

ILRF 2011 Tampere Program

Wednesday 12th October

- 9:00 am Registration and coffee at location University of Tampere, Virta building
- 10:00 am Child Care Center Tour begins
- Group A Group B
- Hippos Child Care Center (Kissanmaankatu 21, Tampere). Director Tiina Pyykkö delivers a presentation. Jussinkylä Child Care Center (Sukkavartaankatu 4, Tampere). Director Hanna Hjelt delivers a presentation.
- 11:30 pm Transfer to the Muotiala Child Care Center (Muotialantie 64, Tampere). Lunch provided. Transfer to the Tasanne Child Care Center (Rusthollinkatu 8, Tampere). Lunch provided.
- 1:00 pm Discussion
- 2:00 pm Coffee
- 3:00 pm Back to the University of Tampere
- 6:00 pm Networking Party at location University of Tampere, Virta building.

Thursday 13th October

- 9:00 am Opening of the conference – Eeva Hujala at location University of Tampere, Virta building
- Session A
- 9:10 am Analysis of a Leadership Phenomenon in Azerbaijani Early Childhood Education, Ulviya Mikayilova, Centre for Innovations in Education
- 9:30 am Early Childhood Education and Strategic Leadership, PhD Candidate Marja-Liisa Akselin, University of Tampere, Finland
- 9:50 am Perspectives on Adult Roles in Greek Day-care Settings: Who are the leaders? PhD Candidate Eleni Katsiada, Sheffield Hallam University
- 10:10 am Discussion
- 10:40 am Refreshment break
- Session B
- 11:00 am Leadership in English Children's Centres, EdD Candidate Jonathan Wainwright, Sheffield Hallam University
- 11:20 am How does a New Organizational Structure define Leadership? PhD Leena Halttunen, University of Jyväskylä
- 11:40 am Leadership Identities of Directors in Early Childhood Education and Care Institutions, Prof Kari Hoas Moen and Assistant Prof Per Tore Granrusten, Queen Maud University College
- 12:00 am Discussion
- 12:30 pm Lunch break
- Session C
- 1:30 pm Superior's Pedagogical Support in Distributed Organization of Early Childhood Education, MEd Ulla Soukainen, City of Turku

- 1:50 pm Shared Leadership: Dimensions of Commitment and Teacher Management – The Trinidad and Tobago Experience, PhD Carol A. Logie, University of the West Indies
- 2:10 pm Distributed Leadership in Early Childhood Education, PhD Candidate Johanna Heikka by Cotutelle at University of Tampere and Macquarie University
- 2:30 pm Discussion
- 3:00 pm Coffee/tea break
- Session D
- 3:20 pm Leadership Role in the Determination of Preschool Teachers Professional Competence, PhD Candidate Tiina Peterson
- 3:40 pm Leadership for Pedagogical Quality in Child Care, Prof Eeva Hujala & PhD Candidate Elina Fonsen, Tampere University
- 4:00 pm Deepening our understandings: Moving from social construction to assessing intention, impact and effectiveness of early childhood leadership, Prof Manjula Waniganayake, Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, Australia
- 4:20 pm Discussion
- 4:40 pm Conclusions
- 5:00 pm End of the presentation day
- 7:00 pm Evening gathering at the restaurant Tammerin Puisto, Sokos Hotel Tammer

Friday 14th October

- 9:00 am Keynote in plenum by Dr Jillian Rodd
- 10:00 am Discussion
- 10:15 am Discussion of the forthcoming publication “Researching Leadership in Early Childhood Education”
- 10:30 am Coffee & Workshops
- 12:30 pm Lunch break
- 1:30 pm Conclusion and discussion
- 3:00 pm End of the ILRF 2011

ABSTRACTS ILRF 2011 TAMPERE

Early Childhood Education and Strategic Leadership

Marja-Liisa Akselin

PhD Candidate, University of Tampere

In Finnish municipalities the responsibility of early childhood development strategy and implementation belongs to the top civil servants and advisory board. The leadership of early childhood education today requires the ability to create, develop and implement on a strategy to

ensure that high quality core task realization is secured. Strategy is significant in the social context in which it is done (Juuti & Luoma 2009). In this presentation the strategic leadership of early childhood education is examined according to the contextual model (Hujala 2004, Nivala 1999, 2001). Crossan, Vera ja Nanjad (2008) also raise the issue of leadership at all levels of leadership as well as drawing attention to contextual factors. A strategic leader leads within and amongst the levels of self, others and organization.

