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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

9TH INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP RESEARCH FORUM - EARLY CHILDHOOD (ILRF EC) CONFERENCE - LEADING HIGH QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION IN COMPLEX CONTEXTS

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ | 9TH – 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024

ILRF EC

INSTITUTE OF educational leadership

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Contents

FOREWORD

The ILRF-EC Coordination Team welcomes you all to the 9th International Leadership Research Forum Early Childhood (ILRF-EC) Conference at the University of Jyväskylä, focusing on "Leading High Quality Early Education in Complex Context".

The primary objective of the International Leadership Research Forum in Early Childhood Education (ILRF – ECE) is to facilitate a collaborative environment for individuals engaged in early childhood leadership research from diverse geographical locations. By convening at this Forum, participants can engage in mutual learning through the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experiences pertaining to the work of educational leaders in the early childhood sector. It offers members the chance to pose questions, engage in critical reflection and provide constructive feedback. It is anticipated that collaborative research and writing will facilitate the generation of new knowledge and understandings about leadership in ECE.

Since its establishment in 2011, members have endeavoured to convene in person regularly. It is anticipated that these gatherings will include a variety of learning strategies, including the presentation of current research, the development of new international research proposals, and opportunities to visit and interact with educational leaders in the host country. Furthermore, these gatherings facilitate networking opportunities for novice and experienced early childhood education (ECE) leadership researchers, enabling them to engage in discourse on matters of shared interest.

As we embark on this conference, I encourage each of you to engage actively, exchange ideas, and collaborate with your fellow participants. This forum is not just a platform for sharing knowledge but also a space for building connections that will drive the future of early childhood education!

Welcome to enjoy high-quality science, the company of colleagues and the warm atmosphere of the University of Jyväskylä!

On behalf of ILRF EC Team,

Elina Fonsén

ILRF EC websites: *https://www.eceaf.org/ilrf-ec/*

1 KEYNOTES

Resilient leadership in ECE: Holistic wayfinding principles for navigating change

Senior lecturer Maria Cooper (Waipapa Taumata Rau - The University of Auckland, New Zeland)

ECE leaders worldwide are grappling with the pressures of rapid change, including staff shortages, technological shifts, funding challenges, and increasing demands for accountability. To navigate this increasingly complex environment, leaders must develop strategies that are both flexible and enduring. Drawing on research from New Zealand and the South Pacific, this keynote introduces a framework based on the Polynesian concept of wayfinding, which offers a holistic approach to navigating uncertainty with insight, wisdom, and cultural awareness. Reflecting cultural notions of collective resilience and connectivity, this approach can support ECE leaders to effectively navigate the challenges they face while fostering resilient and connected communities.

Monday 9th September 2024, 13:30 – 14:15

Distributed pedagogical leadership in early childhood education

Senior researcher Johanna Heikka (University of Eastern Finland)

This presentation examines distributed pedagogical leadership in early childhood education. Understanding about distributed leadership among scholars, policy makers and practitioners is crucial starting point for practise development. In the presentation, I will explain the roots, theoretical foundations and basic concepts of distributed pedagogical leadership research in early childhood education. Based on the results on studies conducted in Finland, this presentation also summarises the state of distributed pedagogical leadership in Finnish municipalities, presents the inhibiting factors for leadership development and suggest developmental proceedings for ECE leadership.

2 ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Session 1a, Room Juho

Chair: Raisa Ahtiainen

Needs & challenges for ECEC center leaders from an international perspective: Their perceptions & possible solutions

Turani, Daniel (German Youth Institute, Germany)

Although leadership in early childhood education and care (ECEC) has increasingly been a focus of scientific interest and is currently high on the agenda of international institutions like OECD or EU and identified as a "key position", it remains insufficiently explored compared to e.g. structural quality features of the ECEC landscape (Movahedazarhouligh 2023). The leadership role is characterised by multiple and complex tasks and serves as an interface between various stakeholders. With the continuous growth of both, sector and centres, the need for coordination, especially in management tasks, is increasing (Hujala et al. 2023; Turani et al. 2022). Rising expectations from society, families, staff, providers etc.

are putting pressure on ECEC and, consequently, on leaders to provide an adequate, high-quality offer of ECEC (Strehmel 2017). To meet these expectations, leadership requires not only the relevant knowledge but also an efficient system of stakeholders, stability, support and planning (BMFSFJ/JFMK 2016). Conversely, centre leaders often feel insufficiently appreciated and are exposed daily to a variety of challenges and their consequences (e.g. staff shortage, diversification). This leads to negative effects on working conditions and satisfaction resulting in stress and a lack of gratification (Viernickel et al. 2017). With my contribution, I would like to shed more light on the perspective of leaders themselves and let them have their say with the help of data from the TALIS Starting Strong study. More than 2,000 centre leaders from nine countries took part in the study in the ISCED 0.2 level. In particular the needs and challenges from a German (N~250), but also international (e.g. Iceland and Norway) perspective can be shown with a focus on needs in the areas of further training and cooperation, as well as on the leaders' satisfaction with their own conditions and potentials. Finally, not only needs but also possible solutions can be identified in order to provide the best support for ECEC leaders and thus further improve the quality in ECEC centres.

Keywords: international comparison; quantitative study; challenges; policy recommendations

Ethical dilemmas in early childhood education leadership

Peltoperä, Kaisu (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) & **Heikkinen, Suvi** (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

This study explores the discourse surrounding ethical dilemmas among early childhood education and care (ECEC) practitioners serving as educational leaders in extended hours ECEC settings in Finland. The 15 participants include seven ECEC managers, seven ECEC teachers, and one ECEC special teacher. An ethical dilemma in this context refers to challenging situations where conflicting beliefs

about the appropriate course of action create a sense of uncertainty. Ethical dilemmas are characterized by the absence of a clear right or wrong decision, allowing for alternative approaches, and carry significant implications for colleagues, subordinates, parents, and/or children. Conducted during in-service training in the autumn of 2023, the study utilizes data from group discussions where participants share their perspectives on ethical challenges. The research employs a two-phase analysis approach: first, thematic analysis categorizes the ethical dilemmas, and second, discourse analytical tools scrutinize the participants' communication in the group discussions regarding these dilemmas. The findings highlight that ethical dilemmas in the ECEC setting are particularly linked to communication challenges with colleagues and children, as well as varying perspectives on determining the best interest of the children. Additionally, managers engaged in discussions about the equitable treatment of subordinates. This study sheds light on the nuanced ways in which ECEC practitioners discuss ethical complexities, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of ethical decision-making within this professional context.

