy of the narratives

Marios Kostas — *Canterbury Christ Church University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): gender; hegemonic masculinity; emphasised femininity; textbooks; feminist critical discourse analysis

Abstract:

Gender-normative discursive representations in textbooks could have deleterious impacts on pupils' gender identity development. This study sets out to explore the discursive construction of femininity and masculinity in anthology textbooks for primary education and scrutinize children's sense-making of gender-normative discourses. Grounded in a poststructuralist theorization of gender and Connell's [(1995). *Masculinities*. Oxford: Blackwell] theory of masculinities, this qualitative study employs a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to explore the discursive positioning of femininity and masculinity in school manuals. Additionally, semi-structured group interviews were conducted in two Athenian elementary schools with 40 boys and 40 girls, aged 7–8 years old. The findings revealed that, in addition to androcentrism, textbooks were overwhelmingly defined by emphasized femininity and hegemonic masculinity discourses. Analyses of pupils' accounts demonstrated that the children negotiated normative discourses in idiosyncratic ways, and that boys were less prepared than girls to subvert the anachronistic discourses of gender promoted by textbooks. It was also found that the mother's employment status may exert a broadening influence on pupils' understanding of gender.

1. A Patent-Based Smart Giraffe Toy for Early Childhood: An Embodied Multisensory Growth Awareness Model

Melike Yörüko — *Bartın University*

Gurbet Kara — *affiliation to be confirmed*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): growth awareness; multisensory learning; embodied learning; play-based model; smart toy

Abstract:

This study proposes an inclusive, play-based, and body-centered theoretical model aimed at supporting young children's awareness of physical growth through multisensory engagement. In early childhood education, the concept of measurement should be addressed through concrete, experiential, and body-based learning processes rather than being presented solely as an abstract cognitive construct. Learning environments that enable children to actively experience and interpret their own physical development play a critical role in enhancing the quality of early learning. Based on this need, the study introduces the Embodied Multisensory Growth Awareness Model (EMGAM), grounded in embodied cognition, multisensory learning, and inclusive design principles.

The model is theoretically framed around a smart educational toy, patented by the authors, designed in the form of a giraffe, which integrates height and weight measurement with multimodal feedback systems, including LED-based visual signals and auditory responses. This design transforms measurement from a passive cognitive task into an active, embodied, and meaningful learning experience, enabling children to connect abstract measurement concepts with their lived bodily experiences. In doing so, children engage in a process of experience-based meaning-making, leading to deeper and more sustained learning.

EMGAM consists of five interrelated components:

(1) Embodied physical interaction, (2) Play-based contextualization, (3) Multisensory feedback, (4) Cause-effect reinforcement, and (5) Inclusive design.

This structure promotes active participation in the learning process while offering alternative learning pathways. In particular, the model supports accessibility for children with visual and hearing impairments by providing multimodal feedback and accessible interaction opportunities, thereby creating alternative pathways for engagement and learning.

Through multisensory feedback mechanisms, children do not merely observe their growth; they actively experience and interpret it, which contributes to both cognitive and emotional engagement in learning. The model presents a holistic approach that supports children's active involvement in their own learning processes, acknowledges individual differences, and promotes accessible learning environments. By integrating educational technology with developmental needs, it offers an innovative perspective for designing high-quality and sustainable early learning experiences.

Although the physical prototype is still under development, the proposed model presents a design-based theoretical framework that bridges early childhood education, developmental psychology, and educational

technology. It also establishes a foundation for future empirical research examining the impact of embodied and multisensory learning environments on children's development.

In conclusion, EMGAM reconceptualizes measurement learning as an embodied, inclusive, and experience-based meaning-making process, offering a theoretical contribution to innovative practices in early childhood education.

2. Protecting the Dignity of the Youngest: Equality and Justice for Children in Early Education

Monika Kiszka — *Adam Mickiewicz University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's voice; dignity; equality; justice; Janusz Korczak

Abstract:

When a child speaks, education has a choice: to listen or to be silent. This presentation examines the importance of listening to children's voices in early school education through the lens of Korczak's philosophy of children's rights. Drawing on his belief in the child's right to respect, the presentation highlights how equality and justice can be nurtured by creating learning environments where children are heard and taken seriously. This presentation explores how Janusz Korczak's educational philosophy can inspire contemporary early childhood education grounded in equality, justice, and respect for children's dignity. Korczak emphasised that children are not "future people" but whole human beings whose voices, emotions, and experiences deserve recognition here and now.

3. Configurations of effective language intervention for young children: An fsQCA evidence synthesis

Shishi Shen — *East China Normal University*

Li Zhang — *East China Normal University*

Yue Yu — *East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): language intervention; fsQCA; evidence synthesis; early childhood; equity

Abstract:

Early language intervention is essential for supporting children's language development and advancing equity in early childhood education. However, early childhood language intervention programs vary considerably in their key components. Although traditional reviews and meta-analyses are useful for identifying the average effects of individual intervention components, they are less suited to addressing the configurational question of which combinations of conditions are more likely to produce higher intervention effectiveness.

Following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, this study conducted a systematic search and selected 28 early language intervention cases involving children aged 0–6 years for analysis. Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) was then used to examine how implementation agent, level of individualization, level of structure, intervention duration, and family involvement jointly shaped children's language outcomes.

The findings showed that no single condition was necessary for high intervention effectiveness, indicating the complex causality of early language intervention. The sufficiency analysis identified four pathways to high

intervention effectiveness, which fell into two types: expert-led pathways (characterized by high structure combined with either high individualization or long duration) and parent-led pathways (characterized by high individualization combined with either high structure or long duration).

Taken together, these findings suggest three implications for intervention design. First, early language intervention should be configured to fit children's needs, implementation agents, and contextual resources, rather than relying on a uniform model. Second, structured delivery and individualized support appear to be especially important design features. Third, in contexts where intensive individualization is difficult to achieve, longer intervention duration may provide an alternative route to improved outcomes.

4. Analysis of the Current Status and Improvement Pathways of Childcare and Education Quality in Rural Kindergartens in Guizhou, China: An observational assessment based on 12 kindergartens

Xiaohong Liu — *Guizhou Education University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): rural kindergartens; quality of care and education; observational assessment; Guizhou; China

Abstract:

The current focus of China's preschool education has transitioned from extensive development, which emphasized scale and quantity, to intensive development that prioritizes equity and quality. In this new era, the promotion of high-quality development in rural preschool education has become a pressing priority. A quality assessment was conducted at 12 rural kindergartens, including those in Liupanshui City, using a combination of stratified and convenience sampling methods. The results indicated that the educational quality of these sampled kindergartens was moderate ($M < 7$ on a 1-9 scale), suggesting a certain gap from the objective of high-quality development. Based on these findings, several strategies were proposed to enhance the educational quality of rural kindergartens in Guizhou: increasing support for private and remote rural kindergartens, fostering a development ecosystem for educators that prioritizes humanistic care, establishing locally grounded embodied learning environments, and enriching the forms of artistic activity practices.

