

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

POSTERS

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

Posters Programme



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1. Values Education in Early Childhood Education – The Perspective of Parents and Teachers and the Child's Voice

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The process of values education in early childhood is most often shaped by adults – parents and teachers – who determine which values are considered important and worth transmitting. However, within contemporary approaches to early childhood education, increasing attention is being paid to the child's perspective, agency, and voice.

The aim of this study was to analyse values education in preschool settings from the perspective of parents and teachers of six-year-old children, and to confront these perspectives with the child's voice. The study is based on empirical data collected from parents and teachers regarding the values they consider essential in the upbringing of young children. The findings were subsequently interpreted in relation to previous research focusing on what children themselves perceive as important in their everyday experiences.

The analysis reveals both convergences and discrepancies between values defined by adults and children's perspectives. The results indicate differences in how what is important in values education is understood, highlighting the need to take the child's voice into account in this process.

The study emphasises the need to strengthen the child's voice in values education and to create space for their genuine participation in preschool practice. It also highlights the importance of cooperation between parents and teachers in developing a more child-centred approach to values education.

2. Giving voice to children's emotions – The daily pedagogical use of the question : HOW DO YOU FEEL TODAY... AT SCHOOL?

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The project belongs to the thematic axis “Education with Empathy and Without Fear” and aims to create a safe, supportive, and emotionally positive learning environment where children feel acceptance, safety, and trust. Its central focus is the cultivation of empathy and the elimination of practices based on fear, punishment, or strict imposition. This educational intervention was implemented within a kindergarten classroom (ages 4–6). The project was inspired by a storybook brought to class by a student titled “How Do You Feel Today?” After reading the story, we discussed the emotions that appear at any moment in our daily lives. The general goal is to create an environment where children feel safe and supported in expressing and understanding their emotions, while developing social skills and self-regulation.

Individual goals:

- To develop children’s ability to recognize, name, and manage their emotions.
- To cultivate empathy and respect for the emotions of others.
- To strengthen the sense of safety and acceptance within the classroom.
- To promote cooperation and positive conflict resolution.
- To help children learn to care for themselves and others.
- To foster a love for school life.
- To help children feel free at school.
- To eliminate possible school-related fears.
- To encourage free expression.
- To adopt practices that develop critical thinking.
- To speak without fear.

The project is carried out in three phases. Phase 1 is Planning the Action. This phase involves reflection, defining the topic, and recording prior knowledge and ideas. Children share what they already know about the subject and raise questions about what they would like to learn. Concept maps are created. The second phase is research, during which information is collected with the help of parents, working in small groups. Children bring the topic home and, together with their families, gather ideas and information that can be applied in the classroom to promote care and empathy. The third phase is the implementation of the Action. Activities are developed based on the New Kindergarten Curriculum areas: Child and Communication, Child, Self and Society, Child and Positive Sciences, Child, Body and Creative Expression. Through experiential activities, role-playing, storytelling, discussion circles, and cooperative games, children are encouraged to recognize and express their emotions, understand others’ feelings, and resolve conflicts through dialogue. Special emphasis is placed on positive reinforcement, establishing commonly accepted rules, and involving children in simple classroom decision-making. Children participate in the “emotion circle,” where each child shares how they feel using cards. A good practice applied is that the circle always begins and ends with a positive comment, handshake, or hug, reinforcing a sense of safety. A puppet asking for help is introduced, and children propose solutions. They write and illustrate their own story featuring themselves as heroes who make mistakes, learn from them, and eventually correct them. Children draw or create collages representing their feelings and then they present their artwork in an atmosphere of acceptance without criticism. Colors and shapes are associated with specific emotions. At the end of each week, children present their work and discuss the emotions expressed. They create a “calm-down box” that children can use when experiencing negative emotions. Role-playing scenarios reflect everyday situations. Children learn to recognize how others feel and respond positively. They engage in cooperative games and

teamwork in small groups and pairs, including guidance games where one child acts as “blind” and the other as helper. Classroom responsibility groups are formed for organizing materials and tidying up. Children compose a simple song about emotions. They use the interactive whiteboard for empathy-related games. They also complete an “emotion route” using the class Bee-Bot robot, learning basic robotics skills. Images from the story “What I Feel,” depicting various emotions, are scattered around the classroom. Children move to music and, when it stops, present the emotion they are holding and describe a personal experience related to it. An “emotion garden” is created with handmade flowers and photographs. Each child makes their own flower and describes their feeling. A painting related to emotions is analyzed: children observe, describe, comment, interpret, and create a story inspired by it. They reenact the painting with their bodies and reproduce it on paper. Children create emotional masks representing different feelings and engage in imitation games. Through an “emotion map,” they place themselves according to how they feel each day. Empathy cards prompt discussions about how another child might feel and how they could help. Calm zones and relaxation corners are organized with cushions, soothing music, soft balls, bubble breathing exercises, short mindfulness practices, cooperative games with rules, group constructions, and circle storytelling that respects turn-taking and others’ ideas. The final phase is Evaluation, during which children reflect on their knowledge and experiences. Assessment is formative and based on observing children’s behavior, cooperation, and emotional expression. The project promotes self-esteem, self-regulation, and social responsibility. As educators, we acted as models of empathy and supportive communication. We encouraged cooperation, dialogue, and mutual respect. We served as facilitators, strengthening autonomy and reflection. Through the implementation of this program, a school climate based on respect, understanding, and emotional safety is fostered, laying the foundation for an education without fear and with meaningful human connection.

3. How to talk with children about their rights? The Project “Leosia and Bieluś – Friends of Preschool Children from Częstochowa”

Authors and affiliations:

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The educational and preventive project “Leosia and Bieluś – Friends of Preschool Children from Częstochowa” was developed to support children’s emotional and social development in the context of their rights.

The main objective of the initiative was to strengthen children’s sense of safety, develop social competences, and promote knowledge about children’s rights among the youngest learners through educational activities, integration of children from preschools in Częstochowa, as well as artistic and movement-based activities.

The project implementation involved the use of activating teaching methods adapted to children’s developmental abilities, including thematic play, creative activities, and meetings integrating the

preschool community.

The main characters, Leosia and Bieluś, are a lioness and an eagle inspired by the symbolism of the coat of arms of the city of Częstochowa. The characters' names were chosen by children from preschools in Częstochowa. The characters acted as guides, supporting children in discovering values such as friendship, cooperation, empathy, and respect for others, as well as in developing behaviors that foster a sense of safety in their immediate environment.

The implementation of the project contributed to increasing children's awareness of their rights, strengthening their sense of safety, and developing their ability to respond in potentially threatening situations. An increase in preschoolers' engagement in teamwork activities was also observed.

Educational aids and digital materials were developed as part of the project.

The project confirmed that the undertaken activities contribute to improving peer relationships and strengthening the sense of agency among young children.

4. Toy library as a shared experience

Authors and affiliations:

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This abstract will be presented as a poster at the OMEP-conference in Poznan 2026

What is a toylibrary?

A toy library is a place where children and caregivers can meet, play and borrow quality toys. The toys and other supply have to be of good quality to last long. Toy libraries are mostly directed towards younger children, younger than 8 years. It's also a place where you can hang around during opening hours to play, make crafts and meet new friends this is free of charge To borrow toys and baby items you need to pay a membership fee at a reasonable cost.

A toy library promotes equality, inclusion and every child's right to play. More children get access to a large variety of good quality toys without buying them.

Play is important for humankind. Play improves the cognitive, physical, social and emotional wellbeing – through play children learn about the world and themselves. A toy library aims to stimulate play and give children and parents an increased opportunity to test play material that they otherwise would not have access to.

To share and borrow instead of buying and owning promotes the climate and contributes to sustainable development. Thus, toy libraries promote a circular economy, sharing, renting, borrowing and so on.

How does it work?

Many toy libraries operate with only volunteers. The consequences are loss of stability and continuity and the risk of it failing increases. That's why it's a good investment to have some employees together with volunteers. As a volunteer you don't have to become a member to make loans.

There is clothes swapping area which is free of charge for everybody. You leave clothes that are too small and exchange them for a bigger size.

What are the benefits with toy libraries?

A toy library promotes equality, inclusion and every child's right to play. More children get access to a large variety of good quality toys for a small cost without buying them.

Play is important for humankind. Play improves the cognitive, physical, social and emotional wellbeing – through play children learn about the world and themselves. A toy library aims to stimulate play and give children and parents an increased opportunity to test play material that they otherwise would not have access to.

It gives families with small financial means access to toys they couldn't afford to buy themselves. All families benefit financially. The climate benefits when children don't own so many toys, less transport and production. Did you know that a child aged 0-7 years in Sweden owns in average 536 toys. If all these children reduce their toy stock with 50% it would mean around 2,3 kilotons CO₂-equivalent.

Toy libraries promote a circular economy, sharing, renting, borrowing and so on.

Sharing is caring!

We even inspired a preschool in Tokyo, Japan to start their own Toy library. Now I hope to inspire some more initiatives in Europe.

In short:

Introduction: A toy library is a community resource where children and caregivers can play, share, meet and borrow high-quality toys for a limited period, providing a shared space for play, learning, and connection.

Social Benefits: Toy libraries promote equality and inclusion by ensuring that children from diverse backgrounds have access to a wide variety of engaging toys. Every child, regardless of their family's financial situation, can exercise their right to play. In addition, toy libraries serve as gathering places that foster connections between families and strengthen community bonds.

Developmental Benefits: Access to different types of toys supports children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Research shows that play is essential for healthy child development, enhancing creativity, problem-solving skills, and overall wellbeing (Ginsburg, 2007). Furthermore, toy libraries encourage shared play experiences, which nurture social skills and cooperation among children.

Financial Benefits: All families benefit financially by borrowing toys at a minimal cost instead of purchasing new ones. This accessibility ensures that families can regularly introduce new toys to their children without significant expense. For example, a local family with limited resources reported that the toy library enabled their children to explore a wide range of toys, supporting their development and alleviating financial stress.

Environmental Benefits: Toy libraries help reduce the environmental impact associated with toy production and waste. By sharing and reusing toys, fewer new toys need to be manufactured, which lessens carbon emissions and conserves resources. For instance, if a community of 1,000 families reduces their toy purchases by half through a toy library, it could prevent approximately 2.3 kilotons of CO₂-equivalent emissions—highlighting a significant positive effect on the climate. Studies emphasize that such shared use models support a more sustainable economy and reduce the ecological footprint of childhood play (UNEP, 2021).

Bibi Karlsson, OMEP Sweden

5. Developing a Self-Assessment Scale for ECCE Professionals-Parents Partnerships : Understanding Children as the Mediating Axis of Collaborative Practice

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The partnership between childhood care and education (ECCE) professionals and parents are widely recognized as a key element in supporting high-quality early childhood care and education. International policies and research also highlight that children's development is enhanced when ECCE professionals and families share responsibilities and engage collaboratively. However, the professional competencies required for ECCE professionals to build effective partnerships with parents have not been sufficiently systematized. In particular, assessment tools that enable ECCE professionals to reflect on and evaluate their interactions with parents remain underdeveloped.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop a self-assessment scale to measure the professional competencies required for ECCE professionals to build partnerships with parents and to examine its reliability and validity. The theoretical premise of this study is based on the perspective that the partnership between ECCE professionals and parents is mediated by a "shared understanding of the child." In other words, the partnership is viewed as being constructed by mutual comparison and integration of the different interpretations that ECCE professionals and parents have of the child.

The development of the scale was based on findings from the author's prior qualitative research, which analyzed how ECCE professionals and parents interpret children's behavior during play. The results revealed systematic differences in focal points, methods of interpretation, and evaluation criteria regarding children. At the same time, the findings suggested that these differences could function as complementary perspectives. Based on these findings, together with all prior research on partnerships in other fields and on partnerships between ECCE professionals and parents, a draft of the scale items was developed.

Subsequently, a questionnaire survey was conducted with ECCE professionals in Japan. After collecting the responses, exploratory factor analysis was performed to examine the scale structure, and reliability and validity were evaluated. This study was conducted with the approval of the Research Ethics Review Committee at the author's university. The purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of participation were explained to the participants, and all responses were anonymized prior to statistical analysis.

The analysis identified five factors constituting partnerships with parents. These factors included professional communication regarding children, empathetic engagement with parents, and a collaborative orientation aimed at sharing an understanding of children. Reliability analysis showed that each factor demonstrated sufficient internal consistency. Furthermore, validity analysis indicated that the scale is an effective tool for measuring ECCE professionals' ability to build partnerships with parents.

In addition, this study examined the relationship between partnership-building ability and the years of professional experience among ECCE professionals. The results suggested that as professional experience increases, there is a greater tendency to emphasize interactive communication with parents and to integrate professional knowledge with parents' perspectives. These findings indicate

that partnership-building ability is not a fixed interpersonal skill but rather a professional competency that develops throughout the career progression of ECCE professionals.

The findings of this study provide an empirical framework for understanding partnership between childcare providers and parents contribute to the international discourse on family participation in ECCE. Furthermore, the self-assessment scale developed in this study can be used not only as a tool to promote self-reflection among early childhood educators but also as a practical resource for in-service training and teacher education. A distinctive feature of this study is that it positions the sharing of understanding of children as the central axis of the collaborative relationship between early childhood educators and parents, offering a new perspective on partnership in ECCE in terms of “shared responsibility for children.”

6. An Analysis of Factors Influencing Preschool Educators on Protecting Children’s Rights in Taiwan: From the Perspective of Ecological Systems Theory

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This study addresses the professional responsibility of preschool educators for protecting young children and safeguard their rights. Despite the ethical and legal expectations placed upon preschool educators, incidents in which preschool educators infringe upon children’s physical integrity or fail to adequately uphold their rights continue to occur. This phenomenon raises critical questions regarding the underlying factors that contribute to such practices. Accordingly, the primary aim of this study is to explore the factors influencing preschool educators’ failure to fulfill their protective roles and to examine how these factors shape their caregiving and educational practices.

This research draws upon selected case studies from Taiwan and adopts Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory as its analytical framework. By situating preschool educators’ behaviors within a multi-layered ecological context, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interactions between individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal influences.

The findings reveal several key factors across different ecological levels. At the individual level, preschool educators’ personal beliefs about child-rearing, their professional knowledge and competencies in early childhood education, and their emotional regulation abilities significantly influence their caregiving perspectives and practices. At the microsystem level, the institutional culture of the preschool and the educational beliefs of colleagues play an important role in shaping preschool educators’ approaches to child care and discipline. At the mesosystem level, inconsistencies or conflicts between preschool policies, parental expectations, and preschool educators’ own educational beliefs can create tensions that affect preschool educators’ decision-making and behaviors in practice. At the exosystem level, the attitudes of family members and media representations and reporting on child-rearing and educational practices exert indirect yet meaningful influences on preschool educators’ perceptions and actions. At the macrosystem level, broader societal values, traditional cultural norms, and prevailing attitudes toward discipline and child protection fundamentally shape the framework within which preschool educators operate. Finally, at

the chronosystem level, preschool educators' personal developmental histories and past experiences contribute to the formation and evolution of their child-rearing beliefs over time.

Based on these findings, this study proposes several recommendations. First, in terms of teacher education, it is essential to strengthen pre-service and in-service training programs by fostering preschool educators' self-reflection and critical awareness. Educators should be encouraged to examine how various ecological factors influence their teaching beliefs and practices, and to develop appropriate, rights-based approaches to early childhood care and education. Second, at the institutional level, preschools should not only promote positive and supportive educational cultures but also actively reduce preschool educators' work-related stress. Providing ongoing professional development opportunities as well as emotional and psychological support systems is crucial for enhancing preschool educators' well-being and professional performance. Third, at the governmental level, in addition to reinforcing legal regulations and policy implementation, authorities should also facilitate the dissemination of accurate and evidence-based information to both the public and parents through media channels. Such efforts can help create a more supportive social environment, enabling preschool educators to perform their roles effectively and responsibly.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of adopting an ecological perspective to understand the multifaceted influences on preschool educators' practices. By addressing factors across multiple systemic levels, it is possible to better support preschool educators in fulfilling their professional responsibilities and ensuring the protection and well-being of young children.

7. Structured Picture Book–Based Instruction as a Multidomain Developmental Intervention in Inclusive Early Childhood Special Education

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Tsai Min-Ying — National Pingtung University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This study examined the effects of a structured picture book–based instructional intervention on multidomain developmental outcomes in inclusive early childhood settings serving children with developmental delays. Although picture books are widely implemented in preschool classrooms, limited empirical research has evaluated their systematic use as structured developmental interventions within special education contexts. A single-case experimental A–B–A design was employed to establish a functional relation between the intervention and observed changes in motor, cognitive, language, and social domains. Repeated measures were collected across baseline, intervention, and maintenance phases using structured observational procedures. Visual analysis followed established single-case criteria, including examination of level, trend, variability, immediacy of effect, and data overlap. Baseline data demonstrated stable and low-variability performance without systematic upward trends. Introduction of the intervention was associated with immediate level changes and accelerated positive trends, with minimal overlap between phases. Maintenance data indicated partial retention of acquired skills. Visual analytic indicators collectively support a functional

relation between the structured intervention and multidomain developmental gains. While replication and additional quantitative indices are warranted, these findings provide preliminary evidence supporting literacy-mediated instructional practices in early childhood special education.

8. Education with Empathy and Without Fear – Relationships that Support Development and Well-being in Democratic Schools in Poland

Authors and affiliations:

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Aneta Bronś — Wolna Szkoła Pozytywka

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This poster presents practices developed in Polish democratic schools, where education is grounded in empathy, relationships based on trust, and a strong sense of emotional safety.

In these environments, the child is recognized as a full and active participant in the educational community. Relationships between children and adults are built on the principle of equality, understood as equal dignity, the right to express oneself, and the right to be heard. At the same time, differences in experience and responsibility are acknowledged, allowing for relationships grounded in mutual respect and understanding.

The learning process is relational and dynamic, with the roles of “teacher” and “learner” remaining fluid and context-dependent. Knowledge and skills develop through dialogue, collaboration, and everyday experiences within the community.

A central element of these practices is a culture of respect, in which all emotions are recognized as meaningful and significant. Rather than being judged, they are understood as expressions of underlying needs. Communication is based on attentiveness and openness.

Adults take on the role of companions and guides in the child’s development – supporting, responding to needs, and co-creating an environment that enables learning. This creates a space in which children can act without fear, take initiative, and develop a sense of self-worth.

Empathy in these communities extends beyond interpersonal relationships to include relationships with nature and the wider environment. Education is understood as a process of developing attentiveness to needs – both of children and adults – and of co-creating solutions in the everyday life of the school.

The practices presented demonstrate that environments grounded in empathy, trust, and openness support well-being, strengthen intrinsic motivation, and foster the development of social and emotional competences. They offer an example of the realization of the right to education as a right to dignity, relationships, and the full development of the human person.

9. The Heart Speaks – The Mind Responds: A Pedagogy of Children’s Rights through Emotion and Play

Authors and affiliations:

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Ioanna Kontou Founta — Hellenic College of Thessaloniki

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This proposal draws on the educational philosophy of Janusz Korczak and explores the connection between children’s rights and their emotional and cognitive development. It presents a holistic framework of activities in which play becomes a space for empathy, self-regulation, and active participation. Through “The Game of the Four Hearts” – an innovative learning model integrating voice, balance, relationship, and creativity – children experience in practice concepts such as justice, cooperation, emotional awareness, and respect for diversity. The activities foster the integration of heart and mind, emotion and thought, leading to a pedagogy that does not merely teach rights but embodies them in everyday school life. This approach highlights the value of play as a medium of democracy, creativity, and emotional wellbeing, contributing to a school culture grounded in joy, care, and dignity.

POSTER SESSION I (PRINTED POSTERS) – 17.07 FRIDAY

10. Every Child Has a Voice: Teaching Children's Rights Through Experiential Learning in Preschool Education

Authors and affiliations:

Elissavet Kontou — Owner of Preschool Education Centre Ntekroli

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

On the occasion of World Children's Rights Day, an experiential educational project was implemented with 50 preschool children with the aim of introducing them to fundamental children's rights and promoting the development of active and responsible future citizens. The project focused on key rights such as the right to education, health, protection, care, participation, and expression of opinion. The educational intervention was based on participatory and experiential learning approaches appropriate for early childhood education. Children engaged in creative and collaborative activities designed to help them explore and understand the concept of rights in a meaningful way. Indicative activities included collaborative artwork, such as the creation of a "Children's Rights Tree," handprint activities symbolizing that every child has a voice, and puppet theatre scenarios presenting everyday situations related to children's rights.

The methodology included an initial exploration of children's prior knowledge about rights, followed by the implementation of the activities and a final reflective discussion to assess their understanding. The evaluation focused on children's ability to recognize and express basic rights through discussion, artistic expression, and participation in classroom activities.

The findings suggest that experiential and participatory educational practices can effectively support young children's awareness of their rights and contribute to the early cultivation of democratic values and active citizenship.

11. Ideal Early Childhood Education Environment Through Children's Eyes: Reconstructing Learning Spaces with the Mosaic Approach

Authors and affiliations:

Handan Doğan — Maltepe University

Rengin Zembat — Maltepe University

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Children spend a significant portion of their daily lives in preschool settings where they interact with peers, explore their environment, and learn through play and experience. Although preschool learning environments are generally designed based on theoretical perspectives on child development and education, these arrangements largely reflect adults' assumptions about children's needs rather than

children's own perspectives. However, as emphasized in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right to express their views on matters that affect them. Supporting children's participation in decision-making processes from an early age is also considered essential for fostering democratic citizenship and agency (UNICEF, 2023). Despite this recognition, children's voices are still relatively underrepresented in research on the design of preschool learning environments.

Grounded in the principle of child participation, the present study aims to explore the perspectives of 5–6-year-old children regarding their ideal preschool learning environments using the Mosaic Approach. The Mosaic Approach is one of the first methodological frameworks in early childhood research that aims to make children's voices heard by employing child-centered and multi-method strategies. By employing a child-centered and multi-method research design, the study seeks to understand how children experience both indoor and outdoor spaces and how they envision ideal learning environments.