Ethical principles and values in early childhood leadership: A case study of center directors' perceptions and practices in a migrant community in Florida

Szecsi, Tunde (Florida Gulf Coast University)

Essary, Jessica (Florida Gulf Coast University, USA)

Rodriquez Meehan, Melissa (SUNY Brockport, USA)

Fernandez, Isabel (Florida Gulf Coast University, USA)

Fonsén, Elina (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

Ahtiainen, Raisa (University of Helsinki, Finland)

This case study delves into Early Childhood Education (ECE) leadership complexities, focusing on each center directors' views about the values and ethical

principles that drive their decision-making processes. The study also examined to what extent these principles are implemented in the centers. The data set included interviews with five directors and center observations. The scores on the observation tool were analyzed with descriptive statistics. The ECE directors' answers were analyzed qualitatively using a "data analysis spiral" model including (1) data management; (2) initial reading and memoing; (3) coding, describing, and interpreting data; (4) data presentation and interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to gain in-depth insights into the case study.

The ECE centers serve children and families who are predominantly from Latin America, and the most common occupation is agriculture in this Florida town. With a high population of people in migration, the subcultures within this socio-cultural context reframe privilege and equity in a space in which history, ethnicity, and principles are unknown, appreciated, ignored, or challenged. Meaning-making of these critical episodes provides an interpretative framework for the study. We explored the ethical perspective of the leadership philosophies and outcomes of these center directors who are navigating between values, demands, and expectations stemming from numerous sources.

The findings unravel a model for ECE leadership dimensions within this socio-cultural context. Directors, managing curriculum, finances, and staff support, navigate economic constraints, secondary stress, role strain, and cultural expectations. Although the directors have heavy and varied management expectations from position, the state, and at the local level, upper administrators focusing on community engagement provide the directors with space for teacher advocacy, creating a specific sphere of influence which is buffered from some political demands. This research highlights innovative, culturally sensitive solutions to unique situations in a community with a large population of people in migration. These results contribute to early childhood education leaders' professional development by providing conceptual and practical tools for identifying, processing, and encountering the values in their work.

Keywords: migrant community, ECE center directors, values, principles

Session 1b, 2nd floor lobby

Chair: Hannele Roponen

Listening to and empowering early childhood educators to lead quality early education programs and practices: Co-creating change

Hadley, Fay (School of Education, Macquarie University)

Barblett, Lennie (Edith Cowan University)

Irvine, Susan (Queensland University of Technology)

Harrison, Linda (School of Education, Macquarie University)

Cartmel, Jennifer (Griffith University)

Bobongie-Harris, Francis (Queensland University of Technology)

This paper reports on findings of two national projects: updating of Australia's national learning framework, the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF V2.0) (AGDE, 2021-2022) and the Quality Improvement Research Project (QIRP)(2019-2020). The EYLF V2 is mandatory for all early childhood education and care settings in Australia from 2024 to use to guide program and practices. The EYLF update used a participatory research framework, key in designing and implementing mixed methods to engage and listen to a diverse array of stakeholders to inform the updates and support implementation. The QIRP sought to elicit and describe how early childhood settings improved quality provision, evidenced by an enhanced rating in their National Quality Standard audit. This included case studies to make visible the views and experiences of providers and practitioners leading quality improvement. We draw on the findings from both projects (EYLF V2.0 and QIRP) to explore and contextualize the new Principle – Collaborative Leadership and Teamwork (EYLF V2.0). The EYLF V2.0 positions leadership is everyone's responsibility to improve practice and demonstrate their professional and ethical accountability in providing quality programs for children.

This session will illuminate the ideas and information from a number of data sources as to how and why Collaborative Leadership and Teamwork is critical to the work of early childhood educators and links strongly to high quality program development and delivery.

Keywords: collaborative leadership, inclusive, co-creating

Handling policy expectations - sludging of Norwegian ECECs work with inclusion?

Janninger, Linda (QMUC, Norway)
Paal E., Salvesen (QMUC, Norway)
Ljunggren, Birgitte (QMUC, Norway)

Norwegian ECEC organizations face policy expectations to work with inclusion. Consequently, a reform for inclusion and special education was introduced in 2021. The reform aims at coordinating the work with children with special needs through interdisciplinary networks and in-house competence building in the ECEC organizations to offer children quicker and more efficient support. This paper presents findings from a qualitative dataset consisting of 8 focus groups and 7 individual interviews with staff and leaders from the initial phase of the reform. The paper analyses the frictions that the reform produces on an organizational and individual level- also for leaders. These frictions are analyzed using the notion of organizational sludge. Sludge distracts or interrupts directions of work (Madsen et al, 2020, Sunstein 2019). Sludge can produce costs that exceed its benefits, and it can harm vulnerable members of society (Sunstein, 2020). We explore the experiences of sludge and the mechanisms that produce sludge in ECEC organizations related to the initial phase where mapping of competence took place in the organizations. Preliminary findings suggest that the production of sludge in the wake of the reform is related to network governance and leadership actions.

Tuesday 10th September 2024, 13:00 – 14:30

Session 2a, Room Juho

Chair: Marit Bøe

Enhancing understanding of broad-based pedagogical leadership in Finnish early childhood education through cultural artifacts

Roponen, Hannele (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

Ukkonen-Mikkola, Tuulikki (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Ahtiainen, Raisa (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Fonsén, Elina (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

This ethnographic case study examines the artifacts of the leadership culture of one Finnish early childhood education (ECE) center and how they appear from the perspective of broad-based pedagogical leadership. Qualitative content analysis with a directed approach was guided by Pasquale Gagliardi's and Mary Hatch's definitions of artifacts. In addition, artifacts were analyzed through broad-based pedagogical leadership.

Based on the analysis, fourteen activities, seven verbal expressions, and twelve objects of leadership culture were found in the data. Most of the artifacts were indirect pedagogical leadership, and some had several purposes due to staff interpretations. The interpretations varied both between the leaders and the staff but also within the staff. The findings indicate that symbolic leadership is present in many leadership situations and that a lack of knowledge about the symbolic and cultural dimensions of leadership can undermine leaders' good intentions.

The results of the study can be utilized in practical work in leading organizational cultures and in structuring pedagogical leadership in ECE. Additionally, the research has theoretical implications by enriching leadership research in ECE and enhancing the concept of broad-based pedagogical leadership, which can be used in leadership training programs in the field of education.

Keywords: broad-based pedagogical leadership, cultural artifacts, case study

The role of distributed leadership in early childhood education in NSW, Australia

Eshaghi, Akram (Macquarie University, Australia)

Effective leadership is crucial for establishing high-quality early childhood education (ECE) programs which positively impact on children's health, social-emotional development, and academic outcomes (Davis et al., 2015; Kivunja, 2015). Faced with challenges like staff retention, rapid socio-political changes, and insufficient funding in the ECE sector, it is important to examine leadership methods. My research study explored Distributed Leadership (DL) in one ECE setting in NSW, Australia. Kemmis et al's (2014) Theory of Practice Architectures was the lens used to analyse leadership practices in the setting. The study aimed to understand how early childhood professionals conceptualized and defined DL and identify factors enabling or constraining its enactment. Participants described DL as a dynamic, collaborative approach, involving shared responsibilities, decision-making, and meaningful interactions to shape the leadership landscape. Practices like groupings of children and adjusting work arrangements were identified as both enablers and challenges in DL enactment, affecting decision-making and communication. Technology consistently emerged as an enabler, fostering transparency and inclusivity, enhancing DL effectiveness in this ECE setting. This presentation will report on innovative leadership solutions, offering practical

implications for improving the quality and responsiveness of leadership practices in the ECE domain, which I argue support staff retention.

