



EARLI SIG5 and SIG28 conference 2024

Wednesday, 10 – Friday, 12 JULY 2024, Warsaw, Poland
Fostering empathy, creativity and resilience for a sustainable future

Abstract book



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Wednesday, 10th July

Keynote

Professor Angela Pyle

Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study,
OISE, University of Toronto

Time: 11:30-12:30

Location: 0.410

Title: Expanding conceptions of play-based learning: Promising paths and pedagogical challenges

Abstract: Research examining play-based learning has shared both promising and problematic findings. There is great promise in the improved learning of children in controlled studies comparing play-based learning to traditional didactic instruction. This promise is counterbalanced by inconsistent findings and dichotomous recommendations for implementation. Many have theorized about the causes of these challenges, including problematizing the lack of agreement and continuing debates surrounding definitions of play-based learning, including the problematic position that adults do not belong in children's play. This presentation will outline the impact of this research on educational practice and consider the lessons researchers could learn from classroom realities. Data from a decade of studies in Canadian classrooms will be used to support the examination of what we know about play-based learning, what we still need to learn, and how teachers are negotiating these complexities in their practice.

Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A1 - Paper session

Chair: Jin Sun

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Children's theory of mind and closeness with the teacher – are they important for each other?

Presenting author(s): Joanna Smogorzewska, University of Warsaw

Co-author(s): Grzegorz Szumski, University of Warsaw; Paweł Grygiel, Jagiellonian University

Abstract: The aim of the study was to analyze the longitudinal relations between theory of mind (ToM) of children and emotional closeness with their teacher. We invited children from primary schools across Poland to take part in the study. Finally, over 700 children participated in its three waves ($N_1 = 751$, $N_2 = 760$, $N_3 = 735$); during the first wave children were $M = 7.45$ ($SD = 0.50$). Children learned in 45 different classrooms in 16 schools. To measure ToM abilities in children, we decided to use those concerning advanced ToM (AToM), therefore the understanding of second, third- and fourth-order false beliefs, emotions and contradictory emotions, irony, pretence, different perspectives (also visual ones), faux pas, metaphors, and persuasion. To assess relationship between teachers and their students, we asked teachers to fill in the subscale 'Closeness' from the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale-short form. To examine the longitudinal relationships between ToM and closeness with the teacher, we used the cross-lagged panel model (CLPM). The results show that previously existing closeness with the teacher influence further development of AToM among children (between T1 and T2, as well as between T2 and T3); therefore, closer relations with the teacher help children to master their ToM skills. On the other hand, however, ToM predicts closeness with the teacher only between T1 and T2, but not between T2 and T3. The results are interesting both theoretically and practically, showing the importance of the relationship with the teacher for children's development.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A1 - Paper session

Chair: Jin Sun

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Loneliness and ostracism in 5-year-olds: Associations to socioemotional functioning and vocabulary

Presenting author(s): Anne-Elina Salo, Universities of Turku and Jyväskylä

Co-author(s): Katja Upadyaya, Mirjam Kalland, Katariina Salmela-Aro, University of Helsinki
Marja-Kristiina Lerkkanen; University of Jyväskylä

Abstract: Being meaningfully included in play and peer interactions helps children meet the fundamental human need to belong. Identifying threats to fulfilling this need – loneliness and ostracism – in context of early childhood education and care (ECEC) is vital to prevent vicious cycles where the child's development and well-being are compromised. However, different combinations of loneliness and ostracism, along with their concomitants, remain scarcely mapped. In this study, 5-year-old Finnish children's (N = 31 169) loneliness and ostracism was rated by ECEC teacher. Based on the type and frequency of these threats to social belonging, four groups of children were identified 1) Rare threats (80.2 %); 2) Frequently lonely–rarely ostracized (10.5 %); 3) Frequent accumulated threats (7.7 %); and 4) Frequently ostracized–rarely lonely (1.6 %). One-Way ANOVA indicated significant overall differences across the groups in children's socioemotional functioning and vocabulary. Based on multiple comparisons, children in Group 1 had significantly highest vocabulary, prosocial behavior, and lowest emotional and peer relationship difficulties, children in Group 3 the lowest prosocial behavior, vocabulary, and highest peer relationship difficulties, and children in Group 4 the highest conduct difficulties and hyperactivity. The findings deepen our understanding of signs that reflect threats to children's social belonging and provide insights into potential challenges in identifying loneliness and ostracism. It is vital to cultivate ECEC teachers' sensitivity in noticing these threats, and their competencies in addressing peer difficulties and helping all children build socioemotional skills that they need to be included and to positively include others.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A1 - Paper session

Chair: Jin Sun

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Problem-solving behaviour in preschoolers: An explorative observation study

Presenting author(s): Joris Van Elsen, University of Antwerp

Co-author(s): Joke Torbeyns, KU Leuven; Sven De Maeyer, University of Antwerp

Abstract: Problem solving is a key competence in academic and professional development. But learning how to solve problems takes years, even decades. It is therefore important to monitor and support children's problem-solving competencies from an early age on. Unfortunately, there are currently hardly any measures available to monitor the development of preschoolers' problem-solving competencies and to measure the effect of problem-solving interventions in preschool. The current study aims to develop an observation instrument to assess preschoolers' problem-solving competencies in the field of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). STEM offers plenty of opportunities to work on problem-solving competencies. Twelve preschoolers aged 4-6 years were individually presented with three different engineering design problems. All 36 sessions were video-taped, resulting in 17 hours of recordings. Recordings were coded by a team of researchers and preschool teachers. Identified problem-solving behaviours were categorised according to the eight steps of the PISA problem-solving framework. Preliminary analysis of the recordings shows that children demonstrate a variety of problem-solving behaviours covering all steps of the PISA framework. We also found that preschoolers' behaviours depend on the problem presented. Our study contributes to the development of a reliable and valid observation instrument to assess problem-solving competencies in preschool settings, which can be used for research and practice.