The data was collected using a narrative interview method. The aim of the narrative interview is to gather narratives of civil servants on early childhood education strategy work. With the narratives we try to understand and to evaluate the temporal perspective of the strategic management of early childhood, the development of the leadership work to date and its orientation of the future. The narrative interview is well suited for a future oriented data collection form, because it does not preclude the flow of experiences and the examination of development even in the long term.

In the study nine municipal leaders told their stories of early childhood leadership work. The data analysis is still ongoing. As a preliminary conclusion, the strategic importance of early childhood leadership role is to point out children and their families as well as the needs of high-quality early childhood education field condition.

How does a new organizational structure define leadership?

Leena Halttunen

PhD (Education), University of Jyväskylä

The aim of the study was to describe leadership and day care work in a distributed organization. In Finland, a day care centre director has traditionally led only one day care unit. Distributed organizations are quite new but an increasing way to organize day care units in Finland. In this study, a distributed organization means an organization where a single director leads at least two day care units. In a distributed organization the day care units are situated physically apart and they may offer different kind of day care services (day care, family day care and open day care).

In the present case study an ethnographic approach was taken. The study was carried out in two distributed day care organizations. These organizations included four and five day care units and the total number of employees consisted of two directors and 48 staff. The data collection methods were observation, interviews and a qualitative questionnaire. The data were analyzed using data driven content analysis.

The basic assumption was that when an organizational change like this occurs, in other words units are merged, it affects the work of the leader and the employees. The researcher was interested in the social structure of an organization. The social structure includes for example the division of labour, position of people and other vertical and horizontal social relationships among the members of an organization. The focus in this presentation is on the vertical hierarchy, division of labour, centralization, and formality. According to the findings all these elements had faced changes, but solutions were mostly made situation by situation without formal discussion along the years without considering the organization as a whole. When an organizational structure faces a change, the researcher recommends that the elements of the organizational social structure should be considered as a whole, discussed openly and defined consistently.

Distributed Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Johanna Heikka

Phd Candidate by Cotutelle at University of Tampere and Macquarie University

This study aims to investigate distribution of leadership in early childhood education context. It focuses on investigating how early childhood education (ECE) stakeholders e.g. teachers, ECE centre directors and administrative ECE leaders as well as municipal committees in municipalities perceived the distribution of leadership. Using focus groups, the data was collected in 14 municipalities in Finland. The study was based on contextual and distributed view of leadership. The study identified different practices of distributed leadership. However, coordinated forms of distribution were rarely used and distribution was inefficient. This resulted in lack of shared visions and tools for practice development and insufficient support for teachers and centre directors. Conclusions suggest how leadership could be restructured more efficiently by coordination of leadership functions and tools for leadership. Overall, this study affirms that there is a need for a better distribution of leadership.

Leadership Identities of Directors in Early Childhood Education and Care Institutions

Kari Hoås Moen & Per Tore Granrusten

Associate Professor, Queen Maud University College & Assistant Professor, Queen Maud University College

During the last years many municipalities in Norway have changed their organizational structure by reducing the main hierarchic levels of the administration from three to two. One of the intension is among others to develop a more effective administration. In this context a two-level model in the municipalities implies a central administration and an administration in the ECEC institutions. In this process many ECEC institutions in the municipalities have been merged to larger organizations.

The aim of this project is to unravel how the directors in ECEC institutions perceive their identity as leaders and how the organization and size impacts their identity. Further, we intend to uncover how the municipality organization influences the directors' perceived identity.