Keywords: distributed leadership, innovation, early childhood education

How leadership matters when engaging kindergarten staff in reflecting on professional and ethical issues

Hege Nordnes (Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway)

Qualified staff are seen as the main factor for quality in kindergartens. Nevertheless, more than 50% of employees are uneducated or less educated. This challenge pedagogical leaders who are responsible for engaging all staff in reflecting on professional and ethical issues to ensure kindergartens are learning organizations. Previous research has shown that leaders struggle to challenge co-worker's attitudes and values and thus the learning potential is limited. The aim for my study is to bring new knowledge to the ECEC sector by linking research on reflection to aspects of leadership, and to highlight and develop pedagogical leader`s reflection and leadership competence. My research questions are as follows: Which aspects of leadership matter when engaging all staff in reflecting on professional and ethical issues? During the reflections, what challenges and success factors can be identified? This is an action research project and data was collected by videotaping several processes of reflection in one kindergarten for a period of 18 months, and by interviewing both leaders and other staff included. Based on preliminary analysis, it will be discussed how findings may contribute to pedagogical leaders work on processes of reflection with co-workers. Keywords: Leadership, reflection, qualified staff.

Session 2b, Room Lauri

Chair: Eija Hanhimäki

The political influence of non-governmental ECEC service providers in Finland, Germany and Norway

Borhaug, Kjetil (University of Bergen, Norway)

Hanne Kvilhaugsvik (University of Bergen, Norway)

Marjo Mäntyjärvi (University of Oulu, Finland)

Petra Strehmel (University of Applied Sciences Hamburg, Germany)

The political-administrative framework is increasingly important for Early Childhood leaders. It conditions EC leadership and calls for leaders to represent their organization in the political sphere. One aspect of this framework that is little researched, is the political influence of non-governmental service providers. They do more than produce services within governmental frameworks. They influence the very same frameworks, depending on their policy capacity.

Policy capacity is a combination of general resources, analytical capacity, political capacity, communicative capacity and relational capacity. In as far as these capacities are developed in interest organizations, this will influence policies, while also supporting governmental policy development. The research question for this paper is to what extent interest organizations representing non-governmental providers have such a capacity to influence EC policies. The development of such interest group capacity will be examined in an exploratory manner, based on qualitative data about 6 such organizations in Finland, Germany and Norway, as they represent quite different contexts for non-governmental EC engagement.

The analysis shows that in all countries, the non-governmental EC providers have developed a substantial capacity to influence EC policies. But there are profound differences among the three countries.

Keywords: governance, interest organizations, comparing ecec governance

Children at the table: Reviving democratic pedagogical leadership

Ruscoe, Amelia (Edith Cowan University, Australia)

Children are rarely privileged in decision-making that determines their school experience, despite the direct and profound impact it has upon their early life. A global educational reform orthodoxy has prompted politically endorsed neoliberal practices that position children precariously in a competitive economic landscape. Uptake of generalised approaches promising accelerated academic learning in the early years has been rapid and widespread. Reports of rising anxiety and weakening engagement among children marks urgency for an innovative response from school leaders and measures for pedagogical protection in the early years. This research adopts a post-structural perspective, underpinned with Foucauldian theories to investigate discursive power in the context of school-based affordances. The voices of 28 five-year-old West Australian children from three pedagogically diverse schools were captured using democratic visual and dialogic methods. Their contributions reflected the distinct pedagogical priorities of the schools' leaders and revealed extremities of commitment and resistance to learning, aJer only 6 months of full-time school. The study clarifies a potential blind spot for school leaders who may rely upon decontextualised quantitative academic data. The use of innovative qualitative methods that complement children's emerging competencies, produce reliable evidence, and uphold children's rights provides a promising avenue to improve outcomes for children.

Does Early Childhood Education provide relevant leadership training for newly qualified ECEC leaders?

Hannevig, Lise (University of South-Eastern Norway)

Juritsen, Trine Lise (University of South-Eastern Norway)

Norwegian national guidelines (UHR, 2018) claim that early childhood education is an education in leadership. Ministry of Education and Research (2017) claim that quality of leadership affects the overall ECEC quality. Researchers have long argued that leadership needs to be strengthened in teacher education (NOKUT,

2010, Ødegård, 2013, Mordal, 2014, Følgegruppa, 2017). More recent research shows that in the supervision of graduates, leadership is one of the most important topics (Halmrast et.al 2021) as graduates experience considerable challenges in being professional leaders for their co-workers (Halland &Vinje, 2022). The purpose of this study is to obtain more knowledge about how early childhood education serves as leadership training. The question being investigated is "in what ways do newly qualified ECEC leaders benefit from the current leadership training?" Using a social constructivist learning perspective (Gergen, 2010) and in light of teaching design (Goodyear, 2015) the study will discuss coherence (Smeby & Heggen 2014) between education and work life.

The study's empirical data will be based on letter- method (Berg, 1999) and focus group interviews (Halkier, 2010) with 23 former students. The results can provide new knowledge regarding the benefits of current leader training and offer suggestions for improvements in early childhood education.

Key words: leadership training, early childhood education

Session 2c, Room Isa

Chair: Juan Dall'Asta

Early PreK and universal PreK in urban and suburban settings in Western New York: experiences of early childhood leaders

Rodriquez-Meehan, Melissa (SUNY Brockport, USA)
Szilagyi, Janka (SUNY Brockport, USA)

This exploratory case study investigates the experiences and perceptions of early childhood leaders within centers and schools that offer Early PreK (EPK) and Universal PreK (UPK), in both urban and suburban regions in Western New York (WNY), USA. The research team will utilize convenience sampling to recruit participants and will employ individual and focus group interviews to collect data.

Open-ended questions will be developed to collect data using semi-structured interviews to allow for some flexibility and rich descriptions. The study will provide insight into the experiences of ECE leaders in a variety of settings, including early childhood centers, public schools, and informal learning environments. Participants will learn about the innovative integration of EPK and UPK into early childhood centers, public schools, and informational learning environments. Participants will also learn about the successes and challenges of early childhood leaders in the WNY region after the rollout of the changes, and their approaches to overcoming the challenges that they have experienced. Although findings from this study may not be generalizable, this research may provide insight and guidance into successes and challenges of EPK and UPK in settings beyond WNY.

