

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

WORKSHOPS

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

Workshops Programme



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WORKSHOPS	17.07 FRIDAY 9.30-12.30
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Student-led Workshops / Students Only

Seeing through the Child's eyes - the power of perspective change

Authors / Organisers: Izabela Bzymek; Daria Kwiatkowska; Kinga Piasecka

Academic supervisor: Monika Kiszka

Keywords: Child-Centred Education; Empathy; Janusz Korczak's Pedagogy; Children's Participation; Perspective-Taking

Abstract:

The workshop "Seeing through the Child's Eyes – the Power of Perspective Change" is an interactive meeting for students, aimed at developing the ability to take the child's perspective and deepening empathy in everyday educational and educational situations. The workshop structure is based on integrating the theoretical component with the practice of personal experience. Its aim is to focus on developing reflective and empathetic competences by changing the perspective from adult-centred to child-centred. The theoretical inspiration is the work of Janusz Korczak, whose pedagogy emphasizes the child's subjectivity, their right to respect, autonomy, and equal participation in social life. Methods that stimulate, such as brainstorming, case studies, and elements of drama, which involve role-playing, will be used in the workshop to enable participants to experience situations from a child's perspective. The focus on deconstructing power asymmetry in the child-adult relationship will be crucial, with the aim of building an environment that fosters increased participation and agency among the youngest.

Small People, Big Rights: Janusz Korczak's Timeless Message

Authors / Organisers: Amelia Borowiak; Amelia Grefling; Marianna Minksztyl; Tymoteusz Kurowski

Academic supervisor: Klaudia Jóźwiak

Keywords: children's rights, child voice, child agency, Janusz Korczak, Janusz Korczak's literature, critical reflection

Abstract:

Presentation of the activity

Does a child have a voice - and are we truly ready to hear it? In a world where children's rights are widely declared but not always implemented, there is a growing need for their deeper interpretation and practical application. This workshop is an invitation to engage with the thought of Janusz Korczak as a living and still relevant source of reflection on the subjectivity of the child.

The workshop focuses on developing the ability to critically understand children's rights and consciously apply them in practice, based on the fundamental assumption that a child does not become a human being - they are one from the very beginning. Particular emphasis will be placed on selected children's rights (including the right to respect and the right to make mistakes), which will serve as a starting point for shared reflection.

The sessions are interactive and combine text analysis, discussion, and creative activities.

Participants will analyze selected excerpts from Janusz Korczak's works and then interpret them in relation to contemporary challenges. Working in groups will allow for the confrontation of different cultural perspectives and the co-construction of meaning. The proposed structure of the workshop leads from a brief introductory reflection, through analytical work, to creative activity and group discussion.

The workshop is intended for students participating in the conference who wish to deepen their understanding of children's rights and develop competencies for their conscious application. Participants will gain tools for interpreting Korczak's ideas and the ability to apply them in various educational contexts.

Materials and Techniques

The workshop is based on active learning methods that engage participants in a process of shared discovery and interpretation. It begins with a short icebreaker activity, introducing participants to the topic through reflection on the tension between freedom and control in education, as well as on their own, often culturally conditioned, beliefs about children's rights.

Next, excerpts from the pedagogical essay *Jak kochać dziecko* (How to Love a Child), in which Janusz Korczak's ideas still resonate today, will be used, along with selected passages from his children's

literature: Król Maciuś Pierwszy (King Matt The First) and Bankructwo małego Dżeka (Bankruptcy of Little Jack). Participants will work in small groups, analyzing the texts and responding to problem-based questions concerning children's rights. The results will then be discussed in plenary, fostering the exchange of perspectives and intercultural reflection.

In the second part of the workshop, participants will apply the knowledge they have gained in practice by creating short visual forms (three-panel comics) illustrating a selected child's right in a specific situation. This allows for translating theory into practice and developing visual communication and collaboration skills.

The workshop concludes with a joint summary discussion, during which participants will reflect on the contemporary relevance of Janusz Korczak's ideas and consider which children's rights are currently most at risk or ignored.

The methods used include: text analysis, moderated discussion, group work and creative visual activities based on real-life situations related to children's rights.

Number of participants: 20-25 participants

There are no children, there are people – Relations based on partnership

Authors / Organisers: Aleksandra Nowicka; Antonina Bielska; Lena Burczyńska; Weronika Lazarek; Wiktoria Piskorska; Julia Tkacz

Keywords: Janusz Korczak's Pedagogy; Children's Rights; Partnership-Based Education; Child Agency; Respectful Relationships

Abstract:

The purpose of this workshop is the exploration of possibilities of creating partnershipbased relationship with children, by referring to Janusz Korczak's vision of children as individuals worthy of respect. Korczak's philosophy, captured in his words "There are no children, there are people", emphasizes recognizing the rights of children, developing autonomy and empowering them to be active participants in their own lives and in a society.

