



# LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



**mac Birmingham, Cannon Hill Park**  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019



The 9th BECERA Conference is hosted by:

Centre for Research in Early Childhood  
St. Thomas Children's Centre  
Bell Barn Road  
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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)

The Centre for Research in Early Childhood, more commonly referred to as CREC, is the home of CREC in Birmingham (Charitable Trust) and Amber Publications and Training (APT).

Established by Professor Chris Pascal and Professor Tony Bertram, CREC has been working to improve Early Years provision for over 20 years.

Located in the St Thomas Children's Centre near Birmingham city centre, CREC specialises in early childhood research which has relevant and meaningful outcomes for practice and policy.

Some of its research is transformed into training and development programmes designed for the specific needs of the early years sector.

CREC also delivers postgraduate and research degrees through its close affiliations with Midlands universities, particularly Birmingham City University and Wolverhampton University.

In 2015, in partnership with the St. Thomas Centre Nursery and various Nursery and Primary schools across the West Midlands, Cambridgeshire & North Yorkshire, we 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 work with many UK local authorities, NGOs and countries.

Examples include the British Council, QDCA, OECD, Portugal, Qatar, South Australia, Birmingham and Gloucestershire.

CREC has also been EECERA's strategic partner supporting the delivery of the annual conference since 2009.

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## WELCOME FROM THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the ninth 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 critically and engaging in 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 and politically makes the need for support and deep thinking about the future of early childhood services even more vital as hard decisions are taken which will shape our futures.

This ninth conference has as its theme:

### LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The remarkable curiosity and exploratory drive of most young children ensures that they actively and continually seek to discover and make sense of their world. Less than 20% of young children's lives are spent in centre-based, learning settings and our BECERA 2019 theme encourages delegates to critically evaluate the many other places and spaces where young children's learning takes place and the characteristics and nature of learning 'beyond the classroom'.

We suggest three strands to frame this thinking but, clearly, they are not exhaustive:

1. Learning in the Home
2. Learning in Public Places and Spaces
3. Learning for Life

We are particularly interested in considering differences in the learning experience between the classroom and beyond.

For example, the development of social cognition and children's understanding of how people interact, how they understand their own world and their place in it, the need for different behaviours and talk in different contexts, what's appropriate, and how we get on, collaborate and learn with and from others.

Linked to this personal social and emotional understanding is the development of 'executive functioning' now increasingly seen as the pre-eminent indicator of successful achievement in life. Does this social cognition, as one example, develop in a different way beyond the classroom? One might also like to consider this theme in the context of EY practitioners and their broader access to CPD and lifelong learning.

## LEARNING IN THE HOME

There is much research which supports the significance of the 'home learning environment' and we invite delegates to share ideas about what this is; the engagement of parents; 'companionable learning', which may or may not include parents; parental involvement in transitions and other aspects of home learning.

## LEARNING IN PUBLIC SPACES AND PLACES

What learning places and spaces are available and accessible to young children; parks, shopping, libraries, open space, community art and events; social media and internet; what kind of learning can occur in these spaces; and how are these changing or contracting?

## LEARNING FOR LIFE

Are there particular types of learning in outdoor or non-centre based spaces and places which provide for the development of educational dispositions or attitudes, the 'super-skills' of learning, which last a lifetime? Are there environments where resilience, exploration, curiosity, self-motivation, independence and social collaboration are fostered?

Our keynote speakers will address some of these issues but BECERA is a forum where critical dialogue and knowledge transfer, power and voice, democracy and participation are actively encouraged from all delegates in a supportive and respectful environment.

Yours sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Tony Bertram' and the second signature on the right is 'C. Pascal'.

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

## CONFERENCE INFORMATION

### LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)

### SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Professor Tony Bertram, CREC, Birmingham, UK

Professor Christine Pascal, CREC, Birmingham, UK

### MAJOR CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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





## GENERAL INFORMATION

### HOST

The host of the ninth 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, delegate pass and bag, including conference programme book, refreshments and lunch.

### COFFEE BREAKS AND LUNCH

Arrival refreshments are served at the Arena Bar. Lunch and refreshments during all scheduled breaks will be served at the Performance Studio. 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 Performance Studio 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](http://www.bookseducation.co.uk).
- **ThoughtBubbles** - A programme of meditation for children and families. Initially developed as a written programme of lesson plans for teachers, now also available as an online series of recorded meditation aimed at children aged 5 - 11. <http://thoughtbubbles.org.uk/>.
- **Effective Early Learning (EEL) and Baby Effective Early Learning (BEEL)** (in conjunction with **Scalchemy Training & Development**). These are programmes of supported self-evaluation and improvement for all settings that provide early education and care for young children aged 0-7 years. Designed for Early Years practitioners to become practitioner-researchers in their own settings and to drive quality improvement through a cycle of reflective practice built on child and adult observations. <http://www.crec.co.uk/EEL-BEEL>.
- **Scalchemy Training and Development** is an early years training and consultancy company, dedicated to the welfare and development of children through interactive, innovative childcare courses and workshops for all early years practitioners. <https://www.scalchemy.co.uk/>.
- **MERYC-England** – Established in 2016, this Birmingham based charity is focused on advancing the musical education of children aged 0 to 5 years through promoting and raising the quality of research and practice in this area. <http://www.crec.co.uk/meryc-england>.

- **Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)** – visit our stand for any questions regarding the BECERA Conference after the morning registration closes. We will also provide further details about our postgraduate courses starting in September 2019 – MA in Education and School Centred Initial Teacher Training (early years focus), as well as EECERA 2019. <http://www.crec.co.uk/>.

#### INFORMATION DESK

The registration and information 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 Performance Studio.

#### 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 file to avoid any compatibility issues. We also recommend that you locate your symposium room in advance and arrive at your symposium room at least 10 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 10 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 4 rooms. Depending on which room your intended symposium is in, it may take up to 5 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, find a seat.

#### CONFERENCE BADGES

Your personal badge is your entry ticket to all keynotes, symposia, exhibition 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, X61 and 63. For more information on bus routes you can use [www.traveline.co.uk](http://www.traveline.co.uk) or other route-planning facilities.

Car parking is available at Queens Ride, next to the mac & on a first come, first serve basis. Please note that this is chargeable via Birmingham City Council who manage the car park by pay & display or phone via park mobile.

- Up to 4 hours = £2
- Up to 16.5 hours = £3

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 #BECERA2019.

# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>08:00 – 09:10</b>	Registration & Refreshments	<i>Foyer (registration) Arena Bar (tea/coffee)</i>
<b>09:10 – 09:25</b>	Opening session	<i>Cinema</i>
<b>09:25 – 10:10</b>	KEYNOTE I – CHRIS PASCAL & TONY BERTRAM – <i>Informal Learning in Times of Austerity</i>	<i>Cinema</i>
<b>10:10 – 10:40</b>	Coffee break & Exhibition	<i>Performance Studio</i>
<b>10:40 – 12:00</b>	Symposium Set I	<i>A: Pinsent Masons 1 B: Pinsent Masons 2 C: Cinema D: Deloitte Room</i>
<b>12:00 – 12:45</b>	Lunch & Exhibition	<i>Performance Studio</i>
<b>12:45 – 14:05</b>	Symposium Set II	<i>A: Pinsent Masons 1 B: Pinsent Masons 2 C: Cinema D: Deloitte Room</i>
<b>14:05 – 14:25</b>	Coffee break & Exhibition	<i>Performance Studio</i>
<b>14:25 – 15:45</b>	Symposium Set III	<i>A: Pinsent Masons 1 B: Pinsent Masons 2 C: Cinema D: Deloitte Room</i>
<b>15:45 – 15:55</b>	Short coffee break	<i>Performance Studio</i>
<b>15:55 – 16:40</b>	KEYNOTE II – UTE WARD – <i>‘A Caring Partnership’: Parent-Practitioner Interactions in Early Childhood Education</i>	<i>Cinema</i>
<b>16:40 – 16:45</b>	Closing session	<i>Cinema</i>

## 9<sup>th</sup> BECERA Conference

### PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2019

**09:10 – 10:10    Opening Session & Keynote I                      Cinema**

#### **Informal Learning in Times of Austerity**

*CHRIS PASCAL AND TONY BERTRAM – Directors, Centre for Research in Early Childhood*

Poor families with young children have been harder hit than any other group by austerity policies and research tells us that informal family learning in community spaces contributes to development of young citizens, particularly for character building, positive learning dispositions and executive learning functions, which influence successful school outcomes (Pascal and Bertram, 2012; Heckmann and Mosso, 2014).

It focuses on informal family learning in urban disadvantaged communities experiencing austerity in England and Portugal. This connection between school outcomes and informal learning in urban environments is vital, under-researched and relevant to many urban communities experiencing austerity.

In this keynote, Professor Chris Pascal and Professor Tony Bertram will report on an international research project undertaken in 2018 in Birmingham and Porto, Portugal. They will describe how they mapped the impact of austerity in English and Portuguese disadvantaged urban communities, documenting changing levels of availability/access to what were, historically, public, free, cultural/leisure services on which poor families depend for stimulation and extension of family learning, including libraries, parks, playgrounds, youth clubs and museums.

The project aims were to enhance family and informal learning for disadvantaged children before entry to school, generating learning with international relevance.