5. From Rights to Reality: A Comparative Analysis of Value Orientations and Implementation Measures in International Inclusive Early Childhood Education Policies

Yue Yu — *East China Normal University*

Li Zhang — *East China Normal University*

Shishi Shen — *East China Normal University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): inclusive early childhood education; education policy; value orientations; implementation measures; comparative analysis

Abstract:

Inclusive early childhood education has become an increasingly prominent concern in both global and national policy agendas. However, comparatively little is known about how recent policy texts frame its core value orientations, what implementation measures they prioritize, and how these measures respond to different value commitments. To address this gap, this study analyzes 51 policy documents released by 4 international

organizations and 11 countries since November 2021, taking UNESCO's Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education as the temporal starting point. Using the paragraph as the basic unit of analysis, the study combines Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling with inductive content analysis to investigate both the value dimension and the implementation dimension of international inclusive early childhood education policy. The value analysis draws on 5,868 text units, while the implementation analysis covers 2,950 text units. The latter further develops a 15-category framework of implementation measures, with high inter-coder reliability (agreement rate = 97.05%; Cohen's kappa = 0.9678).

The findings can be summarized at three levels. First, recent international inclusive early childhood education policies reveal three core value orientations: equity and access, participation and inclusion, and support and guarantees. These orientations do not function as isolated categories; rather, they suggest a progressive policy logic moving from access, to meaningful participation, and ultimately to long-term systemic support. Cross-national comparison further shows differentiated emphases: for most international organizations and countries in the sample, policy discourse remains primarily centered on equity and access; a second group places greater emphasis on participation and inclusion; and support and guarantees is the least dominant orientation overall, with OECD standing out as the only entity in the sample for which it is primary. Second, at the level of implementation measures, the policies exhibit a relatively structured repertoire of action organized into 15 categories. On this basis, the study further regroups these measures into three broader analytical clusters: micro-level support measures, meso-level coordination measures, and macro-level governance measures. Third, building on the relationship between value orientations and implementation measures, the study further proposes three corresponding policy response pathways: a governance-anchored response pathway oriented toward equity and access, a participation-enabling response pathway oriented toward participation and inclusion, and an integrated support response pathway oriented toward support and guarantees. Overall, the study argues that international inclusive early childhood education policy is moving from rights-based declaration toward a more differentiated, connected, and system-oriented policy architecture. In doing so, it offers a comparative framework for understanding how inclusive early childhood education is conceptualized and translated into action across different policy contexts.

6. Agency, Safety, Relationships, and Intentionality: A Multidimensional Framework for Inclusive Early Years Pedagogy

Zofia Wolniakowska-Majewska — *Liverpool Hope University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): inclusive pedagogy; Early Years; agency; trainee teachers; complex needs

Abstract:

This presentation explores how Early Years trainee teachers conceptualise the role of Early Years Pedagogies in supporting children whose needs are complex across mainstream and specialist settings. Findings of the study with students in one of the North West Universities in England show the four themes collectively illustrate enabling pedagogies as multi-dimensional constructs that align closely with EYFS principles of holistic, inclusive development. Agency Through Environment demonstrates how thoughtfully designed spaces can scaffold autonomy and participation for children whose needs are complex (Clark, 2023). Emotional Safety and Regulation foregrounds wellbeing as a prerequisite for engagement and learning, echoing research on co-regulation and secure relational climates (Shonkoff, 2021). Relational and Communicative Foundations

emphasise belonging and the value of multimodal expression, resonating with sociocultural perspectives on communication diversity (Trevvarthen and Delafield-Butt, 2017). Inclusive and Individualised Practice highlights practitioner intentionality, adaptive planning, and responsiveness as central to equitable pedagogy (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). Together, the interplay of physical, emotional, relational, and intentional dimensions reflects an inclusive pedagogical stance in which environments, relationships, and professional judgement converge to support children's holistic development.

REF-ES-01 — VARIA — SPANISH	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 14:00–16:00 Room: 4.14 Language: Spanish Chair: Patricia González Simón	

1. Teachers' voices on formative assessment and pedagogical documentation in the first cycle of early childhood education (0–3). An approach from reflective professionalism within the framework of the European EDUFIRST project

Thematic section: Teachers as Human Rights Defenders

Glòria Olmos-Martínez — *Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya*

Laura Farré-Riera — *Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya*

Francesca Davoli — *Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): formative assessment; pedagogical documentation; first cycle of early childhood education; reflective professionalism; EDUFIRST

Abstract:

In recent decades, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services have undergone a significant transformation, gradually moving from a predominantly custodial model to a clearly educational approach, centred on the holistic development of children, their well-being and equality of interactions. In this process, assessment has also evolved from models focused on verifying outcomes and content acquisition towards approaches oriented towards understanding educational processes, the situated development of children, and the continuous improvement of pedagogical practice. In this context, observation and pedagogical documentation have acquired growing relevance in the early years of early childhood education (0-3), especially in relation to pedagogical perspectives that conceive of children as competent, active subjects and protagonists of their own learning processes (Rinaldi, 2021). These practices make learning processes visible, interpret children's experiences and generate spaces for shared reflection between professionals and families (Barrs & Drury, 2017). At the same time, they position professionals as active agents in the analysis and interpretation of educational practice, linking assessment with the development of a reflective professionalism.

This communication presents part of the results of the European project EDUFIRST (Erasmus+2023–2026), developed in different European cities with the aim of rethinking and improving ECEC services from a systemic, inclusive and community-based perspective. Specifically, the communication focuses on the perceptions of early years education professionals in Catalonia (Spain) regarding formative assessment and pedagogical documentation. The main objectives of the research are:

To analyse the perceptions of early years practitioners regarding formative assessment and pedagogical documentation.

To analyse the relationship between assessment, pedagogical reflection and professional development in ECEC services.

To understand how structural and institutional conditions influence the deployment of formative assessment practices in the early years of early childhood education.

Methodology

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach with a qualitative predominance, framed within the interpretive paradigm. This approach allows for an approach to educational reality from a contextualised and comprehensive perspective, oriented towards interpreting the meanings that professionals attribute to their practices and experiences (Ricoy, 2006). At the same time, the inclusion of quantitative elements facilitates the description of general trends and complements the interpretation of professional discourses.

Data were collected via an online questionnaire aimed at early childhood education professionals (0–3 years) in Catalonia (Spain). In total, 148 professionals linked to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services participated, mainly teachers and educators with diverse professional backgrounds and experience in different educational contexts. The questionnaire was structured into different thematic blocks aimed at exploring the professional perceptions and practices linked to the following dimensions such as formative assessment, systematic observation, pedagogical documentation, and the role of the adult, among others.

The instrument combined closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions included multiple-choice items, frequency questions and rating scales, which allowed the identification of general trends and the frequency of occurrence of certain practices and perceptions. In parallel, the open-ended questions offered participants the opportunity to explain experiences, positions and difficulties related to the evaluation and documentation of pedagogical practice.

The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, primarily based on response frequencies and percentages. This process allowed the most recurring elements to be identified in relation to assessment practices, the pedagogical models of reference, the perceived difficulties and the needs expressed by the professionals. As for the qualitative data, a thematic content analysis process (Piñuel, 2002) was carried out, applying inductive and deductive coding and categorisation procedures (Saldaña, 2013).

Some categories were established a priori, in line with the theoretical framework and the dimensions analysed (evaluation, observation, pedagogical documentation, professional reflection, structural conditions), while other categories emerged inductively from the participants' discourses. This iterative process of constant comparison allowed for the progressive refinement of the categories and the establishment of relationships between the different analysed dimensions. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative results were integrated into an overall interpretative analysis.