The core of the workshop will be counteracting hierarchical approaches in education and replacing them with respectful, empowering practices conducive to forging an educator-child relationship based on partnership. Connecting theory with active exercises aims to provide practical tools for participants to cultivate relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual learning. Along with drawing attention to that every child's voice is an integral part of shaping their own path, we emphasize the importance of learning from mistakes; we support their confidence and decision-making skills. Thereby we reinforce their sense of agency and accountability of their lives.

Presentation of the activity:

In this workshop, we want to show practical steps that we, as educators, can take to support children in learning about their rights. Both theoretical and practical, we plan to reimagine new approaches to relations based on partnership, that can not only improve our ways of interacting with children but also support them to advocate for themselves and people around them. We will focus on topics such as hierarchy in the adult-child interaction, supporting children in reinforcing boundaries, accepting the role of mistakes in identity-forming processes, and children's right as a powerful tool in self-advocacy.

Materials and Techniques:

In this workshop we'll present techniques and materials both theoretical and practical. Opening with lecture and presentation, familiarizing participants with Janusz Korczak's vision of partnership-based relationships. We will then move on to experiential activities: case studies, group discussions, and active exercises based on instructions. We will challenge the participants to create effective ways of equalizing the power dynamic between children and adults. Group discussions are meant to share our thoughts and experiences surrounding that topic, having in mind different cultural backgrounds and contexts.

Number of participants: Maximum 20 participants

WORKSHOPS

17.07 FRIDAY

14.00-16.00

From Voice to Agency: Co-creating Effective Social Media Strategies for Children's Rights and Community Participation

Authors:

Ivona Hrupek — OMEP Croatia, Kindergarten Radost

Katja Leko — OMEP Croatia

Keywords: Social Media Strategy; Early Childhood Education; Family and Community Engagement; Digital Communication; Children's Rights

Abstract:

This workshop is situated within the theme “Families, Communities, and Shared Responsibility” and explores how social media can strengthen connections between early childhood organizations, families, and communities while advancing children's rights and participation. Organizations such as OMEP national committees play a key role in advocacy and communication and increasingly seek to enhance the reach, engagement, and relevance of their social media strategies in dynamic digital environments. The workshop offers a participatory and practice-oriented approach to developing effective and ethical social media strategies. It is designed as an interactive, QR code-based learning journey that combines critical reflection with hands-on creation. Participants will work in small teams, drawing on their own organizational contexts.

Particular attention is given to adapting communication to different platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn and websites) and formats (short video, reels, carousel, visual storytelling), as well as to transforming institutional messages into engaging, audience-centred content suitable for diverse social media environments.

A key focus is placed on communicating with—not only about—children, families, and communities, ensuring that content reflects participation, diversity, and shared responsibility. Ethical considerations, including dignity, consent, and inclusive representation, are integrated throughout the process.

Using a Social Media Strategy Canvas, participants will co-create a tailored social media strategy and develop concrete content ideas ready for implementation, particularly for platforms such as Instagram.

The workshop concludes with short presentations and peer feedback.

Expected outcomes:

- an initial draft of a social media strategy adapted to participants' organizational context
- 2–3 concrete content ideas suitable for platforms such as Instagram (e.g., post, reel, or carousel)
- increased confidence in adapting messages to different social media formats
- improved awareness of how to create more engaging and audience-centered communication
- basic understanding of ethical considerations in communicating about and with children

Materials and Techniques

The workshop is grounded in participatory and experiential learning approaches, emphasizing co-creation, reflection, and practical application.

Participants engage in a structured 90-minute process consisting of:

- a brief introductory framing
- a QR-based interactive phase focused on analysis, reframing, platform adaptation, and ethical reflection
- a co-creation phase using a Social Media Strategy Canvas
- short group presentations and discussion

The QR-based approach enables participants to actively navigate tasks, reflect on current practices, and experiment with new communication approaches across different social media platforms.

Participants will work on a structured Social Media Strategy Canvas as a core tool guiding the development of their social media strategy.

This approach supports participants in developing clear, applicable, and context-sensitive social media strategies, regardless of prior experience.

Number of Participants

Maximum: 12 participants

The workshop is designed for a smaller group in order to ensure meaningful participation, active engagement, and in-depth collaboration. Participants will work in 3–4 small teams, allowing sufficient time for discussion, co-creation, and presentation within the 90-minute format.