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Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A2 - Paper session

Chair: Paulina Marchlik

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Content validity of self-assessment in childcare in the Netherlands: A mixed methods study

Presenting author(s): Simon Hay, Leiden University

Co-author(s): Harriet Vermeer, Anja van der Voort, Harold Nefs, Leiden University; Ruben Fukkink, Universiteit van Amsterdam

Abstract: Aim: Self-assessment enables childcare professionals to become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and to identify their needs for improvement (Isoré, 2009). We explored whether the current quality indicators (from the Dutch Childcare Act) are up to date, and whether existing definitions of childcare quality may also apply in the relatively new and rapidly growing context of self-assessment.

Method: We conducted 3 focus group interviews (with each 7 participants) to explore relevant quality indicators in childcare as well as implications for self-assessment in the qualitative phase of the mixed methods study. In the following quantitative phase we collected and analysed survey data ($n = 351$ for ECE, $n = 126$ for after school care).

Results: We identified the following overarching topics and specific subjects to be examined through surveys (phase 1); weighting of the basic quality goals (of the Dutch Childcare Act), including additional quality indicators (educational quality, inclusion/diversity, use of digital media), aim of self-assessment, suitability of self-assessment for measuring childcare quality, and possible risks of self-assessment. Results of the surveys (phase 2) show that additional quality indicators need to be added to the quality indicators (of the Dutch Childcare Act) to fully capture childcare quality in the Netherlands. Discussion The existing concepts of childcare quality are still relevant according to the various stakeholders. However, there was consensus on the necessity to add a number of quality indicators to the current concepts. Self-assessment can add an extra dimension to the ongoing discussion around measuring and improving childcare quality.

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Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A2 - Paper session

Chair: Paulina Marchlik

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Best practice and proven strategies in online professional development for early childhood educators

Presenting author(s): Eva Pölzl-Stefanec, University of Graz

Co-author(s): Birgit Parz-Kovacic, University of Graz

Abstract: The basic training to become an ECE specialist takes place at upper secondary level in Austria. In a Europe comparison, Austria is one of the laggards when it comes to the basic training of early childhood education and care (ECE) specialists. Due to the low level of basic education, there is an increasing need to focus on continuous professional development (CPD) of ECE specialists (Krenn-Wache, 2017). With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, online formats of CPD programs have also found their way into the field of ECE and have become an integral part of the CPD landscape even after the pandemic (Kim, 2020). This qualitative study examines the perspectives of participants (N=235) and trainers (N=30) in ECE on their perceived advantages and disadvantages of participating in and organising OPD. The results show that the perceived advantages and disadvantages do not differ much between the two groups. Both, participants and trainers, value binding flexibility, individualisation, interaction, learning success, feedback and organisation in OPD courses. The results will be used to develop best practices and proven strategies for CPD of effective OPD. Kim, J. (2020). Learning and Teaching Online During Covid-19: Experiences of Student Teachers in an Early Childhood Education Practicum. *International Journal of Early Childhood = Revue Internationale De L'enfance Prescolaire = Revista Internacional De La Infancia Pre-Escolar*, 52(2), 145–158. Krenn-Wache, M. (2017). Austria–ECEC Workforce Profile. *Workforce Profiles in Systems of Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, edited by P. Oberhuemer and I. Schreyer. www.seepro.eu/English/Country_Reports.

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Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A2 - Paper session

Chair: Paulina Marchlik

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Pedagogical coordination as a key role for continuous learning and development in ECEC

Presenting author(s): Claudia Ciccardi, University of Milano-Bicocca

Abstract: The research project investigates the role of the Pedagogical Coordinator as a key figure in building educational contexts to promote learning and development for all children. In order to shape the goals of full accessibility, also in light of recent research (Urban L. et al., 2011;) and international policies (EU Recommendations, 2021), the urgency of defining new educational strategies and practices through practitioner-acted research is highlighted (Moss P., 2012). The Pedagogical Coordinator can assume a leadership (Bass B. M., 1998) and modelling role (Bandura A., 1997) by offering professionals new opportunities for continuous learning and transformation and development through reflection (Schön D., 1993) with the goal to make ECEC a welcoming place for everybody, spaces to build relationship and citizenship for all (Child Guarantee, 2019). The research, which is still ongoing, is based on a participatory action-research paradigm (Marani G., 2014); 19 interviews and three focus groups were conducted. Grounded theory was used to build an emergent theory of the Pedagogical Coordinator, which stresses the importance of this role constantly supporting work groups so that all those involved within ECEC may evolve completely. The initial results will push the research on and allow to outline models and styles of coordination fostering a holistic-systemic approach to collective learning.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A3 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Joana Cadima

