SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) MEETINGS

Tuesday 22nd August 2022

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| **SIG** | **Time** | **Location** |
| 10th SIG Gender Balance Research Conference | 09:00 – 16:00 | Conference Room 7, Level 3Technology & Innovation (TIC) Building |
| SIG Meeting: Children from refugee or migrant backgrounds | 10:00 – 11:30 | Conference Room 6, Level 3 Technology & Innovation (TIC) Building |
| SIG Meeting: Disability studies and inclusive education in the early years | 11:30 – 12:30 | Conference Room 5, Level 3 Technology & Innovation |
| SIG Meeting: Mathematics birth to eight years | 12:00 – 13:30 | Conference Room 6, Level 3 Technology & Innovation (TIC) Building |
| SIG Research Conference: Sustainability | 13:00 – 17:00 | Conference Room 5, Level 3 Technology & Innovation (TIC) Building |
| SIG Meeting: Transitions | 13:00 – 14:30 | Conference Room 6, Level 3 Technology & Innovation (TIC) Building |

To attend any of the above meetings please notify the convenors (s) of SIG meeting you wish to attend. Their contact details can be found below.

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ABOUTS SIGs Birth to Three

Bringing together international perspectives on children birth to three, to: • Promote the wellbeing of children birth to three, and their families

• Support, share and disseminate SIG members’ research on birth to three and related aspects • Explore and debate emerging curricula and pedagogy, in relation to children birth to three

• Contribute to debates about birth to threes training, employment and professional development, in relation to the wellbeing of children and adults

• Strengthen understanding of integrated services for children and their families.

**For more information, please contact:** Sara Barros Araújo: saraujo@ese.ipp.pt Katherine Bussey: kat.bussey@gmail.com

Children from Refugee or Migrant from

• Develop a partnership that will allow applications for various types of funding (Horizon, EEA, NordFORSK, Erasmus +) to pursue collaborative research projects to build on existing studies and further develop an emerging body of knowledge around the experiences of refugee, asylum seeking children and their families who have experienced Forced Migration from an international Early Education perspective.

• Respond to EU and World expectation making ECEC institutions which enhance a sense of belonging specifically for children from refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant backgrounds to transform ECEC settings into quality agencies, which are culturally appropriate, safe, welcoming and inclusive societies to achieve better outcomes for refugees and migrant children and their families.

• Expand further understandings for the Early Childhood and Education Care workforce, enhance culturally relevant pedagogy and empower ECEC as a sustainable solution for increasing migration challenges.

**For more information, please contact:** Donna Gaywood: dlgaywood@gmail.com Jennifer Koutoulas: jkoutoulas@eyia.org.au

Digital Childhoods. Multimodality and STEM

Our SIG is an inclusive group of academics, teachers, practitioners and students who are interested in the researching Digital Childhoods. We have an eclectic mix of members from across the world who are all interested in how technologies are shaping and being shaped, by children. We accept a broad definition of ‘technologies’ to explore how digital devices not only contribute to children’s cognitive development but also have a central place in play, life and leisure activities. We welcome members with a variety of experience and we seek to support new academics who are emerging in the field.

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Sarina Kewalramani: sarika.kewalramani@monash.edu

Gender Balance

For some years now, researchers from several countries have formed an international network on the issue of men, women and gender balance in the ECEC work force. Since 2010, members of the network organised research symposia on the annual conferences of EECERA. 2012, the network initiated a Special Interest Group within EECERA.

The SIG focuses on the issue of gender balance in the ECE work force, and on the important role gender plays in adult-child-relations. Although there have been discussions about rising the proportion of male ECE workers for more than two decades, the theme remains an issue. Recently, several research projects were conducted, and in some countries governmental funded programmes have been started for bringing more men in the profession of Early Childhood Education and Care.

The members of the SIG support the aim of increasing the proportion of male workers towards a more gender-balanced ECEC work force. At the same time there is a need for a more differentiated view. Research is necessary e.g. on the significance of ECEC workers’ gender for children’s development, the interrelations of gender balance in the workforce and the promotion of gender equality, on gender-sensitive strategies for recruitment for ECE training and work, on recruitment and retention of men in the ECEC workforce, and on gender relations in ECEC in general.