Community Based Involvement for a more Sustainable and Multicultural Education for the Future Generation

Author: Simone Restall — MCAST

Keywords: Sustainable Outdoor Play; Early Childhood Education; Environmental Sustainability; Community Engagement; Creative Learning

Abstract:

Involving professional educator attendees to participate in designing and building Sustainable Outdoor Play Areas in educational institutions, promoting a greener and natural environment for children. The participants will sketch and construct model sized outdoor area layouts using natural, recycled and sustainable materials. The vision behind this workshop is to propose a hands on direct involvement of educators, carers, guardians and the outer community to creatively apply ideas, talents and skills to enhance learning as a global stakeholder responsibility, for the future generation. The objective is to promote a multicultural diversity celebration approach, fostering unity and bringing about social peace. Additionally the attendees will be encouraged to apply their imagination in making educational, sustainable, learning resources to support and promote a more expressive and spontaneous learning methodology.

Wykorzystanie nowoczesnych technologii w terapii wspomagającej komunikację oraz funkcje poznawcze.

Workshop in Polish language.

Autor: Aleksandra Załustowicz — Adam Mickiewicz University

Słowa kluczowe: Technologie wspomagające; Komunikacja wspomagająca i alternatywna (AAC); Rehabilitacja funkcji poznawczych; Terapia cyfrowa; Wspomaganie komunikacji

Abstrakt:

Serdecznie zapraszam na warsztat, gdzie zaprezentuję nowoczesne formy terapeutyczne, wspomagające proces komunikacji, takie jak tDCS, Biofeedback, rękawiczka stymulująca tipSTIM, VR, poznawcze gry edukacyjne oraz komunikatory, aplikację wspomagającą funkcję PHSIS, MÓWIK, GRID 3, syntezy mowy. Niniejsze narzędzia służą poprawie funkcji poznawczych, ale również wspomagają proces komunikacji dzieci, młodzieży oraz dorosłych.

The OMEP ESD Rating Scales OMEP WORKSHOP

Authors:

Ingrid Engdahl — OMEP Sweden

Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson — University of Gothenburg

Keywords: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD); Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Sustainability Leadership; Whole Setting Approach; OMEP ESD Rating Scale

Abstract:

The original OMEP ESD rating scale was developed in line with principles of best practices in early childhood. It was developed in 2011-2014 within a research project covering seven countries: Chile, China, England, Kenya, Korea, Sweden and USA [1] to become a tool for research and in-service education. Today, the OMEP-scale is mostly used as a starting exercise to support teachers in identifying successes and concerns in early education and care for sustainability. Perceived benefits of using such a review tool are: bringing teams of early childhood professionals together, providing a common professional language for discussion and development, monitoring of change and accountability, transparency in terms of the criteria by which ECEC settings are rated, a quality assessment of the ECEC setting's strong and weaker content areas, and minimal paper work. In 2019, based on the experiences of using the OMEP-scale a second edition of the OMEP-scale was discussed and accepted at the OMEP World Conference in Panama. Since then, many countries have used the scale, albeit in different ways: Australia, Bosnia Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic. El Salvador, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Russia, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Venezuela. Based on experiences from some of these countries [2], it is now time to develop a 3rd edition of the OMEP ESD Rating Scale. Additionally, research shows that re-orienting a ECEC setting towards sustainability is best done within a Whole Setting Approach. Based on models by Mattie and Wals [3] and Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Elliott [4], we present a draft version of The OMEP ESD Leadership Scale. This scale includes eight content areas (philosophy and values, pedagogy, ESD integrated curriculum, learning environments, resources and infrastructure, capacity building, transformative leadership and community partnership), and indicators for four qualitatively different levels in each area.

The aim of this workshop in Poznan is to discuss the changes proposed for the 3rd edition of the OMEP ESD Rating Scale and the first version of the OMEP ESD Leadership Scale. An aim is to share experiences of using the scale and how to disseminate the two scales further.

References

- [1] Siraj-Blatchford, J., Mogharreban, C., & Park, E. (Eds.). (2016). International research on education for sustainable development in early childhood. Springer.
 - [2] Engdahl, I., & Furu, A-C. (2022). Early childhood education: A vibrant arena in the complex transformation of society towards sustainability. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 54(1), 1–12.
 - [3] Mathie och Wals[1]. (2022). Whole school approaches to sustainability: Exemplary practices from around the world. Education & Learning Sciences/Wageningen University.
 - [4] Årlemalm-Hagsér & Elliott. (2026). Whole centre approaches in ECEfS: Time for transformative leadership and change. In F. Dovigo & S. Alici (Eds.), *Promoting transformative practices for sustainability in early childhood education and care: Cultivating critical, participatory and emancipatory approaches* (Chapter 3). EECERA.
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Solidarity for Creating a Culture of Peace