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Title: ECEC staff working conditions and wellbeing: Insights from three countries

The staff's well-being in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is a key determinant for improving the workforce's practices with children and their general performance at work, as well as reducing the staff shortages faced by the sector. Recently, there has been an increased research focus on the factors that might impact the well-being of ECEC teachers. Kown and colleagues (2021) proposed a holistic conceptual framework for ECEC teacher well-being, which can be conceptualized in three dimensions: psychological, physical, and professional well-being. This symposium relies on this framework and brings together three studies from three different countries examining different factors accounting for ECEC staff well-being. Paper 1 (The Netherlands) examines the association between several job demands and the well-being of childcare professionals. Paper 2 (Germany) explores the relationship between one specific job demand, the teachers' indirect workload, and their job satisfaction. Paper 3 (Portugal) investigates the differences in the well-being and related factors of the two workforce professionals in ECEC – lead teachers and assistants. The main contribution of our symposium is to extend current knowledge about the diverse factors contributing to promoting or impairing ECEC staff well-being. An expert in the ECEC field from Austria will discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the three papers.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A3 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Joana Cadima

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Paper 1: Teacher wellbeing in Dutch childcare: Relations to individual, classroom, and organizational factors

Presenting author(s): Pauline Slot, Utrecht University

Co-author(s): Bodine Romij, Paul Leseman, Utrecht University

Abstract: The childcare workforce faces several challenges with increasing numbers of teachers on sick leave and rising staff shortages affecting teachers' wellbeing. Wellbeing is a multidimensional construct encompassing negative (i.e. stress), and positive aspects (e.g., self-efficacy) (Jones et al., 2020), which is shaped through individual, classroom, and organizational factors (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). 578 teachers and 333 leaders working in 180 full day care and 191 half day programs completed a questionnaire between 2017 and 2023, measuring background characteristics (e.g., education level, work experience) and several job demands (e.g., working hours, classroom ratios). Multilevel regression analyses were conducted for five aspects of wellbeing (i.e. self-efficacy, work climate, work stress, work commitment, relation with leader). Team cohesion was the most consistent and strongest predictor of well-being (with β ranging from .17 to .40). Teachers reported higher work stress when they experienced more staff shortage in the center ($\beta=.29$) and when taking care of children with special needs ($\beta=.38$). Receiving more professional development benefitted the teachers' relationship with the leader ($\beta=.21 - .27$). These results indicate that investing in organizational climate and team cohesion is promising for improving teachers' wellbeing at it can, at least partly, compensate for organizational and classroom stressors.

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Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A3 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Joana Cadima

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Paper 2: Time for indirect work in ECEC - a lever to improve educational quality?

Presenting author(s): Susanne Kuger, German Youth Institute

Co-author(s): Johanna Romefort, German Youth Institute

Abstract: A core determinant of educational quality are direct interactions between children and teachers. Yet, at a broader level, educational quality also requires working with parents, documenting developmental progress, and preparing learning activities. The amount of time teachers are granted for such “indirect educational work” within their contractual working hours varies widely across ECEC system and providers. Furthermore, in the face of time-variant workload und staff shortages, it is quite common that time for indirect work is difficult or even impossible to realize within the contracted working hours. This in turn contributes to teachers’ stress, lower teacher satisfaction, and possibly even teacher turnover or leaving the work sector altogether. Thus, from a governance perspective, time for indirect work might be a potential lever to improve quality.

Based on representative data of teachers in German childcare centers from the ERiK-Surveys 2020 and 2022 this study therefore intends to analyze teachers’ indirect working hours, their subjective evaluation of its adequacy, and how it relates to other sub-facets of teacher satisfaction and setting characteristics.

Preliminary analyses underline the hypothesis that satisfaction with the amount of available indirect time is a distinct factor in overall teacher job-satisfaction. Moreover, there is great heterogeneity across teachers within one and the same setting, but still remarkable relations to team and setting characteristics. These results are discussed in the light of the dilemma between staff shortage across most ECEC systems on the one side and intentions to improve educational quality on the other side.

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Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A3 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Joana Cadima

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Paper 3: Professional well-being in ECEC in Portugal: A comparison study with lead teachers and assistants

Presenting author(s): Ana Rodrigues de Lemos, University of Porto

Co-author(s): Tiago Ferreira, Joana Cadima, University of Porto

Abstract: Most of the research conducted on ECEC professionals' well-being has focused on the lead teachers. However, in most countries, up to half of the ECEC workforce is represented by teaching assistants (Weisenfeld et al., 2023). Despite being understudied, these professionals assume critical roles in children's learning and caring (Cramer & Capella, 2019). Calls to conduct research with ECEC assistants are increasingly frequent (Weisenfeld et al., 2023). 51 teachers and 44 assistants participated in this study, aiming to compare the perceived well-being, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction of both groups of professionals. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicated statistically significant differences between groups, with teachers scoring consistently higher than assistants, in the well-being engagement dimension, $U = 677.5$, $z = -2.22$, $p = .03$, satisfaction with salary, $U = 452.5$, $z = -2.20$, $p = .03$, job itself, $U = 454.5$, $z = -2.19$, $p = .03$, and self-efficacy, $U = 362$, $z = -3.39$, $p < .001$. These results indicate that fostering the ECEC workforce's well-being should consider the differences between the two equally represented professional groups.