The theoretical framework builds on organizational theories and theories of identity building. We also use the terms "small community" within the ECEC organization, and "large community" within the whole municipality organization which the ECEC institution is a part of. Three leadership identities will be used as an analytic framework for the project (jf Gotvassli, 2010): 1) Directors who prioritize the large community, as an administrative manager or strategic actor, 2) They who prioritize the small community; reproducing a correctness culture or amazement culture, 3) Those who are trying to balance the internal and the external demands and expectations trying to satisfy all.

Methods that will be used in the study are a questionnaire to the directors in a selection of municipalities and an indepth interview of twenty managers.

Leadership for Pedagogical Quality in Child Care

Eeva Hujala & Elina Fonsén

Professor, University of Tampere & PhD Candidate, University of Tampere

In this paper leadership is examined as a contextual phenomenon. According to contextual leadership theory, leadership is perceived as a socially constructed, situational and interpretive phenomenon. The contextual leadership model adheres to the core task of early childhood education and care. In child care the crucial part of leadership is pedagogical leadership, meaning responsibility for assessing and developing the quality of early childhood education and care. Systematic assessment is a precondition for quality management, and provides tools for pedagogical leadership.

Leadership research in the Finnish child care context confirmed that teachers expect pedagogical leadership. The research also proves that leaders report a shortage of time for pedagogical leadership, and it is still difficult for them to define its content. The hypothesis in our research is that, in addition to leaders' problem regarding time, there is a problem of leaders' "readiness" for pedagogical leadership. Leaders lack a tradition and methods for leadership.

The aim of our research is to create a model for leadership to implement pedagogical development in child care. The research is implemented as inclusive and participatory action research. Action research includes the following phases: 1) child-specific assessments of the quality of early childhood education, 2) researchers' pedagogical consultation for child care centres, and 3) evaluation of the results in the developmental process. In action research researchers, child care teachers and parents form a team, where parents and teachers contribute jointly to the development process. The implementation and the importance of pedagogical leadership are assessed.

The purpose of this presentation is to introduce the process of developing pedagogical leadership, also to discuss quality management and success factors of Finnish child care.

Perspectives on Adult Roles in Greek Day-care Settings: Who are the leaders?

Eleni Katsiada

PhD Candidate Sheffield Hallam University

This paper discusses the initial findings from an ethnographic case study project conducted in a large Greek city. The aim of the study was to explore different participants' perspectives on their experiences of day-care services in order to inform policy and practice in Greek day-care settings. Two day-care settings for children aged 8 months to 3 years were identified and field work lasted for approximately six months, with three months allotted for each setting. The project was conducted with institutional ethics approval, and data was collected from ten children (aged between 16 – 35 months), fourteen parents, ten practitioners, five members of the ancillary staff, and two senior area managers. In an attempt to include researchers perspective as well, the ITERS-R (Harms et al., 2003) rating scale was used to measure the settings quality. Finally, an Early Years Education academic from Greece was interviewed to include a further contrasting perspective.

Children's perspectives were explored by using an adaptation of the Mosaic Approach (MA, Clark and Moss, 2001). The MA employs a range of audio, visual, and observational techniques. It requires children's active participation and additional interpretation of children's actions and views from children's parents and practitioners through semi-structured interviews. The perspectives of parents, practitioners, ancillary staff, policy-makers, and the Early Years Education academic were explored by using semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Both theory-driven and data-driven thematic analysis techniques were used to analyse the collected data (Boyatzis 1998). The ultimate objective was to find similarities and differences across perspectives and how they might relate and interrelate.

The paper will focus on the study's findings in regards to the ways in which two senior area managers perceived, experienced, and conveyed their role, and how the settings actors (practitioners, parents, and ancillary staff) were receiving it. Additionally, discussion will focus on how the settings actors perceived their own role in the settings. The terms 'early years leader' and 'leadership' are not used within the Greek Early Years Education and Care context and specifically in research, policy, and practice. This provides indications that although the discourse of leadership is embedded in the Greek day-care context it is not explicitly recognised.