Authors:

Oba — Fukuyama City University, OMEP Japan;

Yuki Oguri — Mominoki Nursery School, OMEP Japan

Mayumi Ueda — Mominoki Nursery School, OMEP Japan

Yusuke Monoi — Mominoki Nursery School, OMEP Japan

Keywords: Peace Education; Origami Crane Symbolism; Children's Rights; Intercultural Collaboration; Global Citizenship Education

Abstract:

Sadako, who was exposed to the atomic bomb in Hiroshima at the age of two and died of leukemia at the age of twelve, continued to fold paper cranes from her sickbed, praying for a recovery, until her final breath. Subsequently, the “Children's Peace Monument” was built to remember the children who lost their lives in the atomic bombing, just as she did, and the paper crane has become a symbol of peace in Japan. (‘Sadako Sasaki and The Children's Peace Monument’ (originally published on May 6, 1958), Hiroshima Peace Media Center, July 9, 2018).

Every year, countless origami cranes are sent from all over the world to the “Children's Peace Monument” in Hiroshima Peace Park. The children of Hiroshima continue to make origami cranes today, deeply reflecting on their meaning and praying for a peaceful future.

In this workshop, after learning about the wishes embodied in origami cranes, participants will watch a video explaining how to fold a large origami crane. They will then be divided into small groups to make their own origami cranes.

For participants, the very experience of listening to each other's opinions and working together to fold the paper cranes will serve as a meaningful step toward solidarity in the realization of world peace.

The paper cranes created will be assembled into a unified collaborative artwork and displayed during the conference period.

We look forward to the day when, through collaboration with participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, we will see what kind of artwork emerges from our solidarity, infused with each individual's wish for peace.

Sustainability from the Start - OMEP WORKSHOP

Authors:

Ingrid Engdahl — OMEP Sweden, Suzan Özunluoglu — OMEP Sweden

Keywords: Sustainability Education; Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Digital Learning Tools; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Teacher Competences

Abstract:

This OMEP workshop responds to the imperative of integrating sustainable development into Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) by presenting the app ECE Academy, the course Sustainability from the Start, the book for children The Day the Earth felt Everything. They are parts in an innovative approach to e-learning for ECEC teachers and students. Grounded in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it recognizes the urgency of shifting values and practices towards sustainability.

The free online course Sustainability from the Start, an Erasmus+ project financed by the European Union, and available by downloading the app ECE Academy. It was evaluated as BEST PRACTICE by EU. Co-ordinating partner was Kristianstad University, Sweden, and other participants are the 5 OMEP national committees of Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, and Sweden, and the Edtech company edChild. It is available in Croatian, Czech, English, French, Spanish and Swedish, with a possibility to add more languages and has reached around 5,000 participants in more than 55 countries. The Day the Earth felt Everything is a children's book written by Suzan Özunluoglu. It includes 8 chapters, each chapter is linked to one of the 8 friends in the course Sustainability from the Start. The workshop will bring forward the tools and present how they are used in different ways and countries. The goal is to focus on possibilities recognized as possible solutions to bridge gaps in current educational practices by fostering competences among ECEC teachers and university students. The project contributes to the understanding of competences and practices required for sustainable education.

To Keep the Mind from Rusting

Authors:

Małgorzata Żendarska — Zachodniopomorski Oddział OMEP

Grażyna Budzik — Zachodniopomorski Oddział OMEP

Keywords: Child Well-being; Mental Health Promotion; Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Family Engagement; Preventive Education

Abstract:

The workshop presents the assumptions, implementation process, and results of the social campaign of the West Pomeranian Branch of PK OMEP, “To Keep the Mind from Rusting,” devoted to supporting the well-being of preschool children. On the basis of the campaign, an educational and preventive programme of the same name was developed, addressed to parents of preschool children and preschool education teachers. An integral element of the project is also a series of short social spots promoting the idea of prevention, building relationships, and consciously supporting child development. The aim of the initiative is to strengthen children’s cognitive, emotional, and social competences by developing family relationships, creative activity, communication, and responsible use of digital technologies. The project was created in response to the need to support children and adults in building an environment conducive to the harmonious development and mental health of the youngest children. During the workshop, participants will become familiar with the structure of the social campaign, the assumptions of the educational and preventive programme, and examples of activities implemented in cooperation between pedagogical, psychological, and media communities. Social spots will be presented as an educational tool and a starting point for discussion on the role of parents, teachers, and local communities in preventive activities.

The workshop is interactive in nature. Participants will analyse audiovisual materials, work in small groups, and exchange experiences related to supporting families and children. Together, they will develop proposals for activities that can be used in various educational and cultural contexts.