The study was conducted with a class of 22 children aged 5–6 attending a kindergarten in Istanbul, Türkiye. The school is a single-story building located within a garden and includes 34 workshop areas such as woodworking, construction, and paper workshops. Data were collected over six weeks through multiple participatory methods consistent with the Mosaic Approach. The process began with awareness walks in indoor and outdoor environments, followed by child-led photography activities in which children documented spaces they liked, disliked, or wished to change. These photographs were then discussed in focus group interviews. In the following stage, children were asked to draw their dream schools, and additional focus group discussions were conducted based on these drawings. In the final stage, children created three-dimensional models of their ideal schools using materials such as wood, cardboard, or 3D printing. Throughout the study, interviews were conducted using child-centered techniques and semi-structured questions developed by the researchers and validated through expert review.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews, photographs, drawings, and three-dimensional models are currently being analyzed through thematic analysis using MAXQDA software. During the coding process, children's statements and artifacts are being organized into themes to identify their perspectives on ideal learning environments. In addition to code frequency, contextual meaning and the depth of qualitative data are being considered, recognizing that even low-frequency expressions may provide important insights into children's experiences.

Initial findings suggest that children tend to prefer unstructured outdoor environments that allow for free play rather than highly structured spaces designed and regulated by adults. In indoor environments, however, children frequently emphasized safety-related features such as non-slip flooring and fire extinguishers. Further analysis of the data is ongoing to better understand how children transformed their ideas and spatial preferences into tangible representations by modeling their ideal schools in three-dimensional form. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to discussions on spatial design in early childhood education, children's participation in educational decision-making, and the development of more child-responsive learning environments.

12. Multilingualism in Preschool Education: A Cross-National Study of Curricula in the United States, Uzbekistan, and South Korea

Authors and affiliations:

Jiyoung Yu — not provided in the database

Heejeong Lee — Soonchunhyang University, Korea

Fotima Turdalieva — University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

1. Introduction

As multicultural and multilingual societies continue to expand, preschool curricula are increasingly expected not only to support children's acquisition of the dominant language but also to foster respect for diverse languages, identities, and cultural practices. Preschool is especially important because attitudes toward language, belonging, and cultural difference begin to develop in early childhood. In this sense, national curricula are socializing texts that reflect which language practices, values, and identities are recognized, legitimized, or marginalized in a society.

The United States, Uzbekistan, and South Korea provide three contrasting contexts for examining these issues. The United States has developed early childhood policies in response to long-standing ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, with increasing attention to Dual Language Learners. Uzbekistan, as a multiethnic and multilingual society shaped by post-Soviet transition and nation-building, reflects a context in which linguistic diversity coexists with strengthened national language policy. South Korea, while historically characterized by a monolingual identity, has recently experienced rapid demographic change due to international marriage, migration, and the growing number of children from multicultural families. These contexts make the three countries meaningful for understanding how preschool curricula position multilingualism and cultural diversity.

Against this background, this study examines how multilingual education is conceptualized in the preschool curricula of the United States, Uzbekistan, and South Korea and explores the cultural orientations toward language and diversity embedded in these documents. By comparing the three curricula, the study identifies similarities and differences in their approaches to multilingualism and derives implications for the future direction of the Korean preschool curriculum.

2. Research Questions

This study addresses two questions. First, how do the preschool curricula of the United States, Uzbekistan, and South Korea define goals and learning content related to multilingual learners and diverse children? Second, what cultural orientations toward multilingual education are reflected in these curricula when analyzed through Language Socialization Theory?

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the language socialization framework developed by Schieffelin and Ochs. From this perspective, language is not simply a tool for communication but a central medium through which children are socialized into the norms, values, and expectations of their communities. Based on this framework, the curriculum documents were analyzed along three

dimensions: communicative accommodation, the social meaning of language, and literacy socialization. Communicative accommodation examines whether teachers are expected to adapt to children's diverse linguistic backgrounds or whether children are expected to adjust to dominant school norms. The social meaning of language focuses on the values assigned to home languages, state languages, and foreign languages. Literacy socialization concerns whether the curriculum recognizes diverse literacy environments and writing systems and supports continuity between home and school literacy practices.

4. Method

This study employed qualitative comparative document analysis. The materials analyzed were the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework in the United States, Ilk Qadam in Uzbekistan, and the 2019 Revised Nuri Curriculum and its official guidebook in South Korea. The analysis focused on the language and communication domains of these documents. The research proceeded in three stages: collecting official curriculum texts and explanatory materials; establishing the three analytical dimensions derived from language socialization theory as the coding framework; and conducting close textual reading to identify statements related to multilingualism, mother tongue, home language, and Dual Language Learners. To strengthen trustworthiness, three researchers participated in peer cross-validation and discussed coding discrepancies until consensus was reached. Careful translation and review procedures were also used to secure linguistic equivalence across English, Uzbek, Russian, and Korean materials.

5. Findings

5.1. United States: Child-Centered Accommodation and Cultural Continuity

The U.S. Head Start framework demonstrates a child-centered and asset-based orientation toward multilingual education. It explicitly identifies children from diverse linguistic backgrounds as Dual Language Learners and recognizes the home language as a foundation for later English learning and overall language and literacy development. In other words, children's first languages are treated not as obstacles but as developmental assets. In terms of communicative accommodation, the framework expects teachers to adapt to children's linguistic repertoires. It acknowledges that DLLs may demonstrate more advanced communication in their home language than in English and may use code-switching depending on context. In terms of literacy socialization, Head Start also recognizes that some home languages may use non-alphabetic writing systems or may not have written forms at all. This reflects a strong commitment to cultural continuity between home and school and an educational approach that values linguistic diversity as a resource.

5.2. Uzbekistan: Integrative and Pragmatic Mediation

Uzbekistan's Ilk Qadam reflects an integrative orientation shaped by the country's long history as a multiethnic and multilingual society. The curriculum states that children learn and develop better when their culture, language, and traditions are respected, indicating that diversity is recognized as an important educational principle. At the same time, the curriculum makes clear that the use of the language of instruction and foreign languages in preschool is governed by national language policy. This creates a pragmatic mediating approach. On the one hand, the mother tongue is given normative importance through goals related to correct pronunciation, fluent expression, and grammatical

accuracy. On the other hand, foreign language learning is encouraged through early communicative goals such as greetings and basic interest in additional languages. In terms of literacy socialization, *Ilk Qadam* values children's early writing skills in the mother tongue, but it does not explicitly address multiple writing systems or provide concrete strategies for children whose home language differs from the instructional language. Thus, Uzbekistan's curriculum combines respect for diversity with a continuing emphasis on national linguistic norms.

5.3. South Korea: Situation-Centered Norms and Monolingual Orientation

The analysis of South Korea's 2019 Revised Nuri Curriculum reveals a largely situation-centered and monolingual orientation. Although the general principles of the curriculum state that discrimination should be avoided on the basis of family and cultural background, language itself is not explicitly presented as a category requiring consideration. This omission becomes more significant when the communication domain is examined closely. The curriculum strongly emphasizes normative expressions such as beautiful Korean, refined speech, and proper language use. These expressions suggest that children are expected to adapt to dominant Korean linguistic norms rather than that teachers should accommodate diverse home language backgrounds. From the perspective of language socialization, this represents a highly situation-centered model in which multilingual children's home languages are rendered largely invisible. Moreover, the curriculum provides little explicit guidance for supporting literacy socialization across different home languages or writing systems. As a result, multilingual children may experience cultural discontinuity between home and school, and the curriculum may inadvertently reinforce assimilationist expectations rather than inclusive multilingualism.

6. Discussion and Implications

The comparison shows that preschool multilingual education is shaped not only by language policy but also by each nation's broader sociolinguistic history and cultural ideology. The United States represents a child-centered, asset-based model in which home language is treated as a foundation for development and continuity. Uzbekistan reflects an integrative yet pragmatic model that balances respect for diversity with state language expectations. South Korea, by contrast, continues to reflect a monolingual and assimilationist orientation in which Korean language norms are prioritized over multilingual inclusion. These findings suggest that the Korean preschool curriculum needs a more explicit multilingual and asset-based orientation. Rather than treating home languages as invisible or peripheral, the curriculum should recognize them as cognitive, cultural, and relational resources. Such a shift would support multilingual children's language development, well-being, identity formation, and continuity across home and school settings. In addition, multicultural education in Korea should move beyond a compensatory model for minority children and be reframed as education for all.

7. Conclusion

This study shows that preschool curricula function as socializing texts that shape how children's languages and identities are valued in educational settings. The three countries reveal contrasting approaches to multilingualism: an asset-based and child-centered orientation in the United States, a pragmatic and integrative orientation in Uzbekistan, and a predominantly monolingual, situation-centered orientation in South Korea. For South Korea,

the findings point to the need for a more multilingual-inclusive and culturally responsive preschool curriculum that explicitly recognizes children's home languages and diverse literacy practices.

13. Exploring Social and Emotional Skills Required for Teachers: A Case Study of a Workshop Using Brainstorming and the KJ Method in Pre-service Teacher Training

Authors and affiliations:

Hirotsugu Tazume — Kyoto University of Education

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

In Japanese ECEC and in school education, fostering non-cognitive skills—often referred to as Social and Emotional Skills (SES)—has become a critical priority. Consequently, teachers are increasingly expected to possess the capacity to cultivate these competencies in children. While previous research (Tazume, 2025) has examined pedagogical strategies for promoting children's SES, teachers' own SES levels are equally vital, as children's development is profoundly influenced by the behavior and attitudes of their role models.

This study reports on a problem-solving workshop designed to address the key question: "What SES are essential for teachers?" The workshop was integrated into a 15-session developmental psychology seminar for pre-service teachers. In the first half of the course, students reviewed and discussed psychological frameworks related to SES, including cognitive and non-cognitive development and executive functions. In the second half, students worked in small groups of approximately four members, engaging in brainstorming and constructing conceptual maps using the KJ Method (Kawakita, 1967).

During these discussions, students identified current challenges in Japanese education and examined the evolving role of teachers. They proposed several key competencies required for educators, including communication skills, professional self-improvement, self-efficacy, judgment, planning, and a proactive willingness to take on challenges. Following these student-led activities, the instructor provided academic feedback. Through this workshop, students shared diverse perspectives and clarified their own ideas by visualizing their thought processes. Ultimately, the experience deepened their understanding of the non-cognitive skills necessary to effectively support children's development.

14. How Montessori Methods and Quality Environment Benefit SEN Preschoolers

Authors and affiliations:

Huen Man Yuen — Hong Kong Christian Service

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

In recent years, Hong Kong Christian Service Kwun Tong Nursery School has actively implemented Montessori education within its curriculum. This teaching method was established by Maria Montessori in 1907, originating from her in-depth research on children's autonomous learning. The Montessori

approach is child-centered, emphasizing the uniqueness of each child. It particularly focuses on creating an inclusive environment for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), designing curricula based on their needs and interests, and encouraging them to explore and learn independently. This fosters their independence and self-management skills, allowing all children to learn and grow in a comfortable atmosphere. Additionally, the Montessori method aids in developing children's social skills. Children learn to collaborate with others through group activities, which helps enhance their social skills and emotional intelligence. Teachers act as guides, primarily observing and supporting the children, allowing them to construct their understanding through exploration.

Some of our school teachers finished the American Montessori Society (AMS)-Affiliated Program and has completed relevant training in the application of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS). ECERS is used to assess the learning environments of early childhood education institutions, including the physical environment, the quality of teacher-child interactions, curriculum content, parental education, and community connections. These areas reflect the diversity of children's learning and development, emphasizing the importance of the learning environment in their growth and learning. Therefore, our school is committed to optimizing its internal environment by referencing ECERS standards and received the Certificate of Accreditation from Pacific Early Childhood Education Research Association (Hong Kong) in September 2025, which highly recognizes that our environment has fulfilled the criteria and standards of the scheme and has been accredited with the Gold Award of Quality School.

We believe that a high-quality environment significantly enhances learning effectiveness, with over 80% of children demonstrating remarkable progress in self-care, language, and mathematical concepts during the academic year. Additionally, over 95% of children diagnosed with SEN have shown significant improvements in their abilities. At the beginning of the semester, a five-year-old boy diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) struggled to adapt to school life and exhibited emotional fluctuations. He faced challenges in grasping the mathematical concepts expected of his peers. However, after one year of schooling and learning, he demonstrated significant progress, managing to arrange the 'Hundred board' independently and placing number cards from 1 to 100 in order with emotional stability.

Overall, the benefits of the Montessori method and a quality learning environment extend beyond cognitive development; they cultivate a sense of order, concentration, coordination, and independence in children. This approach also enhances their confidence, self-discipline, and problem-solving abilities. Our school aims to focus on the holistic development of each child, laying a solid foundation for their future learning. Through these initiatives, we aspire to create a nurturing and effective educational experience that fosters lifelong skills and personal growth in every child.

15. Development and Effectiveness of a Music Performance Program for Young Children: Pre-service Early Childhood Teachers and Local Artists

Authors and affiliations:

Ji Young Yoon — Changwon National University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to develop a music performance program for young children and to explore the experiential meanings it provides to prospective early childhood teachers and local artists. The subjects of the study were 30 students from the Department of Early Childhood Education at C University in Gyeongsangnam-do and 16 local artists, and in-depth interviews and journals were collected. In-depth interviews and journal entries were collected. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively to identify the experiential meanings of music performances for young children for prospective early childhood teachers and local artists.

Research results: First, music performances for young children were based on picture books and comprised choir singing, instrumental performances, and physical expressions. Second, pre-service early childhood teachers experienced joy, regained confidence in music, and fostered communication while conducting music performance programs for young children. Third, local artists experienced understanding of young children, new approaches, empathy, and communication through conducting music performance programs for young children.

16. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY PARENTING PRACTICES AMONG NOMADIC AND URBAN MONGOLIAN PARENTS

Authors and affiliations:

Jugdernamjil Khurelkhoo — Mongolian National University of Education

Narantsetseg Tsogt — Mongolian National University of Education

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Parenting practices play a critical role in fostering children's independence, social competence, value formation, and cultural sustainability during the early years of development. Within Mongolian nomadic family contexts, traditional child-rearing approaches are closely embedded in nature-based livelihoods and everyday pastoral life. Through participation in herding activities, household responsibilities, intergenerational guidance, and observational modelling, children gradually develop practical life skills, responsibility, and socially valued behaviours.

These nature-based and experience-oriented parenting practices differ in important ways from those commonly observed in urban family settings. In urban contexts, child-rearing practices are more closely associated with formal educational institutions, digital environments, and nuclear family structures. However, traditional nomadic parenting practices remain relatively under-documented in international child development research. Therefore, this study aims to document the distinctive characteristics of nomadic parenting practices and to examine how they support children's development and cultural sustainability within their social and ecological environments.

The primary objective of this study is to identify and document the characteristics of nature-based learning and intergenerational modelling within Mongolian nomadic families and to compare these practices with parenting approaches in urban settings. The study addresses the following research questions:

How do nomadic parents foster children's independence, responsibility, and social competence through everyday nature-based experiences?

How are intergenerational modelling and guided participation implemented within child-rearing

processes?

To what extent are traditional nomadic parenting practices reflected in urban parenting contexts, and how do they contribute to cultural sustainability?

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic research approach combining participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and comparative analysis. Data were collected over a six-month period in traditional pastoral regions and in Ulaanbaatar. A total of 24 parents participated in the study, including 12 nomadic parents and 12 urban parents.

Participant observations documented children's involvement in herding activities, household responsibilities, outdoor engagement, decision-making processes, and collaborative participation. Semi-structured interviews explored parental guidance strategies, value transmission practices, and the role of elder family members in child-rearing. Observational records, audio recordings, and photographic documentation were systematically coded and analysed comparatively across nomadic and urban parenting contexts.

The findings indicate that nomadic parents actively use the natural environment as a primary learning context for young children. Through participation in herding, household tasks, firewood preparation, and food-related activities, children develop responsibility, problem-solving skills, and independence. Parents also employ modelling-based guidance in everyday life and enrich learning through oral traditions such as proverbs, legends, and traditional narratives. Elder family members—including grandparents and older siblings—play an important role in children's upbringing.

In contrast, children's daily learning experiences in urban families are more commonly structured around classroom-based learning, digital engagement, and academic achievement. Nevertheless, some urban families partially incorporate nature-based activities into their parenting practices, suggesting that traditional approaches remain adaptable within contemporary contexts. Comparative findings demonstrate that differences in living environments significantly influence parenting strategies and the transmission of cultural traditions.

The results further suggest that nature-based and participation-oriented traditional parenting approaches effectively support the development of children's independence, responsibility, and social competence. Nomadic parenting practices also play an important role in preserving cultural traditions and transmitting ecological knowledge across generations. The presence of selected traditional elements within urban parenting contexts indicates opportunities for integrating indigenous knowledge into contemporary early childhood education.

Thus, this study documents traditional parenting practices within Mongolian nomadic families from an educational perspective and contributes to introducing nature-based and culturally sustainable child-rearing practices into international early childhood education research.

17. Toward Inclusive Classrooms: Exploring the Influence of Cultural Empathy, Intercultural Competence, and Multicultural Attitude among Early Childhood Teachers in South Korea

Authors and affiliations:

Jung Ah Choi — Busan Institute of Science and Technology

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

As multicultural diversity increases in early childhood education settings, creating an inclusive classroom environment has become a critical responsibility for educators. This study investigates the influence of early childhood teachers' cultural empathy, intercultural competence, and multicultural attitude on inclusive classroom practices in South Korea.

A total of 202 early childhood teachers participated in the study. Data were collected using four validated instruments: the Cultural Empathy subscale of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ), Deardorff's Intercultural Competence model, the Classroom Cultural Diversity Climate Scale (CCDCS), and an adapted version of the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis.

All three variables were positively correlated with inclusive classroom practices: cultural empathy ($M=4.21$, $r=.56$), intercultural competence ($M=3.95$, $r=.68$), and multicultural attitude ($M=3.99$, $r=.71$). The regression model was statistically significant ($F=78.94$, $p<.001$), accounting for 54.8% of the variance in inclusive classroom practices ($R^2=.548$). Multicultural attitude ($\beta=0.410$, $p<.001$) and intercultural competence ($\beta=0.302$, $p<.01$) emerged as significant predictors. Cultural empathy showed a strong bivariate correlation but did not reach significance as a direct predictor ($\beta=0.155$, $p=.093$), suggesting its influence may operate indirectly through other competence-related variables. These findings highlight that professional intercultural competence and a relationship-oriented multicultural attitude are direct drivers of inclusive classroom practices. Teacher training and professional development programs in South Korea should prioritize building practical intercultural skills alongside empathy-based cultural sensitivity to support equitable learning environments for all children.

18. Supporting Families Facing Barriers: A Consultation Approach for Neurodivergent Children in Japan

Authors and affiliations:

Junko Nozawa — Kokugakuin University

Sachiyo Ishida — Chiba University

Estuko Togo — Tokyo Future University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

In Japan, ECEC teachers often face challenges in supporting families of neurodivergent children. Although teachers and parents may share concerns about a child's development, these concerns do not always lead to help-seeking or access to appropriate support services. This gap is particularly evident among families who are difficult to engage due to social, cultural, or developmental factors. This study builds on long-term consultation research conducted in Japanese early childhood settings through sustained collaboration with teachers and families. Previous survey data and consultation case studies have shown that developmental and behavioral concerns impose significant burdens on both parents and teachers in everyday practice. However, awareness of these challenges does not always result in effective or sustained family engagement. Based on these findings, this study aims to

explore and develop a practical consultation-based approach to family support that can be integrated into daily practice. An initial phase of the study, including a needs assessment with teachers and initial data collection, has been conducted to inform the design of the full-scale study. The study is conducted in early childhood settings in Japan and adopts an action research approach. The project focuses on improving access to support and strengthening collaboration among teachers, families, and services, particularly for families who may face barriers to engagement. This study contributes to strengthening equitable access to support as part of children's rights in early childhood education. Ethical approval was obtained for this study. This research is supported by JSPS (Scientific Research C, FY2026).

Poniżej **pozycje 19–27**, zgodnie z kolejnością agendy. Zachowuję treść z bazy **bez poprawiania, skracania ani wygładzania**. W pozycji 22 zachowuję również dokładnie taką formę tekstu, w jakiej znajduje się on w bazie, łącznie ze znacznikami HTML.

POSTER SESSION I (PRINTED POSTERS) – 17.07 FRIDAY

19. Safety and Versatility of Locally Sourced Natural Materials for Young Children: A Comparative Study of Perspectives Between Pre-service Early Childhood Education Students and Preschool Teachers

Authors and affiliations:

Kazumi Higuchi — Fukuoka Women's Junior College

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This study examines the safety and versatility of locally sourced natural materials by comparing the perspectives of students in early childhood teacher training programs and practicing preschool teachers. Focusing on tools, educational materials, and creative resources used by young children, the study explores how these two groups conceptualize their use in early childhood settings and how their viewpoints differ in terms of pedagogical possibilities, safety considerations, and attention to children's developmental stages.

First, locally produced natural materials from western Japan were selected as potential teaching resources. Discussions were conducted regarding the characteristics and safety of these materials, how young children perceive and utilize them in play, and the potential for creative activities that may emerge through children's interactions with them. The role of educators in supporting and extending such activities was also examined.

Second, a sensory-based material study was carried out through creative activities using regional materials that children encounter in their daily lives. The investigation focused on sensory experiences such as changes in smell, sound, color, and shape, exploring how children engage with and discover the properties of materials through multiple senses.

Finally, episodes from actual childcare practices were analyzed to examine how children aged 0 to 5 developed activities using these materials. Through these observations, the study considers the educational potential of locally sourced natural materials and discusses effective ways of incorporating them into early childhood education practices.