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Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A4 - Symposium

Discussant: Jan Lenhart

Chair: Anne-Kristin Cordes

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Title: A new era of reading. The effects of digital and olfactory storybooks in ECEC

Children naturally learn with all their senses: Deeper learning occurs when information is presented in a multi-sensory fashion (Mayer. 2003). Reading storybooks to children is a common activity in ECEC. However, research indicates that technology-enhanced stories may be more engaging for children in contrast to print books. Especially, multimedia elements such as animated pictures provide additive visual information (if congruent to the narration) and attract children's attention. Interactive and gamified features (e.g., hotspots, games) bear the potential to activate and engage children with learning objectives but also carry the risk of distracting children from listening to the story (Meyer et al., 2021). Olfactory stimulation supplements visual and auditive cues in storybooks and has been linked to memory recall (Suss et al., 2012). This symposium addresses the potential of multi-sensory learning within digital and olfactory storybooks that offer children the opportunity to engage with the story in a whole different way. The first paper analyses the potential of apps for dialogic reading for language learning with a focus on children's executive functions in an experimental study. The second paper presents 3 cluster-randomized-trials that explore the effectiveness of different reading formats (i.a. dialogic vs. self-paced learning) of digital storybooks on language learning. The third experimental study examines the effect of olfactory stimulation on young children's vocabulary, reading comprehension, and engagement. Results from Switzerland, Germany and Norway provide insights into the usage and effectiveness of technology- and sensory-enhanced storybooks in ECEC. Practical implications, the potential for inclusive education, and further research are discussed.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A4 - Symposium

Discussant: Jan Lenhart

Chair: Anne-Kristin Cordes

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 1: The potential of digital apps for dialogic reading: Focus on children's executive functions

Presenting author(s): Johanna Quiring, Eva Heuss, St.Gallen University of Teacher Education

Co-author(s): Silvana Kappeler Suter, St.Gallen University of Teacher Education

Abstract: Dialogic reading, where children's contributions in picture book reading are encouraged, positively affects emergent literacy skills, as shown in studies (e.g., Flack, Field & Horst, 2018). Picture books, available as printed books and interactive apps with elements like hotspots or games, have been studied for their impact on adult-child interaction and children's literacy skills, with mixed results (e.g., Christ, Wang, Chiu & Cho, 2019). Additionally, the adult's and child's characteristics, such as executive functions, influence outcomes (Richter & Courage, 2017). A research project investigates how picture book format and app elements affect interactions between adults and children aged 4-5, the children's literacy skills and the extent to which children's characteristics, such as executive functions, influence the outcome. 159 teacher training college students conduct assessments with 4- or 5-year-olds, including a picture book session. They are randomly assigned to use printed books or apps. Executive functions are measured with three behavioral tests on working memory, inhibition, and cognitive flexibility (Miyake et al., 2000). The contribution will introduce the project and an offer-and-use model by Helmke (2012) adapted for dialogic reading as a theoretical framework. The research instruments used to measure executive functions will then be explained in more detail and preliminary results will be discussed.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A4 - Symposium

Discussant: Jan Lenhart

Chair: Anne-Kristin Cordes

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 2: The effectiveness of different reading formats of digital storybooks on language learning

Presenting author(s): Franziska Egert, KSH München, University of Applied Science

Co-author(s): Anne-Kristin Cordes, State Institute of Early Childhood Research (IFP Bayern); Fabienne Körner, State Institute for Early Childhood Research and Media Literacy

Abstract: A growing body of evidence indicates that reading stories to children has the strength to foster language development in the early years. This paper investigates the advantages of digital storybooks combined with dialogic reading techniques in contrast to different control conditions (print book / business as usual). In 3 cluster randomized trials, we manipulated teacher involvement (dialogic reading vs. self-paced reading), linguistic input (standardized audio narration vs adaptive teacher reading), and book format (print vs. digital). Oral language production, verb morphology, expressive and receptive vocabulary were assessed at pre- and posttest. Kindergarten children were placed in homogeneous small groups (based on PPVT pretest scores) and then randomly assigned to experimental or control conditions (13-18 children per condition). In the dialogic reading conditions, an adult followed the CROWD strategy (Whitehurst et al., 1988). The short-term small-group interventions consisted of 3 sessions with the same book and took 60-90 minutes in total. Meta-analytic techniques were used to compare treatment effects. Significant advantages of dialogic reading were found on expressive vocabulary ($g=0.75-1.75$) and verb morphology ($g=0.92-1.50$) compared to self-paced reading and business as usual controls, but not for receptive vocabulary or language production. Children benefited more from standardized input than adaptive reading on expressive vocabulary. Dialogic reading was as effective with the digital storybook as it was with the print version. Well-written digital storybooks combined with dialogic reading techniques are a valuable and cost-effective tool to facilitate language learning in ECEC

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session A

Session A4 - Symposium

Discussant: Jan Lenhart

Chair: Anne-Kristin Cordes

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 3: Experimenting with olfaction in reading with young children

Presenting author(s): Ingrid Midteide Løkken, BI Norwegian Business School and University of Stavanger