Keywords: Universal Pre-K (in the USA), early childhood leadership

Leadership of systemic quality development - the ECEC managers perspectives

Flormælen, Laia Skjei (Queen Maud University College of early childhood education, Norway)
Smeby, Kristine Warhuus (Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway)

Recent research has found lower process quality than expected in ECECs and indicates potential for development in Norwegian ECEC (Bjørnestad & Os, 2018; Bjørnestad et al., 2020). The ECEC manager faces challenges as lack of qualified staff and governmental expectations to lead collective inhouse training (Ministry of Education 2021, 2022).

This research is part of a project in process of developing a validated quality assessment system for ECEC-institutions in Norway (KUMBA). This paper aims to explore ECEC-managers experiences testing the tools in this system, including external and internal assessment and children's experiences of quality. The study is

inspired by theoretical perspectives related to leadership and learning organizations (Senge, 1990, 2006). The research questions are: What significance can assessment tools have for the management of quality development in the ECEC institutions? This paper is based on qualitative interviews with 20 ECEC managers participating in the KUMBA project. Preliminary findings shows that the managers find the quality assessment system as a useful tool to raise staff's awareness of process quality. The findings may improve the management of quality development of ECEC institutions.

Key words: ECEC manager, quality development, assessment competence

Voices of Leadership – Experiences, Relations and Challenges Between Past, Present and Future

Moe, Merete (Queen Maud University College of early childhood education, Norway)
Forr, Audun (Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway)
Johansson, Lotta (Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway)

This project uses minor stories to collect voices of leadership in order to rethink former, present and future educational organisations in elaborating relational leadership in Norwegian kindergartens. For all kindergarten staff, decisions are expected to be guided by sound professional judgement, an everyday practice that should be supported by the kindergarten leader and pedagogical leaders. Hence, one main task for these leaders is to supervise and guide the staff, who often hold various educational and formal pedagogical backgrounds. Arguably, this demands a set of relational leadership skills, which in this article are regarded as rather fluid and elusive than stable and often guided by affects such as doubt, unrest and vulnerability. In experience conversations with nine former and present kindergarten leaders, we elaborate with these affective dimensions in leadership relations. In contrast to the majoritarian history presenting the established past, these minor stories from leaders with lengthy experience create other and different ways of understanding the history, development and ideals of the

Norwegian kindergarten as institution. These encounters of past, present and future affects arguably create possibilities for subjectification in a context that could be regarded as leadership in becoming. This article highlights the complexity of being and becoming a relational leader in kindergarten through the analysis of these minor stories and their political, collective and minor language, inspired by the work of Deleuze and Guattari, especially their book Kafka: Toward a minor literature.

Key words: sense and sensations, relational leadership, becoming leaders, minor stories, affect

Tuesday 10th September 2024, 15:00 – 16:30

Session 3a, Room Juho

Chair: Evie Jusni

Improving leadership in the early childhood context: The potential of a systemic approach to ameliorate the challenges in early childhood leadership process and practice

Alchin, Ian (Western Sydney University, Australia)

In a 2019 survey, Australian early childhood director/managers ranked managing staff as the aspect of their role that was the most challenging and demanded the most time. (Author). Phase 2 of that study took a holistic approach and organisational viewpoint to investigate the potential of a systemic approach to leadership and management to ameliorate those challenges. The research employed a nested theoretical framework centred around systems theory supplemented by complexity and activity theories which informed a multi-site case study methodology.

Five early centres and their managers participated in the research, with each manager positioned as a co-researcher to harness their experience and expertise and recognise their role as active agents in the research process. Each manager engaged in action research to identify and trial potential improvements in leadership processes and practices. Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) provided a frame for the data collection process, utilising online tools developed by the researcher for the managers to record leadership engagements and potential improvements, along with their subsequent reflections.

The data indicate that the use of a systemic approach to leadership resulted in improvements to leadership process and practice with potential for further systemic improvements and shared leadership revealed.

Social work in ECEC services - Requirements for leadership and management

Lochner, Barbara (FH Erfurt. Germany)
Thielemann, Nurdin (IU Magdeburg, Germany)

In the context of discussions about how ECEC services can adequately address heterogeneous living environments of children and families and the challenges of social inequality, "Social work in Kindergarten" (Kita-Sozialarbeit) has been established in some parts of Germany in recent years. The aim of integrating social work into the competence profile of ECEC services is to (1) provide low-threshold support to families with complex problems and eliminate barriers to participation, (2) advise and supplement the educational team in the event of particular challenges and (3) network the ECEC services with other social work services in the neighborhood (Author).

The paper is based on an overview and an interview study with social workers (Author) as well as an interview study with social workers and managers (Author) within kindergartens. It provides insights into the social work in ECEC services in Germany and presents findings on multi-professional co-operations

between the social workers, the management, and the educational staff. We would like to promote discussion about the requirements for leadership and management resulting from these changes in the team structure.

Initial findings show that social work in ECEC services is perceived as a relief, but also as an irritation, by professionals and managers. Various modes of multi-professional collaboration (Cloos 2024) are currently emerging. These need to be reflected in organizational development processes, which ECEC managers do not always seem to be aware of.

Keywords: Social work in kindergarten, multiprofessional teamwork, change management

Pedagogical leaders' experience using a structured quality assessment system as a tool for leading ECEC-quality development in complex organizations

Smeby, Kristine Warhuus (Queen Maud University College of early childhood education, Norway)
Flormælen, Laila Skjei (Queen Maud University College of early childhood education, Norway)

This research stems from the KUMBA-project, aiming at developing a validated quality assessment system, free of charge, for ECEC institutions in Norway. This system contains structured conversations with children, internal and external observations of and by ECEC-teachers. Improving quality in ECEC-institutions are on the political agenda. It is challenging to lead quality developing processes in complex organizations where staff have varied competence. Consequently, it is crucial to develop the pedagogical leaders' ability as leaders. Theoretically, this study sees ECEC-institutions as professional learning communities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2014) where the pedagogical leaders play an important but defiant role at their units.

This paper is based on individual semi-structured interviews with 20 pedagogical leaders in 16 ECEC institutions. They have been given the role of implementing and using this quality assessment system at their ECEC-institutions. The objective is to understand how the quality assessment system is used as a tool for improving the pedagogical leaders' assessment competence and professional leadership. Ethical guidelines in research including informed consent from the involved informants as well as the children and parents affected by the research.

Preliminary findings suggest that implementing and using the structured quality assessment system have altered the pedagogical leaders' professional practice concerning developing quality improvement at their ECEC-institution. The findings may improve professional practice and ECEC-quality.