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20. The Process and Factors Leading to a Shift in Attitudes Toward Respecting Children’s Self-Determination, as Reflected in the Narratives of Early Childhood Education Professionals

Authors and affiliations:

Keiko Yano — JUMONJI University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

I. Introduction

The establishment of the Children and Families Agency in Japan on April 1, 2023, marks a significant institutional shift toward a child-centered policy framework. The Agency emphasizes three core priorities: (1) the creation of a society grounded in children's perspectives through dedicated governance structures; (2) the promotion of children’s welfare, health, and rights to enable them to grow as independent individuals; and (3) the strengthening of collaboration between education and welfare sectors, particularly through coordination with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

While these policy developments highlight an increasing recognition of children as rights-holders, a critical gap remains in the translation of these principles into everyday early childhood education and care (ECEC) practices. Specifically, questions persist regarding how rights such as self-determination, choice, and expression of opinion can be meaningfully guaranteed from infancy, and how childcare providers interpret and enact these rights in practice.

1. From “Protection” to “Participation”: A Conceptual Shift
Historically, children—particularly infants—have been positioned primarily as objects of protection within welfare and developmental frameworks. However, international discourse, especially following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), has emphasized a paradigm shift toward recognizing children as active subjects of rights. This shift entails not only safeguarding children but also enabling their participation and agency in everyday life.

The concept of children as “rights-holders” embedded within relational and sociocultural contexts has been articulated in international frameworks such as OECD Education 2030. This perspective positions children not as isolated individuals but as participants in dynamic social relationships, where rights are enacted through interaction, negotiation, and shared meaning-making.

In this regard, the notion of “rights as relationships” has gained increasing attention. Rather than viewing rights as static entitlements, this perspective emphasizes that rights are realized within relational contexts—through dialogue, trust, and interaction between children and adults.

2. The Problem of Infant Self-Determination
Despite growing recognition of children's rights, the concept of self-determination in infancy remains underexplored. A review of domestic literature indicates that while numerous studies address self-determination, only a limited number focus specifically on infants and toddlers, and

even fewer examine this issue within ECEC practice contexts.
Three major challenges can be identified:

(1) Lack of an Agency Perspective

Existing discussions often prioritize developmental outcomes or adult-led support, rather than examining children's capacity to act as agents within social contexts. This results in a limited understanding of how infants can actively participate in decision-making processes.

(2) Duality of Rights: Protection vs. Autonomy

A persistent tension exists between ensuring children's safety and respecting their autonomy. In practice, this often leads to prioritizing adult decision-making under the justification of protection, thereby limiting opportunities for self-determination.

(3) Invisible Organizational Factors

The role of organizational culture and the "hidden curriculum" remains insufficiently examined. While individual childcare providers' attitudes are recognized as important, less attention has been paid to how organizational structures shape these attitudes and practices.

3. Research Purpose and Significance

This study aims to address these gaps by examining how infants' self-determination is understood, constructed, and enacted within ECEC settings. Specifically, the study focuses on:

The processes through which childcare providers' understanding of self-determination evolves

The role of organizational context in shaping these understandings

The structural factors that facilitate or constrain the realization of self-determination

By adopting a qualitative, process-oriented approach, this study seeks to move beyond static descriptions of practice and instead illuminate the dynamic pathways through which self-determination becomes embedded in everyday childcare.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the international discourse by providing an empirically grounded analysis of Japanese ECEC practices, highlighting both their strengths and limitations in relation to global frameworks on children's rights and agency.

II. Methods

1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, utilizing semi-structured interviews and Trajectory Equifinality Modeling (TEM) to analyze the processes through which childcare providers come to understand and enact infants' self-determination.

TEM is particularly suited for this study because it enables the visualization of multiple developmental pathways leading to a shared outcome (Equifinality Point), while accounting for branching points and contextual influences.

2. Participants and Setting

The study focuses on two certified childcare centers (Center A and Center B), both of which:

Operate in municipalities with child rights ordinances

Explicitly incorporate children's rights into their educational philosophy

Provide ongoing human rights training for staff

A total of 18 childcare providers participated (9 from each center), representing diverse roles including directors, senior staff, and class leaders.

3. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews (approximately 30 minutes each) were conducted, focusing on:

Changes in understanding of self-determination

Experiences of conflict or uncertainty

Key turning points in practice

Influence of organizational context

All interviews were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

4. Analytical Framework

Using TEM, the following elements were identified:

BFP (Bifurcation Points): Turning points in perception

OPP (Obligatory Passage Points): Critical transitions in practice

SG (Social Guidance): Facilitating factors

SD (Social Direction): Constraining factors

EFP (Equifinality Point): Shared outcome

The EFP was defined as:

“Childcare practices in which infants’ self-determination is routinely guaranteed as a right in everyday life.”

III. Results

1. Center A: Organizational Stability and Cultural Reproduction

Initial Stage

Childcare practices were characterized by adult-led decision-making, influenced by:

Efficiency-driven routines

Age-based developmental assumptions

Heavy workload constraints

BFP

Turning points included:

Exposure to rights-based discourse

Participation in training

Encounters with children’s agency

These experiences disrupted the assumption that “adults should decide.”

OPP

Key transformations:

Listening to children’s voices

Offering choices

Adopting “waiting and observing”

SG

Facilitating factors:

Continuous training
Practice-sharing culture
Strong leadership support
EFP

Self-determination became embedded as an everyday right.

2. Center B: Transformation through Dialogue and Uncertainty Initial Stage

Characterized by:

Ambiguity in philosophy
Anxiety about decision-making
Reliance on adult authority
BFP

Triggered by:

Philosophical encounters (e.g., Montessori)
Practical experiences
Role transitions
OPP

Transformation involved:

Reduction of anxiety
Development of trust
Dialogic engagement
SG

Key factors:

Psychological safety
Reflective dialogue
Peer support
EFP

Self-determination emerged as an organizationally shared value.

IV. Discussion

1. Self-Determination as an Organizational Process

The findings demonstrate that understanding self-determination is not an individual competency but an organizationally generated process.

2. Cognitive Transformation through BFP

BFPs represent paradigm shifts rather than mere knowledge acquisition.

3. Ethical Nature of Practice

Practices such as “waiting” reflect ethical commitments rather than technical skills.

4. Structural Constraints

Workload, efficiency demands, and developmental norms remain significant barriers.

V. Conclusion

Japanese ECEC demonstrates strong potential for supporting self-determination through relational practices. However, structural reforms are necessary to transform these practices into universally guaranteed rights.

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21. The Characteristics of High-Quality Teacher-Child Interaction in Group Teaching Activities in Kindergartens from the Perspective of Teachers

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Abstract:

The quality of teacher-child interaction is an important indicator of the quality of group teaching activities in kindergartens. Examining its characteristics from the perspective of front-line teachers can help understand teachers' perception of high-quality teacher-child interaction. This study invited 200 kindergarten teachers to watch 20 high-quality collective teaching activity videos in groups and label the key words or phrases of high-quality teacher-child interaction in real time. The method of category

analysis was used to conduct three-level coding of the effective words, based on 2629 reference points, forming an interaction feature structure including six primary dimensions (creating a positive atmosphere, targeting activity goals, optimizing the activity process, providing cognitive challenges, expanding learning experiences, and paying attention to individual differences), 17 secondary nodes, and 24 tertiary nodes. Its uniqueness lies in the warmth of order, the framework of freedom, and the commonalities with differences. It provides an explanation from the teacher's perspective for understanding high-quality teacher-child interaction in group teaching activities. Kindergarten teachers can integrate goal guidance in a positive atmosphere, optimize the process order in a free exploration, and pay attention to individual differences in group commonalities, promoting high-quality teacher-child interaction.

22. "Like a Maid or Like a Queen?" Preschool Children's Experiences of Decision-Making in Kindergarten

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Poszanowanie prawa dzieci do wyrażania swoich poglądów i uczestnictwa w sprawach dotyczących ich życia jest kluczową zasadą współczesnej edukacji wczesnoszkolnej i ideą głęboko zakorzenioną w pedagogicznym dziedzictwie Janusza Korczaka. Wstuchiwanie się w perspektywę dzieci pozwala badaczom i pedagogom lepiej zrozumieć, jak doświadczają one codziennego życia w instytucjach edukacyjnych. Kluczowym wymiarem tych doświadczeń jest możliwość podejmowania decyzji i poczucie sprawczości.

Rozwój autonomii i kształtowanie osobistego związku przyczynowego stanowią istotę „integracji dziecka ze społeczeństwem” i powinny być nadrzędnymi celami działalności edukacyjnej. Podmiotowość, rozumiana jako źródło przyczynowości, przejawia się poprzez świadome działanie, w którym jednostka dokonuje niezależnych wyborów, stając się kreatorem zdarzeń i biorąc odpowiedzialność za własny los. Podobnie, podmiotowość można rozumieć jako zdolność do dokonywania wyborów, wpływania na otoczenie i doświadczania siebie jako aktywnego uczestnika życia społecznego. O ile podejmowanie decyzji jest fundamentem zarówno podmiotowości, jak i sprawczości, o tyle w instytucjonalnej rzeczywistości przedszkola może stać się obszarem intensywnych napięć i regulacji. Celem niniejszej prezentacji jest analiza wpływu środowiska instytucjonalnego przedszkola na rozumienie przez dzieci aktu podejmowania decyzji oraz na to, jak doświadczają one możliwości podejmowania decyzji w życiu codziennym.

Badania przeprowadzono w ramach Childhood Studies, traktując dziecko jako kompetentnego aktora społecznego i eksperta w zakresie własnego życia. Zastosowano podejście jakościowe, wykorzystując technikę półustrukturyzowanego wywiadu grupowego. W badaniu wzięło udział 40 pięcioletnich dzieci z dwóch publicznych przedszkoli w Białymstoku. Analiza danych została przeprowadzona metodą analizy tematycznej, która pozwoliła na identyfikację kluczowych obszarów dotyczących rozumienia przez

dzieci procesu podejmowania decyzji, ich doświadczeń sprawczości oraz ich postrzegania relacji dziecko-dorośli w codziennym życiu przedszkolnym.

Wyniki wskazują, że dzieci utożsamiają podejmowanie decyzji przede wszystkim z dokonywaniem wyboru spośród dostępnych opcji, głównie w kontekście zabawy. Inne aspekty życia przedszkolnego – takie jak codzienne czynności, zorganizowane zajęcia i posiłki – są postrzegane jako zdeterminowane przez dorosłych. Możliwość podejmowania decyzji jest często regulowana i zależna od oceny zachowania dziecka, co wzmacnia asymetrię władzy. Decyzje często mają charakter relacyjny – dzieci obserwują rówieśników, konsultują się z grupą lub stosują losowe strategie (np. losowanie), aby poradzić sobie z odpowiedzialnością. Dzieci wykazują wyraźną świadomość hierarchii instytucjonalnej i opisują swoje doświadczenia za pomocą metafor władzy i zależności, takich jak „czucie się jak królowa” podczas podejmowania decyzji lub „czucie się jak służąca” podczas wykonywania poleceń. Wyniki podkreślają wagę wsłuchiwania się w punkt widzenia dzieci i tworzenia codziennych możliwości dla ich znaczącego uczestnictwa w procesach podejmowania decyzji edukacyjnych. Rekomendacje dla praktyki pedagogicznej sugerują, że nauczyciele powinni świadomie tworzyć sytuacje, w których dzieci mogą podejmować realne decyzje, wpływać na przebieg działań i doświadczać konsekwencji swoich wyborów w bezpiecznym środowisku. Ostatecznie, przekształcenie przedszkolnego „zamku” w przestrzeń autentycznego uczestnictwa wymaga przejścia od hierarchicznej regulacji wyboru w stronę codziennej praktyki demokratycznej, w której podmiotowość dziecka przestaje być jedynie deklaracją, a staje się doświadczeniem godności i sprawczości godnym suwerennego obywatela. Zaangażowanie dzieci w autentyczne procesy decyzyjne jest nie tylko narzędziem wspierania ich autonomii, ale przede wszystkim warunkiem koniecznym przejścia od instytucjonalnego postuszeństwa do edukacji demokratycznej, w której podmiotowość dziecka przestaje być jedynie deklaracją, a staje się codzienną praktyką społeczną.

23. Embedding Amis Arts and Music in Indigenous Intergenerational Learning: A Case Study of Preschoolers' and Elders' Aesthetic Experiences in a Taiwanese Preschool

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Abstract:

With the trends of low fertility and an aging population in Taiwan, intergenerational learning has gained increasing attention in schools and communities. While indigenous education argues for the importance of connecting schools and tribal communities, indigenous intergenerational learning highlights the transmission of indigenous cultural heritage, including traditional arts and music (Chen, 2024; Indigenous Peoples Cultural Development Center, 2024). According to Dewey (2005), aesthetic experience is a complete experience, involving emotions, unity, interactions between doing and undergoing, as well as feelings of pleasure and fulfilment (Chou, 2011). In indigenous intergenerational learning, elders and younger generations can collaborate on learning tasks and co-construct their aesthetic experiences through arts and music.

Using a case study method, this study aimed to explore preschoolers' and elders' aesthetic experiences within an arts and music curriculum designed for indigenous intergenerational learning in an immersive Amis-indigenous-language preschool classroom in northern Taiwan. Participants included preschoolers, community elders, and preschool educators, the majority of whom were Amis indigenous people. Data sources included interviews, observations, and artifacts, which were analyzed through coding and categorization. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and no potential conflicts of interest were identified.

The findings revealed that the preschool educators developed a curriculum centered on Amis indigenous arts and music for intergenerational learning. They invited indigenous elders to share the cultural meanings of Amis traditional arts and music. Furthermore, they guided the preschoolers and elders in creating and appreciating artworks and music. Through these collaborative processes, all participants constructed their aesthetic experiences through doing and undergoing. Both elders and preschoolers discovered the aesthetic qualities of Amis Indigenous artworks. The elders enjoyed interacting with the preschoolers and witnessing the transmission of Amis arts, music, language, and culture, while the preschoolers were engaged and enjoyed creating artworks and music alongside the elders. In conclusion, this study showed an arts and music curriculum for intergenerational learning in an indigenous preschool classroom. The preschoolers and elders constructed their aesthetic experiences through processes of doing and undergoing. This study provides a reference for preschool educators implementing arts and music curriculum for indigenous intergenerational learning and aesthetic education, offering a new perspective within the context of Asian indigenous cultures.

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24. Empowering Children as Rights Holders: Equality, Play, and Peace in Early Childhood

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Abstract:

Empowering Children as Rights Holders: Equality, Play, and Peace in Early Childhood

Keywords

- Children's Rights
- Early Childhood Education
- Play-Based Learning
- Peace Education
- Anti-Bullying Education
- Social and Emotional Learning

Abstract

The recognition of children as rights holders is a fundamental principle of contemporary early childhood education and is closely linked to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this context, educational practices are called to create learning environments that promote participation, cooperation, and respect for diversity.

This paper presents an educational intervention implemented in a kindergarten setting aiming to foster children's awareness of their rights, with particular emphasis on the rights to equality, play, and peaceful coexistence. The activities were organized around three main thematic axes: raising awareness about school bullying, highlighting play as a fundamental right of children, and promoting peace education through creative expression.

Through experiential activities, collaborative learning, and creative engagement, children actively participated in the learning process, developed social and emotional skills, and expressed their perceptions of concepts such as peace, justice, and friendship.

Introduction

The recognition of children's rights has become a fundamental principle in contemporary educational policy and pedagogical theory. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) emphasizes that children have the right not only to protection and care but also to participation, expression of their views, and development in an environment that respects their dignity and individuality.

Within early childhood education, the promotion of values such as equality, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence is particularly important. Children's first experiences within educational environments significantly influence the development of social attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal skills. The pedagogical philosophy of Janusz Korczak has significantly influenced modern perspectives on children's rights. Korczak emphasized that children have the right to respect, to express their opinions, and to participate in decisions that affect their lives. His ideas resonate with contemporary educational approaches that promote democratic education and participatory learning. At the same time, play is recognized as a fundamental right of children and an essential means of learning during early childhood. Through play, children develop cognitive, motor, and social skills while expressing emotions and building relationships with others.

Methodology

The educational intervention was based on a child-centered and experiential learning approach that

emphasizes active participation and learning through experience. The methodology was grounded in the principles of cooperative learning, creative expression, and play-based learning. The activities were implemented within the daily routine of the kindergarten and were organized around thematic units related to children's rights. Children participated in discussions, creative activities, movement games, and dramatization, promoting interaction, cooperation, and emotional expression. Pedagogical observation played an important role in the process, allowing educators to document children's participation, interactions, and responses. Children's creative outputs, such as drawings, constructions, and collaborative artwork, were also considered valuable indicators of their understanding and engagement.

Description of Activities

Activities for the International Day Against School Bullying

On the occasion of the International Day Against School Bullying, a series of activities was organized aiming to raise children's awareness about emotions, respect, and children's rights. Initially, a classroom discussion was conducted where children shared their thoughts and experiences about feelings, fairness, and respectful behavior. Through dialogue, children explored how negative behaviors affect others and emphasized the importance of friendship and cooperation. An educational team was invited to the school to talk with the children about bullying through age-appropriate activities. Through discussion and role-play, children were encouraged to reflect on empathy, kindness, and mutual support.

The activities culminated in a collective event in the schoolyard. Children created artistic constructions and decorated the space with messages promoting friendship, respect, and acceptance. At the end of the event, the children collectively expressed their own message against bullying, promoting the vision of a school environment based on respect and cooperation.

Play as a Children's Right

The second part of the project focused on play as a fundamental right and as an essential learning tool in early childhood education.

Children participated in the creation of self-constructed games using simple materials. One of the games included a shapes puzzle, through which children practiced recognizing geometric shapes and developing logical thinking.

Another activity involved the game "snail" as well as ball-based movement activities that supported gross motor development and coordination.

A particularly engaging game involved "snowmen" with hats of different colors. Children had to match colored balls with the corresponding colored hats, strengthening color recognition, concentration, and fine motor skills.

Another movement game included colored circles placed on the floor. The teacher randomly displayed color cards, and children had to move quickly to the corresponding circle. This activity enhanced observation skills, reaction time, and physical activity.

Through these playful experiences, children experienced play as a collaborative, joyful, and meaningful learning process.

Exploring the Concept of Peace

In the third part of the project, children explored the concepts of peace and war through artistic expression and dramatization.

Children first created drawings illustrating how they perceive peace and war. Their drawings reflected emotional interpretations, often associating peace with friendship, happiness, and cooperation, while depicting war as conflict and sadness.

Following this activity, children created a collaborative collage about peace, combining drawings, symbols, and words representing harmony and unity.

The project concluded with a dramatization activity in which children enacted situations representing peace and conflict. Through role-play, they explored the emotions associated with these situations and discussed constructive ways to express feelings and resolve disagreements.

Results

The implementation of the activities demonstrated significant pedagogical benefits. Children participated enthusiastically and showed increased willingness to cooperate and interact with their peers.

Through discussions and dramatization, children developed a deeper understanding of emotions and demonstrated greater empathy and sensitivity toward issues of fairness and respect.

Furthermore, the movement and cognitive games supported the development of motor coordination, concentration, and observation skills. Creative activities also provided children with opportunities to freely express their ideas, thoughts, and emotions.

Conclusions

The present educational intervention highlights the importance of integrating children's rights into everyday practices in early childhood education. Experiential and creative learning activities offer meaningful opportunities for children to understand values such as respect, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence.

Children's active participation in the learning process contributed to the development of social and emotional skills while strengthening their confidence and sense of belonging within the school community.

Overall, the experience demonstrates that early childhood education can play a significant role in promoting children's rights and fostering democratic values that contribute to the development of a more inclusive and peaceful society.

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25. Learning from the Picture Book of Recital Poetry “Hiroshima-no-ko” Children of Hiroshima: ~ Seeding Peace ~

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

1. Background: The Significance of Peace Education in Early Childhood

The 2023 UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship, and Sustainable Development recognizes that peace is built throughout life across diverse contexts, including schools, communities, and families. It further points out that fundamental attitudes are formed in the earliest years of life, and therefore emphasizes the importance of enabling young children to experience, in an integrated and natural manner through play, a sense of global citizenship, peace, and human rights.

Peace is understood not merely as the absence of war, but as a positive, inclusive, and participatory process rooted in everyday life. Building peace requires individuals to accumulate words and actions oriented toward peace in their daily lives.

Peace education in early childhood has been a central mission of the OMEP since its foundation. However, what methods are most appropriate for achieving this remains an important question. Madeleine Goutard, the 11th World President of OMEP, argued in *Seeds of Peace* (1985) that peace education is embedded within everyday ECCE practices. In daily interactions and play, children encounter and experience peace. Thus, early childhood peace education should not be confined to understanding peace as the opposite of war, but rather should be regarded as cultivating a broader, universal concept of peace and fostering a culture of peace. In this sense, early childhood education itself can be understood as a practice of constructing a culture of peace.

Educators in Hiroshima and Nagasaki not only aim to nurture a culture of peace, but also strive to pass on the realities of the atomic bombing and war to children, while working toward a peaceful world free from war. For those who grow up in Hiroshima, the Atomic Bomb Dome is part of everyday scenery, and the memory of war and the atomic bombing exists as a familiar and ever-present reality. This is also true for young children.

However, considering the developmental characteristics of early childhood, during which cognitive abilities are still developing, careful consideration is indispensable regarding how such topics should be conveyed. If educators attempt to communicate these issues enthusiastically when children have little interest, it may result only in instilling negative emotions, such as fear of war and the atomic bomb.

Regarding peace education in such contexts, Terumi Tanaka, a representative of Nihon

Hidankyo and recipient of the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize, stated that war should not be imposed upon young children when they have no interest, as they may be forced to remember what they do not understand. However, when children raise questions naturally, adults must respond. Therefore, it is essential for adults to consider in advance how to respond when children seek answers. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where the environment itself generates children's natural questions, responding appropriately becomes an essential task. At the same time, such responses should not be excessive.

For this reason, early childhood educators carefully reflect on how to communicate about war and the atomic bomb to young children. In today's global context, where war is once again perceived as a tangible reality, the concerns of educators in Hiroshima and Nagasaki may well be shared by many educators around the world.

2. Purpose

This study considers picture books as important pedagogical tools (materials and resources) for sowing seeds of peace in young children and cultivating a culture of peace within early childhood settings. Picture books can play a valuable role in responding to children's spontaneous and naïve questions about war and the atomic bomb. However, this requires careful examination of the quality and characteristics of the books themselves.