The workshop will create a space for international exchange of experience and reflection on the role of social campaigns and educational programmes in promoting mental health, building relationships, and supporting the harmonious development of the child.

Beyond Furniture: The Learning Environment as a Catalyst for Redefining the Teacher's Role

Author:

Kamila Jakimowicz — OMEP Poland

Keywords: Learning Environment; Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Teacher's Role; Child Agency; Pedagogical Space Design

Abstract:

The organization of space in preschool education is not about furniture, but about redefining the role of the teacher in contemporary early childhood education. Drawing on a ten-year case study conducted in my own private preschool, alongside observations of Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Dalton Plan settings across Europe and the United States, this presentation explores how furnishing becomes a strategic pedagogical decision rather than an aesthetic choice.

The transformation of the learning environment led to a visible shift: “Children are calmer and more focused, and teachers have more time to truly know their students.” This change was not driven by design trends, but by repositioning the teacher—from leader to coordinator of the learning process. The session offers a practical framework for rethinking space as a systemic element of agency, responsibility, and sustainable change in early childhood settings.

Voices, Development, and Dignity: Advancing Children's Rights in Complex Contexts

Authors:

Deborah Young — Community College of Denver

Alia Assali — An Najah university

Keywords: Children's Rights; Peace Education; Child Participation; Language Development; Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Abstract:

This 90-minute interactive workshop explores what it means to recognize children as active citizens in the present. The session brings together insights from language development, epigenetics, and global education frameworks to examine how children's lived experiences shape their development, voice, and participation.

The workshop is aligned with international commitments, including the Tashkent Declaration and the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace Human Rights and Sustainable Development.

These frameworks call for education systems (formal and informal) that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to children's realities, while fostering a Culture of Peace supporting human rights, social justice, and sustainability.

Participants will engage in case-based exploration centering children living in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Through guided activities, they will examine how environmental instability, disrupted education, and exposure to stress influence children's language development, well-being, and opportunities for participation. Drawing on epigenetic perspectives, participants will consider how lived experiences become biologically embedded, reinforcing the importance of early, supportive, and stable learning environments.

The workshop emphasizes a strengths-based, child-centered approach, including vulnerability, resilience, creativity, and the capacity of children to seek meaning and connection. Participants will collaboratively design learning environments that promote dignity, dialogue, and agency.

Two interactive activities structure the session. In the first, participants map the developmental experience of a child in a conflict-affected context, identifying connections between environment, language, and biological stress responses. In the second, they design a learning space that integrates democratic participation, emotional safety, and inclusive, language-rich practices aligned with peace education.

Throughout the session, participants will reflect on their own roles considering how they can act as ethical leaders and advocates for children's rights in diverse and challenging contexts. The workshop connects Early Childhood Care and Education to a current challenge.

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

1. Deepen their understanding of the relationship between biology, environment, language development, and learning
2. Explore practical strategies for supporting language, well-being, and participation in conflict areas.

The workshop uses participatory, reflective, and collaborative methods to engage participants and link theory to practice. Facilitation includes brief slide presentation, small-group discussions, and whole-group reflection. Two core activities are: (1) Child Experience Mapping, exploring how biological, environmental, linguistic, and emotional factors shape development, and (2) Design a Classroom environment under conflict zone where groups create inclusive, democratic learning environments. Techniques focus on dialogue, co-constructing knowledge, and participant-led reflection, with the facilitators guiding discussion encouraging diverse perspectives.

WORKSHOPS	17.07 FRIDAY 18.15-19.30
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Publishing in the International Journal of Early Childhood in Springer Nature

Authors / Organisers:

Mehmet Mart, Necmettin Erbakan University/Türkiye & Acting Editor in Chief of IJEC/Ass. Editor of IJEC
 Petra Vystrčilová, Masaryk University & Ass. Editor of IJEC Cynthia Yael Adlerstein, University of Chile &
 Ass. Editor of IJEC

Alicja R. Sadownik, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences & Ass. Editor of IJEC

Agnieszka Kozłowska, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland; guest editor in SI „Voices of
 Children...”.

E. Jayne White, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand & Editor in Chief of IJEC

Abstract:

This workshop provides participants with encouragement and guidelines to publishing in the *International Journal of Early Childhood (IJEC)*. It begins with an overview of the journal's aims, scope, and publication process - from submission to final publication. Participants will gain insight into the editorial workflow, including desk decisions, peer review, and editorial outcomes.

The session will also highlight opportunities related to Special Issues, with a concrete example of “Voices of Children...” to illustrate the process of application and assessment. In the practical segments of the workshops the participants will be guided through the technical aspects of using *Editorial manager* platform and assessing own abstract (to the conference) based on IJEC guidelines for reviewers. The workshop concludes with guidance on how to register as an author and reviewer on the IJEC website, supporting participants in taking the next step toward publishing.