Keywords: pedagogical leaders, leading ECEC-quality, structured assessment system, assessment competence

Session 3b, Room Lauri

Integrative Leadership Framework for Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care

Alila, Kirsi (Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland)
Vlasov, Janniina (Finnish Education Evaluation Centre)

Several changes have taken place both in the content and structure of early childhood education and care (ECEC), which has led to a need for developing leadership and quality evaluation strategies in early educational settings throughout the world. The purpose of this presentation is to describe how governance, leadership, and operational culture in the ECEC context are integrated and how they provide the foundation for examining quality in ECEC. To better understand the phenomenon, a comprehensive approach to ECEC leadership, called an integrative leadership framework, is presented. The framework was

developed in the Finnish ECEC context after major changes took place in the ECEC governance.

The integrative leadership framework introduces dimensions, which affect operational culture in ECEC leadership and curriculum implementation. Legislation and administrative premises provide the frame for the leadership and management functions, as well as for quality management. The integrative leadership framework combines the dimensions connected to leadership, which are needed when ECEC services, pedagogical practices, and quality of them are developed and maintained.

Keywords: early childhood education and care, leadership, management, quality evaluation

Developing a positive organisational Early Childhood Education and Care culture to retain early childhood educator

Barblett, Lennie (Edith Cowan University, Australia)

Early childhood education and care [ECEC] workforce is at breaking point with reported staff turnover at 25-40% per annum both internationally and in Australia, with description given to why educators stay or go (Heilala et al., 2021; Thorpe et al., 2021). The researchers were working with an early learning service that had not met the National Quality Standard, Australia's measure of quality provision in ECEC seTTIngs, and was an example of a context with a high staff turnover. The researchers turned to scope the literature about how to assist in developing a positive organizational culture in an ECEC seTTIng. However, the term positive organizational culture was not ofen used in the early childhood literature. Using Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) scoping review framework, 127 peer reviewed articles were identified and after exclusion protocols, 29 examined. The review identified singular issues such as educators' mental health and emotional labor; the invisible workload; the importance of supportive work environments and

structures; leaders, leadership, and relational trust; and professionalization, professional identity and professionalism. There was little evidence of research discussing the factors that in combination make up a positive organizational workplace culture in ECEC. This paper presents results of the review and a model developed from the key themes of the literature analysis that may serve as a useful framework for discussion and to guide the growth of positive organisational cultures in ECEC seTTIngs.

Leadership for pedagogical quality in changing basic staff conditions in Norwegian early childhood education and care

Bøe, Marit (University of South-Eastern Norway)
Hognestad, Karin (University of South-Eastern Norway)

The working conditions due to insufficient staff resources and staff absence influence how effectively centre leaders can manage and lead the work in their centres, by supporting and maintaining quality and to create a stimulating environment for both staff and children. Through a qualitative study of four Norwegian centre leaders in three ECEC centres, we explore how the ECEC centre leaders describe their everyday leadership due to a local/municipal political investment in increased staffing in their centres. The research questions addressed is: How do centre leaders describe their intentional pedagogical leadership with increased basic staffing when the aim is to strengthen centre quality? Using Mintzberg`s leadership taxonomy and drawing on intentional leadership constructs, findings reveal that centre leaders enact purpose-based leadership practices by taking advantage of increased basic staffing aiming to strengthen pedagogical practice. Furthermore, purpose-based leadership practices demonstrate leadership agency.

Our contribution is to illustrate and discuss the significance of centre leaders' pedagogical leadership due to taking advantage of the political

investments in human resources as the quality cornerstone supporting and sustaining quality work in ECEC centres.

Session 3c, Room Isa

Chair Marika Warsell

Facilitating smooth workflows- pedagogical leadership and masculinity in Norwegian ECECs

Ljunggren, Birgitte (QMUC, Norway)
Vigdis, Saltrø (QMUC, Norway)

Pedagogical leaders are given a special mandate to realize goals in the Norwegian framework plan. There is scare research on pedagogical leadership in Norwegian ECEC, and the notion of pedagogical leadership is debated. There is a particular lack of research on gendered aspects of pedagogical leadership. The Norwegian ECEC organizations are highly gendered with a female majority among the staff. We therefore set out to answer the following research question: how is pedagogical leadership constructed and gendered by male ECEC pedagogical leaders? This research question is explored through analysis of qualitative interviews (individual and focus group) with male pedagogical leaders (N= 11). The analysis is guided by masculinity theory and theories of workflows in organizations. The paper explores how male pedagogical leaders construct pedagogical leadership as both gendered and non-gendered practices. Preliminary findings suggest that pedagogical leadership practices are tightly connected to smoothing the workflow in ECEC organizations along different dimensions such as decision

making, conflict solving and developing staff-relationships. Facing the challenges of meager ECEC organizations, stronger external expectations, different competence levels and high levels of sick leave, masculine constructions of leadership function as a resource in smoothing the workflow.

Navigating complexity in the early years of school: The role of pedagogical leadership

Fabry, Amy (The Learning Future and Edith Cowan University, Australia)

Early education within school settings in Australia are complex contexts that are pedagogically challenged by evolving social, political and economic priorities. Teachers working in the early years of school experience pressure and confusion as they endure competing tensions about what constitutes quality and the pedagogical practices that best support children's outcomes. Consequently, teachers are left with the moral dilemma of choosing whether to implement age-appropriate and play-based pedagogies that nurture children's holistic development, learning and wellbeing, or whether to follow political agendas of utilising teacher directed instruction to achieve narrowed educational goals and increase children's academic performance.

This paper presents findings from study that explored the role and influence of early childhood pedagogical leadership in school settings in Western Australia where children commence school at 4 years of age. A relational model of early childhood pedagogical leadership emerged from the findings, revealing effective pedagogical leadership assists teachers to navigate complex pedagogical challenges and expectations. This presentation explains the elements that enable effective enactment of pedagogical leadership in the early years of school to empower teachers to be critical thinkers, decision makers and drivers of continuous improvement.

Wednesday 11th September 2024, 09:30 – 11:00

Session 4a, Room Juho

Chair Ulviyya Mikailova

Leading ECEC centers in the times of change

Vlasov, Janniina (Finnish Education Evaluation Centre)

The results of the national evaluation carried out by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre are presented. The aim was to evaluate the work of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) center leaders, deputy management structures, and expectations placed on the leader's work. Theoretical foundations of national evaluations are based on the principle of enhancement-led evaluation (Patton 1997), which stresses the principles of participation and impact. Survey data for the evaluation were collected from center leaders from every municipality in Finland as well as from private service providers. The statistical data was enhanced with focus group interviews. The evaluation shows that while leaders were satisfied with the organization's management structures, the obligations, goals, and expectations set for ECEC center leadership are difficult to meet. Important national reforms cannot be implemented, as not all leaders have time for pedagogical leadership, long-term development, or supporting personnel competence. The evaluation indicates that especially leaders managing multiple centers and leading a high amount of personnel have a lower sense of control over work. The findings point out a clear need to review and develop ECEC center leadership structures, and suggestions for development are provided.