For more information please visit: <https://www.earlylearningausterityproject.org/>.

## **SYMPOSIUM SET I: 10:40 – 12:00**

	<b>Symposium Title</b>	<b>Room</b>
I/A	ENHANCING CHILD OUTCOMES THROUGH USE OF THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT	PINSENT MASONS 1
I/B	CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THEMSELVES, THEIR RIGHTS, AND THOSE OF OTHERS	PINSENT MASONS 2
I/C	INVESTIGATING HOME – SETTING COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS	CINEMA
I/D	GATHERING EVIDENCE TO CHALLENGE DOMINANT DISCOURSE	DELOITTE ROOM

## **SYMPOSIUM SET II: 12:45 – 14:05**

	<b>Symposium Title</b>	<b>Room</b>
II/A	CURRENT ECE DEBATES	PINSENT MASONS 1
II/B	SHARING PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING	PINSENT MASONS 2
II/C	EARLY YEARS MUSIC	CINEMA
II/D	LEARNING IN PUBLIC SPACES AND PLACES	DELOITTE ROOM

## **SYMPOSIUM SET III: 14:25 – 15:45**

	<b>Symposium Title</b>	<b>Room</b>
III/A	EXPLORING LOOSE PARTS OUTDOORS	PINSENT MASONS 1
III/B	SOCIAL COLLABORATION: DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH FOSTERING EXPLORATION, CURIOSITY AND RESILIENCE FOR LEARNING FOR LIFE	PINSENT MASONS 2
III/C	SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION	CINEMA
III/D	THE VALUE OF PLAY	DELOITTE ROOM

**15:55 – 16:40 Keynote II**

**Cinema**

**‘A Caring Partnership’: Parent-Practitioner Interactions in Early Childhood Education**

*UTE WARD – Senior Lecturer, University of Hertfordshire*

In this keynote, Ute will be sharing some insights from her research on practitioner-parent interactions:

“I recently undertook a research project looking into practitioners’ views and perceptions of parents, and into their interactions with parents. I have built on this and explored how parents view their children’s early childhood practitioners, what they expect from them and how they understand these parent-practitioner interactions.

This has highlighted some discrepancies between government guidelines, practitioner expectations and parents’ wishes. This, in turn, leaves settings trying to find the middle-ground between contrasting views and expectations and leads to practitioners having a wide range of different approaches to their relationships with parents.

I will introduce the concept of a ‘caring partnership’ between practitioner and parent and reflect on how this is embedded in wider society.”

You can find out more about Ute and her current research on the University of Hertfordshire Research Database.

**16:40 – 16:45 Closing Session**

**Cinema**

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

TUESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2019

SYMPOSIUM SET I: 10:40 – 12:00

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## **SYMPOSIUM I/A**

ENHANCING CHILD OUTCOMES THROUGH USE OF THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT  
ROOM: PINSENT MASONS 1

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**CHAIR:** Amanda Norman, University of Winchester

### **Narratives in Nature**

Amanda Norman, University of Winchester

### **A life 'in and with nature?' An exploration of outdoor provision in baby rooms**

Nicola Kemp and Jo Josephidou, Canterbury Christ Church University

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## **SYMPOSIUM I/B**

CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THEMSELVES, THEIR RIGHTS, AND THOSE OF OTHERS  
ROOM: PINSENT MASONS 2

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**CHAIR:** Zenna Kingdon, University of Wolverhampton

### **Children's learning about their rights**

Ghadah Abahussain, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University / University of Sheffield

### **Whose Shoes – body or identity, body and identity?**

Zenna Kingdon, Ruth Scott, Jennifer Stanley, Catriona Blair, Abbie Martin and Aishah Samha, University of Wolverhampton

### **The impact of teachers' exclusion practices on young children' acceptance of the inclusion of children with disability**

Nada Alwadaani, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University / University of Sheffield

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## **SYMPOSIUM I/C**

INVESTIGATING HOME – SETTING COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS  
ROOM: CINEMA

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**CHAIR:** Liz Chesworth, University of Sheffield



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**Making connections from the home to setting: Developing a technological pedagogy**

Shannon Ludgate, Birmingham City University

**Do ‘Bucket Lists’ enhance parental engagement?**

Andrea Layzell and Julie Denton, St Edmund’s Nursery School and Children’s Centre

**How do children’s play interests emerge from home cultures in a multi-diverse early years setting?**

Liz Chesworth and Aderonke Folorunsho, University of Sheffield

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**SYMPOSIUM I/D**

GATHERING EVIDENCE TO CHALLENGE DOMINANT DISCOURSE

ROOM: DELOITTE

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**CHAIR: Kathryn Peckham**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**“I’m 4, what does assessment do for me?” Where emotions fit within assessment in Early Childhood Education in Nepal, India, Spain and England**

Alicia Blanco Bayo, Edge Hill University

**An exploration of the relationship between neuroscience and Early Years (EY) training: case studies of knowledge transfer**

Mine Conkbayir, Mine Conkbayir Consultancy

**Understanding the importance of learning for life**

Kathryn Peckham, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

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**SYMPOSIUM SET II: 12:45 – 14:05**

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**SYMPOSIUM II/A**

CURRENT ECE DEBATES

ROOM: PINSENT MASONS 1

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**CHAIR: Michael Gasper**, Starfish Enterprise

**Men in Childcare: Does it matter to children, what do they say?**

Tracey Edwards and Helen Perkins, University of Wolverhampton

**Becoming Resilient: An Examination of Student Persistence in Higher Education and Corresponding Factors in Young Children’s Transitions**

Sarah Sharpe, University of Wolverhampton and Josie Gabi, Manchester Metropolitan University

**From Birth to 1 year – Ben’s journey**

Michael Gasper, Starfish Enterprise

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**SYMPOSIUM II/B**

SHARING PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING

ROOM: PINSENT MASONS 2

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**CHAIR: Donna Gaywood**, Birmingham City University/ Centre for Research in Early Childhood**A Breath of Fresh Air: Shared parent, infant learning and wellbeing experiences outdoors**

Amanda Norman and Mathilda Lecacheux, University of Winchester

**Muddy Knees or Muddy Needs: Parents Perceptions of Outdoor Learning**

Katie Parsons and Jo Traunter, University of Hull

**Managing complex relationships in the field whilst attempting to develop sensitive ethical research practices. A practitioner researcher's experience with refugee children, their parents and Early Years educators**Donna Gaywood, Birmingham City University/ Centre for Research in Early Childhood

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**SYMPOSIUM II/C**

EARLY YEARS MUSIC

ROOM: CINEMA

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**CHAIR: Zoe Greenhalgh**, MERYC England**Who is leading music sessions in the places and spaces beyond the classroom?**

Zoe Greenhalgh and Jane Parker, MERYC England

**The role of play in early years string teaching**

Kate Comberti, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**Musical play in the car, the playground and at the beach**Sophie Fox, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

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**SYMPOSIUM II/D**

LEARNING IN PUBLIC SPACES AND PLACES

ROOM: DELOITTE

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**CHAIR: Helen Lyndon**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood**Making Together: parents and children exploring materials together**

Deirdre Buckley and Katy Sadler, Craftspace

**Citizens in their City: Developing a boat and harbour experience for nursery children, exploring children's agency**

Emma Butcher, Redcliffe Children's Centre

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**Freedom and Control: the challenges of exploring museums and gardens with young children**

Kate Noble, The Fitzwilliam Museum

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**SYMPOSIUM SET III: 14:25 – 15:45**

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**SYMPOSIUM III/A**

**EXPLORING LOOSE PARTS OUTDOORS**

**ROOM: PINSENT MASONS 1**

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**CHAIR: Jan White**, Early Childhood Outdoors

**Exploring Loose Parts Outdoors**

Jan White, Early Childhood Outdoors

**Exploring the local authority role in developing and sustaining a ‘Loose Parts Outdoors’ Special Interest Group - a view from complexity**

Andrea Lancaster, Sheffield City Council and Emma Sefton, St Catherines Primary School Sheffield

**Troubling thinking – Loose parts in assemblage**

Menna Godfrey, York St. John University

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**SYMPOSIUM III/B**

**SOCIAL COLLABORATION: DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH FOSTERING EXPLORATION, CURIOSITY AND RESILIENCE FOR LEARNING FOR LIFE**

**ROOM: PINSENT MASONS 2**

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**CHAIR: Kathleen Roche-Nagi**, Approachable Parenting

**How can Family Learning support families to reach their potential? And Exploring Participants’ Perceptions of Exclusion in Early Childhood Settings in a Plural and Diverse, Urban Community**

Hafsha Dadabhai Shaikh, Smartlyte Ltd

**Approachable Parenting: 5 Pillars of Parenting pregnancy to 3 years**

Kathleen Roche-Nagi, Approachable Parenting

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**SYMPOSIUM III/C**  
SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION  
ROOM: CINEMA

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**CHAIR:** Tanya Richardson, University of Northampton

**Speech and language beyond the classroom: the impact of the environment on children's language**

Tanya Richardson, University of Northampton

**Supporting children identified with speech, language and communication needs at two-years-old: voices of early years practitioners (early findings)**

Nyree-Anne Nicholson, Bishop Grosseteste University

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**SYMPOSIUM III/D**  
THE VALUE OF PLAY  
ROOM: DELOITTE

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**CHAIR:** Sue Gascoyne, Play to Z

**"The play session fundamentally changed so much for us" - parents learning the value of play**

Karen McInnes and Janet Rose, Norland College

**Thriving not just surviving in school - lessons from children's voices in the play therapy room**

Sue Gascoyne, Play to Z

# ABSTRACTS

## SYMPOSIUM SET I

10:40 – 12:00

SYMPOSIUM I/A

### ENHANCING CHILD OUTCOMES THROUGH USE OF THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

**CHAIR:** Amanda Norman, University of Winchester

**ROOM:** PINSENT MASONS 1

#### **Narratives in Nature**

**Amanda Norman**, University of Winchester

*Learning For Life*

#### **Research aims or questions:**

To evaluate perceptions of outdoor playful nature experiences, alongside contemporary literature

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

This research forms part of a larger international project (Canada) currently being investigated. It connects to historical pioneers including Froebel and McMillan sisters whilst drawing on contemporary research from Tovey (2010) on children's experience of outdoor play. Additionally, Dockett (2011) explored teachers' perceptions of free play, and this paper provides initial insight play experiences with the researcher by using the Mosaic Approach, developed by Clark and Moss (2001).