Accordingly, this study focuses on a picture book titled "Hiroshima-no-ko"(Children of Hiroshima), created with the motif of children who lost their lives in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The study analyzes its characteristics and considers what picture books can do to convey the value of peace to as many people as possible.

3. Materials and Methods

The picture book examined in this study is the Recital Poetry "Hiroshima-no-ko" Children of Hiroshima (poem by Goro Shikoku, illustrations by Yoshifumi Hasegawa, BL Publishing, 2025). Based on reviews of the book, as well as statements by the author and the author's descendants, this study analyzes the characteristics of the book and examines the effectiveness of picture books in early childhood peace education.

4. Overview of the Work

The author of the poem, Goro Shikoku (1924–2014), was born in Hiroshima, served in Manchuria, survived internment in Siberia, and, after returning to Japan and learning of the death of his beloved younger brother due to the atomic bombing, devoted the rest of his life to anti-war and peace activism as a poet and artist.

The poem Children of Hiroshima, which begins with the question, "Please look beside you—are there any children of Hiroshima there?", is a read-aloud poem that Shikoku himself composed and recited at the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Hiroshima in 1980 before an audience of more than 10,000 participants. It is a poem written specifically to be read aloud.

Shikoku depicts the children who were present until the morning of August 6, 1945, and continues with the line that they are "gazing steadily at you."

It is Hasegawa who illustrated the gaze of these children. The illustrator, Yoshifumi Hasegawa, encountered this poem in August 2023, more than 40 years after it was written. Reflecting on that moment, he stated, "I wanted to make it into a picture book. I felt that I had to." While

imagining the children who had been living their ordinary lives until just before the atomic bombing, he created the illustrations. Some children died instantly, while others died after days or months of suffering. He drew them while thinking, “How painful it must have been.” In the picture book, boys and girls who appear as if emerging from old photographs are depicted with Hasegawa’s characteristic gentle yet bold brushstrokes. All of the children gaze steadily at the reader.

Although the poem contains harsh expressions and descriptions of tragic deaths, the illustrations do not depict cruel or violent scenes. Instead, the calm and direct gaze of the children quietly conveys the inhumanity of the atomic bomb that took their lives.

The children who lost their lives continue to gaze at the reader and pose an eternal question.

The answer to that question lies in our actions. The gaze of the children depicted in this picture book serves as a question that leads us toward action.

“Please respond with your own eyes,
so that the children of Hiroshima can understand—
that we will never repeat such a mistake again,
and that we will never forgive it.”

5. Conclusion (Discussion)

This picture book is both a story of Hiroshima and a universal narrative. It represents the stories of innocent children whose lives are unjustly taken in various parts of the world. The book was created with the hope that it would serve as an entry point for readers to reflect on the tragedies of war and nuclear weapons as their own pain, and it can be considered that Hasegawa’s depiction of simple and unadorned children fulfills this role.

In today’s uncertain society, it is essential to have an awareness that peace is always an issue of the “present” and of oneself. When encountering the steady gaze of the Children of Hiroshima, readers can feel a connection between themselves and the children living in the present. This sense of personal relevance may lead to an awareness of the irreplaceable value of peace and to the emergence of a commitment to building a culture of peace.

Building peace requires each individual to accumulate words and actions oriented toward peace in their everyday lives. Through this process, individuals may come to perceive themselves—perhaps unconsciously—as active agents of peace.

As a first step, it is essential for educators themselves to read the poem aloud, to face the children depicted in the book, and to engage in a reflective dialogue with them. Such practices may constitute the first step toward cultivating a culture of peace within early childhood settings.

As Madeleine Goutard suggests, peace education in early childhood is the practice of “sowing seeds of peace in the hearts of young children.” To this end, educators are required to focus on providing appropriate nourishment that is not excessive, gentle sunlight that is not too intense, and sufficient water so that the seeds may sprout on their own. What is most important is that the seeds themselves germinate and grow through their own inherent power.

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26. Integrating Animal and Plant Resources into Early Childhood Life Education: An Embodied Cognition Perspective on Mechanisms and Practice Frameworks

Authors and affiliations:

Luhua Chen — not provided in the database

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Early childhood constitutes a critical period for the formation of life awareness and attitudes. Returning to authentic life experiences and embodied practice is therefore a central requirement of life education in early childhood settings. However, current practices are constrained by the over-symbolization of educational carriers, the lack of bodily engagement, and the superficial utilization of animal and plant resources, which collectively limit educational effectiveness. Drawing on embodied cognition theory and adopting an integrative “body-environment-action” perspective, this study elucidates the underlying mechanisms and practical logic through which animal and plant resources can be meaningfully incorporated into early childhood life education. Through sustained and authentic interactions with living organisms, children’s life experiences evolve along a developmental trajectory characterized by multi-sensory engagement, action-feedback loops, empathy activation, representational discussion, and responsible choice-making. This process gradually fosters the development of life-related cognition and attitudes. On this basis, the study proposes a practical framework comprising a structured animal and plant resource repository, interactive learning contexts, and pathways for life experience construction. The framework not only provides theoretical support for applying embodied cognition to early childhood life education but also offers a transferable model for optimizing related educational practices in kindergartens.

27. Listening to Children's Voices: Building a Child-Rights-Based Curriculum Ecology in a Vibrant Courtyard

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Yiqiao Liang — not provided in the database

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Abstract:

The essence of educational transformation lies in a fundamental return to core values. Our kindergarten is committed to creating “A Vibrant Courtyard”—not only a space for exploration rich in natural elements,

but also an emotional haven that offers acceptance and encourages expression, and an educational ecology where children's rights are honored and their agency is unleashed. Here, "vibrancy" signifies the organic integration of three dimensions: the rhythms of nature, the growth of children, and cultural interaction. It marks a value-driven shift in education, from sterile spaces to a living, breathing environment. This profound philosophical shift serves as the starting point for our construction of a child-rights-based curriculum ecology.

Based on this, we position children as co-constructors of the curriculum. Through three pillars—co-creating the environment, co-designing activities, and co-constructing evaluation—we translate the principle of prioritizing children's rights into systematic daily practice. In terms of co-creating the environment, we adopt a child-curator model, making children the creators of their own spaces. Starting with the simple desire to "find a home for seeds," children independently established a Seed Museum. The overall environment was then reimagined as the "Little Courtyard Life Circle," an interconnected space comprising five experiential domains: a children's museum, nature exploration, social interaction, cultural identity, and movement challenges. In co-designing activities, we implement emergent curriculum and deep play. Using a pomelo exploration project as an example, the curriculum grows from children's genuine interests, with teachers transforming into observers and resource supporters. The introduction of a "salary coin–consumption coin" mechanism turns play into a core curriculum through which children actively construct social understanding. In co-constructing evaluation, practices like the "Little Courtyard Construction Festival" empower children in assessment, allowing evaluation criteria to emerge from children themselves. Children thus transition from being evaluated to becoming organizers of evaluative activities.

These three pillars mutually support one another, collectively forming a curriculum ecology that centers on children as subjects, prioritizes experience, and is oriented toward life development. Practice shows that this model facilitates a paradigm shift in education—from teachers' "teaching" to children's "learning," and from closed curriculum implementation to open curriculum co-creation. Children, through deep interactions with nature, culture, and society, author their own narratives of growth.

E-POSTER SESSION I (ELECTRONIC POSTERS) – 17.07 FRIDAY**1. All together for an active education****Authors and affiliations:**

Anastasia Kountouroudi — Kindergarten teacher, graduate of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki/Pedagogical Department of Kindergarten Teachers, Director and owner of the Preschool Education Center "Kindergarten", President of the Regional Department of OMEP CENTRAL MACEDONIA

Georgia Akritopoulou — Preschool Education Center Nipiakos Kipos

Paraskevi Akritopoulou — 17 Jouly

Zoi Kokkinou — Kindergarten teacher at the Preschool Education Center "Kindergarten" and member of OMEP Central Macedonia

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This specific work plan belongs to the thematic axis “Families, communities and shared responsibility”, which is a fundamental axis for the formation of active, responsible and conscientious citizens. It was implemented in a kindergarten department with the aim of creating an active, collaborative and participatory learning environment, where children develop social skills, emotional intelligence and community awareness. The program was based on the principle that learning is not limited to the classroom but extends throughout the school and social context, and that the participation of the family and the community is crucial for the formation of a positive and supportive learning environment. The overall goal of the program is to foster a sense of community and collective responsibility in children, encouraging their active participation in the classroom, school and wider society, through collaboration with families and communities. They also understand that their actions affect the group and that active participation in school and wider society is important.

The specific objectives included the development of cooperation, empathy, responsibility, as well as the connection of learning with everyday life and the community. For children to understand the concept of community and cooperation. To recognize that each person's actions affect the group and the environment. To develop social skills, such as cooperation, mutual support and responsibility. To actively participate in activities with family and community. To strengthen the sense that learning is not

limited to the classroom, but is connected to everyday life and society. To cultivate trust and respect. To engage in volunteering. To develop positive attitudes towards the environment and the neighborhood. To collaborate with various community agencies. To get to know the local culture and traditions. To cultivate a sense of belonging. To acquire responsibility and ecological awareness. To develop life skills through experiential learning. To take care of the school neighborhood. To visit the neighborhood shops, church and elementary school.

The need for quality relationships and collaborations between the school and social and educational institutions led us to choose this specific axis. The aim of the work plan is for teachers, students and parents to actively participate in issues concerning the local community, to develop empathy and compassion, to strengthen free thinking, personality, sociability and extroversion. To get to know diversity through communication with other municipalities and communities, to develop technological literacy.

Good cooperation between school and family benefits the development of children. School plays a decisive role in the life of every child since it is often the first important social context outside the family in which they actively participate. Understanding the necessity of connecting school and family, we decided to develop the work plan.

This work plan aims to help preschool children understand the concept of family, community and shared responsibility through experiential and collaborative activities. The starting point is the exploration of different forms of family, the recognition of the roles and emotional bonds that develop in them, as well as the acceptance of diversity.

The work plan was carried out in three phases. The first phase is called Action Planning during which reflection begins, the topic is defined and knowledge and ideas are recorded. The children report what they know about the topic and ask their questions about what they want to learn. Histograms are created. All the children's ideas that mention what they know about the family, the community, and the school are recorded. Then, reflections are created on the connection between the family, the school, and the community.

The second phase is called Field Research during which the information is collected with the help of parents in small groups. The third phase is called Implementation of the action during which activities are developed based on the New Curriculum for Kindergarten Teachers in the areas of Child and Communication, Child Self and Society, Child and Positive Sciences, Child, Body and Creation and Expression

The program was implemented through various good practices, which included classroom activities, collaboration with families and actions for the community. In the classroom, discussion and reflection circles were held, where children shared experiences of collaboration, thoughts and feelings. These sessions strengthened the ability to listen and respect the point of view of others, as well as the ability to resolve conflicts through dialogue. At the same time, the children participated in group art projects and constructions, such as the “Community Wall”, where each child added an element that symbolized the concept of collaboration or their personal contribution to the community. Through these activities, children strengthened their creativity, solidarity and sense of responsibility. Particular emphasis is placed on the concept of shared responsibility, both in the family and school environment (e.g. taking care of the space, following rules, helping others). Children are encouraged to take on small responsibilities in the classroom, developing a sense of autonomy and participation. Another important category of activities was collaborative experiential exercises, which included role-playing, problem-solving scenarios, and group decision-making activities. In the role-playing games, children faced situations they encountered every day in the classroom or community and were asked to find solutions collaboratively, taking into account the needs and feelings of others. These activities strengthened empathy, social understanding, and communication skills.

Another important element was the creation of a diary or board of collective actions, where children and families recorded daily acts of cooperation, good practices, or moments when the community acted supportively. The board was used as a tool for reflection and reinforcement of positive behavior, allowing children to visibly see the impact of their actions on the group.

The children visit the neighborhood park and take care of it. They keep it clean, plant flowers for decoration and record any repairs that are needed. They contact the community authorities for permission to plant and care for the park. They participate in inviting professionals to maintain the park and carry out any necessary repairs. In addition, they visit shops in their neighborhood, such as a bookstore, bakery, hairdresser, flea market, fish market, tavern. They meet the professionals in the neighborhood, talk to them and ask them questions about their work and their contribution to the community.

The evaluation of the program was carried out through observation, collection of evidence and feedback from children and parents. A significant improvement was found in the children's ability to cooperate, sense of community and social responsibility. Furthermore, family participation strengthened the school-family relationship and promoted the concept of collective responsibility throughout the community.

Overall, the program highlights the importance of active, collaborative and participatory education, which connects the classroom with the family and the community. The good practices implemented – discussion circles, group art projects, family involvement, community actions and experiential role-playing – are examples of the implementation of an active school, where children learn to take responsibility, cooperate and actively participate in the community from an early age. The program offers practical tools and examples for teachers who wish to promote shared responsibility, social awareness and the active participation of children in education and society. In the last phase of the work plan, Evaluation, children provide feedback on their knowledge and experiences. Evaluation is carried out formatively, through observation, discussion and recording of children's participation in the activities. The work plan contributes to the socio-emotional development of children and strengthens the school-family-community connection, promoting the values of cooperation, respect and collective

2. The contribution of judo plays activities to the development of executive functions in children aged 4 to 6 years

Authors and affiliations:

Charilaos Zaragkas — University of Ioannina

Vassiliki Pliogou — University of Western Macedonia

Anna Angelaki — 6th Primary School of Ioannina/ Greece

Sophia Tromara — University of Western Macedonia

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Judo as a sport is a Japanese form of wrestling founded in 1882 by Jigoro Kano and it is a modern expression of physical education and martial art with a strong pedagogical character. It is based on the principle of “maximum efficiency with minimum effort” and “mutual well-being and benefit” (Kano, 1986). It has been incorporated into the physical education curricula of many countries, and it is particularly recommended for children. UNESCO recognizes judo as an integrated system of physical and intellectual education, proposing it as an ideal sport for the initial education of children, due to the combination of motor development and moral education" (IJF). The purpose of this paper, through the method of bibliographic review, is a) to analyze the nature of judo as an activity for young children, b) its contribution to the promotion of executive functions and c) to highlight the physical, psychological and social benefits it offers. This study followed the method of bibliographic review through the PRISMA procedure. Initially, the relevant words and concepts were used, indicatively such as judo and executive functions, judo and memory work, judo and moral code, judo and inhibitory control, etc. in electronic

search platforms such as Pubmed, Google Scholar, Sport Discus, Research Gate, Sage, Academia Edu, PLoS, Frontiers, MDPI, etc. For Kowalczyk, et al., (2025), judo engagement enhances experiential learning because it is taught through playful activities as well as basic motor skills. Preschoolers' engagement includes physical activities in a structured environment with balanced exercises, safe fall techniques, and basic controlled throws of the other person, without hitting (kicks, punches). Executive functions in 4- to 6-year-old children include inhibitory regulation (self-control), working memory, and cognitive flexibility. These develop rapidly and are directly influenced by the type of activity. Ludyga, S., et al. (2021) reports that systematic engagement in judo improves inhibitory regulation through self-control and focused awareness independently of motor skill improvement, through more effective monitoring of cognitive conflicts. It also allows the child to stop an automatic reaction (e.g., trying to avoid the attacking child's fall technique) and choose a more appropriate behavior (e.g., performing the appropriate technical skill or, in the event of a fall, correctly applying the "ukemi" fall instructions). Technico-tactical and sequential motor skill interventions improve cognitive flexibility. Regular participation in judo activity leads to greater improvements in cognitive and emotional self-regulation compared to standard physical education. Judo as a physical activity is characterized by closed repetitive motor skills (Uchikomi) and more than the corresponding open ones as in wrestling (Randori/Shiai). These technical skills are characterized by a circle of internal feedback and proprioception that requires the child to inhibit impulsive movements, move with economy of force, remember rules, important details and adapt to an opponent, making it a complete system of cognitive and metacognitive training.

3. Bridging Children's Rights, Sustainability, and Global Citizenship Education in Early Childhood Education

Authors and affiliations:

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Sophia Tromara — Department of Early Childhood Education, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Promoting children's rights is a widely acknowledged commitment established on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN, 1989), which draws from the insights of the prominent work of Janusz Korczak and functions as a key guiding document ensuring protection, provision, participation, and prevention rights. The Convention highlights the need to establish educational systems, curricula and educational practices that will embed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reflecting thus a holistic rights-based approach that perceives children as active and competent citizens of the present. Children are encouraged, especially from an early age, to learn about and through their rights, the values of democratic citizenship, respect for human dignity, peace, and solidarity. In line with this, learning environments should be safe, inclusive, equitable, should promote playful and meaningful learning, empathy, creativity, authentic inquiry, innovation, support children's voice and agency, autonomy, active participation, decision-making, and a strong sense of membership in local and global contexts. However, the world is characterised by multiple and intersecting challenges and crises, such as rapid technological advancements, pervasive socioeconomic and gender inequalities, environmental degradation, democratic backsliding, forced mass migration, violence, and war worldwide, concepts embedded within the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Agenda 2030, which are often translated as 17 injustices that have to be solved. Additionally, prior research (Ribeiro et al., 2025) highlights that even when educational policies and systems embed these aims, there is a gap in terms of practical implementation within early childhood education settings. Guided by the UNCRC, the educational priorities promoted by UNESCO, and inspired by the humanistic and innovative for his time Korczak's educational philosophy, the present poster aims to explore how a pedagogy of children's rights can be meaningfully connected with Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education, which are considered the most transformative forms of learning. The poster presents initially a conceptual framework and then adopts a pedagogical design approach suggesting a set of intervention activities designed for Early Childhood Education classrooms. Activities are grounded in children's rights, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education and aim to promote children's active participation, collaboration, empathy, and critical awareness of environmental and social issues. Drawing on participatory and experiential pedagogical approaches, the activities include dialogue circles, storytelling, collaborative play, drawing, constructions, and problem-solving related to environmental topics and democratic classroom practices that allow children to express their voices and take part in decision-making while fostering a sense of belonging. Special emphasis is placed on respect for diversity, equal participation, a culture of peace and mutual understanding, empathy and environmental responsibility. The main idea underpinning the suggested intervention activities is that integrating children's rights with sustainability

and global citizenship perspectives can support young learners to develop values and competences that are crucial for building more equitable, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable communities, while placing quality education at the forefront. Thus, they can contribute as practical examples to other educators who seek to integrate children's rights, sustainability and global citizenship perspectives in Early Childhood Education. Therefore, children's voice and meaningful participation become not only a pedagogical practice but also a commitment to democratic and transformative education.

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4. Strengthening Parent Involvement in Literature Programs: Connecting School and Home Literacy Practices

Authors and affiliations:

Effrosyni Katsikonouri — Ministry of Education/ National and Capodistrian University of Athens/ OMEP Greece

Eleni Paschalidou — Ministry of Education/ OMEP Greece

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This presentation explores the critical role of parental involvement in enhancing students' engagement with literature both within school settings and at home. Research consistently shows that when families actively participate in literacy experiences, students develop stronger reading comprehension, motivation, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills.

We will focus on practical ways educators can design literature programs that extend beyond the classroom and create meaningful partnerships with parents. We will examine how shared reading, guided discussions, storytelling activities, and home-based literary projects can strengthen children's connection to texts while fostering a supportive literacy culture in the family environment. Real examples of school-home literature projects will be presented, demonstrating how parents can become active partners rather than passive supporters.

5. Korczak's foundations of contemporary relational pedagogy: Methods for supporting resilience in the face of current educational crises

Authors and affiliations:

Joanna Szłapińska — UAM Poznań

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Abstract

This presentation offers a theoretical and analytical reflection on the reception of the Korczak paradigm within the structures of contemporary relational pedagogy, with a particular emphasis on the mechanisms of developing psychological resilience. It analyses Janusz Korczak's axiology—grounded in the attribution of subjectivity, autonomy, and the ethics of responsibility—as an ontological foundation for building an individual's adaptive resources in an era of permanent crisis within educational systems. The presentation argues that the implementation of Korczak's postulated "pedagogy of love and respect" in school settings fosters the reduction of chronic stress and strengthens the interpersonal and social competencies of students. Specific Korczak's tools (e.g., self-governance, the newspaper, the children's parliament) are analysed as exemplifications of early forms of supporting agency and autonomy, which, in the light of positive psychology, constitute the foundations of psychological resilience.

In conclusion, I will demonstrate that the reorientation of pedagogy toward Korczak's foundations is not merely a matter of historical sentiment, but a necessary strategy for strengthening an individual's adaptive resources. Relational pedagogy, understood in this way, becomes an effective instrument for struggling the consequences of contemporary educational crises, offering a coherent framework for building systemic psychological resilience in an unstable social environment.

6. From Pediatrician to Pedagogue: Recognizing the Educator as a Primary Agent of Human Rights

Authors and affiliations:

Lisa Vodola — Florida Gulf Coast University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

From Pediatrician to Pedagogue: Recognizing the Educator as a Primary Agent of Human Rights

Drawing on the life and work of Janusz Korczak, this poster reflects on his decision to prioritize education over medicine as the most powerful way to make a difference in the world. Although trained as a pediatrician, Korczak recognized that the classroom was the space where children's dignity, voice, and rights were most consistently either upheld or diminished, and that educating children therefore had a

broader and more enduring influence than clinical care alone. He understood that educators are not secondary figures, but powerful human rights defenders who shape whether children experience the conditions necessary for wellbeing and education and are able to develop to their full potential.

This poster conceptualizes early childhood educators as mentors, advocates, and ethical leaders whose daily instructional decisions function as acts of human rights protection. Through intentional relationships, inclusive practices, and responsive instruction, educators actively defend the rights of children with disabilities, invisible needs, and cultural or linguistic differences. Listening to children—how they speak, what they express, and what they require—is framed as a foundational ethical responsibility within educational practice.

Attendees will leave with a renewed framework for understanding everyday classroom practices as essential acts of human rights work. Particular attention is given to supporting children with disabilities, multilingual learners, and those from culturally diverse backgrounds whose voices are most at risk of being overlooked in traditional educational systems.