Co-author(s): Natalia Kucirkova, Janine Campbell, University of Stavanger

Abstract: The sense of smell has been under-explored in the field of reading research (Kucirkova, 2022; Kucirkova, Campbell, Stangeland & Hoel, 2023; Kucirkova & Tosun, 2023), and is linked to memory recall (Suss, Gaylord & Fagen, 2012) and aspects of human development (Schaal et al., 2020). Olfactory reading, which incorporates smell in children's reading, has emerged as a promising field of research, complementing traditional textual and visual pedagogies in the education of young children. A multi-sensory approach to early reading could support inclusive education and provide insights into the relationship of language acquisition with human senses. Our study examines the effect of olfactory stimulation on young children's vocabulary, reading comprehension, and engagement (for the study protocol see Løkken, Campbell, Kucirkova & Dale, 2023). The study was conducted between May and December 2023, and included a sample of 65 children from five early childhood settings in southern Norway. This presentation describes the shared book reading sessions, the challenges encountered, and our findings in relation to the hypothesis that olfactory-enhanced reading through engagement increases children's vocabulary learning, story recall, and interest in reading. This study has important implications for children's reading, olfaction research, and the design of multi-sensory studies for inclusive education with young children.

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Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B1 - Paper session

Chair: Sandra Mathers

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Intervention strategies of kindergarten teachers during pretend play

Presenting author(s): Linda Amrar, University of Teacher Education du canton de Vaud

Co-author(s): Anne Clerc-Georgy, University of Teacher Education du canton de Vaud

Abstract: Drawing on historical-cultural theory, this study investigates intervention strategies used by teachers during pretend play with 5-year-old children when they are involved in a continuing professional development focusing on the seizing of mathematical teaching opportunities associated to pretend play. During pretend play, children substitute the meaning of actions and objects which has been associated with the development of abstract thinking required to perform mathematical activities. Even if the participation of teachers during pretend play is associated with the development of the maturity of pretend play and mathematical performances, teachers face difficulties intervening during pretend play to sustain children's exploration. Four teachers participated in a continuing professional development on interventions intended to sustain mathematical exploration and learning during pretend play. Teachers and parents signed a validated consent form. Data analysis was designed to capture the different intervention strategies used by teachers during pretend play activities with 5-year-old children filmed during the continuing professional development using a constant comparison method. A wide range of intervention strategies are used by teachers during pretend play activities when they are involved in a continuing professional development focusing on the seizing of mathematical teaching opportunities associated to pretend play. An implication of this finding is the possibility that kindergarten teachers took advantage of the continuing professional development to explore various forms of intervention strategies. The findings of this study may have implications in research and for preservice teacher education.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B1 - Paper session

Chair: Sandra Mathers

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Development of pretend play in early years: quality of fantasy and gender differences

Presenting author(s): Valeska Grau Cardenas, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Co-author(s): Fernanda Rufs, Magdalena Fuenzalida, Javiera Ramirez, Daniela Lagos, Camila Eyheralde, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Abstract: This paper aims to describe the development of pretend play, from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten and its relationship with language skills (expressive and receptive vocabulary) and early executive functions. We were specifically interested in the development of fantasy, including imagination, coherence and complexity of the symbolic play. 100 children belonging to 12 different schools in the metropolitan region of Chile participated in the study and were evaluated at the end of pre-kindergarten and the end of kindergarten concerning the quality of their pretend play (including fantasy, coherence, and elaboration of play), receptive and expressive vocabulary, inhibitory control and working memory. Results show that the quality of fantasy is significantly related only to WISC-Vocabulary and Peabody at the end of pre-kindergarten (time 1). Also, the time they spend in pretend play is also significantly related to WISC-Vocabulary. However, those correlations fade at the end of Kindergarten suggesting that individual differences in the quality of fantasy or ability to engage in pretend play are not related to vocabulary. Gender differences were found regarding the quality of fantasy and time engaged in pretend play in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, controlled by performance in vocabulary. Potential implications for the development of pretend play, and the potential relationship with creativity are discussed.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B1 - Paper session

Chair: Sandra Mathers

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.152

Paper: Mother child and older-younger sibling writing play interactions in Arabic

Presenting author(s): Khoulood Zabaneh Tannas, al- qasimi college

Co-author(s): Dorit Aram, Tel Aviv University; Margalit Ziv, Kaye College of Education

Abstract: Parent-child and older-younger sibling play interactions are natural development facilitators. Given its diglossic nature, this is particularly important in Arabic. This study examined the nature of Arabic-speaking mothers' and older siblings' writing and play interactions with preschoolers. The sample included 80 children aged 5-6, their mothers, and older siblings (aged 7-9). A bowling game was used, which included writing short words (for example, نمر - Tiger in Arabic). The mothers and older siblings were filmed while interacting with the young siblings. In both play and writing situations, the interactions were analyzed from three aspects: (1) literacy - grapho-phonemic mediation and letter-production support; (2) dyadic behavior - positivity vs. negativity of the mother/older sibling, positive engagement vs. negative behavior of the younger sibling, and overall reciprocity; and (3) playfulness of the parent or older siblings. The younger siblings' letter knowledge was also assessed. T-test analyses suggest that mothers mediate literacy at a higher level than siblings: they are more dyadic and positive, the children are more positively engaged with them, and the dyad is better coordinated. Older siblings are more playful than mothers: they play with greater enthusiasm and happiness and are stricter with game rules. Pearson correlations show that a family has a style; the higher the mothers' mediation, the higher the siblings' mediation. Regression analyses show that the literacy mediation of both mothers and siblings is the main predictor of the preschoolers' letter knowledge. The findings contribute to our knowledge of family members as early literacy facilitators.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B2 - Paper session

