British Early Childhood Education Research Association

# PLAY-BASED PEDAGOGY:
# New and re-developed strategies for supporting children's learning

**mac Birmingham, Cannon Hill Park**
Tuesday 21st February 2017

Centre for Research in Early Childhood

CREC in Birmingham

AMBER Publications & Training

The 7th BECERA Conference is hosted by:

Centre for Research in Early Childhood
St. Thomas Children's Centre
Bell Barn Road
Attwood Green
Birmingham
B15 2AF

Tel.: +44 121 464 0020

www.crec.co.uk

The BECERA Conference is taking place at
the **mac Birmingham**

# BRITISH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (BECERA)

BECERA is an independent organisation for those early childhood practitioner and researchers working in the British Isles who want a space to meet, enquire and discuss issues relevant to their work with young children and families.

BECERA aims to stimulate, support, create and disseminate rigorous, grounded and conceptual knowledge and its applications to our early childhood services. It does this through an annual conference where research is presented and subjected to peer-review. The knowledge generated from each conference will be made available in an online, searchable database.

## WHAT ARE BECERA'S AIMS?

BECERA is particularly interested in practitioner research and exploring paradigms and methodologies which impact directly on services.

BECERA is interested in how knowledge is constructed, who listens and who speaks, and in capturing the voices of all, including parents and children.

BECERA will provide a unique British forum to bring together research, practice and policy and strengthen the early childhood research community in the vital contribution it makes to British practice and policy.

## WHO RUNS BECERA?

BECERA is an independent, self-funding organisation run by the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) which has dedicated itself to improving services for young children and families in the UK for more than 25 years. CREC's Directors are Professor Tony Bertram and Professor Christine Pascal OBE.

## HOW IS BECERA FUNDED?

CREC has undertaken to cover start-up costs and hopes to attract sponsorship from several major UK organisations.

# CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (CREC)

CREC is a charitable organisation established in 2007 and located in the St Thomas Children's Centre, near the centre of Birmingham, in the UK. CREC is dedicated to raising the quality of early childhood and family provision in order to enhance outcomes for children.

CREC's central focus, as expressed in its Governing Constitution, is:

*"To promote and carry out for public benefit, research into issues relevant to early childhood provision and to publish or otherwise disseminate the useful results of such research."*

CREC achieves this objective by specialising in early childhood research which has relevant and meaningful outcomes for practice and policy. Some of its research is transformed into development programmes by its sister organisation Amber Publications and Training (APT). These programmes include:

- Effective Early Learning (EEL, 3-6 years)
- Baby Effective Early Learning (BEEL, birth to 3 years)
- Accounting Early for Life Long Learning (AcE, assessing and supporting Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy from birth to 5 years)
- Opening Windows (creating open and equitable dialogues with parents)
- Leadership & Management in Early Childhood Settings

CREC also delivers postgraduate and research degrees through its close affiliations with Midlands universities, particularly Birmingham City University and Wolverhampton University. It is also a strategic partner with the City of Birmingham's Children and Young People's Directorate.

In partnership with the St. Thomas Centre Nursery and various Nursery and Primary schools across the West Midlands, Cambridgeshire & North Yorkshire, we have recently launched the CREC Early Years Partnership SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training), delivering Early Years focused Teacher Training with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

CREC has a strong reputation for undertaking reviews, reports, evaluations and consultancy with central government and many UK local authorities, NGOs and overseas countries. It has also made a significant contribution to Government policy for early childhood in England through its contributions to many national committees and professional associations.

# CONTENTS

WELCOME FROM THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the seventh BECERA Conference. Feedback from previous delegates reveals that BECERA has become a special place for those who are passionate about developing their knowledge and understanding about early childhood and care and who wish to collaborate in sharing and co-constructing ideas, thinking and dialogue. The conference is inclusive of all those who operate or who have an interest in the real world of service development and delivery. The challenging times we continue to experience economically makes the need for support and deep thinking about the future of early childhood services even more vital as hard decisions are taken.

This seventh conference has as its theme:

**PLAY-BASED PEDAGOGY: NEW AND RE-DEVELOPED STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING**

While there is growing evidence of the importance of play in early childhood development we can see human play coming under threat in many of our early childhood settings and communities. Questions are raised about the fundamental impact this may have on children's development and how this is compatible with the UN Convention which should have secured the child's right to play.

This theme we hope will encourage delegates to explore the challenges and benefits of implementing a play-based pedagogy throughout the foundation years and early primary schooling. It will explore established and innovative strategies for supporting children's learning and natural desire to play. We also hope it will highlight children's need to experience adventure, challenge and risk taking through their play and consider how the significant adults, both professional and parent, can create exciting playful environments, which allow or 'afford' the development of those essential characteristics and dispositions which lead to a more balanced life.

It will explore a number of hotly contested issues such as: How is child development and learning shaped through play? What are the social, emotional and cognitive benefits of play? How is play perceived in different cultures and communities? How can play promote adventure, risk and challenge? How might we observe and intervene in children's play? What makes for a playful environment? How does play support a child with particular needs?

These and other issues will form the dialogic basis of this exciting, participatory and democratic conference in which all are encouraged to be playful, adventurous, give voice and share power in a creative and challenging forum.

In format and content we are again foregrounding the importance of Practice Based Research with the particular aim of encouraging and supporting the development of Practitioner Researchers who study in the 'real world' of early childhood services. BECERA aims to make research meaningful and relevant to practice and to capture the perspectives and knowledge of professionals and other service participants in

co-constructing our understanding of the quality of experience for families and young children. Reflective practitioners have wide-ranging knowledge and BECERA provides a forum where this can be presented and held for systematic peer-review and examined for its transferability and relevance to others.

BECERA offers you a wonderful opportunity to network and become part of a new sector wide 'community of learners' aiming to inform and enhance the quality of service to children and families. We are hoping that the conference will provide delegates with the confidence and skills to develop evidence based practice, which can show the impact and outcomes of this work. The knowledge we generate, including all presentation abstracts, will be posted on our online database on the BECERA website for wider dissemination. Practice based inquiry has become increasingly important to policy makers and during this conference you will be able to explore it creatively, curiously and companionably.

We at BECERA believe that shared learning can be fun, risky, adventurous and challenging for ourselves and the children and families for whom we work. We believe that learning is realised most effectively when we are both nurtured and deeply engaged. We hope this conference will challenge you, inspire you and support your development both personally and professionally.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Tony Bertram and Professor Chris Pascal**
*CREC Directors*

# CONFERENCE INFORMATION

## CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), Birmingham, UK

Professor Chris Pascal, Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC), Birmingham, UK

## LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE
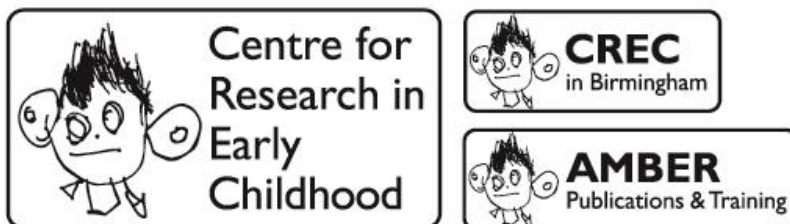
Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham

Professor Christine Pascal, Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham

## MAJOR CONFERENCE SPONSORS

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)
& Amber Publications & Training Ltd (APT)
www.crec.co.uk

# GENERAL INFORMATION

HOST
The host of the seventh BECERA Conference is the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (http://www.crec.co.uk).

REGISTRATION DETAILS
The conference fee for participants includes: admission to the conference, documentation, coffee breaks and lunch.

COFFEE BREAKS AND LUNCH
Lunch and refreshments during all scheduled breaks will be served at the Arena Bar (ground floor). During the last 5 minutes of each break, please make your way to the room in which the plenary or your chosen symposium is located.