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Through a Reggio inspired approach and Froebelian philosophy in valuing outdoor nature play Wenger, (1998) communities of practice was also reflected on.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Within an interpretative paradigm a Mosaic approach (Clark) will be used as a way of gathering data and listening to children non-intrusively in nursery and reception class settings.

This will include a photovoice approach on gathering data, the drawing of pictorial maps, and pictures, with accompanying narratives and child led tours.

#### **Ethical considerations:**

Research was gained through ongoing assent from children during observations and focus-group activities. Consent was also gained from parents and early years providers as gatekeepers. Ethical procedures were additionally sought and adhered to through university criteria.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The project is currently in its data collection phase and findings will include the short and long term educational opportunities regarding outdoor playful nature experiences

**Implications, practice or policy:**

To evaluate the educational attitudes and learning opportunities of engaging with nature, lasting a life time. Resilience, exploration, curiosity, self-motivation, independence and social collaboration are implications for outdoor nature play.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Multiple narratives, Case study, Outdoor Play, Learning environment*

**A life 'in and with nature?' An exploration of outdoor provision in baby rooms**

**Nicola Kemp and Jo Josephidou,** Canterbury Christ Church University

*Learning For Life*

**Research aims or questions:**

Our aims are to raise awareness of the significance of the outdoor environment for babies and toddlers and promote examples of innovative practice within baby rooms.

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

Whilst there is considerable literature on outdoor learning experiences for 2-5 year olds, the nature and extent of provision for 0-2s is unknown with a dearth of research on the subject. Anecdotal and peripheral evidence (NICE, 2008; Bruce, 2012; Clare, 2012; Gooch and Powell, 2013) suggests this is an area that warrants further attention.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This project will use Froebelian principles (The Froebel Trust, 2019) to consider babies and infants engagement with and in nature.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The research design will adopt a mixed methods approach to both audit current provision and gather practitioner perspectives on what effective provision looks like and what facilitates or hinders this. Our lens will be one of appreciate enquiry looking to gather examples of good practice that can then be disseminated further.

**Ethical considerations:**

The research is in its initial stages and full ethical approval is currently being sought. The first phase of the research which will be presented at the conference, is based solely on secondary sources however ethical consideration is being given to ensure fair representation of literature, along with a clear acknowledgement of funding sources.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The focus of our presentation will be on the research design and its significance.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The research has the potential to impact in five distinct areas which we will explore briefly in our presentation:

- Policy
- Practice

- Student learning
- Academic conversations and research
- Infants' and toddlers' experiences in formal ECEC settings

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

## **SYMPOSIUM I/B**

### **CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THEMSELVES, THEIR RIGHTS, AND THOSE OF OTHERS**

**CHAIR:** Zenna Kingdon, University of Wolverhampton

**ROOM:** PINSENT MASONS 2

#### **Children's learning about their rights**

**Ghadah Abahussain**, Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University / University of Sheffield

*Learning in Public Spaces and Places*

##### **Research aims or questions:**

- Explore children's sources to obtain knowledge regards their rights.

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

- The findings of the current study reflect to some degree those in Morgan (2008) and Mangamu's study (2013). Morgan (2008) found that children's information about their rights is obtained through their teachers. This finding supported by Mangamu's study (2013) which found that mothers and teachers were the main sources for children's information about CRs.

##### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The ecological theory was used as a theoretical framework for this study.

##### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

- This is a qualitative research and the data was gathered by the use of the focus group. There were two focus groups with 6 children, three in each, whose age between 9 and 10.

##### **Ethical considerations:**

- Obtain permission from children and their parent to participate in the research, which will be audio recorded.
- The children's information such as their names or their school name will not be mentioned at all.
- The audio records will be destroyed af

##### **Main finding or discussion:**

- The media was the most helpful source that helps children to obtain knowledge about their rights.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

- There should be more interesting by the decision-makers in the use of media to improve the awareness about children's rights.

**Keywords:** *Focus groups, Knowledge*

**Whose Shoes – body or identity, body and identity?**

**Zenna Kingdon, Ruth Scott, Jennifer Stanley, Catriona Blair, Abbie Martin and Aishah Samha,** University of Wolverhampton

*Learning For Life*

**Research aims or questions:**

Early Childhood Studies students and I are working together to generate a rich data set. Students are enabled to participate in a real research project developing research skill. We aim to discover whether children's seeming interest in shoes and feet relates to: body, identity or both.

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

Previously I worked with eight children across two pre-school settings generating data; listening to the voice of the child (Harwood 2010). The children used digital cameras independently (Clark and Moss 2001, Rogers and Evans 2009, Cook and Hess 2007, Loizou 2011). All children took photographs of their shoes and those of friends and the practitioners. They could not explain their interest. Therefore children's interest in feet and shoes remained an unanswered element of the work.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This project is located in a critical paradigm that positions children as active agents, competent participants who are capable of commenting on their own lives.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Qualitative data is generated using a range of techniques; observations, photographs, and through conferencing activities in which children and adults talk with each whilst utilising an object or image to provoke discussion.

**Ethical considerations:**

The research adheres to the EECERA guidelines. All participants gave informed consent and understood that this could be withdrawn at any time.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The project involves three stages of research. The first in which children were given opportunities to explore a selection of shoes and record data with digital cameras is explored here.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Understanding children's identity is essential in supporting their development. Students' engagement in meaningful research will support their development as practitioners.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Play, Children's perspectives, Research paradigms, Creativity*



# **The impact of teachers' exclusion practices on young children' acceptance of the inclusion of children with disability**

**Nada Alwadaani**, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University/ The University of Sheffield

*Learning For Life*

## **Research aims or questions:**

The aim of this research is gain insights into the inclusive practices of early childhood teachers and explore their influences on children's learning about disability and attitudes towards children with disability.

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

The study links to research acknowledging that children learn and acquire knowledge about disability from adults. It draws on Keefe and Moore (2004) and Sapon-Shevin (2007) , that teachers play critical role in children's learning and forming attitudes towards children with disability, it emphasises that teachers' interaction with children with disability as critical. Studies argued that children learn from their teachers how to respect differences.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Children's learning about disability is highly influenced by their social surroundings. Vygotsky believed that adults played an important role in the formation of children's social behaviours, and that children learn and acquire knowledge by modelling adults.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The sociocultural paradigm adopted supported by observations for 8 weeks. The observations took place in three kindergarten classrooms with total of 8 teachers and 70 children aged 4-6

## **Ethical considerations:**

Written consent was received from teachers. Consent of children's (verbal and non-verbal) was constantly negotiated.

## **Main finding or discussion:**

The findings revealed that children excluded children with disability from play and avoided interacting with them. Also, the findings indicated that children learned and formed negative attitudes from their teachers. Teachers pushed the children with disability away and thus, other children as well pushed their peers with disability away.

## **Implications, practice or policy:**

conclusion for increasing understanding and awareness about disability among teachers prior to implement inclusion in classrooms, as they influence children's understanding and acceptance of their peers

**Keywords:** *Case study*

## SYMPOSIUM I/C

### INVESTIGATING HOME – SETTING COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

**CHAIR:** Liz Chesworth, University of Sheffield

**ROOM:** CINEMA

#### **Making connections from the home to setting: Developing a technological pedagogy**

**Shannon Ludgate**, Birmingham City University

*Learning in the Home*

##### **Research aims or questions:**

The study explored the affordances of using touchscreen technologies in four early years settings in the West Midlands.

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

The study builds upon recommendations by Yelland and Gilbert (2012) who suggested more focus should be placed on the affordances of using this form of technology in order to develop practice.

##### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Activity theory (Engestrom, 1999) and Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological systems theory were utilised as theoretical frameworks for this study, to place the touchscreen at the centre of analysis, whilst also recognising the wider factors which influence touchscreen play. **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Through a social constructionist perspective, data was collected through focus-group interviews with young children, interviews with practitioners and observations of practice.

##### **Ethical considerations:**

Consent lanyards were designed to give children an accessible way of providing informed consent and ongoing assent during the focus-group interviews, and to withdraw consent throughout the data collection period. Anonymity was ensured through pseudonyms for each setting, and codes for children.