Results

The results show a high level of pedagogical coherence among the participating professionals regarding current conceptions of assessment in the 0–3 age group. The vast majority of participants identify systematic observation as the primary mechanism for understanding children's development and learning processes. Observation is conceived as a daily practice linked to listening, interpretation and accompaniment, rather than as a tool for controlling or verifying outcomes. Pedagogical documentation also emerges as a widely valued practice. The professionals particularly highlight the value of photographs, pedagogical narratives, observation records and visual productions for making learning processes visible and constructing a more holistic view of the children. Likewise, the participants point out that documentation enables the creation of communication and shared understanding with families.

The results show a strong relationship between pedagogical documentation and professional reflection. The professionals identify spaces for coordination, joint review of documentation and pedagogical debate as fundamental elements for rethinking educational practice, building shared criteria and developing a more conscious perspective on children's processes. Similarly, the participants associate pedagogical

documentation with the development of a reflective professionalism based on interpretation, decision-making and the ability to tailor educational proposals to the interests and needs of the children. However, the results reveal significant tensions in the daily implementation of these practices. The most common difficulties refer to a lack of time, high ratios, bureaucratic overload and insufficient human resources. Many professionals express that these conditions make it difficult to sustain systematic and in-depth observation and documentation processes within the day-to-day educational routine. Significant differences also emerge in the way the function of pedagogical documentation is understood. While some professionals conceive of it primarily as a mechanism for recording or communicating with families, others clearly position it as a tool for analysis, interpretation and the construction of pedagogical knowledge. The results suggest that the real possibilities for implementing this approach largely depend on the structural conditions of the services and on the existence of institutional spaces that support collective pedagogical reflection.

Conclusions

The research reveals that formative assessment and pedagogical documentation occupy a central place in early years education practices and that practitioners perceive them as fundamental tools for understanding children's learning processes and for developing more reflective, contextualised and respectful educational practices. The results show that pedagogical documentation transcends the function of record-keeping and is configured as a device for reflection, interpretation and the shared construction of meaning between professionals and families. Documentation also becomes a tool for professional development and for building a shared pedagogical culture.

The research shows that the implementation of these practices does not depend exclusively on the pedagogical stances of the professionals, but also on the structural and institutional conditions in which educational practice is carried out. Tensions related to time, ratios, bureaucratisation and a lack of resources emerge as factors that strongly condition the possibilities of sustaining an assessment consistent with current curricular approaches. Finally, the communication argues for the need to strengthen spaces for coordination, pedagogical reflection and continuing professional development, in order to consolidate a culture of evaluation oriented towards understanding the processes, relationships and rights of children. Likewise, the importance of incorporating the voices of professionals in the definition of public policies aimed at early childhood is highlighted, understanding that educational quality is built upon the interrelationship between pedagogical practices, institutional structures and political decisions (Collet, et al, in press).

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2. Construcción de la identidad profesional de Educadoras de Párvulos: reflexiones pedagógicas y compromiso con los derechos de la infancia

Thematic section: Teachers as Human Rights Defenders

Keywords (assigned by the editors): identidad profesional; educación parvularia; reflexión pedagógica; práctica profesional; derechos de la infancia

Abstract:

Se presenta una experiencia formativa que se implementa, durante el primer semestre académico 2026 (marzo a julio), con el propósito de fortalecer la construcción de la identidad profesional en estudiantes de Práctica Profesional I, de la carrera de Educación Parvularia, de la Universidad Central de Chile; mediante un proceso sistemático de reflexión pedagógica que articula el diario reflexivo, diálogos reflexivos y entrevistas grupales, integrados con el marco curricular y normativo de derechos de la infancia y las prácticas pedagógicas basadas en la experiencia y que son parte de la trayectoria formativa; como señala Vaillant, D.(2016) la reflexión pedagógica surge de la práctica misma, reflexionar sobre la experiencia profesional permite convertirla en objeto de análisis y aprendizaje profesional continuo. Así, el enfoque reflexivo, como formadores de formadores nos permite pensar la formación de profesores desde aspectos que superen los contenidos y los métodos pedagógicos, dando lugar a la consideración de los valores, actitudes y emociones del profesor, el desarrollo de su identidad profesional, la toma de decisiones, el análisis de los dilemas éticos y la examinación de los propios puntos de vista. (Vanegas y Fuentealba, 2019 p.119)

El objetivo central de esta experiencia formativa es acompañar a las estudiantes en formación para que, a través de la reflexión crítica sobre sus propias prácticas y saberes, articulen representaciones sobre la niña y el niño y reconozcan a la infancia como sujeto de derechos. Se espera que el discurso emergente muestre cómo las estudiantes construyen imágenes de la infancia que integran el enfoque de derecho como elemento constituyente fundamental en su identidad y práctica docente.

La experiencia proyecta como resultados esperados en las estudiantes: el fortalecimiento de la postura ética y profesional, una mayor comprensión teórico-práctica del enfoque de derechos y la capacidad para diseñar propuestas pedagógicas que promueven la participación, la inclusión y la protección. Además, se busca que las futuras educadoras se perciban y actúen como garantes de los derechos de las infancias chilenas, interviniendo tempranamente y promoviendo ambientes educativos respetuosos de la diversidad.

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3. La formación de quienes trabajan con la primera infancia. Una mirada interdisciplinar

Thematic section: Teachers as Human Rights Defenders

Rut Kuitca — *OMEP*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): formación docente; primera infancia; educación y cuidado; interdisciplinariedad

Abstract:

Los desafíos que la época nos presenta en el campo de la Educación y el Cuidado de la Primera Infancia son múltiples y diversos. Por tanto, la formación de quienes trabajan con bebés, niñas y niños pequeños ocupa un lugar central por el carácter decisivo que tienen las primeras interacciones en el devenir de su desarrollo y aprendizajes.

Los bebés, niñas y niños pequeños, y sus familias y cuidadores, transitan espacios educativos, clínicos, de atención de su salud, terapéuticos, recreativos, de esparcimiento, sociales y otros que pueden surgir en el devenir de sus vidas. ¿Cómo se forman quienes reciben, escuchan, alojan, tratan y acompañan las trayectorias infantiles?

Para reflexionar sobre este aspecto, y en el marco del trabajo de la Red Intersectorial por el Desarrollo Infantil Temprano (RIDIT) de la cual el Comité Argentino de la OMEP forma parte, nos juntamos un grupo de especialistas de diferentes disciplinas unidos por el desafío de pensar de manera interdisciplinaria. Nos une el convencimiento de que el único abordaje posible para dar respuesta a la real efectivización de los Derechos de la Primera Infancia es desde la intersectorialidad y la interdisciplina. Respuestas separadas por áreas o sectores no alcanzan frente a la complejidad de la realidad.

Desde allí nos propusimos pensar cuál es el núcleo elemental e indispensable que constituye la base de la formación de todos aquellos actores que tienen incidencia directa en el campo de la primera infancia.

Un marco ético compartido es condición para forjar una formación integral de estos adultos.

En este sentido, toda formación debiera abordarse desde la perspectiva de promoción y protección de derechos; es primordial que los estudiantes cuenten con espacios de reflexión sobre este aspecto y se constituyan en agentes de transformación que contribuyan a modificar lo naturalizado para revertir los destinos cancelatorios que determinan injustamente a las infancias y su futuro. El conocimiento de las normas legales vigentes es necesario no sólo para su cumplimiento, sino también como fundamento de futuras decisiones profesionales.

Es crucial que, cualquiera sea su rol, reconozcan la profunda influencia que ejercen en la constitución subjetiva de las niñas y los niños pequeños.