EXHIBITION
We invite all delegates to visit our exhibition located in the Arena Bar (ground floor) during lunch and tea/coffee breaks. Our exhibition this year includes:

- **Books Education** who offer 10% discount on all titles on the day of the conference. For more information please visit: www.bookseducation.co.uk.

- **MBK Training** - one of the Midlands leading specialists in early years Training and Consultancy offering a range of open and bespoke courses either at settings or in one of their associated training venues. For more information please visit: www.mbktraining.co.uk.

- **Morris and Simmons Education** offers high quality consultancy, coaching, professional development and resources for the Early Years. Training workshops which can be delivered for staff meetings and teacher's days, are great value for money and cover a wide variety of popular early years themes. For more information please visit: www.morrissimmons.com.

CONFERENCE DINNER
This is taking place on Tuesday 21st February 2017 at Piccolino (Oozells Square, Brindleyplace Theatre, Birmingham, West Midlands B1 2EP) Starting at 17:30. Places at the dinner need to be pre-booked.

INFORMATION DESK
The 'Registration Desk'/'Help Desk' will be located in the foyer of the **mac.** After 10am queries should be directed to the CREC stand which will be located in the Arena Bar (ground floor).

STAFF ASSISTANCE
The CREC team will be happy to provide assistance with practical matters during the conference. The team will be stationed around the venue during the conference and there will always be one member of the team at the CREC stand.

## NOTE FOR PRESENTERS

Each symposium room is equipped with a PC and a data projector. We recommend you save your presentations as a Microsoft PowerPoint document, Office 2003 version to avoid any compatibility issues. We also recommend that you locate your symposium room in advance and arrive at your symposium room at least 15 minutes prior to your symposium start time in order to load your presentation and ensure a prompt start. All PCs are fitted with USB drives and we recommend you load your presentation on a USB memory stick.

## NOTE FOR CHAIRS

Please be present in your symposium room at least 15 minutes prior to your session. It is important that the sessions stay on schedule so that individuals who want to listen to a specific talk may do so, and each presenter gets an equal opportunity to present their work. If a presentation is cancelled you may either convene a general discussion or instead call a recess.

## SYMPOSIUM ROOMS

Symposia will take place across 3 rooms. Depending on which room your intended symposium is in, it may take up to 2 minutes to walk between rooms. We recommend you make your way to the symposium rooms in advance to make sure you get there in good time and that you can find a seat.

## CONFERENCE BADGES

Your personal badge is your entry ticket to all keynotes, symposia, refreshments and lunch. We ask that you wear your badge at all times whilst at the venue.

## TRANSPORT TO/FROM THE CONFERENCE VENUE

The mac is located in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, opposite the County Cricket Ground on Edgbaston Road, off Pershore Road (A441) and Bristol Road (A38). The **mac** is easily accessible using all the major city road routes and is served by a number of buses from Birmingham City Centre including 1, 35, 45, 47, 62 and 63. For more information on bus routes you can use www.traveline.co.uk or other route-planning facilities.

For those who wish to call a taxi you can try the following local firms:

TOA taxis: 0121 427 8888 Castle Cars: 0121 472 2222 Falcon Cars: 0121 477 7777

## LIABILITY INSURANCE

The conference cannot accept any liability for personal injuries or for loss or damage to property belonging to the delegates, either during, or as a result of the meeting. Please check the validity of your own personal insurance before travelling.

## WIFI

The mac has free Wi-Fi throughout the venue – look for the network "mac public".

## SOCIAL MEDIA

You can follow the BECERA conference on both Facebook ("BECERA") and Twitter ("@BECERAssoc"). Please post or tweet your comments during the conference and your photos using hashtag #BECERA2017

# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

## Tuesday 21ST February 2017

| Time | Item | Location |
|------|------|----------|
| **8:00 – 9:10** | Registration, Refreshments & Exhibition | *Foyer (Registration)* *Arena Bar (Tea/Coffee)* |
| **9:10 – 10:10** | Opening session & Keynote I | *Performance Studio* |
| | KEYNOTE I: Colwyn Trevarthen – *All learning is play-based: Meanings come to life in shared play with a rich environment for movement.* | |
| **10:10 – 10:30** | Coffee break & Exhibition | *Arena Bar* |
| **10:30 – 12:00** | Symposium Set I | *A: Performance Studio* *B: Pinsent Mason 1* *C: Deloitte Room* |
| **12:00 – 12:50** | Lunch & Exhibition | *Arena Bar* |
| **12:50 – 14:20** | Symposium Set II | *A: Performance Studio* *B: Pinsent Mason 1* *C: Deloitte Room* |
| **14:20 – 14:40** | Coffee break & Exhibition | *Arena Bar* |
| **14:40 – 15:40** | Symposium Set III | *A: Performance Studio* *B: Pinsent Mason 1* *C: Deloitte Room* |
| **15:40 – 16:00** | Coffee break | *Arena Bar* |
| **16:00 – 16:45** | KEYNOTE II | *Performance Studio* |
| | KEYNOTE II: Helen Moylett – *Adults Supporting Young Children's Play: 'A Squash and A Squeeze' or 'Guess How Much I Love You?'* | |
| **16:45 – 17:00** | Plenary & Close | *Performance Studio* |
| **17:30 onwards** | Conference Dinner | *Piccolino – Oozells Square, Brindley Place* |

# 7th BECERA Conference

# PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

TUESDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2017

**09:10 - 10:10 Opening Session & Keynote I     Performance Studio**

**"All learning is play-based: Meanings come to life in shared play with a rich environment for movement."**

*COLWYN TREVARTHEN - Emeritus Professor of Child Psychology and Psychobiology at the University of Edinburgh, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and a Vice President of the British Association for Early Childhood Education*

Colwyn Trevarthen, Professor Emeritus of Child Psychology and Psychobiology at the University of Edinburgh, has applied human brain science, and detailed description of natural intuitive movements in self-related and shared experiences, aided by the methods of musical acoustics, to study and interpret how infants inspire their learning of cultural meanings and conventional skills in intimate, affectionate play with persons they know well and love.

Infant play sets the foundations for a lifetime of learning with growing powers of the body for independent exploration of the world in careful movement, and for mastery of a language. Training for productive, collaborative work, using established routines of production with their rational explanations in symbolic form, must value playful invention of practice by an apprentice with an appreciative instructor. As Jerome Bruner said, we are 'story-making creatures', and the stories of individuals, families, communities and cultures differ. But their motivations in the sympathetic enjoyment of moving in synchrony, anticipating what will happen and what will be made, testing the 'degrees of freedom' of intentions to act, are universal features of what Margaret Donaldson called 'human sense'. In the last 50 years discoveries of the rhythmic impulses by which infants share their intelligence and tell their stories with Daniel Stern's 'vitality dynamics', and what we have called 'communicative musicality', have changed psychology, revealing the inner meaning of movements of play in every human world, especially in early years.

Recent publications on playful movement:
Trevarthen, C. & Malloch, S. (2002). Musicality and music before three: Human vitality and invention shared with pride. Zero to Three, September 2002, 23(1), 10-18.
Malloch, S. and Trevarthen, C. (2009). Communicative Musicality: Exploring the Basis of Human Companionship. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Second Paperback Edition, 2010).

