
COMMENT

The articles in this edition of *Early Childhood Folio* are likely to generate thinking that challenges taken-for-granted practice and beliefs. They all draw on research within early childhood settings.

The first is a provocative article by Jayne White who examines how “authoritative discourses”, which are seen as uncontested, may hold sway in curriculum debate within early childhood settings. In this way, opportunities for practices that promote diversity and innovation become limited, and debate and uncertainty are stifled.

Kayte Edwards examines ways in which teachers may enhance their scientific content knowledge by drawing on funds of knowledge held by participants in the early childhood setting and from external sources. These strategies offer ideas on how teachers might link pedagogical practices with curriculum learning areas.

Three articles focus on children’s play and social interactions within early years settings. These draw on small, in-depth studies to offer valuable insights and provoke questions about the roles that may be played by teachers. Indeed, children’s play as a feature of the early years curriculum was identified by Joce Nuttall (2011) as an aspect of early years research that might warrant attention via the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) programme.

Both Amanda Bateman and Brent Mawson focus their articles on aspects of children’s play that had no direct adult involvement. Amanda Bateman used an ethnographic approach to study social interactions of four-year-old children in a Welsh primary school during playtime. By focusing on a target child and using video and audio recordings she was able to gather rich data on the complex nature of children’s social organisation

over time. Sometimes disquieting, Amanda’s analysis raises questions about whether and when teachers should intervene. Brent Mawson examined the participation strategies children use to enable them to successfully enter collaborative play. Rather than simply raising questions, Brent suggests specific strategies that teachers may use to build into their programmes activities or protocols to lessen the amount of exclusion. And Hanin Hussain’s article examines “games of chase”—in it she argues for the importance of teachers’ active involvement in children’s learning about games. All three articles would be well worth discussion within early childhood teaching teams and student teacher education courses for, as Amanda writes, such discussion would enable teachers to explore their personal pedagogical stance.

Finally, Alex Gunn and Nicola Surtees illuminate disparities between inclusive legislation and policy and the experiences of same-gender-attracted parents and their children in early childhood settings. They challenge teachers to engage with difference and suggest some starting points and strategies.

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Nuttall, J. (2011). *The contribution of the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative to building knowledge about teaching and learning: A review of early years projects 2004–2010*. Retrieved from Teaching and Learning Research Initiative: http://tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/background-paper-pdfs/Nuttall_TLRI_final_paper2011.pdf