##### **Main finding or discussion:**

Children often made connections between their home and setting-based experiences of using touchscreen devices. Children used this knowledge and the skills they had learned to teach their peers or support them during moments where others experienced challenge.

##### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Analysis of the findings revealed that whilst children made these connections and supported their peers, there were few opportunities whereby practitioners recognised this and sought to build upon the learning. Therefore, it is important that practitioners reflect on their practice and seek to gain the child's perspective and develop an understanding of their home-based touchscreen play in order to foster high quality learning experiences.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Focus groups, Play, Children's perspectives, Technology and ICT*

## Do 'Bucket Lists' enhance parental engagement?

Andrea Layzell and Julie Denton, St Edmund's Nursery School and Children's Centre

*Learning in the Home*

### Research aims or questions:

Explore early findings regarding the effectiveness of a 'bucket list', including smartphone app, in engaging parents in their children's learning, creating new / extending existing parental partnerships in early years provision in the private and maintained sectors as part of a £1m, 70 setting DFE School Improvement Fund (SSIF) early years project.

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

Pascal, C., Bertram, T. (2016) <http://www.crec.co.uk/HAWWC%20Boys/HAWWC%20Boys%20Project%20Report.pdf>

Peters, M., Seeds, K., Goldstein, A. and Coleman, N. (2007): <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8605/1/DCSFRR034>.

Romero, R et al. 2018: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797617742725>

Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2010): <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01411920902989201>

### Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:

The main theoretical frameworks used in the development of 50 Things are Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and Social Interactionist Theory of language development (Vygotsky, Bruner) linking to parents' role in children's learning

### Paradigm, methodology and methods:

Focus groups, case studies and interviews have explored professional and parental response to the 50 Things To Do Before You're Five resource, investigating the most effective methods to introduce parents to 50 Things and sustain continuing engagement

### Ethical considerations:

Informed consent gained from parents and practitioners to share conclusions, assertions and their words.

### Main finding or discussion:

Universally well received by professionals, 50 Things is in the early stages of roll out to parents, who report positively about the accessibility and localised approach to ideas and activities

### Implications, practice or policy:

A hard copy resource and app offers us the means to engage effectively with parents in ways and at a time that suits the needs of modern families. A locally referenced smartphone app that utilises resources in the community, links to existing online information and resources, demystifying why and how simple experiences can improve children's early development

**Keywords:** *Action Research, Play, Case study, Communication Language and Literacy, Parents perspectives*

# How do children's play interests emerge from home cultures in a multi-diverse early years setting?

Liz Chesworth and Aderonke Folorunsho, University of Sheffield

*Learning in the Home*

## **Research aims or questions:**

This study aimed to identify the home languages, cultures and practices that children brought to their play in a super diverse early years setting.

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

Drawing upon research by Chesworth (2016) and Hedges and Cooper (2014) we argue that children's home lives have an important influence upon the interests, ideas and knowledge which they explore in their play at nursery.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Informed by sociocultural theories, we used the concept of funds of knowledge (Moll et al, 1992) to acknowledge that households are rich sources of knowledge and experiences for young children.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The interpretive study generated data about ten focus children's play over a four-month period. Paired observations, professional dialogues with practitioners and research conversations with parents were used to gain insights into children's funds of knowledge.

## **Ethical considerations:**

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Sheffield. However, ethics was not seen as a 'point in time' approval, but as an ongoing process of reflection and negotiation between children, families, practitioners and members of the research team.

## **Main finding or discussion:**

The research findings indicate that children's home cultures, including their engagement in digital worlds, are rich sources of knowledge. However, the curriculum requirements of the EYES and the non-verbal modes through which children enacted their knowledge in play, meant that funds of knowledge were sometimes not recognised within the pedagogy of the nursery.

## **Implications, practice or policy:**

Ongoing reciprocal dialogue with parents, and alertness to the multi- modality of children's meaning-making, are key to recognising and responding to the knowledge that children gain from participating in everyday home activities.

**Keywords:** *Play, Curriculum, Parents participation*

## **SYMPOSIUM I/D**

### **GATHERING EVIDENCE TO CHALLENGE DOMINANT DISCOURSE**

**CHAIR:** Kathryn Peckham, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**ROOM:** DELOITTE

#### **“I’m 4, what does assessment do for me?” Where emotions fit within assessment in Early Childhood Education in Nepal, India, Spain and England**

**Alicia Blanco Bayo**, Edge Hill University

*Learning For Life*

##### **Research aims or questions:**

Are the emotional needs of children considered before EC practitioners choose an assessment method in the current climate of standardised testing?

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

Assessment in ECE (Gullo, 2005; Strand et al., 2007; Dubiel, 2016; Buzzelli, 2018, Bradbury & Robert-Holmes, 2017), has been linked to testing and numerical evaluation.

##### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Policy continues to dictate how measuring performance is at the top of the political and economic agenda. This paper sets the context using Martin (2018) perspective on assessment and its connection with development according to Denham et al. (2016) so that the purpose of assessment in ECE can be clarified. It defines emotional needs considering Saarni's (1999) definition of emotional competence.

##### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Interviews used to study to what extent the emotional needs of children are considered before assessment are chosen. Practice-based inquiry methods to engage in discussion were used to value practitioners experiences using approaches suggested by documentation from England.

##### **Ethical considerations:**

Approval under the Department Ethics process at Lancaster University and informed consent to analyse the data collected during the interviews were granted and authorised by each participant.

##### **Main finding or discussion:**

The data confirms that practitioners from Nepal, India and Spain are in favour of observational methods of assessment in EY because they provide details about the emotional development of children. It suggests that the pedagogies included in policy documents in England influence practice in other parts of the world.

##### **Implications, practice or policy:**

It argues whether the pedagogical methods suggested in policy documents should be prioritised in England in order to maintain the moral cycle that makes assessment in ECE socially just.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Personal social and emotional development, Assessment, Ethics, Practice based inquiry*

# **An exploration of the relationship between neuroscience and Early Years (EY) training: case studies of knowledge transfer**

**Mine Conkbayir**, Mine Conkbayir Consultancy

*Learning For Life*

## **Research aims or questions:**

- Critically explore the relationship between knowledge from neuroscience & EY training;
- Identify the processes which enable/inhibit knowledge transfer within EY training organisations.

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

Like Bowers J (2016), Howard-Jones, Varma, Ansari D, et al. (2016), Ward et al (2009), Gladwell 2000), my research aims to bridge the knowledge gap between EY & neuroscience & KT.

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Organisational Learning Theory & within this, five key concepts: knowledge creation; KT; change processes; curriculum design; power & truth.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Interpretivist, qualitative paradigm, using survey & case study methodologies and questionnaire, interview & documentary analysis methods.

## **Ethical considerations:**

- Participant Information Letter sent
- Informed consent obtained
- Opportunity to opt out at any point, without recriminations
- Anonymity
- Feedback provided

## **Main finding or discussion:**

The current status quo prevents efficient & timely KT in EY, dictating that the EY workforce remains at the bottom (base) of the KT process, being “fed” snippets of knowledge that is decided on its behalf from the upper echelons without meaningful consultation/dialogue with them or EY lecturers to help shape qualification delivery.

Two of the expert interviews and the three illuminative case studies have proven to be affirmative case studies within what is proving to be a non-affirmative study, as each has identified how individuals manoeuvred around structural barriers. This is explained by my theory, An Inverse Knowledge Transfer (KT) Hierarchy: The Shifting of Power through Creating Alternative KT Channels

## **Implications, practice or policy:**

Findings being utilised by lecturers across EY to encourage more widespread inclusion of neuroscience as part of EY training, thereby further contributing to a virtuous circle of evidence informed practice.

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Professionalism, Impacts, Case study, Knowledge, Outcomes*

## **Understanding the importance of learning for life**

**Kathryn Peckham**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

*Learning For Life*

### **Research aims or questions:**

By widening appreciation for attributes of learning deeper than those traditionally associated within the classroom this research aims to validate and promote development of life-long skills and an awareness for the environments and opportunities required.

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

This study echoes the concern of downward pressures for didactic instruction troubled by Nicolopoulou et al. (2015) and the optimal measuring, computerisation and standardisation of young children's abilities (Blair, Zelazo, & Greenberg, 2005; Howard & Okely, 2015 in Howard et al., 2016).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Within a social interactive framework, the many variables, contexts and viewpoints involved are considered as it incorporates detailed representations of phenomena experienced by adults and children.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This child-centred, qualitative and naturalistic approach to viewing early childhood supports a cognitive exploration of deeper learning motivations (Nicolopoulou et al., 2015). Viewed through the words of adults and the actions of children, this phenomenological study explores the complex realities of early learning experiences, recognising children, not as passive recipients of information but as individuals within an ecological whole.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Following full disclosure of procedure and intentions, consent was obtained from all parties (adults and children) with ongoing assent secured weekly. Fluidity built into the methods allowed for dissent, and feedback loops in place at every stage retained the integrity.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

Sitting within a larger study, inconsistencies are identified in the understanding of children's abilities and those being demonstrated, indicating the potential for learning that is currently being missed.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Through a greater understanding of the phenomena of early learning, children can be better supported in these formative years.