Following the Sounds of Nature An Arts-Based Inquiry into Voice, Movement and Creative Expression in Early Childhood Practice

Author:

Agnieszka Kuźba — Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Przedszkoli Leśnych

Keywords: Children's Voice; Active Listening; Janusz Korczak's Pedagogy; Arts-Based Education; Child Expression

Abstract:

Art workshop: The art of listening and hearing, 45 min

Inspired by Janusz Korczak's respect for children, this workshop treats listening as an ethical responsibility. It focuses on how adults listen to children — and how both attend to the surrounding world of nature. Participants will interact with real sounds present in their environment: wind moving through trees, leaves shifting underfoot, birdsong, footsteps, children's voices, and silence. These sounds become starting points for vocal improvisation, movement, and visual response. Singing, dancing, and creating sound objects are treated not as performance, but as forms of autonomous expression through which children think and respond before words appear. The workshop encourages educators to shift their role from directing activity to attentive listening — strengthening their ability to recognise, support, and protect children's right to be heard.

Make your own natural paper clay and rediscover the joy of crafting: a new approach for cultivating the aesthetic literacy of early childhood teachers through hands-on activities.

Authors:

Pei-chen Wu — BinJiang Non-Profit Preschool

Yi-chih Jao — BinJiang Non-Profit Preschool

Chih-hsiu Ou — National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences

Hoi Ting Cheung — National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences

Keywords: Aesthetic Education; Natural Materials; Creative Expression; Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Experiential Learning

Abstract:

Make your own natural paper clay and rediscover the joy of crafting: a new approach for cultivating the aesthetic literacy of early childhood teachers through hands-on activities.

Background of the Activity: Aesthetic education has always played a vital role in early childhood education, especially in this era of rapid technological advancement and change. The cultivation of aesthetic awareness has gained importance in early childhood education worldwide. Since its inception, Binjiang Non-Profit Preschool (NPP) has been committed to promoting inclusive education and aesthetic education. It has also participated in the "Ten-Year Aesthetic Education Rooting Plan for Preschools" (2014-2023) sponsored by the Taiwan Ministry of Education's Teacher Training and Arts Education Initiative. The aim is to help children accumulate rich aesthetic experiences in their daily lives, environment, curriculum, and play, laying a solid foundation for their growth and learning. In the process of continuously developing aesthetic activities suitable for all children, the Binjiang NPP team discovered that assisting early childhood teachers in rediscovering diverse aesthetic activities helps to form a team consensus that allows every child to enjoy opportunities for exploration, awareness, and creative expression, while simultaneously enhancing the aesthetic literacy of both teachers and children.

- **Activity Objectives:**

This workshop aims to help participants rediscover their primal senses and enjoy the joy of creation

through making natural paper clay and sculpting activities. The workshop also encourages interaction and collaboration among participants, facilitating discussions and reflections on how to increase opportunities for young children to explore natural materials and freely express their creativity.

- Activity Facilitators

This event will be led by four facilitators: two early childhood educators dedicated to early childhood aesthetic education and two collaborating researchers.

Wu Pei-Chen

Principal of Binjiang Non-Profit Preschool

Jau YC-Chih,

Aesthetic Teacher at Binjiang Non-Profit Preschool

Ou Chih-Hsiu

Associate Professor, National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences

Cheng Hoi-Ting

Research Assistant, National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences

- Materials:

Short-fiber biodegradable paper, stones, bowls and plates, natural pigments, paste, droppers, and containers.

- Techniques:

Discover fun and new possibilities in experiments with the most primal, instinctive tactile activities.

1. Clay Making

Guide participants to rediscover creative materials through the following exploration experiences:

- (1) Observe the direction and length of paper fibers by tearing paper by hand
- (2) Use tools to break down the paper's original structure by pounding it
- (3) Stir the shredded paper with paste and observe the process of it becoming a thick mud-like consistency

2. Sculpting Creation

Guide participants to become aware of their feelings and the results of their collaboration through the following creative experiences:

- (1) Shape homemade paper clay into their desired shapes by kneading and pressing
- (2) Color and share their works and experiences
- (3) Participants collaborate to combine their individual works into a new piece

3. Interaction and Reflection

Guide participants to open new perspectives and possibilities for new actions through dialogue and exchange:

- (1) Share experiences of conducting aesthetic activities with young children
- (2) Inspire participants to use natural materials to provide aesthetic experiences for young children
- (3) Encourage participants to adjust their approaches to conducting aesthetic activities with young children