7. Small Children, Big Questions: Shaping Children’s Actor Positions in Norwegian Digital ECEC — A Critical Approach

Authors and affiliations:

Trude Kyrkjebø — not provided in the database

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This poster presents insights from a sociological and discourse oriented study of digital practices in Norwegian ECEC. The national Framework Plan mandates the inclusion of digital technology in pedagogical work and frames expectations for digital practice. The aim is to explore what shapes the conditions for young children’s actor positions and early childhood teachers’ conditions for action in the pedagogical use of digital technology with children aged 1 to 3. The study examines how meaning and power interact as teachers negotiate between political ideologies (read through the politics of childhood tradition), professional ethics, and pedagogical judgements concerning childhood, the intrinsic value of play, and Bildung in digital contexts, attending to both legitimate and disciplinary modalities of power. While grounded in local practice, the study is situated within contemporary rights informed expectations for the digital environment. At the same time, it treats “voice” not as given but as relationally produced in practice.

Within a narrative methodological framework, the study uses an abductive design combining micro ethnographic fieldwork with 14 children (1 to 3 years), qualitative interviews with 22 teachers, and

document analysis of the Framework Plan. Teachers' shifting statements and affective expressions are analysed to understand how meaning and emotion co produce practice. The analysis delineates the digital as a discursive field, identifies conditions for technology use, and examines how these conditions configure actors and actions (cf. Neumann, 2021). A critical hermeneutic interpretation (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2017) deepens understanding of professional and affective interactions, including researcher reflexivity.

A sociocultural and sociological view of action as mediated through digital artefacts (Vygotsky, 1978) is combined with Childhood Studies (James et al., 1998) and the politics of childhood tradition (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). Weber's theory of social action (value rational, instrumental, affective, traditional) offers a lens on how teachers' actions acquire meaning, while a Foucauldian lens on discourse and power illuminates how utterances and practices are shaped by underlying relations.

The analysis identifies four discursive spaces of pedagogical action: digital enthusiasm, digital scepticism, instrumental practices, and traditional practices. Two cross cutting themes emerge: unease (stakes, tensions, ambivalence under policy expectations) and care (ethical responsibility, affective attunement, professional judgement). Taken together, the findings show how legitimate and disciplinary power work through digital routines to open, narrow, or reconfigure the actor positions available to 1 to 3 year olds. These dynamics shape which actor positions become available to children in digital ECEC, namely being, becoming, competent, or vulnerable, and how such positions are continuously reconstructed through teachers' discursive work, ethical reflections, and researcher representational choices.

Keywords:

Childhood Studies; Politics of Childhood; Social action theory (Weber); Discourse and power; Meaning making; Teachers' conditions for action; Children's actor positions (age 1 -3)

8. Community-Based Neulbom School Programs Beyond Schools: Exploring a University–Local Government Partnership Model

Authors and affiliations:

Youngmi Go — Soonchunhyang University

Hyoin You — Soonchunhyang University

Heejeong Lee — Soonchunhyang University

Gee Ai Kang — Korea National University of Education

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Since 2024, South Korea has implemented the 'Neulbom School' policy, which integrates after-school programs and elementary school care services to provide comprehensive education and care (Ministry of Education, 2023). This policy expands learning and care through community resources to mitigate educational disparities and parental childcare burdens. Unlike conventional programs delivered exclusively within schools, Neulbom School programs are implemented in community-based spaces such as university campuses and apartment community centers, extending education and care beyond school to support children's holistic development (De Marco & Vernon-Feagans, 2013; Pradhan et al., 2013). Community-based approaches that leverage local contexts and resources have gained significant attention in global educational discourse (Kabue et al., 2022; Wood, 2023). In this context, this study examines a Neulbom School program implemented outside of school through a university-local government partnership and explores the potential of a university-community collaborative model.

The program was conducted over an eight-month period (July 2025–February 2026). During the program period, Neulbom School activities were conducted at an apartment community center on weekdays from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., while half-day programs were offered on the university campus during vacation periods. Programs were organized around five domains proposed by the local government—physical activity, arts and culture, creative science, climate and environmental education, and social-emotional development—and were designed by the university to reflect local children's needs. The program was implemented through a collaborative structure between the university and the local government. The university was responsible for program development and operation, instructor training and monitoring, and providing educational spaces and resources. The local government supported funding and participant recruitment.

The participants in this study included approximately 150 elementary school students from nearby schools, Neulbom instructors, assistant instructors, staff members of a university-affiliated research institute, and university students. For the case exploration, data were collected from materials generated during the program implementation, including program operation plans and logs, instructor training and monitoring records, documents related to program management, students' learning outcomes, and final program reports.

The findings indicate that the program demonstrates the feasibility of operating Neulbom School programs in community spaces such as apartment community centers and university campuses. The collaboration between the university's educational expertise and the local government's administrative support contributed to ensuring both program quality and operational stability. The university also functioned as an educational hub by supporting program development and instructor professional

development.

Overall, this study demonstrates that university–local government collaboration can serve as an effective model for operating community-based Neulbom School programs and building sustainable regional education ecosystems.

** This study was conducted by the research team in the course of implementing the university’s commissioned Neulbom School program under the Asan City Education Development Special Zone project

Reference

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9. Metaphor Analysis of University-Based Neulbom School Programs: Elementary Students’ Meanings of Participation

Authors and affiliations:

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Heejeong Lee — Soonchunhyang University, Korea

Youngmi Go — Soonchunhyang University, Korea

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Metaphor Analysis of University-Based Neulbom School Programs: Elementary Students’ Meanings of Participation

Neulbom School has been promoted in South Korea as a national policy initiative aimed at strengthening public responsibility for children's after-school education and care by connecting school and community resources and providing integrated educational experiences after regular school hours. However, existing discussions have mainly focused on policy implementation and operational systems, while relatively little attention has been paid to how participating students themselves experience and make meaning of Neulbom School (Kim, 2025). Metaphor is a useful method for revealing individuals' experiences and perceptions and has been widely used in educational research to explore learners' implicit beliefs and structures of meaning (Saban, 2006). Accordingly, this study aimed to examine how elementary school students who participated in a university-based Neulbom School program perceived and made meaning of their experiences through metaphor analysis. The participants were 80 elementary school students who took part in the university-based Neulbom School program at Soonchunhyang University. Data were collected primarily through students' metaphor responses to the sentence-completion prompt, "Neulbom School is ()," along with their written explanations, and children's drawings visually expressing their experiences were also collected. The analysis involved repeatedly reviewing the metaphor responses, extracting meaning units, and categorizing responses with similar meanings. The drawings were used as visual data to supplement the interpretation of the meanings reflected in the metaphor responses, and recurring major elements in the drawings were coded to examine patterns of occurrence. Through this process, the study comprehensively interpreted how elementary school students experienced the university-based Neulbom School program and constructed meanings around it. The analysis identified five metaphorical categories through which students conceptualized the university-based Neulbom School program: (1) a space of fun and play, (2) a space of emotional comfort and safety, (3) a space of relationships and support, (4) an experience of diversity and enrichment, and (5) an experience of challenge and growth. Among these, the category of fun and play emerged most prominently, with representative metaphors including "playground," "game," and "treasure box." This suggests that students perceived the university-based Neulbom School program not as an extension of formal academic instruction, but rather as an enjoyable and meaningful experiential space. By examining the university-based Neulbom School program through students' lived meanings rather than through institutional or policy-centered frameworks alone, this study contributes to the emerging literature on Neulbom School and offers practical implications for the design of more student-centered programs in the future.

** This study was conducted by the research team in the course of implementing the university's commissioned Neulbom School program under the Asan City Education Development Special Zone project.

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10. Children's Well-being and Involvement in Personally Significant Educational Experiences: Bulgarian Perspectives

Authors and affiliations:

Rozalina Engels-Kritidis — Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The child's uniqueness and omnidirectional personal potential, as seen through the spectrum of the achievements of modern inclusive education, makes individual differences a huge resource which teachers need to purposefully and actively use with regard to the positive perspective in the development of each child.

This study outlines the positive prospects of the child learning through emotional and personally significant experience, which was confirmed and conceptually validated through the lens of the specifically defined goals of stimulating experiences and goals of encouraging activities (Roussinova et al., 1993), viewed within the context of individualization of the pedagogical interaction (Engels-Kritidis, 2020).

Following the Leuven Well-being and Involvement scales (Laevers et al., 2005) for observation of the child, in Engels-Kritidis (2020) the last two mentioned criteria are defined as key factors for educational progress, with special attention afforded to individualized and differentiated interaction during group pedagogical situations/sessions, planned by the teachers, as well as during activities initiated by the child (games or other activities chosen freely).

It is not by chance that Stephen (2010) spotlights the importance of pedagogical practices that center on the child and the child's freely made choice of activity; also, Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva (2004) support a

balance between activities initiated by children and activities planned and organized by the teachers. In this regard, the significance of children-initiated activities and ensuring opportunities for free children choice in the process of pedagogical interaction are specifically underlined, as well as the role of the kindergarten teacher in this process.

The role of children's free games and play as activities that provide the largest field for independent creative expression for the children is also specifically highlighted.

11. Preparing Teachers for Democratic Citizenship: A Cross-National Comparison of EDC/HRE Competencies in Croatian and Chinese Pre-Service Teacher Education

Authors and affiliations:

Adrijana Visnjic-Jevtic — not provided in the database

Peng Xu — Nanjing Normal University, China

Višnja Rajić — not provided in the database

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Despite growing international consensus on the importance of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) in initial teacher preparation, little is known about how these competencies are developed across different national contexts. This study addresses that gap through a cross-national comparison of pre-service teacher education students from the University of Zagreb (Croatia; $n = 168$) and Nanjing Normal University (China; $n = 117$). Participants completed an online survey assessing self-reported EDC/HRE competencies, familiarity with civic education practices, course attendance, and perceptions of relevance to their future teaching role. Group differences were analysed using Mann-Whitney U tests across 37 variables. Thirty of 37 variables yielded statistically significant differences ($p < .05$). Zagreb students reported substantially higher self-assessed competence across 14 of 15 EDC/HRE dimensions (all $p < .001$), including knowledge of international human rights frameworks, EDC/HRE curriculum content, and approaches to modelling democratic values in teaching. They also demonstrated greater familiarity with Civic Education principles and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In contrast, Nanjing students perceived more opportunity to develop HR/EDC competencies within their programmes ($p = .017$) and reported stronger familiarity with community collaboration and child assessment practices. Notable differences in course attendance were also found: Nanjing students were far more likely to have attended courses on children's participation (90% vs. 47%, $p < .001$), while Zagreb students more

frequently attended courses on the child as an active citizen (39% vs. 10%, $p = .002$). These findings reveal meaningful divergence in how EDC/HRE is embedded in teacher education across the two contexts, reflecting differences in curriculum priorities and pedagogical traditions. The results underscore the value of international dialogue in this field and suggest that cross-national exchange could strengthen both programmes' capacity to prepare rights-aware, democratically engaged educators.

12. Crazy Veggie - Inspirations for Health, Education, and Children's Rights

Authors and affiliations:

Jarka Kreskociova — Maly sefkuchar bez capice NGO

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Crazy Veggie – A Program for Preventing Childhood Obesity and Promoting Healthy Lifestyles in Kindergartens is a comprehensive, year-round experiential initiative designed to prevent childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyles among young children in kindergarten settings. It is based on the understanding that early childhood is a crucial developmental stage during which lifelong habits, attitudes, and values are formed. By focusing on prevention and education from an early age, the program aims to create a strong foundation for children's overall well-being. It represents an innovative and meaningful approach to early childhood education. Through its focus on experiential learning, holistic development, and respect for children's rights, it creates an environment where health is understood, valued, and practiced daily. The program demonstrates that by investing in early prevention and education, it is possible to support children in developing habits and attitudes that will benefit them throughout their lives.

PRINTED POSTERS	18.07 SATURDAY
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POSTER SESSION II (PRINTED POSTERS) – 18.07 SATURDAY

1. Is 'Acceptance' Enough? A Lundy Model Analysis of the Japanese National Kindergarten Education Guidelines

Authors and affiliations:

Masaki Isomura — Sugiyama Jogakuen University; Joint Graduate School in Science of School Education (Ph.D. Program), Hyogo University of Teacher Education

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The 2023 enactment of the Child Basic Act provided a crucial legal foundation for children's participation in Japan. It stipulated that children's opinions must be considered in various aspects of society. However, the operationalization of these principles in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings depends on the National Kindergarten Education Guidelines (Course of Study for Kindergarten; MEXT, 2017; hereafter, 2017 Guidelines). This study investigates whether the current guidelines sufficiently address children's right to participate as defined by the Lundy (2007) Model, which comprises four elements: Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence.

Specifically, it employs deductive content analysis, examining the General Provisions, and the Aims and Content of the five developmental domains within the 2017 Guidelines. Meaning units are extracted from the text and systematically coded against the Lundy Model's four aforementioned elements. This allows for a rigorous identification of "silences" regarding children's right to influence decision-making, thereby revealing a significant structural imbalance within the national guidelines.

The findings reveal that the 2017 Guidelines provide a robust foundation for Space and Audience. For instance, the general provisions emphasize "building a sufficient relationship of trust with children" and ensuring they act under "stable emotional states." Furthermore, the requirement for practitioners to "understand and predict each child's behavior," and "fulfill various roles" to support development aligns with the concept of a sincere Audience. However, this study argues that these strengths reflect a unique Japanese pedagogical synchronization, termed Deep Acceptance. While this fosters exceptional psychological safety, it primarily focuses on the child's internal emotional state rather than their external right to impact decision-making.

On Voice, the 2017 Guidelines encourage young children to "subjectively engage with their environment" and "express themselves fully." Conversely, these are framed as internalized developmental milestones—becoming able to express thoughts—rather than the exercise of agency. The most critical gap lies in Influence. Although the guidelines mention "striving to create a better educational environment together with children," this remains an implicit duty for practitioners. It is notably silent regarding the requirement to give "due weight" to children's views in broader kindergarten management or provide feedback on their participation's outcomes.

This imbalance suggests a "Satisfaction Trap": The cultural excellence of Deep Acceptance may lead practitioners to believe that children's voices are already fully realized through emotional resonance, thereby overlooking the lack of actual Influence. Consequently, children's perception needs to be urgently reframed from being passive recipients of care to active rights-holders. Given future revisions, whether the 2017 Guidelines' forthcoming version effectively integrates the principles of the Child Basic Act must be critically verified, particular ensuring respect for children's right to express their views and the structural realization of Influence. This study provides a vital baseline for such future policy evaluations to ensure that children are truly empowered in kindergarten settings.

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-

2. Community-Based ESD for Disaster Resilience: Children's Agency in Biodiesel Learning, Disaster Mapping, and Intergenerational Takidashi in Japan

Authors and affiliations:

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Satomi Washiyama — Keisui Kindergarten

Hirotsugu Tazume — Kyoto University of Education

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This presentation provides an expanded account of a three-year developmental project (2023–2025) conducted in a kindergarten in Japan, focusing on the integration of environmental education, disaster preparedness, and intergenerational learning within an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework. While the project originated as part of the kindergarten's ongoing curriculum development, it was further enriched in 2025 through participation in the one-year Community Disaster Education Promotion Project led by the Cabinet Office. This initiative strengthened the community-based aspects of the program by providing additional structure and partnerships.

A central component of the project was the Children's Council, a daily child-led discussion forum where

children raised questions, shared concerns, and collaboratively determined the direction of learning. Guided by children's initiatives, learning unfolded in three interconnected domains: (1) environmental sustainability through used-cooking-oil recycling and biodiesel learning, (2) disaster literacy through neighborhood exploration and the creation of children's disaster maps, and (3) community support through intergenerational takidashi (emergency cooking) of traditional dago-jiru soup.

In the environmental domain, children collected used cooking oil and observed with a local company how it was converted into biodiesel fuel. This process supported their understanding of circular systems, resource reuse, and the social relevance of environmental actions. Repeated discussions in the Children's Council helped children broaden their inquiries to consider how energy supports communities during emergencies.

In the disaster literacy domain, children conducted neighborhood walks to identify dangerous areas, wide and narrow roads, dark or frightening places, and routes accessible for infants and older adults. Using hand-drawn icons, they produced a child-centered disaster map that visualized local risks and community needs. This encouraged early systems thinking, ethical awareness, and a practical understanding of community vulnerabilities.

In the intergenerational and community support domain, children collaborated with local older adults to prepare dago-jiru, gaining experiential insight into mutual aid and the importance of warm meals during emergencies. Conversations with older adults—including stories of past disasters—supported children's social and emotional learning.

Across all domains, children demonstrated agency by raising questions, proposing ideas, planning activities, and participating in decision-making. Families, local residents, companies, and older adults formed a supportive network that enhanced the sustainability and community relevance of the project. This presentation shares insights from this evolving practice and offers one possible approach to connecting environmental learning, disaster preparedness, and community collaboration in early childhood education.

3. IMPROVING THE ROOFTOP GARDEN ENVIRONMENT, WITH THE CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Authors and affiliations:

Mayumi Ueda — Social Benevolence Organization Seiai Gakusha, Tokyo, Japan

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

IMPROVING THE ROOFTOP GARDEN ENVIRONMENT, WITH THE CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION:
TRANSFORMATIONS OCCURRED IN THE CHILDREN AND ADULTS THROUGH PROJECTS LEAD BY
CHILDREN'S VIEWS

Mayumi Ueda 1 ,

1Nursery school teacher, Mominoki Nursery school, Social Benevolence Organization Seiai
Gakusha,Tokyo,Japan

Background

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states “Parties shall assume to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child,” clearly stipulating that the views of the children be given due weight no matter how old and in what level of maturity they are. In actual childcare and educational settings, however, it has been pointed out that their voices are not necessarily taken into account because they are in the process of acquiring language skills, although their thoughts are shown in their views and facial expressions.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to find out how children's self-expression and actions are changed and how adults around them are affected by the changes if children's voices are actually reflected in the environmental improvement of the roof-top garden in a childcare center.

Method

Subjects: A private certified childcare center in the Tokyo metropolitan area.

Survey 1: Fifteen four-year-olds; Survey 2: Fourteen five-year-olds.

Period: October 2024 – November 2025

In Survey 1, activities were carried out for six months, targeting a class of four-year-olds, combining multiple methods with the aim of hearing children's voices from various angles. It included participant observation, the photo projective method, exchange of views using a photograph-based rooftop garden map, and the creation of a miniature rooftop garden. Using these methods, this study aimed to clarify the children's thoughts and wishes toward the rooftop garden, which they use on a daily basis.

In Survey 2, targeting the class of five-year-olds in the next year, an environmental improvement project was carried out for six months, with the children's participation, based on the children's views that were shared in Survey 1. “Colorful flower beds” and “a Bird's nest” were chosen as their activities.

Applying the Thematic Analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), this study clarified what sorts of transformations occurred in the children's behaviors and awareness through the activities.

Results

Survey 1: It became clear that, even in the limited environment, the children regarded the rooftop garden as a place where they could develop their own unique forms of play. In addition to playing there, they enjoy and love its natural elements such as changes in the sky and flowers, that makes the garden a special place for them, with a certain emotional attachment. On the other hand, there clearly was a room for improvement regarding the environment where weeds were overgrown.

Survey 2: The followings were confirmed.

- An increase in the expression of child-initiated views
- Development of dialogues among the children to accept or adjust other people's views
- An increase in actions to involve adults
- Cooperation and joint studies among children
- Deeper thinkings on problem-solving
- Children's interests and behaviors extending into homes and the local community
- Childcare staff other than homeroom teachers also taking part in the children's activities

Conclusion

Through Survey 1 and Survey 2, this study showed that the experiences in the work to improve the rooftop garden environment encouraged the children to express their views and transformed the quality of their behaviors. The children, not only expressed their wishes in words and in a wide range of expressions, listened carefully to other children's views and tried to find a direction that both could agree on. These results suggest that the children were finding meanings in the process of realizing the self in relationships with others.

The study also confirmed the children's behavior of regarding the activities as personally relevant, and of asking their family and childcare staff for cooperation to achieve the goal. To both the childcare staff and the parents, the practice became an important chance to recognize the children the partner for creating the environment, rather than considering them being the objects for protection..

4. Listening and Responding: Empathy-Based Management and The Practice of Children's Rights in Inclusive Two-Year-Old Classes

Authors and affiliations:

Mei-li Wu — Nanya Institute of Technology

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Abstract:

Echoing Janusz Korczak's philosophy and the spirit of Article 12 of the UNCRC, listening to children is fundamentally an ethical responsibility. However, listening to pre-linguistic children is not easy, especially for special needs children who often express their needs through nonverbal behaviors such as crying or aggression. This study aims to explore how teachers in inclusive two-year-old classes translate "empathy" into classroom management strategies, ensuring that both children's verbal and non-verbal "voices" are heard and valued, thereby fostering a fear-free, inclusive environment.

A mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitatively, pre- and post-tests using the Development Scale for Infants and Preschoolers (DSIP) and the Emotion and Behavior Scale for Preschoolers (EBSP) were administered to 64 two-year-old children. Qualitatively, in-depth interviews were conducted with the teachers of these children, focusing on their practical strategies for "listening and responding" during daily care, routines, and interactive relationships.

The qualitative findings identified three core empathy-based management strategies: (1) interpreting non-verbal behaviors (e.g., crying, aggression) during parallel play as "cries for help"; (2) practicing Responsive Care by establishing secure attachments through flexible schedules and quiet corners. For children with special needs, providers adopted a "non-coercive" approach, replacing mandatory rules with proactive, empathetic guidance to respect individual differences and ensure participation rights for all; and (3) strengthening parent-teacher communication to develop individualized support strategies. Quantitatively, this inclusive model resulted in significant improvements in children's language and communication skills ($p < .001$) and cognitive abilities ($p < .01$), along with a marked decrease in negative emotional behaviors.

This study concludes by suggesting that teachers in inclusive education classes for two-year-olds can act as "translators of children's needs" and "practitioners of empathy," providing adaptable environmental support by listening to and responding to the "multiple voices" of children, and concretely practicing fairness, participation, and justice in early inclusive education.