**Keywords:** *Data gathering, Pedagogy, Methodological approaches, Children's perspectives, Learning environment*

# SYMPOSIUM SET II

12:45 – 14:05

## SYMPOSIUM II/A

### CURRENT ECE DEBATES

**CHAIR:** Michael Gasper, Starfish Enterprise

**ROOM:** PINSENT MASONS 1

### **Men in Childcare: Does it matter to children, what do they say?**

**Tracey Edwards and Helen Perkins**, University of Wolverhampton

*Learning For Life*

#### **Research aims or questions:**

Men in childcare stage 2

- How children perceive male practitioners?
- How they characterise their relationship with the male practitioners?
- Do children consistently choose staff they like for the activities they do well rather than the associate gender connection?

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

Chambers and O’Sullivan (2012), identified that children do not differentiate between staff members based on gender when selecting activities. With the exception of literacy, in which boys participated, but chose female staff. Warin, 2017, Wood and Brownhill, 2018 and Huber and Traxl, 2017 suggest gender flexible pedagogy is vital in early years.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This research is mainly qualitative and based within a sociocultural perspective

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Participatory and are based on praxeological values by involving teachers as research partners (Formosinho and Formosinho 2012 and Pascal and Bertram 2012). Photographs of familiar staff were used with children to provoke dialogue around set activities.

#### **Ethical considerations:**

Children’s participation rights are attended to by teacher researchers noticing and valuing children and their potential contribution to research, and ensuring that children have information and a choice about participation, including the right not to participate.

#### **Main finding or discussion:**

Children need to see our diverse society reflected in their nurseries. It is not just about gender but the opportunity for children to have choice. It is the characteristics and attributes of the teacher that provides a rich learning environment and allows all children to embrace positive non-stereotypical gendered behaviours.



**Implications, practice or policy:**

Are teachers, unconsciously coding activities as male or female?  
Personal values and beliefs unconsciously impacting their behaviours?  
Use of language unconsciously reinforcing gendered stereotypes?

**Keywords:** *Data gathering, Early Childhood Professionalism, Ethics, Impacts, Practice based inquiry*

**Becoming Resilient: An Examination of Student Persistence in Higher Education and Corresponding Factors in Young Children's Transitions**

Sarah Sharpe, University of Wolverhampton and Josie Gabi, Manchester Metropolitan University

*Learning For Life*

**Research aims or questions:**

Drawing on our study in student persistence in Higher Education (HE), this paper aims to scrutinise how extracts of data may be used to examine corresponding practices that cultivate resilience qualities in children in order to help them make positive adaptations in transitions.

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

There has been an increase in interest in research in stress and transition in children (Petty, 2017), coinciding with a rise in reported incidences of children's mental health issues (Wong, 2014). The transitioning process poses risk challenges to children (Correia and Marques-Pinto, 2016) who often experience a range of stressors and anxieties. Possible correlations are investigated between students' persistence as they experience the 'transfer-shock' of transitioning from one academic environment to another (Ivins et al, 2017), and children's resilience in the face of multiple transitions as they adjust to new situations.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

This study draws on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory to understanding resilience through a holistic consideration of contextual 'nested contexts' that influence children's experiences (Stevens, 2005).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A mixed-methods approach in the original study was adopted, underpinned by a pragmatist paradigm.

**Ethical considerations:**

A sensitive approach was utilised in gathering data from participants who may have been already struggling with multiple challenges (BERA, 2011).

**Main finding or discussion:**

Findings suggest that there are strong connections between resilience and persistence qualities in children and in HE students alike in the challenges and transitions they face – strengthened by positive, reciprocal relationships and holistic support.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

This research has political and cultural implications for early years practice and how the environment could nurture resilience.

**Keywords:** *Resilience, Persistence, Transitions, Stress Factors, Positive Relationships*

**From Birth to 1 year – Ben’s journey**

**Michael Gasper**, Starfish Enterprise

*Learning in the Home, Learning For Life*

**Research aims or questions:**

- To reflect on significant moments photographed
- To identify key skills emerging or being reinforced

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

The research is informed by the work of Colwyn Trevarthen and Alison Gopnik on babies interaction with adults and their surroundings and Chris Athey and Cathy Nutbrown on developing schemas.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Ethnographic research: those involved were parents and grandparents in daily or regular contact with Ben. Action Research: researcher and participants are equally involved.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

‘Real world research’: qualitative and interpretivist, concerned with child development and interaction with adults and surroundings. Reflection on photographs over Ben’s first year.

**Ethical considerations:**

As a grandparent, my personal perspective, and that of Ben’s parents and his grandmother, is acknowledged and the possibility of bias recognised. Indeed, the different perspectives add to the richness of the reflection (reflexivity). Both Parents have been consulted and will contribute to the reflections. They will see the presentation and have opportunity to alter it. They also have the right to withdraw permission at any time. The research focus is essentially positive.

**Main finding or discussion:**

- Focused attention, span of attention, persistence, digital dexterity were all surprising in their intensity and lentitude.
- Evidence of schemas emerged earlier than expected.
- Gradual emergence of gross motor control has developed.
- Response to rhythms and music appeared early and have developed.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Ben’s development supports recent research which recognises babies’ capacities rather than ‘in-capacity’.

- How can families be encouraged to support baby’s development?
- How can this be extended in nurseries and pre-school?
- How can the ‘top down’ pressures be reversed?

**Keywords:** *Multiple narratives, Parents participation*

## **SYMPOSIUM II/B**

### **SHARING PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING**

**CHAIR:** Donna Gaywood, Birmingham City University / Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**ROOM:** PINSENT MASONS 2

#### **A Breath of Fresh Air: Shared parent, infant learning and wellbeing experiences outdoors**

**Amanda Norman and Mathilda Lecacheux**, University of Winchester

*Learning in the Home*

##### **Research aims or questions:**

- What are the issues regarding infants and their main carers beyond the home environment?
- What ways can the outdoors and fresh air aid wellbeing and learning according to contemporary literature?
- Can emotional learning be supported when engaging in the outdoors?

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

This research builds upon the work of attachment led parenting (Bowlby 1960s) with contemporary research supporting parent, infant connectivity, including Zeedyk (2000-2019) and Trevarthen (2000). Furthermore, Holt practices (1894), Froebel (1800s), Louv (2005/7) Nature Deficit Disorder, Karsten (2005) highlighted the rationale for fresh air historically with present day concerns of children's engagement with the outdoors.

##### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Specifically, Zeedyk's (2000) relational studies and attachment has been drawn upon. The study also drew on pedagogical thinking of the value of the outdoors during infancy and explored ways of developing innovative strategies to support engagement of the outdoors, within a conceptual health and wellbeing frame. Historical glimpses from baby airing to contemporary practice will be discussed

##### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The Interpretive Paradigm has been drawn upon and the focus for this paper has been through documentary analysis.

##### **Ethical considerations:**

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

##### **Main finding or discussion:**

The preliminary findings from the research suggest that much more education and understanding for parents about the way the fresh air and outdoors can influence learning with infants as well as the links to health and wellbeing.

##### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Nature walks; understanding how the routine of going outdoors can be a healthy and playful learning experience.

**Keywords:** *Impacts, Real world*

# **Muddy Knees or Muddy Needs: Parents Perceptions of Outdoor Learning**

**Katie Parsons and Jo Traunter**, University of Hull

*Learning in Public Spaces and Places*

## **Research aims or questions:**

Exploring perceptions by examining data collected through a combination of questionnaires and interviews with both parents and teachers. The results highlight a significant disconnect in parent and teacher perceptions related to the purpose, aims and opportunities for learning outdoors.

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

Rothlein and Brett (1987) explored parents, teachers and childrens perspectives of outdoor play and learnt that parents considered outdoor play to be part of a childs lesuire time and not learning. In 2005 the Kaiser Family Foundation indicated that many parents were also directing childrens free time towards more structured educational activities. Which leads to the question; do parents understand what is happening during outdoor play and could the answer be effective communiaction (Jayasuriya et al, 2016).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Kaplan's Attention Theory (1984) and Wilson's (1984) work, which detailed the Biophilia hypothesis.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Qualitative and quantitaive mixed questionnaires and interviews with both parents and teachers within a foundation stage primary school.

## **Ethical considerations:**

The ethical aspects were considered, and all participants were informed about the confidentiality and anonymity regarding. All work ethically cleared by the University of Hull Ethics Committee.

## **Main finding or discussion:**

The findings of this study offer implications for early childhood educators, parents and others looking to promote the outdoors as a learning environment across the foundation stage.

## **Implications, practice or policy:**

Encouraging parent-teacher communication could lead to universal support and clearly articulated strategies which could promote active learning opportunities for children in the outdoors. Working collaboratively together enables teachers and parents to contribute to the effective realisation of these ambitions.

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Professionalism, Play, Outdoor Play, Learning environment, Parents perspectives*

# **Managing complex relationships in the field whilst attempting to develop sensitive ethical research practices. A practitioner researcher's experience with refugee children, their parents and Early Years educators**

**Donna Gaywood**, Birmingham City University/ Centre for Research in Early Childhood

*Learning For Life*

## **Research aims or questions:**

How very young refugee children experience Early Education settings, in terms of their sense of being and belonging. Develop responsive, power sensitive ethical research practices and a methodology which can be used with other marginalised people groups.