Exploring Pedagogical Leadership in Diverse ECE Models in Azerbaijan

Mikayilova, Ulviyya (Ada University, Azerbaijan)
Orujova, Lalakhanim (University of South Florida)

Growing recognition of the importance of ECE and equality of access to the ECE services for all children forced the Azerbaijani government to enable new approaches in ECE service provision to emerge. Currently, ECE services in the country are provided by centre-based public and private kindergartens, community-based centres run by paraprofessionals and ECE groups run by general schools. These models differ not only with the format and the length of the services, or curriculum they follow, but also with the qualification, background education, experience and professional preparation of the leaders.

Whilst having this diversity, the leaders must learn, develop and validate their leadership through on-going service provision, interacting and building partnership in the local and a wider context. They have to ensure implementation of a curriculum, support teachers to follow curricular principles, plan meaningful learning activities, build partnership with parents, as well as act on other important concepts introduced in the curriculum.

Through qualitative research design we are interested in learning how the leadership operates in the diverse models; investigating their leadership experience and exploring how they perceive, interpret, develop, communicate and perform pedagogic leadership.

Through exploring this together with the ECE leaders, we seek to draw conclusions that can strengthen pedagogic leadership in ECE programs in similarly complex contexts.

Paradoxes in leadership

Hanssen, Sine Bjerregård (Queen Maud University College, Norway)

Through the last two decades there has been major changes in early childhood education and care. The demands for quality have increased and the profession has been strengthened. Previous studies suggest that the role of the early childhood director is becoming overloaded and there are few studies looking into how this looks from the view of the director.

Through interviews in groups and individually this study explores what it is like to be a leader navigating this complex landscape by looking into early childhood directors' experience of leadership. The project is rooted in hermeneutic phenomenology.

A main finding points to an understanding of leadership in early childhood education as a continuous movement between being close to the work with the children, employes and the daily pedagogical practice on one hand (the inside), and on the other hand being able to be on the outside and take a meta perspective on oneself and the works that is going on in the kindergarten, including dealing with to external demands.

An analytical illustration was developed and used to outline the movement between the inside and the outside, in which the leaders stand. By using paradoxical thinking as a lens, the study's other findings are related through the analysis to the illustration of the inside and the outside. Furthermore, it is discussed how thinking with paradox and contradictions can support leaders in navigating complex situations and challenges they are faced with.

Keywords: paradox, director, complex challenges

Session 4b, 2nd floor lobby

Chair: Monika Haanpää

Enhancing the early childhood education and care workforce by developing resilient educators and leaders

Boylan, Fiona (Edith Cowan University, Australia)

The sustainability of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce is heavily influenced by the emotional labor educators bear, particularly due to the heightened emotional intensity required in working with young children and families. This emotional strain results in educators leaving the workforce. To address this challenge, ten early childhood leaders were invited to engage in a robust culture of critical reflection that utilized building a growth mindset in themselves and others to assist in solving problems contextualized to their se$ng.

Employing a participatory action research approach, the project facilitated a community of practice among the leaders, involving cycles of reflection, action, and evaluation. Data collection methods included pre and post-interviews, and photovoice, wherein participants created visual narratives to depict their experiences throughout the action research process. The images and narratives underwent three stages of analysis from participant and researcher-driven perspectives. Themes from photovoice and interviews were developed to inform the development of a model.

Through this innovative model, designed to support educators' critical reflection with a growth mindset, leaders' professional practice was enhanced. The project aimed to positively impact the emotional labor of ECEC educators, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more stable and resilient workforce.

ECEC teachers' positioning as pedagogical leaders in a culture of equality

Schram, Marianne (Queen Mauds University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway)

Søruanuet, Gunn Anita (Queen Mauds University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway)

Selmer-Olsen, Maria (Queen Mauds University College of Early Childhood Education, Norway)

Pedagogical leaders in Norwegian ECEC institutions are responsible for fulfilling the mandate given in the Norwegian framework plan. They lead a team consisting of employees with different educational backgrounds. Norwegian ECECs is characterized by a flat organizational structure, where ECEC teachers and their coworkers often perform the same tasks, regardless of formal competence.

We have interviewed newly graduated ECEC teachers about the transition from education to professional practitioner. Findings show that positioning themselves as leaders can be challenging. They are often more concerned about maintaining good relations with their coworkers than standing out with professional expertise. ECEC teacher education does not necessarily lead to legitimacy as pedagogical leaders. This is a challenge for the quality of ECEC institutions.

This paper explores how teacher education can better prepare students to position themselves as leaders. We discuss the findings based on the concepts of qualification, socialization and subjectivation (Biesta). To empower the students in using their professional expertise as pedagogical leaders and to prepare them for leadership in a culture of equality, it seems necessary that the education focus even more on the subjectivation dimension.

Finnish Early Childhood Education and Care Leaders' Conceptualisations and Understandings of Pedagogical Leadership

Fonsén, Elina (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

Ahtiainen Raisa (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Heikkinen Kirsi–Marja (University of Helsinki, Finland)

Since the 2010s, the field of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Finland has gone through several changes. Leaders working in ECEC have a crucial role in developing pedagogy and practices in their centres. Pedagogical leadership is one of the key concepts in educational discourse around leaders' work; however, the field lacks a unified definition for pedagogical leadership in terms of both research and practice in ECEC. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how leaders conceptualize pedagogical leadership and how they see their own roles as pedagogical leaders. The data are five focus group interviews with ECEC leaders (N = 15) that were conducted in 2019. The data were analyzed by employing the discursive institutionalism approach. The discourse analysis revealed how ECEC leadership tasks were reflected in relation to the importance of pedagogical leadership competence and the use of 'pedagogical lenses'. Further, leaders described the ECEC curriculum as a strategic tool. Pedagogical leadership was seen as a means for leaders and teachers to jointly interpret and implement the curriculum. In light of these findings, it may be stated that ECEC pedagogical leadership is a concept that appears to be taking shape theoretically in ECEC leaders' discourses. However, its daily implementation requires clarification before a shared understanding of the matter can be reached.

Wednesday 11th September 2024, 12:00 – 13:30

Session 5a, Room Juho

Chair: Kirsi-Marja Heikkinen

Co-created leadership development in partnership

Westerhus, Mari (Queen Maud University College, Norway)

Work based competence development is highlighted in the Norwegian early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy as a measure to enhance quality in the ECEC sector. The same policies emphasize leadership in conducting high-quality collective learning processes. The state-funded program "REKOM" enables ECECs and the university sector to enter into partnerships, to enhance ECEC leaders' ability to lead collective learning processes through co-created learning. This project seeks to explore the impact of this collaboration on leadership development. It explores how ECEC leaders experience their leadership development, particularly leading collective learning processes among the staff. The following research questions will be investigated: How do the leaders describe their leadership development through the collaboration with their university-partner, and what do they point to as significant for this development? The project is inspired by critical leadership development theory, where reflection and reflexivity are central concepts (Gjerde, 2022). Previous leadership development research shows that critical reflection is essential for leadership development (Wu & Crocco, 2019). The sample consists of director and pedagogical leaders from an ECEC who have participated in a collaboration. The project has an exploratory, descriptive approach, where narrative data produced by the informants will be analyzed.