Chair: Nina Hogrebe

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Predictors of burnout of preschool teachers working in the warzone Ukraine

Presenting author(s): Wilfried Smidt, University of Innsbruck; Oresta Karpenko, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University

Co-author(s): Marija Czepil, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University; Eva-Maria Embacher, Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck

Abstract: Research on predictors of burnout among preschool teachers is a crucial topic, particularly in the context of those working in warzones. The present study aimed to investigate predictors of burnout among 562 preschool teachers employed in 183 preschools located in the Ukrainian oblasts Kharkiv (Eastern Ukraine, near the frontline), Lviv (Western Ukraine), Odesa (Southeastern Ukraine), and Poltava (Central Ukraine). The study was conducted as an online survey and key constructs were captured by using well established measures. Path analyses were conducted to investigate the predictors of preschool teacher burnout. Regarding direct effects the results showed that more severe trauma symptoms were associated with higher levels of burnout, while higher levels of resilience and social support were linked to lower levels of burnout. Preschool teachers' work experience only partially predicted burnout symptoms and war-related stressors, preschool location, and preschool teachers' age were not associated with burnout. In addition, there were indirect effects of preschool location, war-related stressors, resilience, social support, and age on burnout. These findings highlight the need for targeted support services for preschool teachers in Ukraine's warzone to enhance available resources and alleviate burnout symptoms. Recommendations for education policy refers to the implementation of low-threshold support services to reduce trauma symptoms, to foster resilience, and to offer social support.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B2 - Paper session

Chair: Nina Hogrebe

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Breaking the gender barrier as early as preschool—Teachers' attitudes and practices

Presenting author(s): Taly Shechter, Bar-Ilan University

Co-author(s): Ornit Spektor-Levy, Bar-Ilan University

Abstract:

The literature underscores persistent gender disparities in STEM fields despite women's advancements, attributing them to social rather than biological factors. Gender stereotypes, perpetuated by societal agents, shape career choices from an early age. Teacher education and intervention programs are vital for addressing these issues. The study focused on a Gender-Responsive STEM Teaching Professional Development Program (PDP) for preschool educators, examining its impact on attitudes, perceptions, and teaching practices. Twenty female Jewish and Druze Israeli educators participated in the PDP, involving lectures and building a community of practice over four months. Qualitative analysis highlighted key themes: gender perceptions in a cultural-social context; gender perceptions in an educational-professional context; recruiting partners for the change; support for implementation; gender-responsive language; organizing the educational environment; gender-responsive STEM teaching; and presenting female role models. These findings underscore the importance of collaborative efforts and inclusive practices in promoting gender equality in preschool education. The Discussion highlights the program's effectiveness. Four vectors for change emerged: raising gender awareness; taking active steps; deepening knowledge; and forming a supportive community of practice. The study concludes that participation in the PDP encouraged preschool teachers to break gender barriers, emphasizing the significance of early intervention in promoting gender equality in STEM.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B2 - Paper session

Chair: Nina Hogrebe

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Domain-specific teacher self-efficacy in German ECEC-centres - a multi-level study

Presenting author(s): Sina Fackler, German Youth Institute

Co-author(s): Daniel Turani, German Youth Institute

Abstract: Self-efficacy (SE) was found an important teacher trait that predicts desirable pupil outcomes. For the early years, cognitive (CD) and socio-emotional development (SED) are among the most important developmental tasks for children. Hence, the present study analyses these two domains of self-efficacy among ECEC staff in Germany and to what extent variation is explained by the use of corresponding activities with kindergarten children. We use data of 1321 ECEC staff and 241 centre leaders in Germany from the TALIS Starting Strong 2018 ISCED 0.2-survey. We run a two-level latent step-wise regression model in MPlus 8 for each domain of TSE, adding the use of activities, leader and socio-demographic information. For SE in SED, 90.9% of variance initially resided within and 9.1% between centres. For higher-SE teachers, we found a more frequent use of activities enhancing pro-social child behaviour and child initiative and a lower headcount of staff per children. This explained 78.9% variance resided within centres and 21.1% between centres. For SE in CD, initially 90.3% of variance esided within and 9.7% between centres. Higher-SE teachers used more activities fostering language and taught in groups with a lower headcount of children/staff and more boys. Their centre leader used a distributive leadership style. This explained 99.5% within and .05% between centres. We learned that domain-specific SE is associated with the use of supportive teacher activities, and requires certain circumstances within the centre. The different amount of variation explained on each level points to the dynamic in which SE develops.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B2 - Paper session

Chair: Nina Hogrebe

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Culturally responsive early science education—Bedouin minority teachers' professional development