Trevarthen, C. (2016, in press). Play with infants: The impulse for human story-telling, In, Tina Bruce, Pentti Hakkarainen and Milda Bredikyte (Eds.) The Routledge International Handbook of Play in Early Childhood. Abingdon: Taylor & Francis/Routledge

## SYMPOSIUM SET I: 10:30 – 12:00

|  | Symposium Title | Room |
|---|---|---|
| I/A | TEACHER IDENTITY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | Performance Studio |
| I/B | PLAY IN THE CURRICULUM | Pinsent Mason 1 |
| I/C | PLAY AND SCHOOL READINESS | Deloitte Room |

## SYMPOSIUM SET II: 12:50 – 14:20

|  | Symposium Title | Room |
|---|---|---|
| II/A | DIGITAL PLAY | Performance Studio |
| II/B | EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS | Pinsent Mason 1 |
| II/C | PLAY PEDAGOGIES | Deloitte Room |

## SYMPOSIUM SET III: 14:40 – 15:40

|  | Symposium Title | Room |
|---|---|---|
| III/A | USING PLAY AND PLAYFUL SPACES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING | Performance Studio |
| III/B | CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES | Pinsent Mason 1 |
| III/C | CAPTURING CHILDREN'S VOICE AND ANALYSING THE DATA | Deloitte Room |

**16:00 - 16:45 Keynote II**                 **Performance Studio**

**"Adults supporting young children's play: 'A squash and a squeeze' or 'Guess how much I love you?"**

*HELEN MOYLETT – Independent Early Years trainer, consultant and writer*

Every early years practitioner knows play is important for young children's development and yet, in many early years settings and schools, play is squeezed and squashed by less important activities. This process is not good for children's engagement and motivation and leads children and adults to become less thoughtful, joyful and creative learners. This keynote will explore some of the threads that connect play and thinking and discuss ways that playful thoughtful adults can foster and extend children's natural love of learning. Helen will focus on the central position of narrative and draw on some of the lessons learned by the teacher researchers involved in the Newham Reception Play Project in 2015/6 and discuss ways to love play 'right up to the moon and back'.

References
Donaldson, J. and Scheffler, A. (2003)   A Squash and a Squeeze, MacMillan
McBratney, S. and Jeram, A. (1994) Guess How Much I Love You, Walker Books
Newham Reception Play Project
Moylett, H. (2016) 'Play and Self-regulation' in Nursery World Early Years in Schools
Supplement Moylett, H. (2016) 'Playing Schools: supporting a play based approach in reception' Nursery World 13.06.16

**16:45 - 17:00 PLENARY & CLOSE**         **Performance Studio**

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

TUESDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2017

SYMPOSIUM SET I: 10:30 – 12:00

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**SYMPOSIUM I/A**
TEACHER IDENTITY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
ROOM: Performance Studio

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**CHAIR: YASMIN STEFANOV-KING,** Coventry University Scarborough

**Can a focused induction programme improve practitioner knowledge and impact on the provision for play in a daycare setting?**

Caroline Wright and Mim Brown, Eduko Education Ltd

**The development of early years teacher's identity as playful pedagogues: A Chilean exploratory study**

Maria Opazo, University of Nottingham

**Making learning real**

Yasmin Stefanov-King and Elaine Altuccini, Coventry University Scarborough

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**SYMPOSIUM I/B**
PLAY IN THE CURRICULUM
ROOM: Pinsent Mason 1

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**CHAIR: HELEN LYNDON,** University of Wolverhampton and Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**It's a tug of war! Schoolification vs. Pedagogical play - Ready, steady, go!**

Julie Ovington, Northumbria University

**Play within children's everyday lived experiences of early primary schooling**

Catherine Gripton, Nottingham Trent University

**Children's free play cultures and practices between home and nurseries - developing insights through meaning-making with young children**

Yaspia Salema, University College London

**SYMPOSIUM I/C**
PLAY AND SCHOOL READINESS
ROOM: Deloitte Room

**CHAIR: KATHRYN PECKHAM,** Independent Early Childhood Consultant and Author

**Listening to Reception children: what can we learn from them about 'school readiness'?**

Laura Heads, Northumbria University

**All Work and No Play: A critical analysis of the tension between academic and play based kindergarten education in the US**

Ithel Jones, Florida State University

**Developing a theoretical framework to support an experiential, play based approach to school readiness**

Kathryn Peckham, Independent Early Childhood Consultant and Author

# SYMPOSIUM SET II: 12:50 – 14:20

**SYMPOSIUM II/A**
DIGITAL PLAY
ROOM: Performance Studio

**CHAIR: SHANNON LUDGATE,** Birmingham City University

**Young children's touchscreen technology experiences: A study of 3-4 year old children in Early Years settings in the West Midlands**

Shannon Ludgate, Birmingham City University

**Children's engagement with digital and non-digital activities. Is it really play?**

Aderonke Folorunhso, Canterbury Christ Church University

**Active learning with tablet computers in the Early Years**

Fiona Byrne, University of East London

**SYMPOSIUM II/B**
EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS
ROOM: Pinsent Mason 1

**CHAIR: FAYE STANLEY,** University of Wolverhampton

**Postionality: Insider and outsider perspectives between practitioner and researcher**

Faye Stanley and Emily Garner; University of Wolverhampton, Gooday Nursery School

**Collaborative pedagogy in the Early Years - valuing the relationship between parents, children and practitioners**

Amanda Crow, University of Huddersfield

**"Why haven't I got one of those?" How to consider ethics for children NOT included in research**

Tanya Richardson, University of Northampton

**SYMPOSIUM II/C**
PLAY PEDAGOGIES
ROOM: Deloitte Room

**CHAIR: KATE SMITH,** Canterbury Christ Church University

**What can loose parts play outside really look like in the Early Years?**

Menna Godfrey, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**Children as playful writers: Mapping multiple expressions as movement and connection**

Kate Smith, Canterbury Christ Church University

**Rhyming with Froebel**

Amanda Norman, University of Winchester

# SYMPOSIUM SET III: 14:40 – 15:40

**SYMPOSIUM III/A**
USING PLAY AND PLAYFUL SPACES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING:
ROOM: Performance Studio

**CHAIR: ELAINE BATES,** Manchester Museum

**A developing approach towards mindfulness with young children**

Christopher Ludlow, Foley Infant School

**An exploration of museums as playful spaces to support participation and learning for previously non visiting families with 2 year old children**

Elaine Bates and Lisa Taylor; Manchester Museum, Martenscroft Nursery School and Children's Centre

**SYMPOSIUM III/B**
CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES
ROOM: Pinsent Mason 1

**CHAIR: TANYA RICHARDSON,** University of Northampton

**Investigation of parents and teachers perspectives on what they perceived as socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviours at home and in school among preschoolers in Saudi Arabia**

Basma Alghufali, Princess Nora Bint Abdul Rahman University

**A cross-cultural assessment of outdoor activities in two countries: The case of freedom**

Mehmet Mart, Plymouth University

**SYMPOSIUM III/C**
CAPTURING CHILDREN'S VOICE AND ANALYSING THE DATA
ROOM: Deloitte Room

**CHAIR: ALISON MOORE,** Birmingham City University

**In search of perfect data analysis**

Helen Lyndon, University of Wolverhampton and Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**Improving pedagogy in children's centres: Using photovoice as a reflective lens to listen to children's voices**

Alison Moore, Birmingham City University

# ABSTRACTS

## SYMPOSIUM SET I
## 10:30 – 12:00

**SYMPOSIUM I/A**

**TEACHER IDENTITY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**CHAIR: YASMIN STEFANOV-KING,** Coventry University Scarborough

**ROOM: Performance Studio**

**Can a focused induction programme improve practitioner knowledge and impact on the provision for play in a daycare setting?**

**CAROLINE WRIGHT and MIM BROWN,** Eduko Education Ltd

**Research aims or questions:**

We wish to explore whether developing a 'knowledge community' (Lave & Wenger 1991), with a shared 'community of practice' through a common induction programme will improve adult's knowledge of play based learning and impact on their practice in the short and longer term.

Identifying three key questions. Following the training:

- Do practitioners have increased knowledge of play based learning?
- Do they implement induction training in their practice?
- Do they use what they learned to influence others?