Inform everyday Early Years practice within local authorities in England

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

This study is inspired by Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire:1970), Natural Inclusion Theory (Rayner: 2017) and Tobin et al (2016), building on the findings of Kalkman and Clark (2017) and Prior and Niesz (2013)

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

An intricate theoretical frame has been used, which includes: Social Identity Theory (Tajfel: 1979); Orientalism (Said: 1978 ); Social and Cultural Capital (Bourdieu: 1979) to be responsive to the complex field.

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A qualitative, real world research paradigm

An emergent hybrid methodology which is praxeological (Formosinho and Formosinho, 2012; Pascal and Bertram, 2012).

And polyvocal (Tobin et al:2016)

A drawing methodology (Theron et al: 2011)

The Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss:2011) used to elicit the child's voice

## **Ethical considerations:**

- Ensuring the very young refugee children and their families voices are heard
- Recruiting participants from a marginalised people group
- Addressing issues of bias in self or others
- A negative national narrative about refugees.

## **Main finding or discussion:**

It has been necessary to adopt certain attitudes and attributes in order to remain ethically sensitive and authentic, whilst conducting deeply relational research (Gaywood: 2018)

## **Implications, practice or policy:**

This paper seeks to identify the times in research relationships where there has been dissonance and identify relevant learning for future researchers, whilst developing deeper authentic ethical approaches.

**Keywords:** *Ethics, Authenticity, Real world, Children's perspectives*

## **SYMPOSIUM II/C**

### **EARLY YEARS MUSIC**

**CHAIR:** Zoe Greenhalgh, MERYC England

**ROOM:** CINEMA

#### **Who is leading music sessions in the places and spaces beyond the classroom?**

**Zoe Greenhalgh and Jane Parker**, MERYC England

*Learning in Public Spaces and Places*

#### **Research aims or questions:**

This presentation will explore the vast proliferation of musical activity groups for young children and their families in England, who is leading them and what do they aim to provide (Greenhalgh 2014).

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

Greenhalgh, Z. (2014). Parker, J (2013). Parker, J. & Westbrook, G. (2018). Pitt, J. (2014). Young, S. (2018)

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Communities of practice (Wenger 1991); connection with peer networks and interactions; awareness of research informed practice, training and professional development.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Taking evidence from a number of sources and our extensive personal experience of working with both practitioners in the field and policy advisory bodies we will examine who is working in the Early Childhood Music Sector.

#### **Ethical considerations:**

This study was granted ethical approval by Birmingham City University Academic Ethics Committee. The data was freely given by respondents who chose to complete the questionnaire and the confidentiality, anonymity and security of data were assured.

#### **Main finding or discussion:**

Music content within practitioner and teacher training is minimal and frequently inadequate with very few specialist training courses available. There is a complete lack of cross-sector cohesion which, coupled with the lack of necessary prerequisite knowledge, skills or qualifications, results in the absence of professional accountability and, anecdotal evidence suggests, a wide variation in quality.

#### **Implications, practice or policy:**

There is a need for appropriate and meaningful Early Childhood music training (Pitt, 2014) and the development of communities of practise to support and develop appropriate models of practise, particularly if in the 2020 National Plan for Music Education the age range is extended to include children aged 0-5 years.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Early Childhood Professionalism, Knowledge, Learning environment*

## **The role of play in early years string teaching**

**Kate Comberti**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

*Learning For Life*

### **Research aims or questions:**

Young Children love to play musical instruments, and parents recognise the life long learning potential of early years music programmes.

This paper presents research undertaken in 2017 as part of MA requirements, exploring:

- What kinds of musical learning experiences do children (aged 4-7 years) have through beginner string programmes?
- What are the perceptions of play based approaches amongst specialist string teachers?
- What are string teachers' perceptions of developmentally appropriate teaching practices for young children?

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

This paper draws on previous research into musical play, pedagogy, instrumental teaching, creative teaching and musical development, Barrett, M (2006), Burnard, P. and Murphy, R. (2013), Marsh and Young (2006), Hallam, S and Creech, A. (2010).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Draws on the theories Froebel, Montessori and Steiner, (Bruce, 2009).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A small-scale qualitative interpretivist, exploratory study, this research draws on the experiences of early-years instrumental teachers, through an anonymous on-line questionnaire, a small self-selecting focus group, and interviews with specialists and teacher trainers to check my interpretation.

### **Ethical considerations:**

An anonymous on line questionnaire, information sheet and consent letter was provided to all participants.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

Very little evidence of child led playing current practice with methodologies, adult led and developmental approaches still dominating traditional approaches.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

A growing awareness across the sector on the importance of musical play and children's spontaneous music making has implications for practice both in early years settings and traditional instrumental music classes, leading to an increased awareness and subsequent call for further research.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Play, Multiprofessional collaboration, Children's perspectives, Creativity*

## **Musical play in the car, the playground and at the beach**

**Sophie Fox**, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

*Learning in Public Spaces and Places*

### **Research aims or questions:**

The aim of this research was to ask how are a child's musical experiences observed and viewed in relation to theories of general child and musical development. The research observed the naturalistic musical play of the child in a number of environments including a journey in the car, playing on a slide and at the beach.

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

This research relates to musicality, communicative musicality, play and learning. References: Trevarthan, C. 2002; Young, S. 2003; Campbell, P. 2011; Dissanayake, E. 2000; Bruce, T. 2015.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Looking at this child's musical play through the lenses of child development theorists, eg Piaget and Vygotsky, and early childhood music methods such as Dalcroze, and specialist early childhood music researchers.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This research was a small, qualitative case study following one 4-year-old child and their family, collecting data through filming and field notes and analyzing them for musical play.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Ethical considerations included gaining consent and ongoing assent from the family and child. The children's names have been changed and additional permission has been given to share the research at conference.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

Musical play and musicality are rooted in this child's natural self-initiated play and outward expressions. The body and voice are the first instruments we play. There was a deep connection to movement and vocal play and in addition to this, I observed a metaphysical intersubjectivity to family and the environment through musical play.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Viewing children's musical lives as rich and diverse, noticing their musical play and innate musicality. Seeing children as competent learners and valuing musical behaviors.

**Keywords:** *Play, Case study, Real world, Creativity*

## **SYMPOSIUM II/D**

### **LEARNING IN PUBLIC SPACES AND PLACES**

**CHAIR:** Helen Lyndon, Centre for Research in Early Childhood

**ROOM:** DELOITTE

**Making Together: parents and children exploring materials together**



**Deirdre Buckley and Katy Sadler, Craftspace**

*Learning in Public Spaces and Places*

**Research aims or questions:**

To observe whether the exploration of materials through making in a community setting is a transformative and positive process that develops social, cognitive and communication skills.

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

Our project is referenced in and builds on; Making Value:craft and the economic and social contribution of makers: Mary Schwarz and Dr Karen Yair

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Adopts a social constructivist theoretical framework (Vygotsky);specifically in the creation of learning contexts where participants play an active role in their learning and the artists and facilitators act as collaborators rather than instructors.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Using a practice based enquiry approach with a range of different tools including child tracking observations, pre and post session questionnaires, artists/staff reflections and photo documentation, we sought to observe and describe what kind of learning happens when maker led creative activity takes place within a within a free access community space for parents and children.

**Ethical considerations:**

Inclusivity and Permission

**Main finding or discussion:**

Making together built social, cognitive and communication skills.

The project led to enhancements in the EYFS seven areas of learning and development.

The nature of the making process naturally encouraged the super skills of learning; fostering resilience, exploration, curiosity, self-motivation, independence and social collaboration.

Parents valued the combination of the social and creative process together. It encouraged communication, enabled play and supported wellbeing.

The nature of the space where making happens is as important as the activity.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Making needs to happen regularly, with other people in the places where people are. Can we build community making hubs supported by professional makers to enable under fives to become makers?

**Keywords:** *Play, Practice based inquiry, Creativity, Learning environment, Parents participation*

## **Citizens in their City: Developing a boat and harbour experience for nursery children, exploring children's agency**

**Emma Butcher**, Redcliffe Children's Centre

*Learning in Public Spaces and Places*

### **Research aims or questions:**

In this research, it has been an interest in how the direct communities where children's lives are set can provide rich, real and historically evolved experiences for young children and their nursery community. These spaces are within the locality so do not require transport. The site within the local community that was the focus of this research was the harbour.

However, it is set in the centre of this nursery's neighbourhood and is the beholder of many cultural-historical developments. Difference between harbour experiences and the educational trip- where potentialities are ironed out and disruptions minimised, however in this research the very interest and aim is to start from the potential and unplanned.

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

This allows for events to be taken at the child's and the spaces lead- in accordance with Taguchi's (2011) posit of seizing opportunities to widen the scope of contexts to promote experience and collaborative participation to each child and also an added consideration each adult and the space of the harbour's continuously transforming learning and evolution, creating authentic learning (Gilje and Erstad 2016) and participation. Cultural historical perspectives

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

I have selected cultural historical as the main framework for my research, with emerging elements of New Materialist Theory. Authentic learning

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Pragmatic ontology through analysing case study

### **Ethical considerations:**

Involving children, staff, harbour workers and parents and continually searching their ethical approval.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

The richness and depth of spaces within the community for learning about children and stimulating authentic learning.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Consider the local community as source and site for learning and exploring.