The project adheres to national research ethical regulations.

Keywords: leadership-development, co-creation, narratives

Collective storytelling about culture and place: a transformative approach to leadership learning

Cooper, Maria (University of Auckland, New Zealand)

Gould, Kiri (University of Auckland, New Zealand)

Early childhood teachers who assume pedagogical leadership roles and responsibilities sometimes do so without the benefit of formal leadership education. This is especially the case in ECE in New Zealand (NZ). Consequently, their leadership knowledge, experiences, and aspirations remain underexplored, often taken for granted. This limitation is intensified in challenging times, when decisions and actions are often required sooner rather than later. While NZ policymakers express support for leaders to have access to timely and relevant learning opportunities, the translation of this support into practice has been slow. Consequently, some ECE leaders have been compelled to create their own approach to leadership learning, seeking methods that challenge the status quo and stretch their current thinking and practice. Our study, 'Storytelling for Leadership Learning' highlights the powerful potential of narrative methodology. It recognises storytelling as a timeless and universal method for sharing, reconstructing, and the 'passing on' of leadership knowledge. In collaboration with six leaders representing diverse cultural backgrounds, from one ECE centre in NZ, we carried out a year-long investigation immersed in collective storytelling. Leadership narratives imbued with cultural meanings were shared, revealing a connection between storytelling and the shaping of culturally grounded leadership. Our findings affirm the transformative potential of storytelling for leadership learning, foregrounding the essence of who leaders are and where they lead from.

Development paths of joint leadership

Mäntyjärvi, Marjo (Regional State Administrative Agency for Northern Finland)
Keski-Rauska, Marja-Liisa (Regional State Administrative Agency for Southern Finland)

This study examines what kind of ECE leadership development paths there have been in the model of joint leadership and how they relate to other studies and theoretical models of ECE leadership. The concept and theoretical model of joint leadership has been produced in early studies (Aronen et al. 2014; Fonsèn et al. 2015). The development of the model of joint leadership has originally been associated with the development of early education. The model aimed to strengthen the competence of leaders and to promote processes related to finances and practitioners as well as customer relationships. The following dimensions have been identified as success factors of joint leadership: time, structures, diversity of work and dialogue (Keski Rauska & Fonsèn 2018).

The aim of this study is to deepen the model of joint leadership by mirroring other studies of ECE leadership in relation to the dimensions of joint leadership. As a result of the theoretical examination, a star model of joint leadership is constructed, where the dimensions will deepen and expand with new research data. Model can be used to examine the relations of dimensions to each other and to systematically view joint leadership in an increasingly complex ECE environment. In a forthcoming study, we examine what happens to joint leadership, when one of the dimensions changes, what happens in other dimensions and how it affects the whole joint leadership.

Session 5b, 2nd floor lobby

Didactic choices in two Swedish municipalities systematic quality work

Arvidsson, Catarina, (Mid Sweden university, Sweden)

Styf, Maria (Mid Sweden university, Sweden)

Swedish preschools are obligated to conduct activities where all children are given equal opportunities to learn and develop. To create a basis for this task, the activities must be systematically documented, analysed, and evaluated (Education Act, 2010:800; National Agency for Education, 2018). The purpose of this study was to, based on two municipalities´ leadership practices, describe and understand the organisation for the implementation of the government's assignment with systematic quality work. The study was conducted with a case study design and contains following data material: letters and notes from process-meetings with the staff and letters, recorded meetings and notes from a group of municipal leaders for the preschool in the two municipalities. A theoretical framework based on didactic theory and leadership practice was developed and used for

analysing and discussion. The results show that when didactic choices at the different levels of leadership practices lack a common agenda, it becomes more difficult to create a mutual understanding and common agenda for the structure, process, and result of quality work. On the other hand, when didactic choices synthesize between all levels, and systematic quality work have a mutual agenda: education with high quality for learning and development of all children.

Keywords: didactic choices, leadership practice, systematic quality work

Organisational climate & awareness of COVID-19 regulations as an expression of leadership and its relationship to process quality in German childcare centres

Buchmann, Janette (German Youth Institute (DJI) Germany)
Pachner, Theresia ((German Youth Institute (DJI) Germany)
Romefort, Johanna (German Youth Institute (DJI) Germany)

Recent theoretical frameworks based on the Structure-Orientation-Process-Model consider leadership as crucial to early childhood education and care (ECEC). These approaches assume that by creating a positive and supportive working environment, ECEC leaders indirectly influence process quality. However, empirical evidence for this assumption is scarce.

In this context, this study investigated such indirect influences of ECEC leadership in an especially challenging time, the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study focused on organizational climate and awareness of COVID-19 regulations within ECEC centres as an expression of leadership and its relationship to the extent to which (a) children's needs could be met and (b) educational tasks could be fulfilled.

Representative cross-sectional large-scale data of leaders and pedagogical staff in German childcare centres from the ERiK-Surveys 2020 was used to conduct hierarchical regression models. The results indicated that the organizational climate as well as the awareness of COVID-19 regulations within childcare centres was significant for the extent to which (a) children's needs could be met and (b) educational tasks could be fulfilled. In conclusion, the empirical results demonstrated the importance of leaders in creating a working environment that promotes high quality ECEC and highlights the need for further political measures to strengthen ECEC leaders.

Keywords: organizational climate, crisis management, ECEC

2 POSTERS

Tuesday 10th September 2024, 11:00 – 12:00, Ruusupuisto lobby

Promoting Inclusive Practices for Children with Special Needs in Nigerian Early Childhood Education Settings (ECES)

Taiwo, Adesina (Gfolan Education International Limited, Nigeria)

Early childhood education has been a major concern for a significant number of scholars and researchers over the years. This is because a good education serves as pivotal bedrock upon which every child's future should be built. Unfortunately, studies have revealed that rather than the inclusive system of education, the segregated system is adopted in many developing countries. In Nigeria, to be specific, the National Policy on Education has state the policies which are only seen in writing but are not implemented in the Nigerian education system. This handicap greatly acts as a barrier for many children with special needs; it makes it difficult for them to exercise their right to a good and quality education. This is why this paper examines the promotion of inclusive practices for children with special needs in Nigerian early childhood education settings (ECES). It reveals how an inclusive

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system of education can significantly increase the chances of children with special needs to become meaningful members of the society; it also reveals the strategies which helps in promoting inclusiveness in Nigerian early childhood education settings, that would, in the long run, positively impact the lives of children with disabilities or special needs.