Key words: Two-Year-Old Classes, Inclusive Education, Empathy, Children's Rights, Mixed-Methods Design

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5. Children's Preconceptions of the Concepts "Fairy Tale" and "Poem"

Authors and affiliations:

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Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The study focuses on the issue of children's preconceptions of the concepts of "fairy tale" and "poem" and presents the results of an empirical survey conducted among children of pre-primary age. Preconceptions represent intuitive, often pre-scientific ideas about phenomena and concepts that are formed based on everyday experiences even before their systematic acquisition in the process of formal education. Studying them is important for understanding how children construct the meanings of concepts, how they interpret them, and how these ideas change during the educational process. At the same time, it allows for a better understanding of the influence of the social and cultural environment on a child's cognitive and language development. The aim of the study was to identify, describe, and analyze children's preconceptions of the concepts "fairy tale" and "poem" among children aged five to six years, that is, during a period critical for the development of reading literacy and language competencies. The study was conducted as part of the VEGA 1/0505/24 project, "Children's Preconceptions about Reading Literacy Phenomena," which focuses on examining children's early conceptions of reading culture. The research sample consisted of 55 children in their final year of pre-primary education. Data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews conducted in kindergarten settings, which allowed for the capture of authentic children's statements. The research instrument reflected four levels of understanding: description of the concept's meaning, its application, assessment in a hypothetical situation of absence, and identification of sources of knowledge. A total of 980 statements were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The results show that children understand fairy tales primarily through their own experiences. They associate them with the family environment, particularly with bedtime reading, but also with media forms such as television or digital devices. They perceive fairy tales as a source of entertainment, relaxation, knowledge, and emotional satisfaction. At the same time, they distinguish between different ways of engaging with them—reading, listening, and watching—while emphasizing their importance for imagination and emotional experience. Children most often associate the concept of a poem with

recitation, singing, and performing. Their understanding stems primarily from experiences in preschool, but also from the home environment. For them, poems are associated with learning, social interactions, and positive emotions, such as during performances. The analysis confirmed that, in children's perception, fairy tales and poems are linked to daily rituals, social relationships, and emotional experiences. Children also point to their multimodal nature—a combination of text, sound, and image. According to the children, their absence would result in a loss of fun, learning, and positive emotions. Children cite family, preschool, the media, and their own experiences as the main sources of knowledge, with children's books also playing a significant role. The results confirm that children's understanding of concepts is predominantly concrete and based on immediate experience. The findings highlight the importance of the social environment in the formation of preconceptions and emphasize the need for targeted pedagogical work in the area of reading literacy. They can serve as a starting point for the development of didactic strategies that will reflect children's ideas and systematically develop them toward a deeper understanding of concepts.

POSTER SESSION II (PRINTED POSTERS) – 18.07 SATURDAY

6. Interactions between Five-Year-Olds and Practitioners during Circle Time in Japanese Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Settings (Part 1): An Analysis of Verbal Interactions between Children and Practitioners

Authors and affiliations:

Yoko Arai — Tokyo Kasei University

Naomi Hiura — Kwansei Gakuin University

Ayako Matsuyama — Soen Childcare Professional College

Yuki Oguri — Mominoki Nursery School

Keiko Yano — Jumonji University

Taketo Yoshida — Hiroshima University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

I. Purpose

In recent years, the quality of interactions between children and practitioners has become a central concern in efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education and care. In this context, practitioners are expected to adopt practices that respect children's rights, including providing opportunities for children to express their opinions and participate in decision-making. In Japan as well, increasing attention has been paid to practices that respect children's rights as

articulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right of children to express their views and the right of the child to be heard. As a result, educational practices that aim to listen to and incorporate children's voices into ECEC settings are being actively explored. Furthermore, since the 2017 revision of the Course of Study for Kindergarten (National guideline for kindergarten curriculum), dialogue has become an important concept in discussions of early childhood education in Japan. This perspective emphasizes not only child-centered learning but also collaborative relationships between children and practitioners. Within the framework of the 'OECD Learning Compass 2030' (OECD, 2019), the concept of 'co-agency' was introduced to emphasise the importance of agency exercised in collaboration with others. In this framework, dialogue is understood as a relational process that emerges through interaction with practitioners and peers. Based on these perspectives, the present study examines the quality of interactions between children and practitioners by focusing on their verbal exchanges during circle time, a common activity in Japanese ECEC settings where children and practitioners gather to share opinions and experiences. Although circle time has been recognized as an important opportunity f regarded as an important opportunity to listen to children's voices, detailed analyses of verbal interactions in such contexts remain limited.

Research Questions

Therefore, this study analyzes the utterance of both children and practitioners during circle time in order to clarify:

1. What are children expressing in their interactions with practitioners ?
2. How do practitioners elicit and respond to children's utterance?

Through this analysis, the study aims to better understand the characteristics of interactions between children and practitioners in Japanese ECEC settings.

II. Methods

1. Participants and Data Collection

The study analyzed audio recordings of circle time sessions conducted in five ECEC facility education and childcare facilities in Japan (three located in eastern Japan and two in western Japan). Data were collected between July and September 2025.

The participants were children enrolled in five-year-old classes, an age at which verbal self-expression is considered to become relatively stable.

2. Data Analysis

One circle time session from each facility was transcribed and analyzed. The utterances of both children and practitioners were coded, and their frequency and content were analyzed using MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software (Rädiker & Kuckartz, 2020) .Based on the coded

data, the characteristics of verbal interactions between children and practitioners were organized and examined.

3. Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Review Board of Tokyo Kasei University (Approval No. Ita2025-10). Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from the children's parents, the facility director, and the class teacher.

III. Results

Analysis of the recorded data identified several notable characteristics of the verbal interactions between children and practitioners. Across the five ECEC facilities, the total number of utterances by children was 495, while practitioners produced 541 utterances.

1. Characteristics of Children's Utterance

Analysis of children's utterances yielded 26 utterance codes.

The most frequent category was "Response (opinion)" accounting for 20.0% of all utterances. In addition, "Expressions of intention" (e.g., the child express what they want or intended to do) accounted for 10.7%.

These results suggest that circle time provides opportunities for children to express their own opinions and intentions in response to practitioners' utterances.

Further examination of response types revealed additional patterns, including:

- "Responses (short phrases) "accounted for 10.9%.
- "Response (past experiences)" accounted for 9.7%.
- "Response (trying to give the correct answer) "accounted for 4.0%.

These findings indicate that children often participate in the interaction by drawing on their knowledge or experiences when responding to practitioners. Also, the fact that children try to give the correct answer suggests that their responses are influenced by the quality of the practitioners' questions.

In addition, several types of peer-related utterances were observed, including:

- "Repeating other child's utterance"accounted for 2.8%.
- "Explanation to other child's utterance" accounted for 2.6%.
- "Agreement with other child" accounted for 2.6%.
- "Disagreement with other child" accounted for 2.2%.

These results suggest that interactions during circle time are not limited to practitioner-child interactions but also involves communication among children.

2. Characteristics of Practitioners' Utterance

Analysis of practitioners' utterances yielded 20 utterance codes.

The most frequent categories were:

- “Repeating a child’s idea” accounted for 12.0%.
- “Suggestion” accounted for 11.5%.

The high frequency of “Repeating a child’s idea” suggests that practitioners often support interactions by repeating or reformulating children’s utterances, thereby helping to sustain the conversation.

Analysis of practitioners’ questions revealed several different types:

- “Clarification questions” accounted for 10.0%.
- “Questions about children’s opinion” accounted for 7.8%.
- “Rephrased Questions” accounted for 5.7%.
- “Closed Questions (seeking correct answer)” accounted for 3.9%.
- “Questions (past Experiences)” accounted for 3.0%.

These findings suggest that practitioners’ questions serve not only to elicit children’s opinions but also to support shared understanding within the group. Among these, there are also questions that seek a correct answer from the child. On the other hand, “Neutral responses” (e.g., minimal responses such as “uh-huh” or “I see” used to signal attention and encourage the child to continue speaking) were also observed in 4.4% of cases. In these instances, the responses were designed to elicit the children’s opinions, regardless of whether they were correct or incorrect.

IV. Discussion

This study analyzed audio recordings of circle time sessions involving five-year-olds in five Japanese ECEC facilities in order to examine the characteristics of verbal interactions between children and practitioners. Three main findings emerged.

1. Opportunities for Children’s Expression

The most frequent categories of children’s utterance were responses expressing their own opinions and utterances of intentions. These findings suggest that circle time provides opportunities for children to express their voices within the classroom community. At the same time, the frequent occurrence of practitioners’ reutterances and suggestions indicates that practitioners actively support interactions by sharing children’s opinions with the group and encouraging further discussion.

2. Practitioners’ Questions and Children’s Responses

Only about 7.8% of practitioners’ utterances consisted of questions that directly elicited children’s opinions. Other questions focused on clarification, recalling past experiences, or seeking correct answers. These findings suggest that the content and structure of practitioners’

questions may influence the types of responses produced by children. Further analysis of the relationship between practitioners' utterances and children's responses will be presented in Poster 2.

3. Interactional Characteristics of Circle Time

When comparing the number of utterances made by children and practitioners, the practitioners spoke more overall. This suggests that the practitioners play a key role in shaping the flow of conversation during circle time. On the other hand, it also suggests that children's responses may have been limited by the questions asked. It is necessary to consider how practitioners can support children to ensure they have sufficient opportunities to express their opinions.

Also, the analysis revealed the presence of peer interactions, such as agreement, disagreement, and repetition of other children's utterances. These findings highlight the importance of creating opportunities for children to listen to and respond to one another, rather than limiting interactions to practitioner-child exchanges. Therefore, further research should examine how practitioners can facilitate interactions among children during circle time.

4. Limitations and Future Research

This study analyzed circle time sessions in five ECEC facilities; however, the data were limited to one session per facility, and the findings cannot be generalized to all ECEC settings in Japan. In addition, the content of children's and practitioners' utterance may vary depending on the specific topic discussed during circle time.

Finally, while this study focused on verbal data, children's communication also includes nonverbal expressions, such as gestures and facial expressions. Future research needs to examine interactions in relation to specific circle time topics and incorporate analyses of nonverbal communication.

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7. Interactions between Five-Year-Olds and Practitioners during Circle Time in Japanese Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Settings (Part 2): The Role and Challenges of Practitioners in “Listening to Children's Voices”

Authors and affiliations:

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Taketo Yoshida — Hiroshima University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Interactions between Five-Year-Olds and Practitioners during Circle Time in Japanese Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Settings (Part 2):

The Role and Challenges of Practitioners in “Listening to Children's Voices”

Naomi HIURA(Kwansei Gakuin Univ.), Yoko ARAI(Tokyo Kasei Univ.), Ayako MATSUYAMA(Soen Childcare Professional College), Yuki OGURI(Mominoki Nursery School), Keiko YANO(Jumonji Univ.), Taketo YOSHIDA(Hiroshima Univ.)

I. Purpose

In recent years, Japanese laws and regulations related to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) have emphasized children’s right to express their opinions and to participate socially, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, as these regulations primarily function as policy guidelines reflecting childcare philosophy, further empirical research is required to examine how children interact and engage in everyday childcare practices.

Over the past decade, research on children’s expression of opinions within the Japanese ECEC field has expanded and can be broadly categorized into the following four areas:

- (1) theoretical studies organizing children’s rights to express opinions;
- (2) studies examining practitioners’ awareness and practices;
- (3) research on children’s participation; and
- (4) practical studies focusing on the utilization of children’s voices in childcare settings.

Across these strands of research, a shared understanding has emerged: children’s expression is not limited to verbal utterances; practitioners’ attitudes play a crucial role; and supportive mechanisms are necessary to facilitate expression. While children’s expression includes gestures, actions, and emotions, empirical research that closely examines actual verbal interactions between practitioners

and children remains limited. Although children's opinions may be expressed in diverse forms, speaking language constitutes an important aspect of expression. Accordingly, this study deliberately focuses on verbal exchanges between practitioners and children.

In Japanese ECEC settings, a daily period is typically designated for discussion between practitioners and children. Although this period is referred to by various names, this study uses the term circle time. Building on prior findings that explored the realities of practitioner-child interactions during circle time among five-year-olds (Poster 1), this report addresses the central question: Are practitioners truly listening to children's voices? Specifically, we examine instances in which children actively articulate their own thoughts, as well as utterances that appear to align with practitioners' intentions. The aim of this study is to identify which types of practitioner utterances elicit these different forms of child responses and to consider the roles and challenges practitioners face in genuinely listening to children's voices.

II. Method

This study analyzes audio-recorded data from circle time sessions involving five-year-old children at five ECEC facilities (three located in eastern Japan and two in western Japan), collected between July and August 2006. All utterances by both practitioners and children were systematically coded. Using the qualitative analysis software MAXQDA, we examined actual practitioner-child interactions (see Poster 1 for an overview of the coding scheme). Based on co-occurrence analyses of utterance codes, we identified characteristics of practitioner utterances associated with children's proactive expression of opinions, as well as those associated with children's more passive responses. These findings were then used to examine the roles and challenges practitioners encounter in listening to children's voices. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of Tokyo Kasei University. Prior to data collection, informed consent was secured from children's parents, facility directors, and class teachers.

III. Results

1. Practitioner utterances associated with children's proactive expression

Children's expressions of their own thoughts, judgments, and value assessments were found to occur following specific types of practitioner utterances.

Table 1-1. Characteristics of Practitioner Utterances Leading to Children Voicing Their "Own Opinions"
Practitioners' Utterances

Characteristics of Practitioners' Utterances

Confirmation/Repetitive Questions

Avoid limiting Correct Answers

Repeating the Child's Opinion

Affirmation/Sense of Security

Proposing

Room for Thought/Options

Questions Asking about Feelings

Questions with No Single Correct Answer

Table 1-2. Functions of Practitioner Utterances Promoting Children's "Own Opinions"

Practitioners' Utterances

Primary Functions

Question (Opinion Elicitation)

Draw out Subjective Opinions

Question (Requests for Reasons/Evidence)

Deepen Thinking

Repetition

Encourage Continued Utterances

Acceptance/Empathetic Response

Create a Safe Space for Speaking

Cross-group Opinion Elicitation

Facilitate Group Dialogue

Requests for Specification

Refine Expression

Practitioner Self-Disclosure

Ensure Equality

Promotion of Imagination/Inference

Increase Freedom of Thought

2. Practitioner utterances associated with passive child responses

Table 2-1. Practitioner Utterances That Lead to Passive Children's Utterances

Practitioners' Utterances

Mechanism of Instilling Passiveness

Questions (Seeking Correct Answers)

Leads to Guessing-Based Thinking

Confirmation/ Requesting Agreement

Leads to Waiting for Evaluation

Excessive Contextual Explanation
 Relegates Children to Being “Listeners”
 Limited-Choice Questions
 Narrows Thinking
 Preemptive Summarization
 Strips away the Role of Thinking
 Value-Oriented Guidance
 Makes It Harder to Express True Feelings

3. Peer interactions during circle time

For each facility, we calculated the proportion of peer interactions (e.g., agreement with another child, elaboration of a peer’s utterance, disagreement, or advice) relative to the total number of children’s utterances.

Table 3-1. Proportion of Peer Interactions in Total Child Utterances

Facility

Proportion of Peer Interactions
 in Total Children’s Utterances

A

$$5/66 \times 100 = 7.6\%$$

B

$$1/48 \times 100 = 2.1\%$$

C

$$5/118 \times 100 = 4.2\%$$

D

$$1/36 \times 100 = 2.8\%$$

E

Not Calculable

Across all facilities, peer interactions were found to be minimal. This indicates that circle time interactions were predominantly characterized by practitioner–child exchanges rather than child–child exchanges.

IV. Discussion

1. Practitioner roles reflected in practitioner–child utterance relationships

This study demonstrated that children’s proactive utterances were more likely to follow practitioner utterances such as open-ended questions, paraphrasing, and accepting

empathetic responses. In contrast, practitioner utterances aimed at eliciting correct answers, confirming agreement, providing anticipatory summaries, or conveying value judgments tended to be associated with more passive child responses.

Notably, both types of utterances were employed by the same practitioners. This finding suggests that children's patterns of speech are not fixed characteristics but rather fluctuate depending on the structure of practitioners' utterances during circle time, including question formats, response styles, and the timing of evaluation. Consequently, the question of whether practitioners are "listening" to children's voices cannot be reduced to a simple dichotomy. Practitioners must recognize that utterances fostering active expression and those reinforcing passivity often coexist in practice, and that consciously shaping a responsive environment is a key professional responsibility.

2. Practitioners as facilitators of peer dialogue

The consistently low frequency of peer interactions suggests that circle time in these settings may be oriented more toward practitioner–child dynamics than toward child–child dialogue. This implies that ECEC practices may remain confined within practitioners' intentions and learning goals, rather than fully incorporating children's perspectives. From the standpoint of listening to children's voices, this highlights the importance of practitioners' roles as facilitators who promote interactions among children, enabling individual utterances to connect and develop into shared, collective dialogue.

3. Limitations and future research directions

Because this study is based on co-occurrence analysis, it does not establish causal relationships between practitioner and child utterances. Future research should examine how specific practitioner utterances, situated within contextual conditions (e.g., practitioner intentions, topic characteristics, and peer relationships), influence children's active or passive participation. Continued investigation into strategies for fostering peer dialogue and incorporating its content into ECEC practice will contribute to a more precise understanding of the conditions that support children's active expression of opinions.

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8. Eliciting Musical Expression from Picture Books in Young Children —What Will Students Studying Early Childhood Education Choose? —

Authors and affiliations:

Shiho Yokoi — NAGOYA GAKUIN UNIVERSITY

Hiroko Kosugi — Sugiyama Jogakuen University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

In early childhood education, expressive play, especially musical expressive play, is different from other spontaneous play. Simply preparing musical instruments to play does not make it musical play, and a certain level of guidance from the early childhood educator is required. For this reason, the author's research has revealed that many early childhood educators feel they are not good at musical expressive activities. However, musical expressive activities in early childhood education are not limited to singing, playing instruments, or directly related to music. When an early childhood educator reads a picture book to a child, the rhythm of the words resonates in the child's mind, is felt by the body, and accumulates as sound, which can help with musical expression. The author have been conducting empirical research trying to elicit musical expression in young children through picture books. 1) 2)

This study conducted a questionnaire survey of 191 students studying early childhood education, with the aim of clarifying what they focused on when selecting picture books in order to elicit musical expression in young children, based on their descriptions of the reasons for their selection. Each student was asked to select up to three books. The picture books selected were sorted in order of frequency, and text mining was performed on the descriptions of their reasons using KH Corder (free software).

As a result, 102 picture books were selected. The picture book chosen by the most students, "Taiko" (by Tomomi Hikatsu), was chosen because the sounds written in this picture book is rich in onomatopoeia, and children would be able to enjoy the rhythm of the drums while reading it. The next most popular book, "Crash! Bang! Boom!" (by Peter Spier), was chosen because it contains many onomatopoeias depicting everyday sounds along with pictures.

A picture book that was chosen because it was thought that the drum beating scene itself would elicit musical expression in young children was ranked low. These results suggest that students selected picture books by focusing on the sounds (onomatopoeia) and the rhythm written in the words (not the rhythm of the words themselves), and that in order to elicit musical expression in young children, it is first necessary to make them interested in sound itself.

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9. Preparedness for Missile Threats in Early Childhood Education Settings: A Rights Based Analysis Grounded in Children’s Right to Life and Survival — With Reference to Janusz Korczak’s Philosophy

Authors and affiliations:

Takeshi Kurihara — KUMAMOTO GAKUEN UNIVERSITY

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Preparedness for Missile Threats in Early Childhood Education Settings:

A Rights-Based Analysis Grounded in Children’s Right to Life and Survival

— With Reference to Janusz Korczak’s Philosophy

Introduction (Background)

Armed conflicts continue to unfold across the world in the 21st century, as seen in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the Israel–Palestine crisis in 2023. In Japan, which marks 80 years since the end of World War II, shifts in national security policy are underway amid rising regional tensions, including the possibility of a Taiwan contingency. In 2025, the Ministry of Defense announced a plan to deploy domestically produced long-range stand-off missiles to the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Kengun Garrison in Higashi Ward, Kumamoto City, generating new risks and anxieties within the local community.

Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees every child “the inherent right to life,

survival and development.” However, early childhood education curricula—such as the Course of Study for Kindergartens and the Childcare Guidelines for Daycare Centers—contain no explicit references to missile threats or preparedness for armed contingencies. A gap has thus emerged between evolving security policies and actual practices in early childhood education settings. This study begins with the question of how this gap affects the protection of children’s rights.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to clarify the current state of preparedness for missile-related emergencies in early childhood education and care facilities in Kumamoto Prefecture, and to analyze these practices from a rights-based perspective grounded in children’s right to life and survival (Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Methods

A literature review and semi-structured interviews with early childhood education and care professionals in Kumamoto Prefecture were conducted. The study adhered strictly to ethical standards outlined in the Japan Society of Physical Education, Health and Sport Sciences Research Ethics Code and the Early Childhood Education and Care Research Ethics Guidebook 2023.

Results (Preliminary Findings)

The analysis suggests the following points:

Significant variation exists among facilities in their level of preparedness.

A gap persists between changes in national security policy and early childhood education curricula.

Concerns have been raised regarding the psychological impact of missile-related evacuation drills on children.

Judgments about balancing safety, emotional stability, and rights protection remain ambiguous.

These findings highlight the widening gap between security measures at the policy level and the realities of practice in early childhood education settings.

Discussion and Implications (Connection to Korczak’s Thought)

The issues identified in this study extend beyond crisis management and are deeply connected to Janusz Korczak’s principles of “dignity,” “peace,” and “education free from fear.” Korczak emphasized that children should be respected not merely as future citizens but as “human beings living in the here and now.” When early childhood education facilities respond to emerging security risks, a rights-based approach is essential—one that protects children’s lives while avoiding unnecessary fear and ensuring emotional safety and dignity.