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

EPPE (2003) draws the first clear links between training and 'quality' of Early Childhood Education provision, citing better outcomes for children where adults have higher academic qualifications.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Pascal & Bertram (1999) remind us that 'quality' is dynamic and changes between time and place. Ongoing professional development is a well established tool to bring about changes and refine practice (Gusky 1994; Darling-Hamond 1990; Cook & Fine 2003). Munton, Mooney, Moss, Petrie, Clark & Woolner (2002) note that practitioners embarking on just 20 hours of training a year will improve their caregiver behaviours.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Practice based inquiry (praxeology) to inform future induction programmes; three main methods:

1. questionnaires;

2. observations in the setting;
3. interviews.

**Ethical considerations:**

Permission for the project sought from the Board of Directors and individual participants; anonymity maintained throughout.

**Main finding or discussion:**

All attendees cite improved understanding of play based learning;
Some practitioners implement the induction training and share their knowledge with others.
Implications, practice or policy
Induction needs to be dynamic and reinforced through in-house CPD and EY support visits.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Play, Practice based inquiry, Knowledge*


**The development of early years teacher's identity as playful pedagogues: A Chilean exploratory study**

**MARIA OPAZO,** University of Nottingham

**Research aims or questions:**

To explore the development of early years teacher's identity as playful pedagogues and how the social construction of this identity relates to the different contexts they work in.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Recent studies that have explored identity in early years' teachers have revealed that the actual educational system is affecting teachers' professional autonomy and in consequence the opportunity for developing play pedagogies (Osgood, 2006 & Woodrow, 2007). However this is an emergent research field.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

To understand how teacher's identity is constructed this study draws on sociological frameworks (Wenger, 1998; Eteläpelto & Saarinen, 2006) that investigate the influence of contextual factors in teachers professional development.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The research design is qualitative with a phenomenological framework. To gather early years' teachers' perspectives visual and narratives methodologies such as photo-elicitation, semi structured interviews and observations were employed. The sample is purposive and involves 13 Chilean early years.

**Ethical Considerations:**

Informed consent was sought from all participants and their right to privacy, anonymity and protection withdraw was assured at all times.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Preliminary result of this doctoral study shows a relationship between early years teachers professional development and their opportunities to exercise their autonomy in their pedagogical practice.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

This study will contribute by generating knowledge that could better inform professional development and pedagogical practices. In addition it advocates for the inclusion of Chilean context into the international discussion.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism*

**Making learning real**

**YASMIN STEFANOV-KING and ELAINE ALTUCCINI,** Coventry University Scarborough

**Research aims or questions:**

To discover whether introducing student EY practitioners to children in their familiar university environment enables more successful transitions and outcomes in their work placements.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Taylor (2013) identifies the stresses of placements. Musgrave and Stobbs (2015) recommend pre-placement visits.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Students who are confident in planning and facilitating enriching play experiences are likely to achieve more successful outcomes personally and for children both during their work placements and beyond.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

CU Scarborough introduced the EY setting into the university via regular student-led 'Stay and Play' sessions. Feedback shows that this opportunity to prepare and practice transferable play activities helped alleviate students' pre-work placement stresses, suggesting future positive results for children.

**Ethical Considerations:**

Children – supported by students with adult carers always in attendance and encouraged to take part in play activities
Carers – registration taken, personal details safely stored, agreement for students to interact with their children gained
Students – supervised at all times by university staff

**Main finding or discussion:**

Students reported they approached their placements more confidently and with an improved understanding of how to design and facilitate enriching play activities.

The 'Stay and Play' sessions were a positive experience for students and families, and raised awareness of the good work of the university students in the wider community.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Allowing students to build confidence and skills prior to commencing placements benefits children by ensuring that students appreciate the importance of providing diverse play activities, and feel that they have the skills to do so. This practical knowledge of the pedagogy of play will inform their future practice.

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Professionalism, Play, Practice based inquiry, Real world, Transitions*

**SYMPOSIUM I/B**

**PLAY IN THE CURRICULUM**

**CHAIR: HELEN LYNDON,** University of Wolverhampton and Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**ROOM: Pinsent Mason 1**

**It's a tug of war! Schoolification v's Pedagogical play - Ready, steady, go!**

**JULIE OVINGTON,** Northumbria University

**Research aims or questions:**

Recent policy introducing free early education and care for two-year-old children significantly alters the current 'school readiness' debate. The aim is to identify how this policy is interpreted by professionals and parents and enacted in practice at local levels and the consequences this yields to provide new perspectives.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Children are unique, learning efficiently through play and continuous exposure to social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). 'School readiness' is influenced by numerous factors (Clark, 2016) creating fluidity in definitions and interpretations resulting it the concept becoming nebulous. This variability legitimises the discourse to be molded to dovetail interventionist strategies, creating finite standards eroding pedagogical play within the milieu of learning (PACEY, 2013).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and cognitive play theory (Vygotsky, 1978) were used to explore constructs of school readiness and play in early education.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A social constructivist paradigm and an 'illuminative' case study approach were chosen to conduct mixed methods including reiterative focus groups, observations and interviews.

**Ethical considerations:**

Aims, objectives and preconceived ideas were discussed, followed by written information to overcome concerns of judgement prior to obtaining informed consent. Assent booklets were used to gain child informed consent. A reiterative, participatory approach ensured transparency by sharing findings. British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines were followed. Northumbria University granted ethical approval.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Language is paramount to children's learning however school readiness creates conflict between personal and professional identities developing a discord between policy and practice.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Demands to quantify tangible productivity is schoolfying two-year-old children to meet prescribe standards. Where is the importance of pedagogical play?

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Assessment, Play, Case study, Outcomes*


**Play within children's everyday lived experiences of early primary schooling**

**CATHERINE GRIPTON,** Nottingham Trent University

**Research aims or questions:**

This case study research with two classes of 5-7 year olds aimed to use playful data collection methods to provide rich description of individual children's lived experiences of the primary classroom and identify how play featured within these.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This study constitutes part of a larger doctoral study into children's everyday experiences of the primary classroom. It connects to work on children's experience of school by Einarsdottir (2010) and Londal's research into children's lived experience (2010).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Theoretically, adults were deemed outsiders to childhood (James, Jenks and Prout's tribal child, 1998) with children deemed uniquely placed to tell their own stories as competent, capable and responsible individuals (Harcourt 2011).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Within a social constructivist approach, data collection methods included children's video tours of their classrooms and classroom representations using small toys.

**Ethical considerations:**

This study was conducted adhering to BERA and NCB ethical guidelines with informed consent sought throughout and video data securely stored. All data uses pseudonyms and images of children are not presented.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Each child appears to attend to different aspects of classroom life, constructing their individual lived experience. For some children play, or the absence of play as they perceive it, is central to their experience of schooling. This appears connected to their attention to relationships, structures, curriculum and the scope of their awareness.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

This small scale, case study research suggests that a focus upon play as crucially experienced by each child rather than play within physical provision or practitioner perception is important when reviewing or researching provision in early primary schooling.

**Keywords:** *Methods, Case study, Children's perspectives*


**Children's free play cultures and practices between home and nurseries - developing insights through meaning-making with young children**

**YASPIA SALEMA,** University College London

This paper examines the nature of the relationship between researcher and child participants developed over time, based on a research project in London, concerning how schools approach the transition of young children's free play cultures and practices between home and nurseries.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

While Bennett et al. (1997) and Dockett (2011) explored teachers' perceptions of free play, this paper provides insight into how children share their meaning-making of free play experiences with the researcher by using the Mosaic Approach, developed by Clark and Moss (2001).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Following Prout's tenet, the study enables children to direct research as 'social actors, with a part to play in their own representation'.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Sixteen children use multiple participatory tools such as photography; pretend play; drawings; and their collaborative meaning-making with their parents, researcher and teachers, to share their reflections on their free play experiences with the researcher who assumes the role of a learner.