Presenting author(s): Idit Shaul, Bar Ilan University

Co-author(s): Ornit Spektor-Levy, Bar-Ilan University

Abstract: "Early science education is important, however, implementing scientific thinking in early childhood is challenging mainly due to a lack of teachers' understanding of the appropriate pedagogy and a lack of confidence in their scientific knowledge. Teaching scientific topics that combine cultural knowledge and children's daily lives, improves their scientific understanding and increases their community identity. Culturally responsive science education (CRSE) seems ideal for mitigating gaps in science achievement worldwide. This study focused on the indigenous Bedouin minority in the south of Israel. Bedouin society is traditionally semi-nomadic, tribal, affected by high levels of poverty. Bedouin children are vulnerable and disadvantaged. The main objective of this study was to reveal Bedouin preschool teachers' attitudes toward integrating culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in their teaching, with a focus on science education. Another objective way to evaluate the impact of a professional development program (PDP) that models community-based CRSE on their attitudes, sense of self-efficacy, and teaching practices. A sample of 54 preschool teachers from the Israeli Bedouin community participated in a CRSE PDP. We used the Preschool Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs toward Science Teaching Questionnaire (P-TABS) and in-depth pre and post interviews to track changes in teachers' attitudes, perceptions and practices. Preliminary results showed positive effects on teachers' attitudes and sense of self-efficacy toward implementing CRSE. The specially designed CRSE PDP supported the preschool Bedouin teachers in implementing community-based CRSE with their preschoolers. "

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B3 - Symposium

Discussant: Lise Fox

Chair: Silvia de Barros

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Socioemotional learning & programme-wide approaches in ECEC in Greece, Portugal and the USA

Policy reports systematically highlight the need to develop effective programme-wide frameworks that promote social inclusion and educational engagement and foster socioemotional development and resilience in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Previous studies have also emphasised the significance of enhancing professionals' competencies to promote children's social and emotional growth and prevent challenging behaviours during the early years (e.g., Snyder et al., 2022). The programme-wide positive behaviour support approach, often referred to as the Pyramid Model, is a framework that comprises three tiers of interventions: the primary level focuses on nurturing positive relationships and creating supportive environments for children, the secondary level on enhancing social skills and emotional regulation for children who require more assistance, and the tertiary level on developing comprehensive, function-based interventions for children with greater needs. This framework supports preschools in implementing evidence-based practices while also establishing systems to maintain these efforts. Through a collaborative approach involving children, families, staff, management, specialists, and the community, strategies are systematically promoted, and children's socioemotional outcomes are significantly improved, enabling them to achieve their full potential. This symposium aims to provide an outlook of programme-wide frameworks being implemented in three countries with different educational systems (Portugal, Greece, and the USA) and their impacts across diverse ECEC settings. The increasing body of evidence supporting the adoption of program-wide approaches in ECEC will also be complemented by guidance on the key features of their effective implementation.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B3 - Symposium

Discussant: Lise Fox

Chair: Silvia de Barros

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.172

Paper 1: School-wide positive behaviour support on enhancing social skills in ECEC: A study in Greece

Presenting author(s): Anastasia Vatou, International Hellenic University

Co-author(s): Vasileios Grammatikopoulos, Maria Evangelou-Tsitiridou, Evridiki Zachopoulou, International Hellenic University

Abstract: The School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) approach emerges as a valuable asset for early childhood education aiming to enhance school climate, reduce problem behavior, improve socio-emotional skills, and enhance ECEC teacher well-being (Floress & Jacoby, 2017). Despite its recognized benefits in several domains, SWPBS interventions in Early Childhood Education and Care settings remain scarce, with the majority implemented within the US educational framework (Obee et al., 2023). This gap raises uncertainties about the SWPBS interventions' impact across various Early Childhood Education and Care contexts. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the effects of an intervention program on children's social skills in Greece. The sample involved 1067 young children and their teachers from 33 ECEC settings. Data collection used the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) before and after a one-year implementation period, during which ECEC teachers received SWPBS training. ANOVA analysis revealed significant intervention effects on various social and behavioral skills. Notably, children in the experimental group exhibited greater behavioral improvements by Year 1 end compared to the control group, underscoring the program's efficacy. Collectively, the findings from this study highlight the significance of implementing intervention programs to support the social behavior of young children.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B3 - Symposium

Discussant: Lise Fox

Chair: Silvia de Barros

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.172

Paper 2: PW-PBS in Portugal: Exploring challenges and potential from the perspective of ECEC professionals

Presenting author(s): Sílvia de Barros, Politécnico do Porto

Co-author(s): Vítor Oliveira, Miguel Santos, Sara Araújo, Instituto Politécnico do Porto

Abstract: The European project “Implementing Positive Behaviour Support in Early Childhood Education and Care” (PBS-ECEC) aimed to train and empower professionals in the application of a Programme-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PW-PBS) approach in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The present communication aims to explore the perspectives of Portuguese ECEC professionals on the challenges and potential of fostering children’s positive behaviours by using this approach. Participants included ECEC team members ($n = 67$) involved in implementing PW-PBS in their preschools who enrolled in a training program, including online and face-to-face sessions, self-training online modules and resources, and expert supervision. We analysed professionals' perspectives from two online questionnaires, which included open-ended questions about implementation difficulties, barriers, strengths, and the potential of a program-wide approach. Additionally, we integrated the field notes from the researchers' contact hours with the teams. The findings illustrate that despite the constraints of limited time, inadequate staffing, and conflicting schedules among professionals, the progressive implementation of PW-PBS practices and strategies demonstrated the potential for substantial transformative change in ECEC settings. This potential was attributed, among other factors, to the collaborative and reflexive nature of a programme-wide approach as well as the quantity and quality of resources provided by the PBS-ECEC project. This research highlights the importance of establishing training programs in Portugal that offer flexible learning opportunities to foster professional growth and foster essential skills in promoting children's socioemotional learning. By integrating online resources with in-person support, the PW-PBS has been shown to be a valuable asset for professionals.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B3 - Symposium