- Activity Flow

10-Minute Introduction, (Description of preschool aesthetic education in Taiwan/Aesthetic experience activities for parents, teachers, and students at Binjiang NPP)

40-Minute Experience and Creation Activities

- (1) Clay Making
- (2) Sculpting Creation
- (3) Personal Experience and Artwork Sharing

30-Minute Interaction and Reflection

- (1) Group Collaborative Creation
- (2) Sharing Experiences in Designing and Implementing Aesthetic Activities for Young Children

10-Minute Q&A (Checking Activity Objectives and Conclusion)

WORKSHOPS

18.07 SATURDAY

14.00-15.30

When I Was Little Again: The Epistemological Shift in Korczakian Practice

Author:

Basia Vucic — Tiny Songs

Keywords: Children's Rights; Janusz Korczak's Pedagogy; Child Agency; Adulthood; Respectful Listening

Abstract:

Developmental psychology has given early childhood education a rich, evidence-based understanding of how children grow and learn. It has also given the field a persistent habit: interpreting children through comparison, normativity, and developmental expectation. The questions "What does this child need?" or "What is this child missing?" have become so naturalised that they often replace a more fundamental question — one that is not about prior learning, content, or assessed capability, but about what the child knows of the world itself. Not what she has been taught. What she still holds. Piaget observed young children make errors, declaring their failure to reason. However, she was reasoning, poetically and philosophically, stating truths about time, care, and belonging that adults have learned to categorise as mistakes. Applied as the primary interpretive framework, the psychological lens forecloses that possibility before it can be noticed — and it rests on something older and more deeply embedded.

- Beneath it lies adulthood: the unexamined privileging of adult logic, adult interpretation, and adult certainty. It is so woven into professional practice that it appears as neutral observation — not as a framework at all, but as sight itself. The adult who interprets before asking, scaffolds before noticing, or corrects before listening is not acting from malice, but from a professional formation that Korczak spent his life examining.
- In his text *When I Was Little Again*, Korczak attempts to re-enter the child's world, to see as children see, and to unlearn the interpretive dominance of adulthood. His foundational claim — that the child is already a person and already a poet-philosopher — directly challenges both the psychological lens and the adulthood beneath it. In this view, a child's behaviour is not a deviation to be explained but a communication to be received. The adult's task is not assessment. It is attention.

- This workshop begins with a familiar scenario from an early childhood setting. The standard reading is immediate, fluent, and almost certainly wrong. Through this shared encounter, participants will examine how confidently applied professional judgment can misinterpret children's meaning-making — not in moments of neglect, but in moments of care.

Drawing on Korczak's pedagogy, Article 12 of the UNCRC as a practical constraint rather than a policy aspiration, and contemporary case studies drawn from early childhood settings, participants will explore the epistemological gap between adult assumption and child reality. The workshop invites a demanding shift: from the adult who already knows to the adult who declares 'I don't know' — and who understands that not-knowing is not a threat but a requirement of rights-respecting practice. It is the shift toward asking before acting, pausing before concluding, and treating the child's knowledge as the starting point of the interaction.

Korczak called this the most important thing he ever learned about children. The children, as usual, already knew.

It takes a child to raise a village.

Early childhoods systems for equity, justice, and sustainability. A policy future workshop

Author:

Mathias Urban — Dublin City University

Keywords: Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Systems Approach; Sustainable Development; Children's Rights; Policy Advocacy

Abstract:

In a world characterised by accelerating polycrisis young children are most affected by mutually reinforcing disaster scenarios: Climate catastrophe and loss of biodiversity, war, violence, and genocide, forced migration, poverty and inequality. At all levels, in research, policy, and practice, these scenarios require trans-disciplinary, multi-sectoral, and integrated responses. This workshop offers a space to engage with current and recent policy developments at inter- and trans-national levels, with a specific focus on whole-systems-approaches and -frameworks that aim at better, more just and equitable outcomes for ALL children. The workshop will be underpinned by a series of policy briefs on integrated and multi-sectoral ECD and ECEC, written by a global collective of early childhood scholars and activists for the annual summits of the Group of 20 (G20), a global forum for multilateralism in an increasingly polarised world.

We will employ the 'future workshop' methodology, as developed by Robert Jungk, and widely used in contexts of civic engagement, community agency, and peace movements. Future workshops ('how to create desirable futures') help structure thinking, analysis, and forward planning in diverse groups. Following a short introduction to the workshop, the topic, and the methodology, participants will collectively work through three distinct-but-connected phases:

Critique – a thorough analysis of the situation we're in

Vision – unrestricted and unapologetically utopian thinking

Implementation – moving from 'wishful thinking' to concrete action

The aim of the workshop is to initiate concrete collaborative action that reaches beyond the conference to policy collaboration and joint project development. In other words, to use Gramsci's image, to refuse to resign to the 'morbid phenomena' of the dying old world, and use the interregnum to shape the desirable new.