**Ethical considerations:**

Ethical considerations include data anonymisation and provisional consent obtained from the children.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The paper will include the analysis of vignettes of interactions between the researcher and the children, revealing the following areas related to their complex relationship: establishing and development; the emotional nature of the process; how meaning-making is affected by it; how

contextual factors such as the school culture relate to it; ownership of the research 'task' within the relationship and the relational dimensions of consent.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The paper suggests the need for schools to recognize the significance of children's emotions and their meaning-making of adult-child relationships, in their experiences of free play.

**Keywords:** *Ethics, Methods, Play, Children's perspectives, Research paradigms*


**SYMPOSIUM I/C**

**<u>PLAY AND SCHOOL READINESS</u>**

**CHAIR: KATHRYN PECKHAM,** Independent Early Childhood Consultant and Author

**ROOM: Deloitte Room**


**Listening to Reception children: what can we learn from them about 'school readiness'?**

**LAURA HEADS,** Northumbria University

**Research aims or questions:**

There is widespread unease that pressures to 'ready' children for Year One are having a negative impact on Early Years practice and children's play (PACEY, 2013). The aim is to use Reception children's voices to bring new perspectives to the 'school readiness' debate.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Other authors have examined children's perspectives in relation to 'school readiness' (McGettigan and Gray, 2012). This research also links to other areas of inquiry, including children's participation in research and studies of childhood.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Using a social constructionist approach, the research challenges narrow conceptions of 'readiness' by regarding children as powerful agents in their own lives. Focusing on children's voices will allow appraisal of 'school readiness' policy.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

In an illuminative first study (July, 2016), mosaic methods (Clark and Moss, 2011) were used as stimulus for capturing children's voices. In one of the activities children were asked to draw their 'perfect' classroom. Teachers' reactions to these drawings were explored.

**Ethical considerations:**

Working with children raises important ethical dilemmas. A variety of strategies were used to mitigate these concerns, such as letting children become familiar with recording equipment to facilitate their informed assent. Tasks were designed with sensitivity to their age.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Play emerged as a theme in discussions with children and in their drawings. The drawings stimulated informative responses from teachers about the nature of play and 'work' in Reception and Year One.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Judgements of 'readiness' often fail to capture the complexity of Reception children's worlds and what it means to be five years old. Are children 'ready' to leave play behind?

**Keywords:** *Focus groups, Play, Children's perspectives, Transitions*


**All Work and No Play: A critical analysis of the tension between academic and play based kindergarten education in the US**

**ITHEL JONES,** Florida State University

**Research aims or questions:**

This paper critically analyses the tension between play-based experiential approaches and academic approaches to kindergarten education in the United States.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Recent research by Bassock and colleagues (2016) suggests that today's kindergarten classrooms are similarly structured to first-grade (primary) classrooms of the late 1990's. While some experts maintain that there is too much focus on teaching academic skills and content (e.g., Classens, Duncan, & Engel, 2009; Copple & Bredekamp, 2008; Watts, Duncan, Siegler, & Davis-Kean, 2014), others express concern about the lack of play in kindergarten (Gallant, 2009; Miller & Almon, 2009; Russell, 2011). There is substantial debate about the benefits and risks of increased emphasis on early childhood learning experiences that are focused on academic content.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The paper draws on play theories and research showing that play expedites a variety of social, cognitive, emotional, and motor, improvements.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The theoretical paper examines the extent to which educators can maintain developmentally appropriate practices while at the same time addressing academic standards and expectations.

**Ethical considerations:**

Although this is a philosophical paper, important ethical issues were considered including adhering to appropriate university procedures and guidelines for the ethical conduct of research.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Pay-based approaches to kindergarten education can support the same skills valued in a more direct instruction, or academic-based approach.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Addressing the tension between play and academic content involves the development of practices that reflect our understanding of how young children learn and, at the same time, considers current expectations concerning high academic standards.

**Keywords:** *Play, Curriculum*


**Developing a theoretical framework to support an experiential, play based approach to school readiness**

**KATHRYN PECKHAM,** Independent Early Childhood Consultant and Author

**Research aims or questions:**

To develop an objective and comprehensive understanding of a holistic, practical approach to school readiness that is steeped in play-based pedagogies throughout the foundation years and early primary schooling.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This study considered and built upon previous research when looking at the effective holistic experiences children require prior to formal schooling (Wasik, Karweit, Bond, Woodruff, Jaeger and Adee, 2011; Field, 2010; Sylva et al., 2004, 2014), how rare effective preparations are and the effect this has (Fabian, 2002; Tickell, 2011). It looked at misdirected preparations offered in the absence of official guidance (Whitbread and Bingham, 2012; Margetts, 2013; Brzeziska, Matejczuk and Nowotnik, 2012; Suggate, 2007; Schweinhart, et al., 2005) and the impact of more effective practices (Whitbread and Bingham, 2012; Karweit, 1998; West, Germino-Hausken & Collins, 1993).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This study provides the underpinning literature review and focus for the qualitative, phased research to follow.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Multi-phased interviews and observations with adults and children will follow a post-structural paradigm.

**Ethical considerations:**

Informed consent gained through preliminary meetings and shared methods, strengthened through feedback loops.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Highlighting the need for experiential, play based pedagogies to predominate within children's earliest experiences, 16 features of lifelong learning were developed and characterised together with their impact on children's ongoing trajectories and recommendations for their facilitation throughout the key stages of the early years.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The findings of this research have been written into a book (published January 2017, Sage). Written for practitioners and those studying within the Early Years this has the potential to have direct and widespread impact on practice.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Applications, Early Childhood Professionalism*


# SYMPOSIUM SET II
# 12:50 – 14:20

**SYMPOSIUM II/A**

**DIGITAL PLAY**

**CHAIR: SHANNON LUDGATE,** Birmingham City University

**ROOM: Performance Studio**


**Young children's touchscreen technology experiences: A study of 3-4 year old children in Early Years settings in the West Midlands**

**SHANNON LUDGATE,** Birmingham City University

**Research aims or questions:**

To explore affordances of young children's use of touchscreen technology in early years settings.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This research builds upon the work of O'Connor's 'Technobabies' research, alongside Plowman et al (2012) and Flewitt et al (2014), who highlight children's opportunities to use touchscreens in educational settings.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Activity Theory and Grounded Theory have been selected for the analytical aspect of understanding the data, in a way which allows practical application into the early years setting.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

An interpretative mixed-methods approach has been taken, through a comparative case study of four early years settings in the West Midlands. Interviews, observations, an online survey and focus-group interviews have been utilised.

**Ethical considerations:**

Researching with children raises many ethical issues, so consent lanyards were designed by me to ensure I had gained ongoing assent from children during observations and focus-group interviews. Consent was also gained from parents and early years providers as gatekeepers.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Children use touchscreens in a range of ways. Practitioners report 'educational' benefit from games and specifically designed apps to promote learning, in areas including literacy and numeracy. Children report to enjoy using touchscreens both individually and with others, but often seek their own achievement of goals rather than shared goals. Time allocations to touchscreen use also differs; actual time use compared to suggested time use (by practitioners) is considerably different.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The research has the potential to influence the way practitioners seek to use touchscreens with young children. It offers practitioners the chance to reflect on their own practice and review the opportunities and experiences they provide.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Play, Case study, Children's perspectives, Technology and ICT*


**Children's engagement with digital and non-digital activities. Is it really play?**

**ADERONKE FOLORUNHSO,** Canterbury Christ Church University

**Research aims or questions:**

In what ways are children engaged with digital and non-digital activities?