The SIG focuses on the links of research, practice and policy, intends to provide an academic forum for the promotion, development and dissemination of research, and facilitates cooperation and collaboration between researchers in the field.

**For more information, please contact:**

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Holistic Well-being

The holistic well-being SIG aims to critically reflect on the concept of children’s well-being in a holistic, inclusive manner. This is timely due to the increased awareness and interest of practitioners, researchers and policy makers at a cross-national and global level in understanding children’s physical, mental, social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and cultural well-being. It will foster research in a range of aspects including ESD in early childhood, child development, cross-cultural elements, policy, empowerment and agency and their synergy in examining children’s holistic well-being. The SIG welcomes international collaboration and innovative research.

• The Holistic Well-being SIG aims to explore the following questions, amongst others: • What do we mean by well-being?

• Why address well-being?

• What do we know about well-being from the perspective of children’s and human rights? • How can we support the well-being of children and families in a holistic and inclusive

manner?

• Do practitioners, researchers and policy makers understand children’s physical, mental, social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and cultural well-being in the same way?

• What experiences influence children’s well-being?

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• How can we advocate for the well-being of the children and their families? • Are there universal measures of well-being?

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Mathematics Birth to Eight Years

The EECERA SIG Mathematics provides an academic and rigorous forum to develop and disseminate high quality research on early childhood mathematics education. It has organised stimulating and relevant symposia and other presentations at recent EECERA conferences. Some collaborative research, publication and evaluation have arisen as a result of people engaging with others at SIG meetings and during presentations. There is great potential for future collaborations, perhaps through joint publication in books and papers. The SIG Mathematics is a friendly group looking to expand in order to continue learning about early childhood mathematics education. Please join us.

The EECERA SIG Mathematics aims to coordinate and disseminate international research on the discourse in the emerging early childhood mathematics education field. It creates a space for shared thinking and for creating synergies between participants from a wide range of professional and scientific contexts to encourage a clearer articulation and understanding of early childhood pedagogy, policy and practice in relation to mathematics

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Multilingual Childhoods

The Multilingual Childhoods SIG was launched at the 2015 EECERA conference in Barcelona. It has been set up with a view to bringing together researchers who are investigating the learning of two or more languages in the home, school or community by children from birth to the age of 6 years old – this includes aspects of L1 and L2 language development in contexts of awareness of languages, additional languages, foreign languages, second languages, bilingual education, and immersion. More information about this SIG can be found on the [Multiligual Childhoods SIG website](https://multilingualchildhoods.wordpress.com/)

• To bridge the areas of multilingualism and early years education;

• To promote and disseminate research in early years multilingualism and its implementation in policy and practice;

• To create opportunities for informed and constructive discussion and debate; • To foster possibilities for cross-national collaboration and interaction.

**For more information, please contact:** Mila Schwartz: milasch@post.bgu.ac.il

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Outdoor Play and Learning

The Outdoor Play and Learning SIG provides an academic and rigorous forum at European and international level to develop and disseminate high quality research on outdoor play and learning. It aims to coordinate and disseminate international research on the international discourse in this emerging field. It intends to create a space for shared thinking and for creating synergies between participants from a wide range of professional and scientific contexts to encourage a clearer articulation and understanding of early childhood pedagogy, policy and practice in relation to outdoor play and learning.

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Participatory, Pedagogy and Praxeological Research

We constitute a group of researchers that want to create a community within the larger EECERA organisation with a shared interest in advancing a specific area of knowledge – participatory pedagogies linked with praxeological research, where members meet and dialogue, organise symposia and conferences, and conduct collaborative projects and publications.