Esta función se realiza a través de todas aquellas competencias, habilidades o destrezas que cada adulto debe adquirir o construir para desempeñar su profesión, ocupación u oficio, desde una posición de respeto frente al niño. Si bien nos estamos refiriendo a una relación bidireccional y de afectación mutua, es el adulto quien porta con la responsabilidad sobre la misma dada la dependencia en la que se encuentran el bebé y el niño pequeño. Y es en parte por esta razón que consideramos tan relevante esta reflexión.

Frente al interrogante de cómo nombrar, a todos aquellos que trabajan atendiendo y educando a las Primeras infancias, más allá de las especificidades, tomamos prestado el concepto de “oficios del lazo” (Frigerio, G 2017) para referirnos a aquellos trabajos a partir de los cuales se gesta lo humano. Tareas de cuidar, educar, curar, relaciones entre generaciones, oficios que conciernen a las interacciones entre sujetos. “Oficios del lazo (o del acompañamiento)” es la manera de nombrar ese trabajo que se lleva a cabo desde y con formaciones distintas (de los territorios de la educación, del campo de la salud, de la cultura, trabajadores sociales, de la justicia, desde las artes) intentando propiciar ciertos desanudamientos para que otros enlaces sean posibles...oficios del intento, de la tentativa, oficios que buscan acompañar, sostener, ofrecer...oficios que siempre exceden los nombres de bautismo de profesiones definidas.

La presentación pretende dar cuenta del trabajo de discusión y debate al interior de grupo redactor y destaca aquellos contenidos imprescindibles de abordar en una formación destinada a quienes ejercen los oficios del

lazo, entendiendo al oficio de educar como una apuesta privilegiada en la posibilidad de modificar destinos en tanto agentes de transformación que contribuyan a modificar lo naturalizado para revertir los destinos cancelatorios que determinan injustamente a las infancias y su futuro.

La formación que pregonamos contiene y sostiene en su base la dimensión ética; supone un compromiso ideológico y epistemológico en lo que concierne a la primera infancia, implicando una clara toma de posición.

También supone políticas públicas que necesitan financiamiento sostenido en recursos humanos y materiales que hoy son insuficientes.

4. El arte como cuidado y afectividad de las infancias en condición de enfermedad, un abordaje desde la pedagogía hospitalaria

Thematic section: The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice

Nadia Milena Henao-García — *Tecnológico de Antioquia I.U. - OMEP Colombia*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): pedagogía hospitalaria; arte; cuidado; afectividad; infancias en condición de enfermedad

Abstract:

La presente ponencia, presenta algunos de los resultados de la investigación “Observatorio para las Infancias del departamento de Antioquia”, cuyo objetivo fue caracterizar a las infancias desde dimensiones culturales, sociales, económicas, educativas, de cuidado y atención, reconociendo las particularidades de quienes transitan por contextos hospitalarios.

En ese sentido, la ponencia se centrará en el abordaje del arte como forma de expresión humana que posibilita el cuidado y la construcción de la afectividad en las infancias en condición de enfermedad, desde el campo de la pedagogía hospitalaria. El problema de investigación se centra en la limitada incorporación de prácticas pedagógicas sensibles a las dimensiones emocionales, relacionales y expresivas de los niños y las niñas hospitalizados, en contextos donde predomina un enfoque biomédico que tiende a invisibilizar sus experiencias subjetivas.

El marco teórico se sustenta en los aportes de la pedagogía hospitalaria (Henao, 2018; Violant, Molina y Pastor, 2011; Ortiz, 2005), la pedagogía de la expresión (Calmels; 2009; Malaguzzi, 2001), la teoría del reconocimiento (Honneth, 1997) y los enfoques de derechos de la infancia (Tonucci, 1996; Hart, 1993; Naciones Unidas, 1989), destacando el lugar del arte como lenguaje privilegiado para la expresión emocional, la construcción de sentido y la agencia infantil (Dewey, 2008; Freire, 2005).

Metodológicamente, el estudio se inscribió en un enfoque cualitativo de corte interpretativo, que privilegia la voz y la experiencia de los niños y las niñas. Se emplean técnicas como la observación participante y las producciones artísticas (dibujos, narrativas, expresiones corporales) de los niños y las niñas en condición de enfermedad. El análisis se realiza mediante procesos de categorización inductiva y triangulación de la información, permitiendo la construcción de hallazgos interpretativos integrados.

Entre los resultados y la discusión, se evidencia que el arte posibilita la expresión de emociones, saberes y narrativas que, en muchos casos, no logran exteriorizar desde el lenguaje verbal. Las prácticas artísticas favorecen la construcción de vínculos afectivos y la resignificación del entorno hospitalario, transformándolo

en un espacio más humanizado. Asimismo, se identifican tensiones entre las lógicas institucionales del cuidado en salud y las apuestas pedagógicas centradas en el juego, la expresión y la participación.

Finalmente, se concluye que el arte, entendido como experiencia estética, relacional, afectiva y política, constituye una vía fundamental para el cuidado integral de las infancias hospitalizadas. Se recomienda fortalecer la formación de docentes en pedagogía hospitalaria, promover enfoques intersectoriales que integren salud y educación, y consolidar sistemas de información y observación que permitan comprender y transformar las realidades de las infancias en contextos de enfermedad en Antioquia, Colombia.

5. La Constitución de la sala, memoria colectiva, identidad y construcción de ciudadanía

Thematic section: The Child as a Subject of Rights and Voice

Vanina Poczymok — *Jardin Sarmiento-Sholem Buenos Aires*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): classroom constitution; participation; democracy; citizenship; Janusz Korczak

Abstract:

This paper presents a pedagogical experience developed with a group of five-year-old children at Jardín Sarmiento, part of Sholem Buenos Aires (Argentina), inspired by the legacy of Janusz Korczak and aligned with the theme of the 78th OMEP World Assembly and Conference: “When a Child Speaks... Korczak’s Inspirations for Education and Children’s Rights.”

The experience, entitled “The Classroom Constitution”, was designed as a concrete exercise in participation, democracy, and citizenship from early childhood. Through collective deliberation, voting processes, and shared writing, children created their own classroom constitution to regulate daily life, resolve conflicts, and express shared values. Far from being a symbolic activity, this process granted real institutional value to children’s voices, validating them through intergenerational dialogue and adult participation.

Rooted in Korczak’s principles — particularly the recognition of children as citizens of the present, the mediation of conflict through law, and education grounded in empathy and dignity — the project demonstrates how rights-based pedagogies can be meaningfully enacted in early childhood education. The experience also articulates memory, identity, and citizenship by connecting classroom practices with the historical and ethical legacy of the institution and its documentary archives.

From a curricular perspective, the project integrates literacy as a social practice, democratic use of numbers through voting, ethical and civic education, and education for respectful coexistence, in line with the current curriculum framework of the City of Buenos Aires.

This presentation seeks to contribute to international dialogue by offering a situated Latin American experience that illustrates how Korczak’s humanist vision remains alive in contemporary early childhood education, reaffirming children’s right to speak, participate, and transform their educational environments.