This study offers an opportunity to reconsider how early childhood education can sustain and cultivate children’s rights and a culture of peace, even in a society marked by rising tensions.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Building on insights gained from the interview phase, the next step is to conduct a questionnaire survey targeting early childhood education and care facilities across Kumamoto Prefecture. This will enable a broader understanding of current preparedness and existing challenges. Ultimately, the study aims to develop a rights-based guideline to safeguard children's right to life and survival within the evolving security environment.

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Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Childcare Guidelines for Daycare Centers (latest edition).

10. When Development Looks Like Regression: A Longitudinal Study of Fluctuation in Early Childhood Non-Cognitive Development

Authors and affiliations:

Yuko Suzuki — Nagoya Ryujo Junior College (St. Mary's College, Nagoya)

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

In early childhood education, the development of non-cognitive competence is increasingly recognized as a crucial foundation for children's later learning, well-being, and social participation. Research has demonstrated that abilities such as self-regulation, persistence, empathy, and goal-directed behavior are strongly associated with long-term educational and social outcomes. However, developmental frameworks often emphasize stability, linear progression, and measurable attainment. Within such frameworks, behaviors such as hesitation, withdrawal, inconsistency, or sudden changes in engagement are frequently interpreted as signs of developmental delay or regression. Educational responses therefore often aim to stabilize children's behavior through correction, guidance, or behavioral regulation.

A similar perspective can be found in the educational philosophy of the Polish educator Janusz Korczak, who emphasized that children should be respected not merely as "future adults" but as persons living in the present moment, whose expressions deserve to be listened to before they are regulated. From this perspective, behaviors that appear unstable or inconsistent may be understood as meaningful expressions emerging within relational contexts rather than simply as signs of

developmental deficiency.

Recent developmental research suggests that early childhood development may not always follow a linear path. Instead, developmental processes may involve temporary fluctuations as children reorganize emerging competencies across cognitive, emotional, and social domains. In this study, developmental fluctuation refers to temporary variability in observable behavior that occurs during periods of developmental reorganization. From this perspective, instability is not interpreted as developmental failure but as a potential indicator of ongoing developmental change.

Previous research has emphasized the importance of non-cognitive and social-emotional skills for later life outcomes, including academic success, health, and social adjustment (Heckman, 2013; Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Duckworth & Yeager, 2015). Longitudinal studies have also demonstrated that early self-regulation predicts adult well-being and social functioning (Moffitt et al., 2011).

Developmental psychology further indicates that executive functions and emotional competence develop rapidly during early childhood and play key roles in adaptive behavior within social contexts (Diamond, 2013; Blair & Raver, 2015). These abilities are closely associated with social competence and prosocial behavior within peer and classroom relationships (Denham et al., 2003; Eisenberg et al., 2006). Nevertheless, educational practice often attempts to minimize behavioral fluctuation rather than interpret its developmental significance.

The present study investigates whether developmental fluctuation in early childhood non-cognitive competence represents developmental delay or instead reflects a necessary developmental process within competence formation. A six-wave longitudinal study was conducted from early age three to late age five in five early childhood education and care centers in Japan. Complete data were obtained from 240 children. Teachers evaluated children's everyday classroom behavior using a validated observational rating scale consisting of five components: self-regulation, active engagement, challenge orientation, goal-directed behavior, and empathy. Ratings were based on daily classroom interactions rather than standardized tasks, allowing competence to be assessed within natural social contexts.

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Approval was obtained from the institutional research ethics committee of the authors' university. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from the directors of participating centers and from children's guardians. All data were anonymized to protect participants' privacy.

Longitudinal analyses indicated that all five components consistently contributed to overall competence at each measurement point, confirming a stable multifactorial structure of non-cognitive

competence. However, the relative contributions of these components changed across development. Early stages were characterized by strong exploratory engagement and interpersonal orientation, whereas later stages showed increasing integration of regulatory processes. Development therefore appeared as qualitative reorganization rather than simple quantitative accumulation, consistent with dynamic systems perspectives on development (Thelen & Smith, 1994; Smith & Thelen, 2003). In addition, lower initial levels predicted greater subsequent gains across several components, particularly empathy, suggesting compensatory development and developmental plasticity. These findings suggest a developmental process consisting of three phases: exploratory engagement, transitional instability during self–other coordination, and integrated socially regulated competence. Temporary instability may therefore represent developmental work rather than regression. Educational environments that respond to children with empathy rather than behavioral control may support the developmental processes through which non-cognitive competence emerges. From this perspective, behaviors that appear unstable or inconsistent may reflect children’s ongoing efforts to reorganize their developing capacities.

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POSTER SESSION II (PRINTED POSTERS) – 18.07 SATURDAY

11. From Equality to Equity: Using MTSS to Promote Social Justice in Early Childhood Education

Authors and affiliations:

Tsz Yan Cheng — Hong Kong Christian Service

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This study presents a case of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) implemented in a mainstream nursery school in Hong Kong serving aged 2-6 children and their families, positioning it as a transformative mechanism for advancing social justice within early childhood education. Operating within a demographic landscape where approximately 30% of the student population presents with Special Educational Needs (SEN), the school's adoption of MTSS transcends traditional intervention; it serves as an equity-oriented framework designed to dismantle systemic barriers related to ability, class, and cultural background.

The implementation operationalizes a responsive, four-tiered structure that prioritizes the unique, intersectional identities of children and their families. Tier 1 (Universal Support) addresses the “opportunity gap” exacerbated by the pandemic by providing equitable access to developmental resources, such as structured home-based activity guides and adaptive writing tools, ensuring that socioeconomic status does not dictate developmental trajectory. Tier 2 (Early Identification and Referral) mitigates the latency of diagnosis often faced by marginalized families through proactive screening and social worker advocacy, thereby promoting procedural justice in accessing essential services. Tier 3 (Targeted and Intensive Support) exemplifies a commitment to distributive justice by allocating intensive resources—such as individualized scaffolding and social-emotional interventions—to children languishing on service waiting lists. This tier explicitly counters the “wait-to-fail” model by validating diverse learning profiles and abilities immediately. Furthermore, Tier 4 (Interdisciplinary Capacity Building) integrates cultural responsiveness into the pedagogical core, specifically addressing the intersectional disadvantages faced by cultural-diversity children with SEN. By collaborating with allied health professionals and therapists, the school ensures that interventions are culturally linguistically appropriate, challenging dominant normative frameworks.

Beyond the classroom, the school fosters family agency and empowerment—key tenets of social justice work. By establishing mutual support networks and facilitating informed transitions to special schools, the program actively combats the social isolation often experienced by families of children with disabilities. The dissemination of these inclusive practices to the wider community further advocates for a systemic shift toward valuing neurodiversity and inclusivity.

Ultimately, this case study demonstrates that a rigorous, contextually adapted MTSS framework is not merely an administrative tool, but a vehicle for social justice. It effectively addresses inequalities by honoring individual differences and ensuring that every child, regardless of ability or background, is afforded the dignity of a fair start.

12. How Teachers Recognize Pedagogical Moments in Play: Improvisation, Embodiment, and Reflection in Early Childhood Practice

Authors and affiliations:

Midori Kobayashi — Bukkyo University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Play is widely recognized as a central activity through which children explore their environment, construct meaning, and form relationships with others. However, everyday actions by teachers, such as moving teaching materials or tools, are often viewed merely as environmental adjustments, and their educational significance has not been sufficiently examined. This study focuses on the act of “moving objects” performed by teachers in childcare settings, aiming to clarify how these actions are understood in relation to children’s play experiences. It particularly examines how teachers recognize pedagogical moments that emerge within play, exploring the roles of improvisation, physicality, and reflection in these instances.

In this study, video recordings of play scenes were presented to three groups of teachers with varying years of experience (newly qualified, mid-career, and experienced) who then participated in group discussions (focus groups). The resulting narratives were analyzed using SCAT (Steps for Coding and Theorization) to generate concepts for each group and compare their interpretive structures.

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects and received review and approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Bukkyo University.

Participants were provided with a prior explanation of the study’s purpose and methods, and informed consent was obtained. Participation in the discussions was voluntary, and participants were assured they could withdraw at any time without disadvantage. Video materials were filmed with permission from the childcare facilities. During transcription and analysis, anonymization was performed to prevent identification of individuals or facilities. Data were used solely for research purposes and managed securely.

The results revealed distinct differences in understanding the identical act of “moving objects” based on childcare experience. Newly hired teachers tended primarily to describe observed events and did

not sufficiently interpret the educational meaning of the action. Mid-career teachers tended to understand these actions as situational adjustments aimed at maintaining order, ensuring safety, and sustaining play. In contrast, experienced teachers interpreted the same actions as opportunities to change the situation and expand children's play possibilities. They discussed not only the actions of teachers but also how changes in object placement influenced children's engagement to environment and participation.

These results suggest that professionalism in early childhood education may involve the ability to discern pedagogical moments latent within play events. This recognition is thought to be supported by physicality—understanding children's physical interactions with objects and space—improvisational thinking that generates meaning according to the situation, and reflection that revisits and reinterprets practice. This study suggests the importance of dialogic reflection—sharing and interpreting daily practices—in both early childhood educator training and current teachers' training. It also reveals how teachers' seemingly casual actions can become opportunities that open up possibilities for children's play.

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13. Implementing a STEAM Curriculum Through Sail Car Projects in Preschool: A Case Study on Curriculum Development, Challenges, and Children's Learning Outcomes

Authors and affiliations:

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Ya-ling Chen — National Pingtung University

Keywords: not provided in the dedicated database field

Abstract:

This study employed a case study methodology to investigate the implementation of a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) curriculum centered on sail cars in a preschool setting. Nine children from a senior preschool class in Pingtung County, Taiwan, participated in the project-based STEAM curriculum over 11 weeks. The research examined three key aspects: (1) the teacher's process of implementing the sail car STEAM curriculum, (2) the challenges and difficulties encountered during implementation, and (3) children's growth in abilities following participation in the curriculum. The findings revealed three major conclusions. First, regarding the teacher's

implementation process, the teacher adopted a project-based approach originating from children's daily conversations and interests. During the initial exploration phase, teachers facilitated children's discovery of STEAM learning through exploring motorized vehicles, sparking curiosity and engagement. In the in-depth investigation phase, children systematically explored factors affecting sail car speed through scaffolded experiments, documenting findings using learning worksheets and sharing discoveries during group discussions. In the extension phase, teachers provided scaffolding through questioning when children encountered challenges, promoting collaborative problem-solving and scientific sharing. Second, regarding challenges encountered, four primary difficulties emerged: (1) teachers needed to respond and solve problems immediately as curriculum direction shifted with children's interests; (2) teachers needed to provide construction and exploration materials promptly; (3) teachers needed to continuously adapt content to match children's life experiences and abilities; and (4) both teachers and children experienced frustration when facing repeated failures, requiring strategies to maintain motivation. Third, regarding children's growth, substantial development was demonstrated across multiple domains.

In STEAM competencies: Science—understanding sail car mechanics and wind power conversion; Technology—correctly using tools and materials for construction; Engineering—designing optimal sail-car combinations to improve performance; Arts—creating aesthetically pleasing designs; Mathematics—applying numerical concepts and recording data. Children also showed growth in cognitive abilities (understanding sail car structure, variables, and construction methods), affective expression (increased enjoyment, enthusiasm for exploration, and willingness to share), and skill development (constructing, measuring, and documenting experiments). Overall improvements were observed in self-confidence, problem-solving, peer collaboration, active participation, and oral expression. Based on these findings, the study recommends that STEAM curricula should connect with children's interests and life experiences, teachers should continuously enhance professional knowledge while providing appropriate scaffolding, and educational policies should increase STEAM professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.

Keywords: STEAM education, early childhood education, sail cars, case study, curriculum implementation, project-based learning

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

Authors and affiliations:

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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: not provided in the database

Abstract:

摘要：一项针对中国五大区域（东部、西部、南部、北部和中部）1082名3至6岁学龄前儿童的研究，考察了他们对16个芝麻街布偶形象的偏好。结果显示，儿童之间存在共同的审美偏好，其主要影响因素依次为：身体特征、服装或道具以及面部特征。中国学龄前儿童强烈偏爱与其认知经验相符的形象——写实且具体——同时排斥超出其审美预期的超现实主义描绘。对人物偏好中隐含内涵的分析表明，中国儿童更倾向于体现传统文化“积极特质”的形象。“美德”文化的微妙影响深刻地塑造了他们的审美倾向。该研究表明，在特定环境下形成的文化隔离，通过文化意识或自律，塑造了特定区域和情境群体内的集体审美趣味。

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.

15. Technology Integration in Early Childhood Education: Attitudes, Challenges, and Support Needs among Preschool Educators in Taiwan

Authors and affiliations:

Yi-wen Tsai — National Pingtung University, Taiwan

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The integration of digital technologies into early childhood education (ECE) has become a global priority aligned with twenty-first century competency frameworks (Tsai, 2024; Blackwell et al., 2014). In Taiwan, this impetus is anchored in two intersecting policy frameworks. First, the Early Childhood Education and Care Act mandated the consolidation of kindergartens and childcare centres under a unified system, establishing the Ministry of Education (MOE) as the central authority over curriculum quality (MOE, 2012). Second, the Curriculum Guidelines of Preschool Educational Activities (MOE, 2017)—effective August 2017—explicitly emphasizes that curriculum planning should respond to rapid social changes and cultivate children's six core competencies through diverse media and multi-modal learning environments. The MOE's Digital Learning Enhancement Plan (2021–2025) further extended investment in educational technology infrastructure and teacher digital literacy across all schooling levels, including early childhood settings (MOE, 2021; Tsai, 2024). Despite these policy drivers, the lived experiences of preschool educators in implementing technology-integrated teaching remain understudied within Taiwan's ECE context. This study addresses three research questions: (1) What are the current attitudes toward, challenges in, and support needs for technology integration among kindergarten educators in Taiwan? (2) What are the bivariate relationships among these three constructs? (3) Do attitudes and challenges significantly predict educators' perceived support needs?

Theoretical

Framework

This study is grounded in Ertmer's (1999) Barrier to Technology Integration Model, which distinguishes between first-order (external) barriers—such as inadequate hardware, unstable network infrastructure, and insufficient institutional support—and second-order (internal) barriers, encompassing teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and confidence (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). A "third-order barrier" linked to teachers' capacity to translate digital pedagogical knowledge into contextually appropriate practice has also been identified (Tsai & Chai, 2012). Together, these frameworks predict that technology integration is not merely a resource problem but is deeply shaped by educator disposition and professional readiness (Blackwell et al., 2014; Alotaibi, 2023).

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey design was employed. A purposive sample of 103 preschool educators across kindergartens in Taiwan completed a researcher-developed questionnaire comprising three sections: (a) Challenges of Technology Integration (21 items; 4 sub-dimensions: technical/equipment barriers, instructional design and professional capability, child learning and classroom management, and parental/external factors); (b) Attitudes toward Technology Integration (19 items; 3 sub-dimensions: beliefs about educational value, confidence in implementation, and willingness to adopt); and (c)

Support Needs for Technology Integration (19 items; 3 sub-dimensions: hardware and digital resources, professional development and training, and administrative/personnel support). All items used a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). Reverse-scored items were recoded prior to analysis. Internal consistency reliability was established for all three main scales: Challenges ($\alpha = .911$), Attitudes ($\alpha = .833$), and Support Needs ($\alpha = .944$), all exceeding the accepted threshold of $\alpha \geq .70$. Composite mean scores were computed for each construct. Pearson product-moment correlations were examined first, followed by multiple linear regression (Standard method) with support needs as the dependent variable.

Results

Descriptive statistics. Mean scores were: Challenges ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.46$), Attitudes ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.31$), and Support Needs ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.45$), all on a 1–4 scale. Support needs scored highest overall, while challenges fell below the scale midpoint, suggesting that although participants did not perceive technology integration as overwhelmingly difficult, they nonetheless expressed strong demand for institutional support.

Correlation analysis. A significant negative relationship was found between challenges and attitudes ($r = -.281$, $p < .01$), indicating that educators who encountered greater difficulties held less positive orientations. A moderate positive relationship was found between attitudes and support needs ($r = .558$, $p < .001$), suggesting that more favourably disposed educators perceived greater need for support. The relationship between challenges and support needs was positive but non-significant ($r = .183$, $p > .05$).

Multiple regression. The model accounted for 43.7% of variance in support needs ($R^2 = .437$, Adjusted $R^2 = .426$, $F(2, 100) = 38.82$, $p < .001$). Both predictors were statistically significant: attitudes ($B = 0.955$, $\beta = .662$, $t = 8.47$, $p < .001$) and challenges ($B = 0.355$, $\beta = .369$, $t = 4.72$, $p < .001$). Variance inflation factors ($VIF = 1.09$) confirmed the absence of multicollinearity. Attitudes emerged as the substantially stronger predictor.

Conclusions

and

Implications

Three findings merit particular attention. First, educators' attitudes toward technology integration were the strongest predictor of perceived support needs ($\beta = .662$), corroborating the second-order barrier thesis (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010) and findings from ECE contexts internationally (Alotaibi, 2023; Blackwell et al., 2014). Second, contrary to a deficit assumption, more positively disposed educators did not feel they needed less support—they perceived greater need across all three support dimensions. As teachers become more motivated to integrate technology meaningfully in line with the MOE (2017) Curriculum Guidelines' emphasis on diverse and responsive learning environments, they simultaneously recognise gaps in the available infrastructure and professional development. Third, the

non-significant relationship between challenges and support needs suggests that experiencing barriers does not automatically translate into articulated demand for support. Policy-makers should not wait for teachers to report difficulties before deploying capacity-building initiatives; proactive support aligned with teachers' instructional aspirations is more effective. From a rights-based perspective consistent with OMEP 2026's theme of teachers as human rights defenders, these findings underscore that preschool educators require sustained, multi-dimensional institutional support to enact technology-enriched pedagogy that advances children's rights to quality and responsive early education.

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16. Children's Participation at Moments of Rule Emergence in Preschool Free Play: A Qualitative Re-analysis from a Phenomenological Perspective

Authors and affiliations:

荣 谢 — East China Normal University

Keywords: not provided in the dedicated database field

Abstract:

Children's Participation at Moments of Rule Emergence in Preschool Free Play: A Qualitative Re-analysis from a Phenomenological Perspective

In discussions of children's participation, researchers are no longer concerned only with whether children are able to express their views. Increasingly, attention has turned to how children enter concrete situations through action, relationships, and shared activity, and how, in doing so, they influence the formation of a shared world. Drawing on conversation analysis, ethnography, and related approaches, existing studies have offered detailed accounts of how children negotiate entry rights, role allocation, material use, boundary maintenance, and the development of play. In many such studies, however, rules are still treated primarily as pre-existing frameworks within play. Less often do researchers ask under what conditions, in free play that usually proceeds through tacit coordination, rules cease to remain in the background and become issues that participants must address together. Starting from this question, the present study examines how moments of rule emergence take shape, and how children, precisely at these moments, enter into the definition of a shared problem and influence the unfolding of the activity. From a phenomenological perspective, a "moment of rule emergence" refers to the moment when a rule moves from tacit background to the foreground of interaction and becomes something that participants must jointly define, interpret, and deal with.

This study adopts a qualitative re-analysis of publicly available transcripts of preschool children's interaction from TalkBank/CHILDES. The selection of materials was guided by two principles: first, the episodes had to be clearly identifiable as preschool children's free play; second, the transcripts had to preserve a sufficiently complete process of interaction so that one could observe moments when shared activity shifted from tacit coordination to pause, disagreement, or uncertainty. On this basis, the study mainly draws on unstructured free-play episodes from the Sawyer Corpus as its core material, supplemented by school interaction episodes from the Hall Corpus that can be identified as free play, so as to broaden the range of situations in which rules enter the foreground. The analysis focuses on moments when a smoothly unfolding shared activity is interrupted by pause, dispute, correction,

exclusion, renaming, or the reorganization of positions. It examines how children interpret, respond to, and negotiate around shared questions such as “What are we playing now?”, “Who can join?”, “Does this count?”, and “How should we continue?” It further traces how these interpretations are accepted, rejected, or revised, and how they in turn reorganize the situation and the subsequent activity. Rather than classifying rules in advance according to fixed types, the study understands rules as a process through which they enter the foreground in concrete interaction, become jointly dealt with, and shape the direction of activity. Through this re-analysis, the study focuses on how rules come into the foreground of interaction, and how children, in this process, gain, adjust, or lose positions of participation.

The re-analysis shows that, in preschool free play, rules do not always exist prior to interaction as explicit provisions. More commonly, rules enter the foreground as matters of order that need to be dealt with when the ongoing coordination of shared activity is interrupted by pause, disagreement, or mismatched understanding. Their emergence mainly takes three forms. First, negotiation over entry and boundaries: when a new member attempts to join, when existing boundaries are disturbed, or when participation positions need to be redefined, children respond to questions concerning who may enter, what position latecomers should occupy, and whether the boundaries of the play still hold. Second, the handling of disputes over legitimacy: when conflicts arise over the use of materials, ways of acting, or the distribution of resources, children explain, defend, or reject particular actions by addressing whether something is allowed, whether a certain act counts as part of the play, and how resources should be distributed. Third, reorganization in response to mismatches over how the play should proceed: when children develop different understandings of what they are playing and how the play should continue, rules enter the foreground through the redefinition of the situation and the adjustment of the direction of play. In these situations, children transform previously tacit understandings into issues open to joint response by explaining, rejecting, insisting, restating the situation, reallocating positions, and redirecting the play. In other words, rules are not always explicitly proposed by children in advance; more often, they are called forth when prior coordination breaks down and enter the foreground of interaction as shared problems. This study argues that children’s participation in preschool free play should not be understood solely in terms of whether children are present or whether they are given opportunities to speak. Rather, it should be understood in terms of whether children are able to enter into the definition of a shared problem and make their interpretations effective in shaping the course of activity. Moments of rule emergence are important precisely because they transform the order of play from a tacitly followed background into a shared matter that children can enter, negotiate, and influence. In this sense, the significance of children’s voice lies not merely in whether something is said, but in whether children’s interpretations

enter into the handling of shared problems and become consequential within it. Differences in interactional power are likewise manifested first in whose interpretations are more likely to be taken up and to organize what happens next. The contribution of this study lies in shifting the analytical focus from how children negotiate rules to when rules themselves enter the foreground and become shared problems, thereby revealing moments of rule emergence as an important site for the generation of children's participation. This also suggests to researchers and practitioners that pauses, disputes, and mismatches in play should not be viewed simply as interruptions of order, but also as important moments in which children jointly define situations, negotiate rules, and generate participation. The study is mainly concerned with the interactional conditions under which rules become shared problems and with the relation between such moments and the formation of participation. Children's fuller embodied experience, as well as the applicability of this perspective to other educational settings, remains to be explored further.