**Keywords:** *Action Research, Pedagogy, Authenticity, Learning environment, Parents participation*

## **Freedom and Control: the challenges of exploring museums and gardens with young children**

**Kate Noble**, The Fitzwilliam Museum

*Learning in Public Spaces and Places*

### **Research aims or questions:**

To investigate how young children make meaning during a week long nursery residency at a museum and botanic garden and to examine the implications for professional practice at each setting (Wallis and Noble 2018).

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

Inspired by 'My Primary School is at the Museum' (De Witt et al, 2018, Kings College London, 2017) and influenced by Macrae, C et al (2017), Pringle, E (2018) and others

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Practitioner led research based on Pascal and Bertram's (2012) praxeological Action Research, Oliveira-Formosinho and Formosinho (2012) and MacNaughton and Hughes, (2009) research understood as a way of 'thinking by doing.'

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Data includes field notes, pre and post project questionnaires, interviews with practitioners, nursery learning journals, children's artwork, photographs and video and audio recordings collected over the course of the residency.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Informed by the EECERA ethical code (2014) – written consent gained from practitioners/ parents carers and ongoing or non-verbal assent sought from children.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

- Children and adults work together to create knowledge about new spaces, places and collections
- Meanings are actively constructed and enacted in a variety of ways using bodies, movements, words and touch
- Practitioners sometimes send contradictory messages to children about freedom and control outside the classroom
- Young children care deeply about our public spaces and places

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Acknowledge the tensions implicit when supporting enquiry led learning in public spaces in order to enable a range of embodied creative responses. Allow children the freedom, time and space to explore their experiences beyond the classroom to allow for unexpected possibilities and connections.

**Keywords:** *Action Research, Practice based inquiry, Children's perspectives, Creativity*

# SYMPOSIUM SET III

14:25 – 15:45

SYMPOSIUM III/A

## EXPLORING LOOSE PARTS OUTDOORS

CHAIR: Jan White, Early Childhood Outdoors

ROOM: PINSENT MASONS 1

### Exploring Loose Parts Outdoors

Jan White, Early Childhood Outdoors

*Learning For Life*

#### **Research aims or questions:**

With child-led enquiry, play and agency at its heart, the range of valuable thinking that the concept of 'loose parts' provokes has the potential to cause a significant shift in pedagogy. This practitioner-led enquiry sought to: investigate what young children do with loose parts outdoors; explore what the concept 'loose parts' could mean and its pedagogical value; and develop the use of loose parts for play, wellbeing and learning in the outdoors.

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

Nicholson's 'theory of loose parts' (1971) is much cited, but has been poorly interrogated. White (2017) outlined the value of this concept for enabling the development of flexible thinking and creativity.

#### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The enquiry draws upon affordance (Gibson 1986), ecological (Morton 2010) and embodied cognition (Claxton 2016) theories.

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This practice-based, community of learning inquiry involved semi-structured meetings with planning emerging from ongoing findings. Information gathering methods included questionnaires, field notes, observations, photographs, video, children's comments, discussion notes and journaling.

#### **Ethical considerations:**

EECERA 2014 guidelines were followed regarding informed consent, respectful practice and data management.

#### **Main finding or discussion:**

The presentation describes early findings from the project's first year. Running for 1 year from January 2018-19, Reception teachers in six schools across Sheffield met half-termly at each other's sites to share, analyse and debate their investigations of children's interactions with 'loose parts' in dynamic outdoor environments.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

The enquiry has offered a protracted, practitioner-led and action-research based opportunity for professional growth, influencing practice for learning outdoors within participating schools. It has also generated useful insights and contributions for deepening the pedagogy of 'outdoor learning' nationally.

**Keywords:** *Pedagogy, Play, Practice based inquiry, Outdoor Play, Learning environment*

**Exploring the local authority role in developing and sustaining a 'Loose Parts Outdoors' Special Interest Group - a view from complexity**

**Andrea Lancaster**, Sheffield City Council **and Emma Sefton**, St Catherines Primary School Sheffield

*Learning For Life*

**Research aims or questions:**

To explore the effectiveness and sustainability of this CPD initiative by considering the complex interactions between contextual factors and structural and process aspects of the initiative.

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

There is very little English Language ECE research using complexity analytically or methodologically. For an example see Wetzels, Steenbeek & Van Geert (2016).

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The enquiry will use critical complexity theory as an analytical and methodological framework, drawing particularly the work of Morin (2008), Cilliers (1998) and Byrne (2005).

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This study will be developed in conjunction with the ongoing study by White (2017) and will use some of the same data. Teachers' views will also be gathered through evaluations and ongoing correspondence.

**Ethical considerations:**

EECERA 2014 guidelines will be followed regarding informed consent, respectful practice and data management

**Main finding or discussion:**

This enquiry is based on two Special Interest Groups being developed in Sheffield LA. The presentation will explain the rationale, methodology and methods being used in the enquiry and how the complexity inherent in the CPD initiative will be taken into account.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Policy makers and funders increasingly demand value-for-money and impact measures for CPD initiatives. Whilst much research in ECE acknowledges complexity in the research context, it is frequently accounted for by using statistical methods to manage the variables involved. This critical complexity methodology offers an alternative way of understanding that provides what Morin (2008) claims is "both/and" rather than "either/or" perspective and which I believe could help to alleviate some of the tensions that exist between debates on pedagogy and debates on effectiveness.

**Keywords:** *Early Childhood Professionalism, Methodological approaches, Case study, Research paradigms, Outdoor Play*

## **Troubling thinking – Loose parts in assemblage**

**Menna Godfrey**, York St. John University

*Learning For Life*

### **Research aims or questions:**

As part of my ongoing reflection on the play that the young children in my playgroup setting engage in outdoors I have set out to understand better the role of loose parts (Nicholson) from a new materialist perspective see amongst others Barad, Braidotti and Bennett.

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

This research is inspired by that of Rautio and Kind as well as Lenz Tagguchi all of whom consider human-non-human assemblages as a lens through which to understand young children's play.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The perspective that loose parts, both organic and man-made play an active role in play intra-actions provides a challenge to commonly held binary assumptions.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This post qualitative (Rautio), (auto)ethnographic (Henderson) research recognises the sensory/multimodal nature of young children's learning. Positioning myself an observant participant I distilled data from informal conversations and 'noticings', in order to describe assemblages. I used video and still images as memory prompts.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Taking account of the UNCRC articles and the EECERA code of practice I ensured that children, staff and parents gave appropriate informed consent as well as ongoing assent.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

Early findings indicate that children, who have confidence that they can explore and experiment for themselves, are prompted into action by the resources and environments in which they find themselves. Loose parts as described by Nicholson appear to be significant in assemblages. Every intra action is uniquely determined by all the materials involved.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

As I continue to observe assemblages in the nursery garden I need to ensure that I recognise agency of both human and other than human actants.

**Keywords:** *Play, Practice based inquiry, Outdoor Play, Learning environment*

## SYMPOSIUM III/B

### **SOCIAL COLLABORATION: DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH FOSTERING EXPLORATION, CURIOSITY AND RESILIENCE FOR LEARNING FOR LIFE**

**CHAIR:** Kathleen Roche-Nagi, Approachable Parenting

**ROOM:** PINSENT MASONS 2

#### **How can Family Learning support families to reach their potential? And Exploring Participants' Perceptions of Exclusion in Early Childhood Settings in a Plural and Diverse, Urban Community.**

**Hafsha Dadabhai Shaikh**, Smartlyte Ltd

*Learning For Life*

##### **Research aims or questions:**

The impact of Family Learning programmes demonstrates the importance of all Early Years practitioners having an understanding of methods and the value of including Family Learning in their learning environments and practice.

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

The study reflects on the work by NIACE (2013) Family Learning Works: The Inquiry into FL; 'A summary of research and evidence of impact of family learning.' Carter-Wall, C. and Whitfield, G. (2012).

##### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The previous study by Desforges, C. & Abouchaar, A. (2003) 'The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment has been used to frame the work'.

##### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

A qualitative interpretive approach using mixed methods for data collection together with detailed case studies.

##### **Ethical considerations:**

My research draws on EECERA Ethical Code (2015) and the UNCRC (1989). I actively consider the power within my role as a researcher and my relationships with participants of the research and aim to achieve the ethical expectations within my work.

##### **Main finding or discussion:**

The presentation will discuss how Family Learning can be used to engage families to learn, develop skills and aspire. By providing specific outcomes, the programmes increased use of resources by families. The findings emphasised the importance of Early Years services incorporating Family Learning, as a cost effective preventative measure and intervention. My MA explores why some families do not engage.

##### **Implications, practice or policy:**

The impact of Family Learning demonstrates the importance of all Early Years practitioners having an understanding of methods and the value of including Family Learning in their learning environments and practice.

**Keywords:** *Personal social and emotional development, Communication Language and Literacy, Parents perspectives, Parents participation*

## **Approachable Parenting: 5 Pillars of Parenting pregnancy to 3 years**

**Kathleen Roche-Nagi**, Approachable Parenting

*Learning For Life*

### **Research aims or questions:**

The 5 Pillars of Parenting Programme was designed by Approachable Parenting, a social enterprise, which provides parenting courses and parent-coaching to BAME families. The research considers parental outcomes of those attending the programmes. Part of 3 presentations describing a Social Collaborative Approach, developing community engagement through fostering exploration, curiosity and resilience for learning for life.