6. Education for Sustainable Development as a Co-Constructive Learning Experience in Early Childhood Education

Thematic section: Education for Sustainability and Peace

Keywords (assigned by the editors): education for sustainable development; co-construction; teacher education; early childhood education; practicum

Abstract:

The pedagogical experience presented here was developed within the course Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood, taught in the fifth semester of the Early Childhood Education degree program. The course is curriculum-linked to the Inclusive Classroom Project Practicum, forming part of a teacher education model that understands pedagogical practice as a space for the bidirectional construction of professional knowledge. Within this model, universities and educational centers establish collaborative relationships based on mutual learning derived from real and context-based challenges. From this perspective, practice is not conceived merely as a space for the application of theoretical knowledge, but as a situated process in which pedagogical knowledge is constructed through reflection on experience and through the articulation of theory, practice, and social commitment (Schön, 1992).

Within the course framework, students are asked to identify a pedagogical need related to sustainable development during their practicum experience. This process begins with a contextualized diagnosis of the educational setting, developed through systematic observation of the surrounding environment, analysis of the socio-cultural and natural context in which the educational center is located, and ongoing dialogue with the pedagogical teams. This process promotes a shared understanding of the educational and territorial context and supports the design of pedagogical interventions that are both relevant and consistent with the principles of early childhood education and with the approaches of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) promoted by international organizations (UNESCO, 2017).

The experiences were implemented in three early childhood education centers located in the urban area of Santiago, Chile, where environmental problems affecting the immediate surroundings of the schools were identified. Among these issues was the accumulation of waste in nearby spaces, which raised concerns among educational communities due to its potential impact on children's health, environmental care, and community coexistence. These environmental issues were recognized by educational teams as relevant pedagogical challenges, creating an opportunity to develop an educational intervention that would both respond to the training objectives of the program and contribute to strengthening the pedagogical management of the institutions while fostering environmental awareness within the educational community.

Within this context, pedagogical experiences related to environmental care are understood as opportunities to promote attitudes of respect, responsibility, and commitment toward the environment from early childhood. Research in early childhood environmental education suggests that early experiences with nature contribute to the development of ethical relationships with the environment and support the construction of values such as care, interdependence, and collective responsibility (Davis, 2023). In this sense, education for sustainable development in early childhood education goes beyond the transmission of environmental knowledge; it involves fostering emotional connections with the environment and promoting pedagogical practices oriented toward sustainability (Siraj-Blatchford, Smith & Pramling Samuelsson, 2010).

Based on the shared diagnosis developed with the educational teams, the project "Playing and Learning with Recycled Materials" was designed and implemented. This initiative was conceived as a pedagogical action-research experience aimed at raising children's awareness about caring for their environment and encouraging

the development of early ecological awareness. The project was structured around a series of pedagogical experiences integrating play, exploration, and the reuse of materials, consistent with the pedagogical principles of early childhood education and the approaches promoted by education for sustainable development.

The intervention included several pedagogical experiences that initially focused on raising awareness about the environmental issues identified in the surrounding environment. Through observation activities, exploration of nearby spaces, and opportunities for dialogue, children were able to recognize elements of their everyday environment, express emotions related to environmental care, and begin reflecting, according to their developmental level, on pollution and environmental responsibility.

In a later stage, activities focused on the reuse of materials as pedagogical resources. Using recycled materials collected from the environment and within the educational centers themselves, children participated in activities such as creating planters, preparing planting spaces, and caring for seeds. These experiences allowed waste materials to be reinterpreted as educational resources and as elements capable of supporting life, fostering meaningful learning about reuse, recycling, and environmental responsibility.

From the perspective of the participating educational centers, the initiative was valued as an innovative pedagogical strategy, relevant to the local context and potentially replicable in future educational experiences. Furthermore, the project created opportunities for pedagogical reflection on the importance of integrating sustainable development approaches into everyday educational practices.

The implementation of the project also helped make visible an environmental issue present in the immediate surroundings of the schools, generating spaces for dialogue and reflection among educational teams about the importance of addressing these issues from a pedagogical perspective. In this sense, the intervention helped establish an educational approach to a concrete territorial problem, promoting awareness-raising actions that have the potential to extend beyond the classroom and involve other members of the educational community and the broader local environment.

At the same time, the experience strengthened the pedagogical management of the institutions by incorporating educational practices oriented toward sustainable development and by promoting the pedagogical use of reusable materials. Thus, the practicum experience not only supported the professional training of the students but also generated a concrete and contextualized contribution to the educational centers, encouraging processes of pedagogical innovation and reflective practice.

The educational context also made a significant contribution to the students' professional development. Engaging with a real problem, recognized and validated by the educational teams, allowed students to better understand the social and ethical dimensions of the teaching profession and to recognize themselves as agents of educational transformation. In addition, the experience contributed to the development of professional competencies related to critical observation, contextual analysis, situated pedagogical decision-making, and the articulation between theoretical frameworks addressed in university courses and the pedagogical practices implemented in educational settings.

Finally, the process of formative support, developed through continuous dialogue with the mentor teacher at the educational center and through reflective feedback from the university practicum supervisor, enabled deeper reflection on pedagogical action and strengthened the construction of professional identity. This process helped students reconsider prior beliefs about environmental education in early childhood, recognizing that education for sustainable development is not limited to the transmission of environmental

knowledge but is built through meaningful, emotional, and contextualized experiences that allow children to establish caring relationships with their environment, with others, and with the community of which they are part.

In conclusion, the experience described here demonstrates the potential of linking teacher education, situated pedagogical practice, and education for sustainable development. Initiatives of this kind not only support meaningful learning processes among children but also strengthen the professional competencies of future early childhood educators while enriching pedagogical practices within educational institutions. In doing so, they contribute to the development of early childhood education committed to building more sustainable, inclusive, and environmentally conscious societies, in line with the principles of Sustainable Development Goal 4.7, which promotes education for sustainable development and global citizenship (UNESCO, 2017).

7. GOBERNANZA DE LOS SERVICIOS DE CUIDADO Y EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL: REVISIÓN SISTEMÁTICA DE LA LITERATURA

Thematic section: Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility

Patricia González Simón — *Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): gobernanza; educación y cuidado infantil; ECEC; revisión sistemática; PRISMA

Abstract:

La gobernanza de los Servicios de Educación y Cuidado Infantil (ECEC) se define como el proceso por el cual los países deciden, organizan y alinean los elementos del sistema —desde las regulaciones hasta la participación de los actores— para garantizar el desarrollo integral de niños de 0 a 5 años. Este artículo presenta los resultados de una revisión sistemática de la literatura, siguiendo el método PRISMA, basado en el análisis de 47 artículos sobre la gobernanza de EAPI. Se examinaron aspectos generales (regiones, años, métodos) y temáticos (nomenclatura, regulaciones, estructura institucional y participación). Los resultados indican un predominio de estudios en Europa, principalmente en los países nórdicos. La mayoría de las investigaciones son de naturaleza cualitativa, empleando el análisis documental y las entrevistas como técnicas principales. A nivel temático, existe un claro predominio de estudios que analizan las regulaciones vinculadas a la calidad de los servicios. En cuanto a la estructura institucional, se destaca la tendencia a compartir roles entre el Estado central y los gobiernos subnacionales. Finalmente, en la dimensión de la participación, la literatura muestra que en América Latina existen políticas nacionales que sirven de marco general y subrayan el papel protagónico de la mujer en la implementación de los servicios.