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This research is based on a number of literature and research that investigated children's engagement and interactions with digital technology such as Disney et al., 2013; Arnott, 2016; Yelland, 2015; Marsh et al., 2016.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The design for this research is the FraIM: Frameworks for an Integrated Methodology developed by David Plowright (2011). The aim of the framework for this research is to support the

integration of quantitative and qualitative methods in this research process to ensure the successful study of children's engagement with digital and non-digital activities.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A pragmatic mixed method approach was employed to be able determine children's level of engagement while using iPads. Observations were carried out with children of ages three and four in an early childhood setting using structured observation and open-ended observation.

**Ethical considerations:**

EECERA codes of ethics were followed and informed consent and ascent was obtained throughout the project.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Findings have revealed that digital activities such as applications on the iPad can engage children behaviourally, emotionally, cognitively and socially. It also showed that children engaged with non-digital activities the same way. The data also showed that the children exhibited the same playful patterns of interactions while they interacted with digital and non-digital activities.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The findings from this research will highlight any other findings that are of interest and contribute towards the subject of children and iPads in early childhood education.

**Keywords:** *Play, Technology and ICT*


**Active learning with tablet computers in the Early Years**

**FIONA BYRNE,** University of East London

**Research aims or questions:**

To examine how practitioners support children's active usage of tablet computers.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

There is a limited amount of research on the integration of tablet computers into early years settings and the majority of research that does exist focuses on the development of children's literacy and mathematics ability. Additionally, literature indicates that practitioners' have problems integrating technology into early years settings, displaying anxieties about children's passive interaction with technology.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Observations of the children were guided by an Observational Framework assessing for:

1. Four pillars of learning.
2. Characteristics of effective learning.

3. Shared Sustained Thinking.

Tablet apps were assessed using Highfield and Goodwin's continuum.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**
An explorative case study consisting of children at play with tablets and semi-structured interviews with practitioners.

**Ethical considerations:**

1. Using picture books of research alongside simple verbal assent with children.
2. Continuous consent.
3. Removed identifiable data.

**Main finding or discussion:**

1. Practitioners revealed being initially wary of the integration of tablets.
2. Practitioners indicated a difficulty with finding appropriate tablet apps for children.
3. Practitioners were anxious about the potential passivity of tablets.
4. Practitioners educational philosophy appears to have affected how they supported creative play with tablets.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

1. The introduction of an external expert appears to be of use to nurseries that experience difficulty with tablet integration.
2. The definition of an educational app needs to be regulated.
3. There needs to be more research completed on the active use of tablets in the early years as it combats children's passivity whilst promoting problem solving and higher order thinking.
4. Practitioners may need training to understand the creative and sensory benefits of tablets.

**Keywords:** *Assessment, Play, Case study, Creativity, Technology and ICT*

**SYMPOSIUM II/B**

**EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS**

**CHAIR: FAYE STANLEY,** University of Wolverhampton

**ROOM: Pinsent Mason 1**

**Postionality: Insider and outsider perspectives between practitioner and researcher**

**FAYE STANLEY AND EMILY GARNER;** University of Wolverhampton**,** Goodway Nursery School

**Research aims or questions:**

This research aims to report on practitioner and researcher perspectives when videoing a day in the life 3 and 4 year olds in an English nursery school.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The work of Brostrom et al. (2014), Thornberg (2010) and Habermas (1995) on practitioners values. This research design is also based on the work of Tobin et al. (2012) and Arnold & Brennan (2013).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Social Constructivism and Symbolic Interactionalism underpin the theoretical framework and focus on what society is rather than how it exists and the meaning individuals give things (Blumer, 1969).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This is an interpretative and qualitative study based on phenomonological principles and focusses on how life is experienced and it also deals with the way people interpret events and make sense of their personal experiences (Seidman, 2006). Video was used as a stimulant to ascertain practitioners' values and hearing peoples' feelings and their stories is a key feature of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and the idea that social science research "is saturated however disguised in positionality" (Clough and Nutbrown, 2010) will be a focus of this presentation.

**Ethical considerations:**

Working with preschool children the ethical considerations remain paramount. BERA and EECERA ethical guidelines have been implemented and informed consent, confidentiality and valuing all opinions within a praxeological framework.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The outsider and insider continuum will be explored and how the researcher is an active not a passive agent and the importance of ethicality and reflexivity by the researcher.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The video will be the data collection tool which will be used for PhD findings.

**Keywords:** *Data gathering, Pedagogy, Ethics, Practice based inquiry, Research paradigms*


**Collaborative pedagogy in the Early Years - valuing the relationship between parents, children and practitioners**

**AMANDA CROW,** University of Huddersfield

**Research aims or questions:**

Central to this research is the co-construction of early learning between parents, their children and practitioners.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Literature from the last 20 years documenting the importance of effective parental involvement and partnership in Early Years concentrating on what parents do rather than their social status (Sylva et al, 2004, Teather and Milton, 2011). International influences including practice in New Zealand, Italy and the Netherland countries.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Viewing pedagogy through sociocultural and ecological frameworks utilising the concept of co-construction through the lenses of Individual, Interpersonal, and Cultural (Rogoff 2003). Equally important is how the voice of the child is valued.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Through the eyes of parents, practitioners and their children, this small-scale study uses observations and interviews via adapted collaborative 'triads' (Renzulli, 1977). Analysis will concentrate on interrelating patterns of collaboration, exploring themes in the data through learning stories.

**Ethical considerations:**

Explicit consent gained from adult participants, being mindful to gain assent from the children through participatory methods (Greig et al., 2007) by establishing a respectful relationship and valuing their participation through play (UNRC, 1989, Bera, 2011). Safe data storage and confidentiality discussed with participants in relation to safeguarding.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Research is at the pilot phase, initial findings suggest a deeper shared understanding between the practitioner and parent, including a greater knowledge of the child's development, also significant is the way the child interacts with siblings and other children, given that her spoken language is still developing.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The research is in its infancy however I believe the study will contribute to early years pedagogy and practice.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Ethics, Children's perspectives, Parents perspectives*


**"Why haven't I got one of those?" How to consider ethics for children NOT included in research**

**TANYA RICHARDSON,** University of Northampton

**Research aims or questions:**

This paper will consider how to protect children who are not directly involved in research, but inadvertently become involved due to the play-based approach that research can take.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

It is acknowledged that children can be observed at play in order to gain a natural perspective when researching (Palaiologou, 2012). This research aimed to discover if the quality of a child's utterances was different within different play/learning environments. This builds on previous research (DCSF, 2007) that asserts that children speak more in certain environments, however what does not appear to have been ascertained is whether the increased quantity leads to increased quality of speech.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This paper will build on the theoretical framework of Landsberger (1958), who devised the Hawthorne effect, and argued that it is impossible to undertake research without impact. This will therefore consider ALL children's rights.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This discussion centres around the collection of naturally occurring data with limited researcher interference (O'Reilly et al., 2013). Data was collected using audio recording devices and then random vignettes of speech were analysed using Type/Token Ratio analysis (TTR).

**Ethical considerations:**

Although BERA (2011) guidelines were followed and participants were protected from harm and confidentiality was maintained, it became obvious that this was not necessarily sufficient.

**Main finding or discussion:**

When analysing children's utterances, it was noted that the children who were not participants were becoming involved indirectly.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

It is therefore argued that when considering research methods, it is insufficient to just protect the participating children. Consideration also needs to be given to those non-participants who become involved by association.