Shared Leadership: Dimensions of Commitment and Teacher Management –The Trinidad and Tobago Experience

Carol A. Logie

PhD, University of the West Indies

This study explored the concept of shared leadership within the context of early childhood environments. Both commitment and teacher management were the selected variables of effective leadership. One hundred and ten (110) teachers, and administrators in Early Childhood Care and Education Centres in Trinidad and Tobago participated in the study and shared their perception of leadership, management and commitment to their profession. A questionnaire adapted from Leithwood, Aitken and Jantzi (2006) and Mayers (2008) was used to gather data. The study found teachers and administrators who stated they had an administrative role believed they were effective leaders. Similarly, a strong correlation was found between teachers who were committed to the job and their leadership role. Shared leadership although new to the early childhood landscape, was found to be an effective strategy towards high quality job performance in early childhood environments.

Analysis of a Leadership Phenomenon in Azerbaijani Early Childhood Education

Ulviya Mikayilova

Center for Innovations in Education

The purpose of this research is to provide evidences and analysis on the impact of different issues and processes on development of leadership skills of directors in Step by Step (SbS) pilot kindergartens in Azerbaijan. It is hoped that this research will assist in understanding the nature of leadership and ensuring a sustainability of leadership development in the national Early Childhood

Education. The research will be also used as a management and learning tool for development of preschool leadership policy and designing leadership training programs for administrators and practitioners in the field. During 1998-2002 SbS child-centered methodology was piloted in 53 kindergartens of Azerbaijan. After 2002 some of the pilot kindergartens returned to the traditional teaching methods. But some of the pilot kindergartens continued improving a teaching methodology using own resources, joined to other innovative projects and professional development opportunities. Those kindergartens have become well recognized leading preschool centers . Staff of those centers has become a driving force for education sector reforms through participation in various Task Forces on evaluation of teacher guide books and textbooks, development of new curriculum, new assessment system, child development standards and monitoring and evaluation system for national preschool education.

The research question of this study is: What are the elements of and factors affecting development of leadership skills of directors in pilot SbS kindergartens? The main objective is to conduct a qualitative study (via FGs, individual interviews and leadership skills survey) with kindergarten directors, teachers, education authorities, parents as customers of kindergarten services.

A sample of pilot kindergartens representing both urban and rural area will be involved in the research.

Discussion of research findings in a view of the transformational model of leadership is expected.

Leadership role in the determination of preschool teachers' professional competence

Tiina Peterson

PhD Candidate, Tallinn University

Research problem: In the new Estonian pre-school curricula, since 2008 is determination of the concept of learning. Transfer from focus on teacher to a focus a child: a child is an active participant in education and schooling activities, a teacher is the creator on environment that supports the child's individuality and development. Based of the new concept of learning we need a concept of leadership role in the determination of pre-school teachers professional competence. Research question: how preschools principals evaluate leadership role in the determination of teachers professional competence.

Theoretical background: According to Urban (2010), Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2003) a key feature of a professional system would be its ability to encourage and systematically create spaces for dialogue and for asking critical questions at every layer of the system – and to value the multitude and diversity of answers as key to creating new understandings. Effective leadership involves accepting the inevitability of change and helping staff respond adaptively when it occurs. Improved professionalism in early childhood will come about when early childhood practioners define themselves as leading professionals who choose to take up the challenge of creating and delivering high-quality services for children and families (Rodd, 2009).

The aim is to find out how evaluate preschools principals leadership role in the determination of teachers professional competence

Method: Researchers composed and distributed 5-point Likert-type pilot questionnaires to 60 principals in Estonian preschools. Anonymity of respondents was ensured.

Results of Estonian respondents will be analyzed and compared. The reliability of the questionnaire blocs was relatively high. Questionnaire used by us gave quite good result and showed that this model of Professionalism is acceptable. Answers to seven question blocs: interaction/communication, family involvement, planning of education and evaluation of children development, using teaching strategies, professional development, creating growth environment, development of values – show that according to principals our teachers are quite good in creating Growth Environment and development of values. Study gave an answer that in the area of professionalism and family Involvement we must work more in future. According to result will plan focus group interview with 10 preschool principals and 10 teachers per country in Estonian, Finnish and Swedish preschools, which aim is: how evaluate Estonian, Finnish and Swedish preschools teachers and principals leadership role in the determination of teachers professional competence.