We envisage to:

• generate critical reflection on those connected themes;

• encourage the emergence of cross-national perspectives;

• support innovative and reflexive research on current ECEC issues and themes through international collaboration

• promote participatory praxis with children and their teachers

• promote praxeological research of participatory pedagogies with children and with teachers • connect teachers’ education to children learning

The aims of this community are fully in line with EECERA philosophy and ethos and highly connected to the EECERA momentum of creating an impetus in the development of pedagogical praxis, as can be seen with the recent creation of the EECERA book series – Towards an ethical praxis in early childhood.

Hopefully the creation of this group will contribute to capacity building in such an important area for the development of quality education, either at the level of children or of teachers.

**For more information, please contact:**

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Professionalism in Early Childhood Education and Care

In many countries of the world, the expansion and further development of the early childhood care and education system is linked to a terminology of ‘profession’. Curricula, or national pedagogical frameworks, have been introduced as a means to foster professional practice. Qualifications, in-service training/education and an increasing number of university degrees are contributing to the notion that there is a profession in early childhood and an associated need for ‘professional’ development.

Yet (at least from our point of view), there is far less understanding about what ‘profession’ in Early Childhood is all about. Do we really understand what it means to act ‘professionally?’

• in a rapidly changing society where settings and situations are continuously changing, in social contexts and groups which tend to be chaotic as they organize and re-organize themselves, continuously forming patterns and relations which cannot be predicted or controlled?

• with a broad variety of people (children and adults) who pursue various interests?

• when we know that teachers act first as human beings with a personal history and generate their ‘actionable knowledge’ (Argyris) everyday.

The SIG on professionalism in early childhood wants to address these (and other relevant) questions. We suggest paying special attention to the development of what might be called a professional habitus. And while we find that these questions can be cross-nationally addressed and reflected upon, we must be aware that ‘acting’ as a professional can only be done in the specific local context. Under these conditions, the SIG can be a place for ‘shared thinking’ and for creating synergies rather than for producing universally valid outcomes.

**For more information, please contact:**

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Rethinking Play

In the context of EECERA Rethinking Play has to be thought provoking and reflecting on issues that relate to developments at scientific, social, educational and policy level; multidisciplinary and open for theoretical and practice based research; sensitive to issues of diversity, and rights and lived experiences of children.

The SIG Rethinking Play discusses several issues among which:

• Cultural differences in the concept of play and the valuation of the role of play in young children’s learning and education. Consequences for exchange of ideas with non-western colleagues and the implementation of play-based programmes in non-western countries.

• The role of the teacher in supporting and stimulating young children’s play and learning, including the discussion of educational preschool programmes.

• Play and learning of children under 3 years old in day care centres

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Sustainability in Early Childhood Education

The aim of this SIG-group is to develop a space for networking and to encourage cross-national research and perspectives in the field of early childhood education for sustainability. The research agenda focuses on ways of understanding how young children are recognised as, and learn to be, active citizens for sustainability. Sustainability refers here to the interlinked social, economic, natural and political dimensions defined by UNESCO (2010), and these must underpin all decision-making for equitable global futures.

In the last 10 years, the field of early childhood education for sustainability has strongly emerged as evident in the chronology listed by Davis and Elliott (2014). The need for formal places and spaces for researchers to meet and collaborate has become increasingly evident. As EECERA is an international organisation gathering researchers in the field of Early Childhood Education we are confident that by seeking a platform within EECERA, research initiatives in sustainability will be further developed. Increased research opportunities in various forms such as joint conference presentations, international research collaborations and co-authored publications are envisaged. A key aspect to consolidating this field of research is to broaden the theoretical and methodological perspectives shared and to incorporate multiple international socio-cultural lenses. A SIG platform within EECERA creates opportunities to progress this broader agenda and engage others. We share these organisational priorities at a time when global climate change is increasing and cannot be ignored as a compelling issue for children’s futures. Actions to mitigate climate change through both early childhood education research and practice are much needed. Aligned international policies with import for early childhood education and education for sustainability are The UN Global Action Programme (GAP) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) (UNESCO, 2017). These policies are integrated with the dimensions of sustainability and offer a global action plan for developing a sustainable world. The SDG’s, in particular, are far reaching and highlight that global sustainability is not to be achieved by an environmental or human poverty focus alone. The GAP and SDG’s are integral to a globally transformative agenda and the SIG collaborative research and publication initiatives will strongly support this agenda.