VARIA - ENGLISH	17.07 FRIDAY
Time: 14:00–16:00 Room: 4.18 Language: English Chair: Muireann Ranta	

1. Quality Assurance in Free Preschool Education Policies: International Experience and China's Approach

Thematic section: Equality, Justice, and Dignity 1

Jun Cai — *Xi'an University*

Dingyu Guo — *Xi'an University*

Ke Chen — *Xi'an University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): free preschool education; quality assurance; education policy; international experience; China

Abstract:

Globally, free preschool education policies have become a key measure to improve national quality and promote educational and social equity. Free preschool education is not merely a fee reduction but a systematic reform premised on ensuring educational quality. Observations of some grassroots preschools reveal that in the initial stages of implementing free policies, practical challenges persist in areas such as the precision of financial subsidies, the stability of teaching staff, and the internal motivation for evaluation within preschools. Drawing on international experiences in legislative safeguards, financial investment, evaluation mechanisms, teacher development, and diversified provision, China must prioritize four pathways to ensure quality in implementing free preschool education policies: First, optimize the structure of financial investment by establishing a dynamic adjustment mechanism for per-student funding standards that is quality-oriented, ensuring funds accurately cover educational costs. Second, improve evaluation and supervision mechanisms by building a self-assessment system centered on "internal motivation," transitioning from external supervision to routine self-evaluation by preschools. Third, enhance teacher compensation and professional development by strengthening salary safeguards and training systems to solidify the foundation of quality. Fourth, establish a collaborative provision mechanism between public and private preschools, guiding all types of kindergartens to operate in a standardized manner while maintaining their intrinsic development. Only by upholding quality as the baseline and advancing "free access" and "quality improvement" in tandem can the goals of equity, excellence, and inclusivity be achieved.

2. Reconstruction of Early Childhood Science Enlightenment Education Space in the Digital Context: Value Implications and Development Pathways

Thematic section: Play, Creativity, and Expression 8

Ke Chen — *Xi'an University*

Dingyu Guo — *Xi'an University*

Jun Cai — *Xi'an University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): science education; digital education space; early childhood; digitalization; China

Abstract:

Driven by the strategies of Digital China and educational modernization, the spatial boundaries of early childhood science enlightenment education are undergoing profound transformation. It is imperative to examine the structural predicaments of traditional science enlightenment education in terms of physical

space, interactive relationships, and the experience of meaning, and to propose a new digital education space for early childhood science enlightenment. This digital education space is not a simple replacement of traditional space but a new form dynamically generated based on the triadic dialectical relationship of "perception-conception-living." By constructing a living space integrating virtual and real elements, a multi-directional interactive space, and a deeply immersive experiential space, it systematically responds to the limitations of traditional educational spaces in the process of early childhood science enlightenment. Consequently, it provides young children with a new environment for science enlightenment education that is perceptible, interactive, and generative.

3. Empowering Early Childhood Educators to Embed Education for Sustainability (EfS) Using an Online Community of Practice (CoP) Approach

Thematic section: Education for Sustainability and Peace 3

Annie Cummins — *Department of Sport, Leisure and Childhood Studies, Munster Technological University, Cork*

Muireann Ranta — *Department of Education and Lifelong Learning, South East Technological University Ireland*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): education for sustainability; community of practice; participatory action research; early childhood educators; Ireland

Abstract:

This presentation shares insights from a Research Ireland funded participatory action research (PAR) that examined early childhood educator's knowledge and practice of embedding Education for Sustainability (EfS) within Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings in Ireland. Education is widely recognised as key to changing values and behaviours for a sustainable future, and Ireland's national strategies on Education for Sustainable Development (DES, 2014; GOI, 2022) highlight the importance of developing sustainability as a lifelong learning skill, beginning in the early years. However, training and resources for early year educators remain limited (Ranta, 2023; 2025). Findings from this study revealed a broad range of understandings of EfS, often shaped by an anthropocentric lens that emphasises individual responsibility. At the same time, some participants began to reframe EfS as a shared, transformative process grounded in collaboration and collective action, aligning with Armstrong's (2015) Ecocene perspective. Participants highlighted key barriers to implementation, including lack of time, limited professional training, insufficient resources and managerial support, and uncertainty about how to translate sustainability concepts into daily practice. The study concludes that creating meaningful, lasting change requires both grassroots innovation and top-down policy backing.

4. Early Childhood Educators' Awareness of Supporting Heritage Language Learners: Challenges and Needs in a Multicultural City in Japan

Thematic section: Education with Empathy and Without Fear

Takami Sugimoto — *St. Andrew's University*

Rosa Merc Ochante Muray — *St. Andrew's University*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): heritage language; multilingualism; early childhood educators; children with foreign backgrounds; Japan

Abstract:

In recent years, the number of children with foreign backgrounds in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings in Japan has increased, resulting in significant changes in children's linguistic environments. Similar trends are particularly evident in areas with high concentrations of foreign residents, where multilingualism has become an increasingly common feature of everyday childcare practice. In response to these changes, this study conducted a questionnaire survey of early childhood educators working in a multicultural city in Japan to examine their awareness of supporting heritage language learners.

The survey results indicate that although educators make efforts to communicate with children using simple vocabulary and greetings in their home languages, systematic curricula and structured approaches to supporting multilingual language development are largely lacking. Based on the challenges identified through the survey, this study examines the current state of multilingual environments in early childhood education settings and discusses the difficulties educators encounter in supporting children's language development.

Furthermore, this study argues that support for children with foreign backgrounds should not be framed as merely integrating them into a monolingual Japanese-language environment. Instead, an approach grounded in coexistence and linguistic diversity is essential. From this perspective, educators' awareness of multicultural coexistence plays a crucial role, regardless of whether children with foreign backgrounds are currently enrolled in their settings. Finally, this study proposes practical measures for developing language acquisition support programs in multilingual environments and highlights the urgent need to enhance educators' awareness and professional development in this area.

5. Play as a Space for Development in Polish Democratic Schools

Thematic section: Play, Creativity, and Expression 8

Anna Makowska — *Wolna Szkoła Grójec*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): play; democratic schools; mixed-age community; creativity; Poland

Abstract:

This presentation focuses primarily on early childhood within Polish democratic schools drawing on the example of Wolna Szkoła Grójec. Although commonly referred to as a "democratic school," this environment includes a significant group of younger children aged 4–8, who participate in a mixed-age community. The presentation will highlight how play, creativity, and expression function as central elements of learning and development for these younger children within this context.

In these environments, play is understood as a natural and fundamental way of engaging with the world – a form of "experiential laboratory" in which children explore, test hypotheses, develop social relationships, and construct their understanding of reality. Play is not treated as a tool for achieving predefined outcomes, but as a value in itself – a process that supports the holistic development of the child from early childhood onwards.

An important context for these experiences is contact with nature, understood as a relationship grounded in respect. Children have the opportunity to spend time and act freely in natural environments, developing attentiveness and responsibility – not through the use of nature, but through coexistence with it.

Children's free expression takes many forms – from movement and artistic activity to social initiatives and inquiry-based exploration. The boundaries of this expression are co-created and based primarily on the principle of safety – for oneself and for others within the community. This approach supports the development of autonomy and responsibility.

A key element is the understanding of learning as a process shaped by curiosity and playfulness – characterized by openness, lightness, and a readiness to explore. Learning is not separated from play, but emerges within it. Children engage in inquiry, ask questions, and seek answers independently, developing creative thinking and cognitive flexibility.

Equally important is the right to make mistakes, understood as an essential and valuable part of the learning process. Mistakes are not treated as failures, but as sources of information, reflection, and further development. This perspective supports risk-taking, resilience, and intrinsic motivation.