Sowing “Seeds of Peace” in Children's Minds and Hearts ~Picture-Book Exchange and Seeds/Sowing Activities~

Authors:

Nobuko Kamigaichi — Jumonji University

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Makoto Hashimoto — Taninoyuri Kindergarten

Kyoko Kanaya — Seigakuin University

Keywords: Peace Education; Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Human Rights Education; Children’s Participation; Culture of Peace

Abstract:

Since 1948 as the year of founding, World OMEP has committed for sowing the seeds of peace in children's minds and hearts, and for realising a peaceful world free from war and conflict – that is, to promote peace education from early childhood. Based on this World OMEP's philosophy and mission, the Japanese National Committee of OMEP has respected peace and human rights in its activities since joining the World OMEP in 1968. Even today, with pursuing peace indicated in SDGs 16, and efforts to promote ESD from early childhood, disseminating ECCE practices for building a culture of peace, with children and teachers/educators as active participants, remains a central task for the OMEP.

The workshop is consisted of three parts: 1) Reading picture-book and sharing, and 2) Creating one’s own seeds of peace and sharing. 3) Cultivating the culture of seeding of peace in future.

Reading aloud the book, “Hiroshima no ko (children of Hiroshima)” (Shikoku & Hasegawa, 2025) in Japanese, English, Spanish, French, and Polish and sharing impressions and thoughts from the book openly. Then, reflecting on daily life with the children in terms of cultivating peace, and having a discussion for the ways sowing seeds of peace at ECCE settings.

Creating a seed from clay, and participants embody words or images that emerge from their imagination of peace, write or draw them on paper, and embed them within clay to create a “Seed of Peace.” Then, having a discussion about the “Seeds of Peace.”

Taking the “Seeds of Peace” back home and carry it always with the participants. Talking about the reunion in several months after the OMEP World Conference or next year to share experiences of sowing and nurturing the Seed of Peace.

[Materials and Techniques]

1.A Picture-book, “Hiroshima no ko: roudokushi (Children of Hiroshima: Reading-aloud-poetry” (Poem by G. Shikoku, Picture by Y. Hasegawa) BL publisher, 2025. :The picture-book was published in 2025, the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing. Mr. Shikoku, the poet, read-aloud a poem at the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs in Hiroshima in 1980, which was inspired by the children who perished in the Hiroshima atomic bombing. An illustrator, Mr. Hasegawa was moved by the poem, and illustrated in 2023, more than 40 years after Mr. Shikoku performed the poetry reading.

Clay, Markers and Drawing papers

Several picture-books on the theme of peace

Among the practices, since picture books as being familiar to young children, reading aloud activity as well as reading one another are considered a profoundly meaningful practice. It generates and disseminates a culture of peace from ECCE settings where seeds of peace are sown in children's minds and hearts.

Mr. Terumi Tanaka, representative committee member of Nihon Hidankyo and 2024 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, stated as while it is unnecessary to forcefully convey the horrors of the atomic bomb directly to young children, it is essential for adults to have considered how to respond to the children when they ask.

Cross-conference workshop

Creative Hub – “Matt’s Kingdom” Storyline

Author: Anna Basińska, Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, English Teacher Training and Effective Learning Laboratory

Keywords: Storyline Approach; Janusz Korczak’s Pedagogy; Creative Learning; Child Participation; Imagination in Education

Abstract:

Inspired by Janusz Korczak’s classic novel *King Matt the First*, "Matt's Kingdom" is an interactive Storyline experience that comes to life through the collective imagination and active participation of conference attendees. We warmly invite you to the lobby, where the scenery is set, characters await, and rumor has it that Janusz Korczak himself might make a special appearance.

Feel free to drop by at any time to immerse yourself in the narrative and embark on adventures alongside young King Matt. This is a unique opportunity to not only live the story firsthand but also gain practical insights into the Storyline educational approach.

Originating in Scotland, Storyline is a structured framework that integrates the curriculum into a cohesive whole. It is built on the premise that truly meaningful learning must be memorable. By leveraging students' natural enthusiasm for storytelling, this framework transforms classroom dynamics, the teacher's role, and the overall learning experience. Furthermore, it promotes active engagement and reflection, ultimately empowering learners with a profound sense of ownership over their education.

We warmly invite all participants to actively contribute to the creation of “Matt’s Kingdom” – a place where imagination and education come together, and where the voice of every child inspires us to build a better world.