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

Previous literature has found many benefits to participation in parenting programmes (e.g. Barlow, Coren, & Stewart-Brown, 2002). Research has identified a need for cultural specificity as most programmes have been strongly influenced by Western values (Kumpfer, Alvarado, Smith, and Bellamy, 2002) and therefore risk poor engagement from other cultural groups (Barlow et al, 2004).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The programme uses psychological principles (e.g. attachment theory, social learning theory and systemic models) within an Islamic framework to form motivational change within parenting.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Questionnaires were completed before and after each 8-week course: Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) screening, diagnosing, monitoring and measuring the severity of depression. Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD7) measuring of generalized anxiety disorder. Mothers' Object Relations Scales Short-form (MORS-SF). Relationship Quality index (RQI) measures attributions of partner behaviour.

### **Ethical considerations:**

Informed consent is obtained, questionnaires are coded and all information is collected/stored accordingly under strict guidelines.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

Outcome scores indicated statistically and clinically positive changes when data was analysed using SPSS T tests & Wilcoxon.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

This research outlines the importance of culturally adapting programmes, engaging BAME parents to develop their learning and skills required for parenting and child development. Learning the importance of bonding, secure attachment which contribute to better outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Birth to Three, Children's perspectives, Outcomes, Learning environment, Parents participation*



## **SYMPOSIUM III/C**

### **SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION**

**CHAIR:** Tanya Richardson, University of Northampton

**ROOM:** CINEMA

#### **Speech and language beyond the classroom: the impact of the environment on children's language**

Tanya Richardson, University of Northampton

*Learning For Life*

##### **Research aims or questions:**

The aim of this research project was to investigate the impact of the play/learning environment on young children's utterances.

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

Previous research highlighted that there may be a link between the environment and the quality of a child's utterances (Richardson and Murray, 2016). This research aimed to discover if the quality of the environment was influential in the language used by children.

##### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The philosophical approach to this study was that of transcendental idealism (Kant, 1781), whereby knowledge is gained through learning and through intuition. The theoretical framework was founded on interactionism (Tomasello, 2003), believing that it is necessary for children to interact with others, and the environment in order to develop.

##### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

Using a case study approach, and through conducting interviews and voice recordings it has been possible to devise a transferable rating scale that analyses the quality of the environment. This was applied alongside children's utterances to establish whether a correlation exists between the two elements.

##### **Ethical considerations:**

Ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018) were followed. Children were recorded by use of go-pros. They were not always happy to participate and wishes were adhered to.

##### **Main finding or discussion:**

It was found that there is a correlation between the quality of children's utterances and the quality of the environment. Overall, it was found that high quality natural environments were the most conducive to high quality speech.

##### **Implications, practice or policy:**

This has implications for practice and how children are encouraged within the area of language development. It is therefore argued that young children have the right to play and learn within high quality environments.

**Keywords:** *Communication Language and Literacy, Outdoor Play, Learning environment*

## **Supporting children identified with speech, language and communication needs at two-years-old: voices of early years practitioners (early findings)**

Nyree-Anne Nicholson, Bishop Grosseteste University

*Learning For Life*

### **Research aims or questions:**

Investigate how early years practitioner's identify and support children who have an additional speech language and communication need.

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

Existing research has highlighted, there are children living in England who are starting school without the basic level of communication and language, to fully access the curriculum (Law et al., 2017).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The theoretical framework is based upon Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model and the factors that can impact on the early years practitioners ability to support a child with a speech, language and communication need (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The conceptual framework comprises of a narrative analytical framework (Riessman, 2005) and constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014).

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

The study aims to utilize a narrative inquiry approach, through unstructured conversational interviews, to explore participants experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)

### **Ethical considerations:**

Issues of consent; potential researcher/participant power relations; the right to withdraw from the research; the right to remove any aspects from the finished transcript.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

Early findings suggest that the level of external support available to practitioners varies according to location. In addition, the subjectivity of the Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters documentation, as the main assessment tool was discussed by many of the participants.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

These findings could add to the existing body of knowledge, by providing an understanding of how children are assessed, how the assessments differ from setting to setting, and within geographical locations. This could raise questions on the validity of the assessment tool from which local and national data is gathered, to create an overview of children's developmental levels nationally.

**Keywords:** *Assessment, Methodological approaches, Practice based inquiry, Multiprofessional collaboration, Communication Language and Literacy*

## **SYMPOSIUM III/D**

### **THE VALUE OF PLAY**

**CHAIR:** Sue Gascoyne, Play to Z

**ROOM:** DELOITTE

**“The play session fundamentally changed so much for us” - parents learning the value of play**

**Karen McInnes and Janet Rose, Norland College**

*Learning in the Home*

**Research aims or questions:**

Evaluate the impact of a combined parenting and yoga programme on family and children’s functioning

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

Parents view play as valuable for their children; however, fears of increased risk and lack of time have reduced the amount and types of play that children engage in at home with their parents (Whitehead et al, 2012) thereby reducing the benefit of the home learning environment.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

Utilising parenting and play theory, this aspect of the study looked at the provision of play within the home learning environment.

**Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

This was an impact evaluation study utilising interviews and standardised assessment measures with a convergent parallel mixed methods design.

**Ethical considerations:**

Informed written consent was sought from parents. Confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed alongside the right to withdraw.

**Main finding or discussion:**

The overall evaluation identified the success of the programme in developing children’s and family functioning. However, one unanticipated outcome of the programme was in relation to parental knowledge, understanding and practice of play in the home. Prior to starting the programme, parents stated that their children loved playing but mostly played on their own with siblings. Some parents questioned the need for a session on play in the programme but, overwhelmingly post programme, parents stated that the play session was the most beneficial. They understood the value of play and they knew how to play with their children, creating a more effective home learning environment.

**Implications, practice or policy:**

Taken for granted assumptions regarding parent-child play in the home need to be challenged and parents might need support providing play in the home learning environment.

**Keywords:** *Play, Impacts, Case study, Parents perspectives, Parents participation*

## **Thriving not just surviving in school - lessons from children's voices in the play therapy room**

Sue Gascoyne, Play to Z

*Learning For Life*

### **Research aims or questions:**

Explore how the Compass approach (Gascoyne, 2019) provides a foundation for therapeutic teaching and parenting.

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

Previous research includes Gascoyne's analysis of messy play use to explore change and communicate emotions in therapeutic environments, Hastings, (2013), Minahan and Rappaport (2017).

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework of research:**

The enquiry draws upon affordance (Gibson 1986, Heft, 1988), Deci and Ryan's Self-determination theory (2000) and Theraplay dimensions.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods:**

As a practitioner researcher, working within therapeutic and mainstream early years environments I took an ethnographic approach as a participant observer (Cosaro 2003). Data was gathered through reflective journal notes, Strength and difficulties questionnaires (Goodman, 2000), photography and third-party analysis.

### **Ethical considerations:**

EECERA 2018 guidelines were followed regarding consent, respectful practice and data management and in my role as a play therapist my work complies with the local authority safeguarding policy and code of professional conduct, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

### **Main finding or discussion:**

Within a safe environment, creative arts and play therapy supports self-regulation, wellbeing, self-efficacy and mastery orientation, developing lifetime skills which help children move from fight or flight states to being able to learn.

### **Implications, practice or policy:**

Transferring insights from the therapy room helps inform therapeutic teaching in schools. Although confidentiality about the process is paramount, effective communication between children, parents/carers and schools can help bring about positive transitions and lasting benefits. Within the therapy room children are free to use their '100 languages' to convey what their life is like, opening our eyes and ears to the messages behind behaviours and highlighting the importance of children experiencing the 'Compass points' (Gascoyne, 2019) of Noticing, Exploration, Structure and Warmth.

**Keywords:** *Personal social and emotional development, Play, Practice based inquiry, Children's perspectives, Learning environment*

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**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

This year, the prestigious EECERA Annual Conference will be held 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> August, and is hosted in Greece by The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH). The theme of the 29<sup>th</sup> conference is **“Early Years: Making it Count”** and it takes up that challenge particularly around the issue of measurement and accountability. ‘What counts’ and ‘Who is making it count and why?’ And there is another subtext in the rubric which suggests we, early years researchers, should be raising the profile and visibility of early childhood studies to make it count in the corridors of power. To be such advocates we need to be articulate, knowledgeable and assertive and our Conference this year provides a forum to develop those skills.

If we believe in ‘high quality’ programmes and services, then there must be accountability and evaluation but what form should ‘quality assessment’, ‘quality control’, ‘quality assurance’, ‘quality improvement’ and similar concepts and terms take? What qualitative and quantitative measures do we need? What are the significant ‘impacts’ and ‘outcomes’? Can these be universalised into metrics or curricula to provide global comparative data? Who and what counts for children’s development in the complex inter-relationship between health and wellbeing, parenting and high quality services? And how far can the measurement of child outcomes be a proxy for system accountability? It is this broad and topical theme which we hope to explore in Thessaloniki.

We warmly invite you to join us to participate and contribute to what is acknowledged as the European early childhood research community's most important forum.

With warm regards,

**Athanasios Gregoriadis**  
**Chair of the EECERA 2019 Conference**

For further information regarding the conference please visit <http://www.eecera2019.org/> or email [enquiries@eecera2019.org](mailto:enquiries@eecera2019.org).