Keywords: children's voice; children's participation; free play; moments of rule emergence; qualitative re-analysis

17. Implementation and Cultural Adaptation of the Second Step Kindergarten Program in Taiwan: A Mixed-Methods Exploratory Study

Authors and affiliations:

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Ya-ling Chen — Department of Early Childhood Education, National Pingtung University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Abstract

This study, primarily driven by in-depth qualitative exploration and supported by quantitative evaluation, investigates the implementation process and cultural adaptation mechanisms of the Second Step Kindergarten social-emotional learning (SEL) program within a Taiwanese early childhood education context. Employing a mixed-methods exploratory case study design, this seven-month research involved 15 kindergarteners from a preschool in Pingtung City. Qualitative data, analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), were collected from classroom observation records, the teacher's reflective journals, and parent feedback. Quantitative data from pre- and post-tests using the DESSA-SSE scale (analyzed via the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test) served as supplementary evidence. The core findings highlight three cultural adaptation strategies practiced by the teacher: contextual localization, material indigenization, and family culture bridging. Furthermore, the study reveals a key

pedagogical transformation specific to Taiwanese culture: the teacher deliberately stepping back from the role of an arbitrator, thereby guiding children to transition from relying on adult intervention (tattling) to engaging in autonomous social negotiation. While the quantitative results indicated improvements across all four dimensions of the children's socio-emotional competencies, findings from this small sample size warrant cautious interpretation. The study concludes that culturally responsive systematic adaptation is a critical prerequisite for the effective realization of the program's outcomes, offering significant implications for the localized practice of SEL in East Asian contexts.

18. "Life Practice Field": Young Children's Autonomous Experiential Learning Through Play Based Curriculum — A Case Study of Xianyou Experimental Kindergarten, China

Authors and affiliations:

Wei Huang — not provided in the database

Saihua Chen — not provided in the database

Zishang Liu — not provided in the database

Xunyi Lin — not provided in the database

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Introduction

China's Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6 advocates implementing education holistically within children's daily lives, creating supportive environments, and integrating learning across developmental domains. However, in practice, many kindergartens still face three persistent challenges: (1) learning content is disconnected from children's real-life experiences, as teachers tend to "over-design" activities that do not align with children's intrinsic developmental needs; (2) teachers and learning environments fail to adequately support children's autonomous learning, relying heavily on teacher-directed whole-group instruction while overlooking opportunities for experiential exploration, problem-solving, negotiation, and reflection embedded in authentic life situations; and (3) parents hold narrow conceptions of learning — equating education with academic knowledge such as mathematics, pinyin, and literacy — which leads to the academicization (xiaoxuehua) of early childhood education and diminishes children's opportunities for self-directed experiential learning. To address these challenges, Xianyou Experimental Kindergarten, a provincial-level model kindergarten in Fujian Province, China, developed the "Life Practice Field" (Shenghuo Shijian Chang) — an innovative curriculum framework that positions play, creativity, and authentic life experience at the center of young children's learning.

Rooted in Janusz Korczak's humanitarian educational philosophy of respecting children's dignity, listening to their voices, and safeguarding their rights, this study maintains a firmly child-centered and anti-adult-centric educational stance. It employs Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as its competency framework, focusing on the five core dimensions of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Using the "Life Practice Field" as the implementation vehicle, the curriculum transforms authentic daily life, labor practices, social interactions, and problem-solving into vital arenas for emotional development and character cultivation. Ultimately, it achieves an organic unity of emotional education, practical learning, and the protection of children's rights, providing both theoretical support and practical pathways to foster the comprehensive and individualized development of young learners.

Methodology

This case study employed an action research approach, proceeding through iterative cycles of "identifying problems — implementing actions — adjusting plans — refining practices." The initiative unfolded in four developmental phases over more than a decade: (1) Initial exploration, in which teachers piloted life-based experiential learning through activities such as "Healthy Diet Fairs" and a "Life Secrets Discovery Corner," gradually expanding content to encompass seasonal rhythms, festival cultures, daily routines, and community issues; (2) Comprehensive deepening, in which the kindergarten transformed its physical environment into a "Micro-Community" (Wei Shequ) — a life-simulated learning space featuring a "Shared Practice Hall" (including a miniature street district with a bookshop, clothing workshop, florist studio, science station, and children's kitchen) and age-differentiated "Classroom Homes" (Banji Xiaojia); (3) Sustained reform, which introduced an "N+1+1" curriculum model — where "N" represents each child's individualized, interest-driven explorations, and the two "1s" represent a preset developmental curriculum and a teacher-generated community-of-practice curriculum — alongside a "Big Recess" flexible scheduling system that grants children 2 hours each morning and 1 hour each afternoon for self-directed play; and (4) Outward dissemination, which forged a kindergarten-family-community educational alliance through systematic parent education, shared life-practice activity cases, multi-scenario experiential learning extensions (e.g., "Classroom Cleaning Day" extending to "Family Cleaning Day"), and synchronized child-development assessments with parents.

Findings

The "Life Practice Field" yielded four key outcomes. First, the life-contextualized learning environment effectively activated children's prior experiences and supported meaningful experiential learning, as children autonomously set up, managed, and operated the street-district venues based on their observations of real-life scenarios. Second, life-logic-based learning content — drawn from daily

routines, seasonal cycles, cultural festivals, street-district role-play, and children's own inquiries from classroom "Discovery Corners" and "Problem Walls" — enabled children to acquire direct, concrete experiences transferable to home and community contexts. A representative example involved children spontaneously organizing a parcel delivery service after noticing accumulated packages at the school entrance; this child-initiated activity expanded organically into map-drawing, phone-number identification, polite customer service, waste sorting research, and eventually a whole-class thematic inquiry on "Trash Is Treasure," demonstrating rich creative expression, collaborative problem-solving, and self-directed learning. Third, the autonomous learning management model — featuring dual platforms ("Community of Practice" and "Self-Individualized Learning") and the "Free Agent" role system — cultivated children's agency, time-management awareness, and capacity for both independent and collaborative learning. Fourth, the kindergarten-family-community consensus-building strategies successfully shifted parents' educational beliefs from academicization toward embracing "Life is Education," with families actively co-participating in experiential learning activities across multiple real-life settings.

Conclusions

This case study demonstrates that the "Life Practice Field" curriculum provides a viable, play-based, and creativity-rich pathway for young children's autonomous experiential learning within authentic life contexts. By restoring real-life scenarios within the kindergarten environment, respecting children's agency in choosing what, when, and how to learn, and bridging kindergarten, family, and community education, this approach effectively counters the academicization of early childhood education. The findings highlight that when children are given voice and autonomy — consistent with the Korczakian spirit of respecting the child as a rights-bearing subject — they demonstrate remarkable creativity, initiative, and problem-solving capacity through play and life-based exploration. This case offers practical insights for international early childhood educators seeking to design curricula that honor children's right to play, express, and learn through lived experience, contributing to the broader discourse on child-centered, rights-based early education.

19. The Impact of Indigenous Yoruba Play Forms on the Creative Problem-Solving Skills of Preschoolers in Southwest Nigeria

Authors and affiliations:

Tolulope Osanyintade — Lead City University, Ibadan

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The continuous changes in educational paradigms across the world in favour of play-based learning (PBL), there is an immediate necessity to study how indigenous play constructions can contribute to creativity in the Global South. The paper investigates the implementation process of the Yoruba traditional play, Ere Omode, into the early childhood education (ECE) institutions in Southwest Nigeria (Oyo, Lagos, and Ogun State). The study used a mixed-method explanatory sequential design as a survey of 120 ECE teachers and an observation of 300 preschoolers in a Play-Lab. The findings show that rhythmic play (Orin Eré) is the most common (mean=3.42); however, cognitively challenging strategy games and riddles are not used. The statistical analysis showed a positive correlation with $X = 0.72$ and $p = 0.001$ (highly significant) between exposure to indigenous storytelling (Àlò) and the originality dimension of creativity. Nevertheless, the research establishes an important barrier of academic myth where 85 percent of teachers state that parental expectation of rote academic exercises prevents play-based innovation. In the conclusion, a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) Framework is suggested in the paper, which incorporates the Yoruba riddles, strategy games, and materials that can be found locally into the national curriculum. This paper leads to the decolonisation of ECE and offers a scalable paradigm of developing 21st-century skills by means of African classroom cultural expression.

20. Rethinking Teacher–Child Dialogue through Gadamer’s Hermeneutics

Authors and affiliations:

Yawen You — not provided in the database

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Hans-Georg Gadamer distinguishes the I–Thou relationality between the interpreter and what is handed down and conceptualizes it in three forms. The first treats the “Thou” as an object of knowledge, corresponding to an objectifying attitude grounded in methodological thinking. The second regards the “Thou” as a means of self-relation, through which the “I” reflects upon itself and achieves self-confirmation. The third, by contrast, approaches the “Thou” as a genuine “Thou”: the “I” listens to what the other says and enters into dialogue with an open attitude. Teacher–child dialogue constitutes a central component of educational activities in early childhood settings. Yet in practice it faces persistent difficulties. At the level of relationality, teacher–child dialogue often takes the form of one-sided, teacher-centered communication. In terms of content, it tends to become mechanized, oriented toward the rapid acquisition of information. In the dialogical process, it is frequently proceduralized, guided by the completion of predefined tasks.

From a Gadamerian perspective, these practical difficulties can be understood as consequences of the dominance of the first and second forms of I–Thou relations. When teacher–child relations are situated within an objectifying subject–object framework, the child as the “other” is reduced to an object, and understanding becomes a mode of abstraction, appropriation, and control, ultimately transforming all understanding into a form of self-mastery. By contrast, in the third form of relationality, the “I” and the “Thou” stand in a genuinely intersubjective relation of listening and dialogue, oriented toward understanding as something achieved within dialogue itself. Such dialogue is not an exchange of opinions between subjects, but a dialectical movement of question and answer guided by the structure of the question—that is, a form of dialogical play. Dialogue unfolds as a play within language, and understanding continually comes into being through this linguistic movement. Therefore, teacher–child dialogue should be understood as an intersubjective dialogical relation, whose educational significance lies not in the effective operation of methods, but in the event of understanding that takes place within dialogue.

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E-POSTERS	18.07 SATURDAY
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E-POSTER SESSION II (ELECTRONIC POSTERS) – 18.07 SATURDAY

1. Understanding Children’s Learning and Development in Play-Based Early Childhood Education in Japan: Educators’ Professional Practice and Challenges

Authors and affiliations:

Makiko Muroi — Tokyo City University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

- Background

Play-based learning forms the foundation of early childhood education, and its importance has been widely recognized in previous research (MEXT, 2017; Edwards, 2017; Danniels & Pyle, 2018). At the same time, educational policies aimed at developing human capital for the twenty-first century have increasingly influenced preschool education. In many countries, this has contributed to the global spread of “schoolification,” in which early childhood education is positioned primarily as preparation for primary school (Kaga, Bennett, & Moss, 2010; OECD, 2011). Against this backdrop, Japanese early childhood education has maintained a play-centered and experience-oriented approach rooted in the philosophy of Sozo Kurahashi. This perspective is reflected in the national Course of Study for Kindergartens (MEXT, 2018), which emphasizes “comprehensive guidance through play” (Muroi & Iwatate, 2025). Central to this approach is the professional practice of *youji rikai*—the process through which educators understand children’s learning and development as it emerges in play and everyday life. However, concretely grasping and articulating this understanding remains a significant challenge for practitioners.

- Purpose

This study aims to clarify how educators in Japanese play-based early childhood education understand children’s learning and development, and what difficulties arise in this process. Three research questions guide the study: (1) How are “play” and “children’s agency” positioned in Japan’s national curriculum and its commentary?

(2) How is *youji rikai* described as a professional practice in national curriculum documents?
(3) What significance and difficulties do educators experience in understanding, articulating, and supporting children’s learning and development, and what factors underlie these difficulties?

- Methodology

First, a document analysis was conducted of the Course of Study for Kindergartens and its commentary (MEXT, 2017), as well as Assessment Based on Understanding of Young Children (MEXT, 2019). Descriptions related to “play,” “agency,” and *youji rikai* were extracted and analyzed. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted twice (June–July and September–October 2023) with six classroom teachers (with 1–13 years of experience) working at two private kindergartens in the Kanto region of Japan. Interview data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically.

- Results

Document Analysis

The national curriculum positions play not as preparation for future learning but as learning that

holds meaning for children in the present moment. This perspective resonates with Kurahashi's concept of sanagara no seikatsu ("life as it is"). The analysis indicates that youji rikai is described through three interconnected dimensions:

- (i) reading children's behavior through careful observation of actions, language, expressions, and gestures;
- (ii) reflection on educational practice; and
- (iii) supportive and responsive engagement with children.

Although a high level of professional expertise is required, the documents provide little concrete guidance on how this understanding can be enacted in daily practice.

- Interview Findings

Educators recognized the value of articulating children's growth in words. Some participants noted that "vague impressions become clearer," and that shared frameworks help reduce individual bias in interpreting children's behavior.

However, three main difficulties were identified:

- (i) the time burden associated with documentation (e.g., "it takes considerable time after a day of childcare");
- (ii) the inherent difficulty of capturing children's inner development in words (e.g., "some behaviors could not be fitted into words");
- (iii) the practical challenge of recording and sharing observations for all children.

One educator described having "mixed feelings": while articulating children's development helps make growth more visible, organizing documentation requires considerable time and effort.

- Discussion

Although Japanese early childhood education maintains a clear philosophy of play-based learning, several challenges emerge when educators attempt to articulate and share children's learning in practice. These include the limitations of language in expressing children's inner development, time constraints associated with documentation, and the tension between recognizing the importance of articulation and experiencing its practical burden.

-

When what children learn through play cannot be adequately articulated, the educational value of play may become less visible, making early childhood settings more vulnerable to pressures to replace play with more easily measurable activities. Consistent with Korczak's (1929/2009) idea that "children are not the people of tomorrow but the people of today," respecting children as present-tense beings requires carefully understanding what emerges in their play here and now. The

professional capacity to recognize and articulate such learning is therefore essential for sustaining play-centered early childhood education in the face of schoolification pressures.

- Conclusions and Future Directions

This study confirmed the central role of play-based learning and the professional practice of *youji rikai* in Japanese early childhood education, while also identifying challenges faced by educators in practice. The difficulty of articulating children's inner development, the burden of documentation, and educators' ambivalence between recognizing the value of articulation and experiencing its difficulty are issues that run deeply through early childhood professional practice.

Building on the perspective of *youji rikai*, further research is needed to develop concrete, practice-oriented approaches for understanding and appropriately articulating children's learning and development as it emerges in play and everyday life.

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2. Listening to children's voices: the impact of the Mosaic Approach on Young Children's self- regulation, self- expression and self-efficacy

Authors and affiliations:

Mattha Galakouti — University of Dundee

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

This study investigated the impact of the Mosaic approach on young children's self- regulation, self- expression and self- efficacy. Generally known for its use as a research and listening method, the Mosaic approach was developed by Alison Clark and Peter Moss (2001) and has been widely used in early childhood education throughout the years. Based on the idea that young children can communicate their experiences in many different ways, the Mosaic encourages researchers to collect data through a wide range of means and use them to form a bigger picture. Research shows that the Mosaic approach promotes children's right to be heard and sees them as experts of their own lives. However, there seems to be a need for further research on how this approach benefits children. Most studies tend to focus more on teachers' perspectives rather than children's contributions and benefits of the mosaic approach are mentioned, yet not further measured.

This study, addressed gaps in literature by measuring children's self- regulation, self- expression and self- efficacy. Conducted in a private kindergarten classroom in Athens (n-19, 4-5 years old), the research used a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative scales (adapted Devereux, Rosenberg Self-Esteem, and school personal progress scales) with qualitative observations, short interviews, drawings and creative methods. Child- led and hands-on activities allowed students to choose projects of their own interest, as well as various expressive ways, aligning with the Mosaic approach's philosophy of giving children an active voice.

Quantitative results revealed significant improvements in self-regulation, self-expression, and self-efficacy from pre- to post-intervention, with effect sizes ranging from medium to large and highly significant p-values. Qualitative data highlighted children's increased autonomy, creative expression, problem-solving, and social collaboration. However, follow-up analysis of children's transition to primary school indicated some decline in scores, suggesting that the supportive, child-led environment of the Mosaic approach may not be fully sustained in primary school settings.

These findings underscore the Mosaic approach's potential to empower children's voices, foster social-emotional skills, and enhance self-directed learning in early childhood. They also highlight the importance of sustaining child-centered practices beyond kindergarten. This research contributes to the

global dialogue on children's rights to participation, offering practical implications for educators seeking to listen to children and implement developmentally supportive, participatory approaches.

3. Children's Living Environments and Children's Rights in Sri Lanka's Tea Plantation Sector — Changes in Early Childhood Living Conditions and Care from the 1970s to the Present —

Authors and affiliations:

Narumi Matsumoto — Tokyo Kasei University

Michiko Iwasaki — Tokyo Kasei University

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

Tamil communities living in Sri Lanka's tea plantation (estate) sector have long been situated within distinctive social systems and living conditions shaped by labor and residential structures established during the British colonial period. In particular, children's access to education, health services, caregiving environments, and early childhood care and welfare provisions has differed significantly from that of children living in other regions of the country.

This study aims to clarify long-term changes in the living environments surrounding children belonging to this social and ethnic minority from the 1970s to the present. The analysis focuses particularly on (1) institutional conditions, including citizenship status and political rights, and (2) the development of early childhood care and welfare services, especially Child Development Centres (CDCs), in order to examine how these factors have influenced children's daily lives and the realization of their rights.

The study is based on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with NGO practitioners engaged in community support in tea plantation areas and with medical professionals who have been involved in estate communities since the 1970s and who also served as CDC personnel. Interviews explored changes over time in children's and families' living conditions, challenges related to education and health, the establishment and functions of CDCs, and broader institutional transformations. Interview transcripts were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. In addition, public statistics, international organization reports, and relevant legal and policy documents were reviewed to situate the findings within their historical and institutional contexts.

Findings indicate that from the 1970s through the 1980s, many estate Tamils lacked citizenship and voting rights and were politically marginalized. This exclusion affected access to education, health care, and social services. Estate areas often lacked government-appointed physicians, and medical care was

provided by medical assistants with limited qualifications, reflecting a system distinct from that of the Sinhala-majority society. Within families, long working hours for mothers frequently resulted in insufficient care for infants and young children. Limited school resources and restricted educational opportunities also placed children at a disadvantage from an early age. From the perspective of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, key rights such as non-discrimination, the right to health, and the right to education were not fully realized during this period.

Since the 1990s, progress in citizenship recognition and institutional reforms has legally ensured more equal access to education and health services. From the 2000s onward, the development of CDCs and improvements in caregiver training have transformed previously informal collective childcare practices into more structured early childhood care services. These changes have contributed to improvements in school attendance and children's health conditions. However, from the 2010s to the present, structural challenges such as persistent poverty, family vulnerability due to maternal overseas labor migration, and cases of child abuse continue to reflect ongoing regional disparities.

This study demonstrates that although citizenship restoration and the expansion of early childhood care services have brought measurable improvements, the effects of historically rooted structures of exclusion have not been entirely eliminated. The findings highlight the importance of understanding children's rights in the estate sector within a long-term historical and socio-institutional framework.

4. Who Protects Children Online? Comparing Parents' and Educators' Perspectives on Children's Internet Use

Authors and affiliations:

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Tena Velki — Faculty of Education Josip Juraj Strossmayer (University of Osijek)

Keywords: not provided in the database

Abstract:

The increasing presence of digital technologies in children's everyday lives raises important questions about children's safety in the online environment, the monitoring of Internet use, and the role of adults in protecting children while they use digital technologies. The aim of this study was to examine and compare the perceptions of parents and educational staff regarding children's Internet use, the advantages and dangers of digital technologies, the assessment of children's digital safety and cautiousness, and strategies for monitoring and protecting children's Internet use. The study was conducted using an online questionnaire administered to two convenience samples: 84

parents and 86 educational staff (early childhood educators, teachers, and professional associates). The questionnaire included sociodemographic questions, questions on Internet use, the assessment of the advantages and dangers of digital technologies, the assessment of children's digital safety and cautiousness, questions on the monitoring of children's online activities, and preventive activities related to Internet safety. A combined methodological approach was used, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

The results showed no statistically significant differences between parents and educational staff in their assessment of the advantages of the Internet for children. However, educational staff rated the dangers of the Internet significantly higher, whereas parents rated children's digital safety and cautiousness higher. Parents were also more likely to report direct strategies for monitoring children's online activities, including tracking social media activity and physically supervising children while they used digital devices. In addition, parents were significantly more likely to report being fully aware of how and when their children use the Internet, whereas educational staff were more likely to regard children as passive users of digital technologies.

Qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses revealed clear differences in the protective strategies of parents and educational staff. Parents most often reported individual and restrictive strategies, including limiting time spent online, monitoring social media activity, controlling content, and physically supervising children's activities while they used digital devices. Educational staff, by contrast, more often emphasized preventive and educational activities, such as workshops, conversations with children, the development of digital literacy, and the observance of Safer Internet Day. At the same time, many staff members reported a lack of systematic preventive programs and activities within educational institutions.

Overall, the results point to different approaches to protecting children in the digital environment. Parents rely more on individual supervision, restriction, and direct monitoring of children's activities, whereas educational staff emphasize the importance of education, prevention, and the development of children's digital competences. These findings confirm the importance of cooperation between parents and educational institutions in developing systematic digital protection for children.