**Keywords:** *Data gathering, Ethics, Methods, Communication Language and Literacy, Learning environment*


**SYMPOSIUM II/C**

**PLAY PEDAGOGIES**

**CHAIR: KATE SMITH,** Canterbury Christ Church University

**ROOM: Deloitte Room**

**What can loose parts play outside really look like in the Early Years?**

**MENNA GODFREY,** Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**Research aims or questions:**

The research aims to consider ways in which children in Early Years settings use loose parts in their play and the adult role is in enabling unadulterated play.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

Previous research includes Csikszentmihalyi's work on Flow (2014), Nicholson's Theory of Loose Parts (1971) and Heft's (1988) taxonomy of affordance, whilst the research about play drew on the work of Gray (2015), Hughes (2013), Bruce (2011) and Wood (2013) amongst others.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The greater the variety of loose parts available the more creative the play and the greater the involvement of the player. Laevers Involvement Scale (1994) was used as an indicator of the depth of learning of the child.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

As a practitioner researcher, working within an interpretive paradigm I took an ethnographic approach recognising myself as an insider, participant observer (Cosaro 2003). Data was gathered through field notes, informal conversations and in the form of video and still photography.

**Ethical considerations:**

EECERA guidelines were followed, consent was gained from parents and staff and assent of children determined both verbally and as indicated by their body language.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Children demonstrated a greater depth of involvement when they had a choice of loose parts and were given 'permission' to use them creatively.
Practitioners commented on high levels of cooperation where children engaged in the same play activities.

Challenges include ensuring consistent approaches from all adults involved as well as ensuring appropriate storage and accessibility of resources.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

These emerging findings will inform further study of the activities of children in particular their play in the Mud Kitchen.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Play, Practice based inquiry, Case study, Outdoor Play*

**Children as playful writers: Mapping multiple expressions as movement and connection**

**KATE SMITH,** Canterbury Christ Church University

**Research aims or questions:**

The aim of this research was to follow six children's actions as writers during their first school year to find out how writing becomes socially, culturally and materially meaningful through its function and purpose.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The work builds on multimodal understandings of children's mark-making, drawing and writing as a representational and transformational act (Kress, 1997, 2010; Mavers, 2011). It also explores how children's writing can be viewed as relational material text making (Masny and Cole, 2009; Olsson, 2009; Sellers, 2013.)

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

A sociocultural approach was taken and Deleuzoguattarian ideas were 'plugged into' this framework as a way of exploring multiple connections and relations.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Ethnographic principles were employed, and observations, field notes, photographs, video and artefacts were analysed rhizomatically and formed into discursive assemblages.

**Ethical considerations:**

The tools used within each research encounter provided the children with a participatory voice. Their ideas were critically explored within the analysis.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The findings indicated that children's writing within open-ended play in the classroom was a moving, overlapping and connective ensemble, utilising many different modes of expression (drawing, text making, map making, copying, etc.). The writing materials used in these encounters 'mattered' to children: their sensorial qualities, the histories associated with them, and the potential they had to be adapted.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Adults should foster space for young children's 'playful writing' as it is in these encounters that meaningful and desirous associations can be formed. Children's multiple modes of expression and their movement as playful writers needs to be recognised as essential aspects of learning to be literate.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Methodological approaches, Play, Children's perspectives, Communication Language and Literacy*

**Rhyming with Froebel**

**AMANDA NORMAN,** University of Winchester

**Research aims or questions:**

This paper discusses how Finger rhymes, or as Froebel, an influential educationalist called them 'Mother Songs' could be used in contemporary daycare settings with infants to holistically enrich emotional communication, learning and inform practice.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This research forms part of a larger project currently being investigated. The study is exploring the influence of Froebel pedagogical thinking to today's early years practice, specifically with the under twos attending daycare.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The development of Froebel's philosophy and its practical application to contemporary early year's contexts Tovey, H (2010) and Bruce, T (2014). The communicative relationship between adult and infant, Trevarthen (2009). Emotional literacy and person centred therapy in their wider contexts draws on the works of Goleman, D (1995) and Rogers, C (1960).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A case study approach in the Interpretive Paradigm was carried out. There were daycare participants including the researcher involved in the process.

Observations and monthly focus groups with the participants informed part of the data.

**Ethical considerations:**

Ethical issues were employed when the children were observed, following ethical guidelines of the setting and parents were informed prior to the project.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The findings demonstrated that employing Froebel's pedagogical thinking to music sessions, emotions and communication with infants were supported and articulated, playing with different styles of rhymes together.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Exploring innovative and creative ways of delivering musical sessions in its broadest context, alongside reflecting on the EYFS (2012) and other areas of learning with infants within England.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Personal social and emotional development, Play, Birth to Three*

# SYMPOSIUM SET III
# 14:40 – 15:40

**SYMPOSIUM III/A**

**USING PLAY AND PLAYFUL SPACES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING**

**CHAIR: ELAINE BATES,** Manchester Museum

**ROOM: Performance Studio**

**A developing approach towards mindfulness with young children**

**CHRISTOPHER LUDLOW,** Foley Infant School

**Research aims or questions:**

This is post masters research. The development and refinement of mindfulness strategies that work with young children (from 4 to 7 years old) and their place in a crowded curriculum. Key questions include; are mindful strategies worth pursuing and what are the benefits? How can mindful strategies be implemented with young children and how much of this can be done through play?

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

This is a development of my MA research which continues to inform practice for myself and colleagues and this links to the work of Katherine Weare (2013) and the Mindfulness in Schools Project.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This research follows a line of secular approaches to mindfulness and meditation from the work of Kabat-Zinn (1995) to the work of Puddicombe (2010).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This study operates within a qualitative paradigm and continues to use an action research cycle. Current research is based upon a reflective journal as mindfulness strategies are developed within my practice.

**Ethical considerations:**

The original research that this builds upon followed BERA and EECERA guidelines. My current practice takes place as part of my role as a teacher and senior leader and my work complies with the local authority safeguarding policy which ensures confidentiality and anonymity; data is not gathered against individual children.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Mindfulness and relaxation strategies can be introduced through play and they promote self-regulation.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Mindfulness and relaxation strategies can be introduced through play and they provide an important space in the day that is non- judgemental, fun, safe and belongs to the child.

**Keywords:** *Applications, Personal social and emotional development, Play, Creativity, Curriculum*


**An exploration of museums as playful spaces to support participation and learning for previously non visiting families with 2 year old children**

**ELAINE BATES AND LISA TAYLOR;** Manchester Museum, Martenscroft Nursery School and Children's Centre

**Research aims or questions:**

To document how museum visits support outcomes in personal, social and emotional development and language and communication development for disadvantaged families with young children.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

It contributes to a growing body of research documenting young children's experiences of visiting museums. My previous studies documented the development and evaluation of a natural history gallery for young children.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Draws on research documenting family learning in museums, young children's physical exploration of museum spaces and responses to museum objects. Cultural capital theory is used as a framework to analyse how museum visits can support positive outcomes in building confidence, developing relationships and contributing to language development.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Set within the paradigm of praxeological research and undertaken in collaboration with early years practitioners. It is presented as an evaluative case study using qualitative methods, including written observations and informal interviews.

**Ethical considerations:**

Informed by the EECERA ethical code (2015).Written consent was obtained from adult participants and verbal/ non-verbal assent was sought from children. Voluntary informed consent was sought from all participants throughout the study.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Museum visits support the development of social and cultural capital in previously non participating families, evidenced through an increase in confidence, participation and progression in the language and communication skills of all children.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The importance of working in partnership with other professionals to support access to museums for non-participating families .The need for further research to evidence the contribution that museums can make to improving life chances for children in disadvantaged families.