Keywords: Education, Early Childhood, Inclusiveness

Socialization of the language of the French-speaking minority from early childhood: to collectively commit under a shared leadership to meet this challenge

Auger, Claudine (Université de Moncton, Canada)
Boudreau, Lyne Chantal (Université de Moncton, Canada)

In minority contexts, French-speaking schools are challenged to support students' linguistic and identity construction through a teaching's cultural approach (MEDPE, 2014). It then becomes very complex for schools to act as socializing environments to young French speakers (Landry et al., 2007; LeBlanc, 2009) especially when the language's used in families experiences a decline (Cao et al., 2005; Houle & Corbeil, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2022). Despite challenges and efforts, schools fail in countering assimilation (Statistics Canada, 2012), so the challenges related to teaching persist (FCE, 2014). From a creativity perspective as proposed by Boudreau (2014), Gélinas-Proulx (2014) recommends informal training as a solution. The Forum Francophone sur l'Apprentissage (education conference) allowed collective reflections on the winning conditions favoring solutions, from the first years of schooling. Shared leadership was important to identify ways to support the main players and raise awareness about the challenges. This provincial event allowed for an understanding of linguistic and cultural issues, and the development of skills (Luc, 2010). This presentation examines the knowledge and skills sharing promoting commitment (Lacroix, 2018) to develop creative training initiatives

intended for professionals seeking solutions for the influence of the language and culture of French-speaking schools in minority contexts from early childhood.

Relationships between novice and expert kindergarten teachers transformed through the creation of "Learning Stories"

Kubotera, Setsuko (Aoyamagakuin University, Japan), **Yada, Takumi** (University of Jyväskylä, Finnish Institute for Educational Research, Finland)

The relationships between novice and expert kindergarten teachers in the teacher training in Japan has been characterized as one-way (teach-taught), focusing on how the novice teacher should do. Especially, expert kindergarten teachers tend to focus on what the novice teachers cannot do. This case study aims to explore one kind of portfolios, "Learning stories", as a tool to develop a second-person relationship between a novice and an expert kindergarten teacher where both are learning with each other. This case study was held as an auto-ethnography study in 2016. One of the authors involved in the teacher training as the expert. The weekly teaching plan made by the novice and the diary by the expert were analyzed. This study found three characteristics of their relationship which cannot be seen in usual teacher trainings: 1) A second-person relationship was created in which they listened to the children's voices and talked together about the children's growth. 2) A second-person relationship create mutual subjectivity and are no longer a relationship of teaching and being taught. 3) A mutually nurturing relationship was created in which children, parents, and kindergarten teachers talked about their children's growth together.

Cultivating ECE Teachers' Pedagogical Tact: through the reflection on practice

Murai, Naoko (Kyoto Women's University, Japan)

This presentation focuses on the issue of how ECE teachers can cultivate pedagogical tact. The concept of "pedagogical tact" plays an important role for

Herbart (1776-1841) both as a middle link between theory and practice and as a means of judgment and decision-making for the educator. To cultivate pedagogical tact for ECE teachers is important. Because the pedagogical context of ECE practice is complex and contingent, and in these situations, teachers need to choose and act on options that are better for the children's development without sufficient time to fully consider them.

In order to help cultivate pedagogical tact, the presenter conducts a reflection of ECE practice. We are using a method of reflection based on the ALACT model proposed by a Dutch teacher education researcher. As ECE teachers collaboratively reflect on their ECE practice and deepen their own questions about their own state of being in daily practice, it can be said that childcare practice becomes more tactful.

In this presentation, we will present a case study of an ECE setting that regularly conducts reflection and discussion of its practices. The focus will be on how teachers and children interact in practice and how teachers act tactfully toward children's development. The relationship between reflection and this tactful behavior will be clarified.

The moment is now – time and timefullness in pedagogical leadership practices in early childhood education

Nordin, Pia (Åbo Akademi University, Finland)

The aim of the study is to analyse ECE centre leader's conceptualisation of time, pace and presence in relation to pedagogical leadership. Research shows that ECE experience stress due to more multifaceted tasks, large groups of children and lack of staff (Heilala et al, 2023; Furu & Heikkila, 2022). Clark (2023) highlights the idea of slow pedagogy to keep focus in pedagogical activities. Hjelt's (2023) study shows that the moments of calm and undisturbed presence are important. The theoretical framework of the study consists of a practice-oriented theory. In this

study, pedagogical leadership constitutes the practice. The study has a qualitative orientation with an abductive approach. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 14 leaders and follow-up in-depth interviews have been held with three of the respondents. The research follows scientific practice regarding ethical considerations as stated in the Swedish Research Ethics Board (TENK, 2019). Research data is collected and stored in accordance with the instructions for storing and handling information at Åbo Akademi University. The results show a practice where a perceived lack of time is common and how timefullness, presence and engagement could look like in pedagogical leadership.

Keywords: ECE centre leader, pedagogical leadership, time

A Study of Childcare Workers' Organizational and Career Commitment

Sakata, Tetsuhito (Otsuma Women's University, Japan), **Inoue, Mariko** (organisaatio)

Recently, the overall birth rate in Japanese society is declining, however the number of people going to work is increasing, due to the declining economic situation. This has also meant that the need for childcare facilities to accommodate the growing number of children. This situation has resulted in a shortage of childcare workers, and the government has sought to financially enhance the availability. While this policy has had a certain effect, it has also led to other issues.

In recent years, the labor market has been rapidly fluidizing, and it has been said that childcare workers' organizational and career commitment to a childcare facility has changed along with it. Specifically, job selection is now being made with an emphasis on working conditions (e.g., working hours and salary). However, it is still not clear what variables exist, how they relate to each other, or how they are changing. So this is why our research group is interested in.

Our research group has been conducting a questionnaire survey nationwide regarding organizational and career commitment. This survey has been conducted

intermittently three times to date, in 2014, 2018, and 2022. A comparison of these surveys reveals that in some areas there has been a change in attitudes as described thus far, while in others there are still attitudes toward work and organization that can be considered unique to childcare workers.

Matti Huuskonen, City of Jyväskylä, Finland

Extra: Outdoor exercise "wild group " (Meeting at Ruusupuisto lobby on Monday 16:30)

Welcome to join and enjoy a holistic experience nurturing all the aspects of a physio-psycho-social human being, and feel a moment of respite during a multi-day conference while appreciating fresh and innovative outlooks on the cutting edge of Early Childhood Education in Finland. Your host will be an experienced ECE teacher and a current coordinator of ECE physical education in Jyväskylä region, Matti Huuskonen, who will take you for an exciting and surprising field trip through nature spots at the heart of JYU campus area!