Researching Leadership in Early Childhood: Where Are We? What Are our Challenges?

Dr Jillian Rodd

Educational Consultant, England

This presentation explores the status of existing research into leadership in early childhood, how leadership is currently understood, some limitations of the research undertaken and poses questions regarding the direction of future research. Key features of credible research in early childhood and potential benefits of this international research endeavor are raised.

Superior's Pedagogical Support in Distributed Organization of Early Childhood Education

Ulla Soukainen

MEd, Inspector of Early childhood education, City of Turku

The focus of this research is in distributed organization of early childhood education, or in other words long-distance management meaning that there are managers who have many day-care-centers or several types of day-care to lead.

My interest is to compare subordinates in the physically same unit with superior to those who work in units without superior's constant presence.

I made a questionnaire including a question: "What kind of pedagogical support do you need from your superior?" I discovered categories such as cooperation and interaction, pedagogical guidance, developing and resources. I also had 16 Likert scale questions that measured pedagogical support. (Answering percent 87, N = 223.) I made the sum of the variable of those 16 questions (Cronbach's Alpha .917) and surprisingly subordinates working without superior's constant presence felt that they get more support than those working in the physically same unit with superior. (Mann-Whitney, $Z = -2.311$; $p = 0,021$.)

Leadership in English Children's Centres

Jonathan Wainwright

Senior Lecturer and EdD Candidate, Sheffield Hallam University

This paper discusses the initial findings from a narrative study working with the leaders of 7 Sure Start Children's Centres in a large UK city.

In England in 1997, the Blair government established 'Sure Start Local programmes' through the 'recognition that deprivation was blighting the lives of too many children and families in disadvantaged areas'. (dcsf.gov.uk). A critical evaluation of the programme (NESS, 2002), led to the formation of Children's Centres which had the core purpose of being at 'at the heart of the Government's drive to provide accessible, integrated early childhood services for all parents-to-be and families with young children' (dcsf.gov.uk).

Goffin and Means (2009) suggest that there has been a dramatic change in the context of early years leadership over the last few decades. They say that 'early care and education has risen in esteem as a public good, has become politicized, is expected to produce results and currently lacks the capacity to meet public expectations'. (Goffin and Means 2009 p3).

This situation has been highlighted by recent changes in funding within the Early years sector in England where payment by results is the new order.

The body of literature on leadership in the sector is at its infancy and there is a 'paucity of research' in a context where there is a heightened need for effective leadership development (Muijs et al, 2004). As with other leadership research, Nivala et al (2002) point out the challenges faced by those exploring leadership in early years settings. They say that there is no general agreement on how we should define leadership and that different ontological approaches to the study of leadership will offer different emphases to different issues. 'The more you read, the more difficult it is to build a clear picture of what is good leadership or what skills you need to develop' (p14).

It is within this highly political context that the current study explores Children's Centre leaders' perceptions of leadership and their development of that understanding through engagement in a narrative approach. It is hoped that conversations about their lives and their work will enable a greater understanding of the cultural system in which they lead.

Deepening our understandings: Moving from social construction to assessing intention, impact and effectiveness of early childhood leadership

Manjula Waniganayake

Professor, Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University

Leadership is a socially constructed phenomenon. Our understanding of early childhood leadership is bound by societal culture and organizational context. The extent to which the theorizing and practice of leadership in early childhood settings offers adequate understandings of these connections is

difficult to assess. Research based on individual leaders in particular settings alone is also not sufficient. The perspectives of followers on the intentionality, impact and effectiveness of leadership may shed new light on our understanding of leadership in early childhood settings. A deeper level of exploration that can enable us to investigate the nature of decision-making is necessary to grasp the interdependence between structure, agency and context. Silence of gender, culture and class in the operationalisation of leadership in early childhood settings is of particular interest in multicultural societies such as Australia.