**Keywords:** *Personal social and emotional development, Play, Multi-professional collaboration, Communication Language and Literacy, Parents participation*

**SYMPOSIUM III/B**

<u>**CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES**</u>

**CHAIR: TANYA RICHARDSON**, University of Northampton

**ROOM: Pinsent Mason 1**

**Investigation of parents and teachers perspectives on what they perceived as socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviours at home and in school among preschoolers in Saudi Arabia**

**BASMA ALGHUFALI,** Princess Nora Bint Abdul Rahman University

**Research aims or questions:**

The aim of this research is to explore parent and teacher perceptions to identify perceived acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours among pre-school children in the domestic and school environment.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

In Saudi Arabia, current research on social behaviour is scarce, and the perceived meaning of social BH among parents and teachers is still unclear causing a lack of psychiatric specialists in kindergartens.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The aim of the framework design in this study is to couple traditional parenting styles with development theories that favour a balanced perception of behaviour in Saudi society. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and Baumrind's parenting style will be used.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This research adopted a mixed methods approach. With mixed paradigms realism and pragmatism, a questionnaire was conducted to collect data from parents and teachers. Additionally, three focus groups that were conducted in Riyadh city with fathers, mothers and teachers. Mixing methods that helped one understand the diverse views and assumptions, using different methods of collecting and analysing data (Creswell, 2009).

**Ethical considerations:**

Ethical approval was obtained for the current study. Information sheet and consent forms were provided to participants for both qualitative and quantitate studies. The participants were free to withdrawal from the participation at any time without any compensation.
No personal information was involved.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The findings of this research indicate that under this cultural influence that perceived acceptable child behaviour among Saudi fathers is gender-based; for example, Saudi fathers tolerate aggressive behaviour in boys, and tolerate shy behaviour in girls, Further while father perceptions differ, teacher and mother perceptions were similar.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Indirectly affect the social behaviours among children, and recognises that parents and teachers are the principal factor that impacts the formation of a preschool child's social behaviours and learning due to the cultural influence.

**Keywords:** *Data gathering, Methodological approaches, Parents perspectives, Parents participation*


**A cross-cultural assessment of outdoor activities in two countries: The case of freedom**

**MEHMET MART,** Plymouth University

**Research aims or questions:**

This research aims to identify the teachers' perception and practice of outdoor activities in terms of 'freedom'.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The research is based on Tobin, Hsueh and Karasawa's (2009) work.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Bilton (2010, p. 26) describes that "outside is a natural place for children to be and play and there is a freedom associated with it." Dewey discusses the meaning of freedom in his book, and claims that even if adults use their knowledge and conditions in order to extend children's freedom, there is likely to emerge the restriction for both adult and children (Dewey, 1963).The term of freedom is also defined by Boisvert (1995) regarding Deweyian approach that freedom is a power to gain desired life experience for children within learning process.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

As an ethnographic research, observations and interviews were used to collect data in southern Turkey and south-west of England.

**Ethical considerations:**

The ethical aspects were considered, and all participants were apprised about the confidentiality and anonymity regarding EECERA's Ethical code (EECERA, 2014) and Plymouth University Ethics Policy (Plymouth University, 2013).

**Main finding or discussion:**

While the participating English teachers were criticising their activities and claiming to do some small changing for this (in order to abide by EYFS), the participating Turkish teachers' perspectives improved and their practices changed in consequence of having interaction with others. This is related with discussed points in the literature review chapter that culture is described as "rules and tools of a society" by Sanders (2009, p. 12).

**Implications, practice or policy:**

There is a need for policy development and active learning opportunities for teachers.

**Keywords:** *Outdoor Play, Learning environment*


**SYMPOSIUM III/C**

**CAPTURING CHILDREN'S VOICE AND ANALYSING THE DATA**

**CHAIR: ALISON MOORE**, Birmingham City University

**ROOM: Deloitte Room**


**In search of perfect data analysis**

**HELEN LYNDON,** University of Wolverhampton and Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**Research aims or questions:**

The initial PhD aim was to develop listening strategies in early years through pedagogic research; this aim has shifted during the research process as pedagogic mediation has been developed as a strategy through which listening can develop.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

As with other creative methodologies (e.g. Kara 2015) and multi-modal techniques e.g. Mosaic Approach (Clark and Moss, 2001), this research has used a broad range of methods.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The theme of pedagogic mediation is analysed using a priori frame (openness, listening, suspending and encountering; Oliveira-Formosinho 2014) whereas the theme of listening relied on a participatory concept analysis (from Walker and Avant, 2005 and Rodgers, 1989). Thick data (Geertz, 1973) is sought in relation to making final reflections on the research.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This praxeological research has worked with practitioners form the outset to develop listening methodologies. Photographs, narrative observations, drawings and a field diary are just a few elements of the data that has been gathered.

**Ethical considerations:**

Ethical considerations are central to this praxeological research which has aimed to question traditional power relationships; the researcher's aim has been to empower staff through pedagogic mediation. The settings have been most concerned about anonymity which has been addressed through a cluster agreement. EECERA ethical guidelines have been followed and shared with settings.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Despite an initial focus on listening methodologies the findings to date surrounding pedagogic mediation offer the greatest contribution to knowledge. Examples of data analysis strategies will be shared and findings discussed.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

There were isomorphic elements of pedagogic mediation where traditional research/ practitioner roles merged.

**Keywords:** *Ethics, Methods, Methodological approaches, Children's perspectives*


**Improving pedagogy in children's centres: Using photovoice as a reflective lens to listen to children's voices**

**ALISON MOORE,** Birmingham City University

**Research aims or questions:**

This pilot study explores the use of Photo Voice as an innovative research method for 'listening' to children's voices in a children's centre context. We reflect on practice with a view to making improvements to enrich learning and inform service development.

**Relationship to previous studies by others and self:**

The concept of Photo Voice (Wang et al 1997) is used as a reflective lens to support pedagogical enquiry. The praxeological and participatory work of Oliveira-Formosinho & Formosinho (2012, 2015) and Pascal & Bertram (2012, 2015) also inspires the study.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The RAMPS Framework developed by Lancaster (2003) forms the basis of reflection, facilitating collaborative partnerships and practitioners as catalysts for change, supporting Freire's view of critical consciousness (1970/1993).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Qualitative and praxeological research in the Interpretive Paradigm, using Photo Voice (Wang et al, 1997; Carlson et al, 2006).

Focus group methodology was adopted using a facilitator's guide referred to as ORID: objective, reflective, interpretive and decisional questioning. (Morgan & Bottorff, 2010; Liamputtong, 2011).

Researcher-directed diaries (Holliday, 1999; Thompson & Holland, 2005; Day & Thatcher, 2009) as a means of reflection and documentation.

**Ethical considerations:**

The research complies with University ethics committee, BERA (2005) and EECERA (2014) guidelines.

Informed consent, children's assent, the right to withdraw and any possible risks to anonymity were explored.

**Main finding or discussion:**

Practitioners demonstrated the use of Photo Voice as an effective research tool for reflecting on practice, examining when and how they listen to children and influencing changes and improvements to pedagogy.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The findings will be used to develop innovative research methods for reflection to inform practice, developing pedagogical approaches to create learning environments.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Methods, Focus groups, Children's perspectives, Learning environment*

# INDEX

# *EECERA 2017 – Call for Papers*

**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

This year, the prestigious EECERA Annual Conference will be held 29th August – 1st September 2017 in Bologna, Italy hosted by University of Bologna. The theme of this year's conference is **"ECE beyond the crises: social justice, solidarity and children's rights"**.

We warmly invite you to respond to this 27th conference call of papers and hope you will be able to participate in this year's conference scientific activity. Full guidance and details of how to register online and submit a proposal for a conference paper or poster can be found on the conference website: **http://www.eecera2017.org**.

Proposals should be submitted online by 3rd March and successful applications will be notified by 5th May 2017, following the meeting of the Scientific Committee. There is a full programme of social activities for those who want to network.

We really are looking forward to welcoming you in Bologna and encourage you to participate and contribute to what is acknowledged as the European early childhood research community's most important forum.

With warm regards,

*Lucia Balduzzi and Arianna Lazzari*
*Chair and Co-chair of the EECERA 2017 Conference*

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