Creativity manifests both in artistic activities and in everyday problem-solving and inquiry. The educational environment supports diverse forms of expression, recognizing them as equally valid ways of understanding and interpreting the world.

These practices reflect a broader understanding of the right to education as the right to an environment that supports autonomy, well-being, and the full development of the human person. They demonstrate that play, creativity, and expression are not additions to education, but its foundation – a space in which children learn, grow, and build meaningful relationships with the world.

REF-PL-02 — VARIA — polski	18.07 SATURDAY
Time: 09:00–10:30 Room: 4.18 Language: Polish Chairs: Małgorzata Cywińska, Katarzyna Segiet	

1. Interspecies Encounters as a Context for Children's Learning with Non-human Partners

Thematic section: Education for Sustainability and Peace

Małgorzata Kowalik-Ołubińska — *Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): posthumanism; interspecies encounters; non-human partners; children's learning; more-than-human

Abstract:

In contemporary academic discourse, a gradual shift towards the ideas of posthumanism can be observed. It questions the validity of assigning a superior position in the world to human, considering him to be just one of the elements of a network of interconnected beings. Supporters of this view place at the center of research analysis not the human being, but the networks of material and discursive forces, all links of which are connected by relations of interdependence and kinship (Barad 2007; Braidotti 2014; Haraway 2016).

The permeation of posthumanism into the research field of Childhood studies has resulted in the recognition of children as relational beings (Murriss 2016). They exist in mutual and interdependent networks with humans and non-human others in the spaces of natureculture (Haraway 2000, 2012), in heterogeneous communities called common worlds (Latour 2009). The shift towards posthumanism is also visible in the educational

discourse. The ideas of relationality, community, becoming and becoming-with are increasingly often evoked in this context. There is a clear tendency towards a pedagogical approach known as the pedagogy of common worlds. It is understood as an educational practice that enables children to establish close, direct, and non-hierarchical relationships with non-human others during interspecies encounters (Taylor, Pacini-Ketchabaw 2015, 2019; Taylor et al. 2021; Kowalik-Olubińska 2023, 2025).

The author's intention is to present interspecies encounters as a context for children's learning with non-human partners. According to D. Haraway (2008), the sense of community that emerges in interspecies encounters suggests that the term "non-human others", commonly used in the literature, may be more accurately replaced by "non-human partners". Sharing D. Haraway's position on this issue, the author uses the term "non-human partners".

The author begins her considerations by recalling the basic threads of posthumanist thought. Then, she presents descriptions of children's encounters with representatives of other species, during which relationships emerged between them at the level of intra-actions (Barad 2007). The presentation of these encounters allows them to be considered as a context that offers significant opportunities for children to learn with non-human partners. The material-discursive intra-activity (Barad 2007) of participants in interspecies encounters enables them to establish direct, non-hierarchical relationships that are communal in nature (Kowalik-Olubińska 2025). They therefore foster being together, learning "from" and "with" each other. It is during interspecies encounters that the opportunity arises to learn how to coexist with non-human partners, how to create shared natureculture spaces with them (Haraway 2008), and how to build good common worlds with them (Latour 2009).

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2. Korczakowskie prawo dziecka do popełniania błędów w perspektywie sytuacji stresowych dzieci / Janusz Korczak's Idea of the Child's Right to Make Mistakes in the Context of Stressful Situations in Childhood

Thematic section: Education with Empathy and Without Fear

Małgorzata Cywińska — *Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): prawo do popełniania błędów; Janusz Korczak; sytuacje stresowe; dzieciństwo; prawa dziecka

Abstract:

Liczne badania nad dzieciństwem wykazują, że dla wielu dzieci rzeczywistość ich dziecięcego świata nie jest szczęśliwa, bowiem dzieci nierzadko doświadczają wiele sytuacji trudnych, sytuacji stresowych choćby z powodu nadmiernych wymagań rodziców w stosunku do dzieci, oczekiwania od nich osiągania nieustannych sukcesów. Ich brak często wiąże się z wycofaniem miłości przez rodziców. Odmawianie dzieciom prawa do błędu, do przegranej, odmawianie prawa do akceptacji porażki jest wyrazem opresyjnego traktowania dzieci.

Numerous studies on childhood show that for many children the reality of their childhood world is not a happy one, as children often experience many difficult and stressful situations, for example due to excessive demands placed on them by their parents and expectations of constant success, the absence of which is often associated with the withdrawal of parental love. Denying children the right to make mistakes, to lose, and to accept failure is an expression of oppressive treatment of children.

3. „Jestem. Znacę. Widzą mnie. Mogę. Będę”. Postać Janusza Korczaka w literaturze dziecięcej.

Thematic section: Education with Empathy and Without Fear

Małgorzata Sławińska — *Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie*

Aneta Świder-Pióro — *Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): Janusz Korczak; literatura dziecięca; narracja; współczesna literatura polska; prawa dziecka

Abstract:

Wystąpienie ukaże różnorodne drogi (tropy i formy) prezentacji postaci Janusza Korczaka zaproponowane dzieciom przez współczesnych polskich pisarzy. Będzie próbą odpowiedzi na pytania, czy sytuacja narracyjna w analizowanych książkach stwarza perspektywę pogłębionego poznania Janusza Korczaka jako empatycznego i wrażliwego dziecka, a następnie współodczuwającego z dziećmi dorosłego człowieka. W jaki sposób pisarze angażują młodego czytelnika w rozumienie Korczakowskich idei? Czy świat przedstawiony w analizowanych utworach stanowi przestrzeń inspiracji dla współczesnego dziecka i otwiera je na szeroko rozumiany dialog? Podjęta analiza stanie się impulsem do namysłu nad praktyką edukacyjną w obszarze relacji dziecko – dziecko i dziecko – wychowawca.

4. „Sprawiedliwość zaczyna się w codziennym życiu szkolnym: edukacja wczesnoszkolna jako narzędzie integracji i wyrównywania szans”

Thematic section: Equality, Justice, and Dignity

Keywords (assigned by the editors): sprawiedliwość edukacyjna; edukacja wczesnoszkolna; integracja; wyrównywanie szans; pedagogika społeczna

Abstract:

Sprawiedliwość w edukacji nie zaczyna się na poziomie deklaracji politycznych, lecz w codziennych praktykach klasowych. Edukacja wczesnoszkolna odgrywa kluczową rolę w kształtowaniu trajektorii edukacyjnych dzieci, ich kompetencji społecznych oraz poczucia przynależności. Autorka podejmuje refleksję nad edukacją wczesnoszkolną jako przestrzenią sprzyjającą integracji i ograniczaniu nierówności edukacyjnych. Odwołując się do perspektywy pedagogiki społecznej oraz współczesnych badań edukacyjnych, wskazuje, że codzienne interakcje szkolne, strategie dydaktyczne oraz kultura instytucjonalna w istotny sposób wpływają na możliwości uczestnictwa i sukcesu dzieci.