**For more information, please contact:**

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Transforming Assessment, Evaluation, and Documentation in Early Childhood Pedagogy

In the field of early childhood education and pedagogy the issues of assessment, evaluation and documentation are having central role in research and practice that are concerned with effective ways of assessing, evaluating and documenting children’s development and learning. Moreover the issues of children’s and parents’ voices, participation, involvement and engagement in these

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processes are seen as a challenge when early childhood educators try to align

effective practices and values with external pressures such as policy, government standards.

In this new SIG faithful to EECERA values, we aim to open the debate about ways where assessment, evaluation documentation, children’s and parents’ voices, participation involvement and engagement can be inter-dependant, inter-connected and woven in a way that forms an ecological thinking so we can develop rigours and systematic ways moving away of attempts to “modelise”, “universalise” assessment, evaluation and documentation and formulate testing as many policies tend to.

Central to the SIG will be the exploration of the potentialities of assessment, evaluation and documentation in early childhood education drawing attention to the pedagogy and open up a discussion of alternative way of thinking about these concepts in early childhood education vs approaches oriented by government policies focused on the notion of academic achievement, attainment and “testology”. The underpinning ideology of this SIC is illustrated in the words of the founder of Reggio Emilia ideology and it will seek :

*“A pedagogy that denies children unexpected and ambiguous encounters to the fantastic and imaginative, to the adventurous, to the risky and the improvised”* (Malaguzzi lecture November 1993)

**Keys aims of this new SIG will be:**

• To examine ways of how an ecological thinking involving all stakeholders’ (early childhood educators-term used collectively to describe all who are involved in a professional capacity with children’s education, parents and children) participation, involvement, dialogic pedagogy in assessment, evaluation and documentation versus testing and laboratory tick boxes assessment processes;

• To open the discourse of the underpinning ideologies, philosophies, theory/theories, epistemologies of assessment, evaluation and documentation;

• To explore the potentiality/potentialities of innovative ways and ecological thinking to assessment , evaluation and documentation;

• To share practices of how we can develop effective and ethical ways of assessing, evaluating and documenting how children are connecting cognitive skills and transversal competences with situations that appear in everyday life, children’s unique strategies and narratives of connecting situations, how children develop skills and try to make sense of the world without trying to apply a universal approach to these processes;

• To explore alternatives on how we can move away from developmental scales focusing on academic achievements that they are the dominant discourse in many curricula approaches and reduce social stratification and inequality;

• To engage into discussions on the focus of the assessment, evaluation and documentation (i.e: singularity of the child versus universality, connectivity of situations versus testing)

• To discuss and potentially extend relevant research and experimentation of assessment, evaluation and documentation in practice and on practice.

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Transitions

To bring together international perspectives on transitions in early childhood to:

• Promote the wellbeing of young children and their families

• Support, share and disseminate SIG members’ research on transitions and related aspects • Explore and debate emerging research, professional practices and theories in relation to

transitions

• Contribute to debates about transitions in relation to the wellbeing of children and adults • Strengthen understanding of transitions for children and their families.

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Working with Parents and Families

• To share international research, experiences and understandings of the role of the family in early childhood education

• To discuss, reflect and challenge the power relationships between families and workers in research studies and work with parents and families.

• To provide a forum for the voice of parents and families in educational research

• To support the development of appropriate methodologies for research with parents and families to investigate how families support their children’s growth and development.

• To explore workforce issues that arise through the development of different ways of working with parents and families across a number of disciplines e.g. early childhood education and family work

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Young Children’s Perspectives

• To generate critical reflection on children’s perspectives and children’s rights

• To support and encourage cross-national perspectives on seeking children’s perspectives • To support SIG members’ research in a collaborative and cooperative manner

• To share innovative and reflexive research on children’s perspectives and children’s rights.

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