Szczególną uwagę poświęcono praktykom inkluzywnym, pedagogice relacyjnej, zróżnicowaniu nauczania oraz współpracy z rodziną jako mechanizmom wspierającym integrację dzieci z różnych środowisk społeczno-ekonomicznych, kulturowych i rozwojowych. Wczesne doświadczenia szkolne mogą zarówno reprodukować istniejące nierówności społeczne, jak i pełnić funkcję kompensacyjną oraz wzmacniającą, budując sprawczość i odporność dzieci. W narracji podkreślono znaczenie wrażliwości nauczyciela, refleksyjnej praktyki oraz wsparcia systemowego w tworzeniu sprawiedliwego i równościowego środowiska uczenia się. Koncentracja na codzienności szkolnej pozwala ukazać, że sprawiedliwość edukacyjna nie jest abstrakcyjnym ideałem, lecz rzeczywistością konstruowaną poprzez codzienne decyzje pedagogiczne. Edukacja wczesnoszkolna staje się zatem strategiczną i etyczną przestrzenią budowania spójności społecznej oraz wyrównywania szans od najwcześniejszych etapów kształcenia.

5. Znacząca nieobecność. Dziecko w cieniu dorosłej narracji w literaturze dziecięcej o tematyce adopcji – analiza jakościowa.

Thematic section: Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility

Karolina Żelazowska-Byczkowska — *Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej w Warszawie*
Urszula Bartnikowska — *Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): adopcja; literatura dziecięca; perspektywa dziecka; analiza jakościowa; bajki terapeutyczne

Abstract:

Celem wystąpienia jest krytyczna analiza bajek dotyczących adopcji, rekomendowanych przez polskie ośrodki adopcyjne oraz inne instytucje wspierające rozwój dzieci. Analiza objęła 30 tekstów opublikowanych w formie książek, jak i udostępnionych online. Punktem wyjścia jest pytanie o to, w jaki sposób literatura ta reprezentuje perspektywę dziecka adoptowanego, jego potrzeby i realne doświadczenia. Badanie przeprowadzono z wykorzystaniem metody Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), obejmując zarówno warstwę treściową, jak i językową analizowanych tekstów.

Wyniki wskazują, że w wielu analizowanych bajkach dominującą perspektywą jest punkt widzenia dorosłych: ich pragnienie rodzicielstwa, przeżycia związane z procedurą adopcyjną oraz emocjonalna droga prowadząca do spełnienia. Świat wewnętrzny dziecka najczęściej jest zredukowany, a jego historia sprzed adopcji

przedstawiona skrótowo lub wręcz pomijana. Narracje często kończą się szczęśliwie, brakuje w nich refleksji dotyczącej straty czy ambiwalencji związanej ze złożoną sytuacją tożsamościową dziecka. W niektórych tekstach problematyczne okazują się również sformułowania wartościujące, które mogą utrwaląć niekorzystne dla dziecka rozumienie pojęcia rodziny.

Bajki te kształtują nie tylko samoświadomość dzieci adoptowanych, lecz także społeczne wyobrażenia o adopcji oraz sposób, w jaki dorośli rozmawiają z dziećmi o ich historii lub historii ich rówieśników. Wystąpienie ukaże zarówno potencjał wspierający tego typu tekstów w budowaniu poczucia bezpieczeństwa i przynależności, jak i możliwe konsekwencje redukcji wątków biograficznych dziecka oraz stosowania określonych strategii narracyjnych i językowych.

6. Realizacja praw dziecka jako kluczowy aspekt optymalizacji jego rozwoju.

Thematic section: Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility

Anna Ratajczak — *Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu*

Keywords (assigned by the editors): prawa dziecka; rozwój dziecka; dobrostan; rodzicielstwo; podmiotowość dziecka

Abstract:

Abstrakt dotyczący realizacji praw stanowi jeden z kluczowych wyznaczników jakości rodzicielskiego oraz kluczowy czynnik warunkujący rozwój dziecka we wszystkich jego wymiarach: fizyczny, potwierdzający, zatwierdzony i poznawczy. Współczesne rozwiązanie problemu, oparte na uznaniu dziecka jako podmiotu posiadającego własne prawa, wynikające z tego, wymaga odejścia od modelu paternalistycznego na rzecz relacyjnego i partycypacyjnego. Celem jest pogłębienie analizy zależności pomiędzy stopniem realizacji praw dziecka a jego funkcjonowaniem oraz dobrostanem w ramach działalności krótko- i długoterminowej.

Punktem wyjścia będzie odniesienie do kategorii praw dziecka, wynikających m.in. prawo do życia i rozwoju, ochrona przed przemocą i zaniedbaniem, dostęp do edukacji i opieki nad dziećmi, a także prawo do ujawnienia poglądów i skutków w decyzjach, które go dotyczą. Wystąpienie, że realizacja tych praw nie ogranicza się wyłącznie do ich formalnego przekazania, lecz wymaga ich obowiązkowego uruchomienia w przypadku praktykach wychowawczych, edukacyjnych i opiekuńczych.

Istotnym elementem analizy będzie omówienie roli kluczowej dla rozwoju dzieci – rodziny, systemu edukacji oraz instytucji wsparcia społecznego – w kontekście tworzenia warunków zapewniających urzeczywistnienie praw dziecka. Podjęta refleksja nad istotą powiązania dorosłego – dziecko, znaczenie komunikacji ogólnej na temat, uznaniu autonomicznego dziecka oraz wspieraniu jego sprawczości. Powiadomienie o wystąpieniu także o wystąpieniu barier utrudniających wykonanie praw dziecka, takich jak użycie społeczne, utrwalone wzorce kulturowe, systemowe lub ograniczenia instytucjonalne.

W części rozszerzonej, która obejmuje konsekwencje niepełnej realizacji praw dziecka, m.in. w ograniczeniach rozwoju, niższych wartościach, które są zawarte w ograniczeniach związanych z użytkowaniem edukacyjnym. W opozycji do tego zaprezentowane przykłady dobrych praktyków oraz rekomendacje działań wspierających wdrażanie udziału na prawach dziecka, w tym rozwijanie nadzoru rodziców dorosłych, wzmocnienie systemów wsparcia oraz promowanie kultury dialogu i partycypacji.

W konkluzji jest to, że realizacja prawa dziecka jest postrzegana nie tylko jako jednostka regulująca, lecz przede wszystkim jako inwestycja w rozwój człowieka i społeczeństwa. Tworzenie środowiska respektującego prawa

zapewniające dostęp do tworzenia konta członkowskiego na zaufaniu, odpowiedzialność i wzajemne traktowanie, w którym każde dziecko może być naprawdę możliwe do rozwinięcia twojego użytkownika.

7. W stronę nowego modelu ojcostwa. Urlopy ojcowskie i rodzicielskie jako instrument realizacji praw dziecka do opieki, więzi i obecności obojga rodziców

Thematic section: Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility

Łukasz P. Ratajczak — *Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu*

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

[Abstract to be supplied.]

8. Education on children's rights as a subject in teacher training

Thematic section: Teachers as Human Rights Defenders

Małgorzata Turczyk, Jagiellonian University

Keywords (assigned by the editors): children's rights education; teacher training; higher education; teacher competences

Abstract:

The proposal concerns issues related to child rights education content in the process of teacher training at universities. Introducing the issue of children's rights into the discourse on teacher education is extremely important in the context of realising children's rights in education, and in particular the right to education about children's rights. Only a properly prepared teacher, with an appropriate body of knowledge, skills, and competencies, is capable of addressing the issue of children's rights in educational institutions and building a culture of respect for human rights there. It is therefore important to initiate a discussion on teaching and methodological approaches, with the rights of the child at the centre. In this way, we can examine children's rights within the context of a module in teacher training. We can analyse its content, areas of competence and specific skills that will assist teachers in their work to promote, educate about and protect children's rights.