Discussant: Lise Fox

Chair: Silvia de Barros

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.172

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Paper 3: Program wide supports for pyramid model implementation in the USA

Presenting author(s): Mary Louise Hemmeter, Vanderbilt University

Abstract: The Pyramid Model (PM; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2021) is an evidence-based framework for promoting social-emotional competence and addressing challenging behavior in young children. Randomized trials examining the use of Practice Based Coaching (Snyder, Hemmeter, & Fox, 2022) to support PM implementation have demonstrated that teachers can learn to implement the practices, and improvements are noted in children's social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes (Hemmeter, Fox, et al., 2021; Hemmeter et al., 2016). However, in these studies, research staff have delivered a high dosage of coaching to individual teachers. Because this model is not feasible in many early childhood programs, our team has used an implementation science framework to develop Program Wide Supports for Pyramid Model Implementation (PWS-PMI). A key feature of PWS-PMI is the initial provision of external coaching (i.e., research staff) support that is gradually faded as the program builds their capacity to support PM implementation through structures for coaching and behavior support. Preliminary findings indicate that with training and external coaching, programs can develop a leadership team and build systems and capacity for supporting PM implementation (Hemmeter et al., 2022). We are currently conducting a second randomized control trial evaluating the effectiveness of PWS-PMI in childcare programs. Primary program and teacher outcomes are measured using direct measurement tools, and child outcomes are assessed using a rating scale completed by teachers and direct assessments. These findings will provide additional evidence for the effectiveness of PWS-PMI in childcare programs and implications for scaling.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B4 - Symposium

Discussant: Joana Cadima

Chair: Pauline Slot

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Sleep like a baby? Children's sleep in the early years

Sleep is essential throughout life. In the first year of life the regulation of sleep is a main theme for both parents and teachers. To optimize their development, it is important that young children get good quality sleep in a suitable environment. Often, sleep quality and strategies to promote sleep are studied in the hospital setting or at home. To date, little is known about sleep practices within daycare centers and how these might affect children's sleep. The current symposium addresses this issue from several angles. The first presentation provides a review of current knowledge about the role of sleep in early development, thus providing a basis for understanding the importance of studying sleep in the early years. The second presentation describes a study into the beliefs and knowledge of daycare teachers about infant sleep. The third presentation compares sleep practices and diurnal cortisol between US and Dutch daycare centers. The study shows that different sleep practices in daycare are related to different patterns of rise and fall in cortisol levels. Finally, the fourth study discusses the importance of safe sleep practices and adherence to these practices at home.

Together, the four studies address sleep in the early years in different sites and from different angles, addressing knowledge and attitudes, as well as sleep practices and effects on children from parents' and teachers' perspectives. Given the important role of sleep in early development, it is essential to address this topic in future research in order to enhance knowledge about sleep.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B4 - Symposium

Discussant: Joana Cadima

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.168

Paper 1: The importance of sleep for early development

Presenting author(s): Eline de Groot, Utrecht University

Co-author(s): Jeroen Dudink, UMC Utrecht

Abstract: Sleep is an essential part of early development. In the womb, fetuses are thought to spend up to 90% of their time asleep. Over the first year of life, infants have spent more than 50% of their life asleep, starting from 17 hours and decreasing with age until 11 hours around 1 year.

Similar to adults, fetal and neonatal sleep is divided in two sleep stages; active and quiet sleep. Active sleep – the infant equivalent of REM sleep – is thought to be a driver of early... neural connectivity. Before birth, active sleep makes up most of the fetal sleep cycle. During this stage, the brainstem generates activity, stimulating neurons and facilitating the development of the early neural network. After birth, the share of quiet sleep – the neonatal equivalent of nREM sleep – increases. Quiet sleep is thought to help the brain to adjust to exogenous sensory input, which significantly increases after birth.

During the first year of life, infants develop a circadian rhythm and sleep cycles start to resemble adult sleep architecture. A vast body of work has supported the importance of sleep for physical growth, memory, language, executive function and overall cognitive development in infants and young children. Due to recent technological advances, monitoring infant sleep is increasingly simple and automated, exciting new research about the role of sleep as a starting point for interventions.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B4 - Symposium

Discussant: Joana Cadima

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.168

Paper 2: Sleep care quality in infant class in Israel

Presenting author(s): Esther Adi-Japha, Bar-Ilan University

Co-author(s): Sharon Yahav, Noa Laor, Bar-Ilan University

Abstract: Infants' sleep poses many challenges to a daycare schedule. The first year of life is characterized by a wide range of individual differences in sleep patterns (Jenni & Carskadon, 2007). Early childhood curricula, including the Israeli one (Shohet, Givon, & Adi-Japha, 2021), require individualized infant care. The situation is even more complicated as infant caregivers hold different views of infant care. The aim of the current study was (a) to characterize infant sleep patterns in childcare settings (b) to assess caregivers' knowledge about infant sleep.... safety ($\alpha=.63$), and (c) to probe daycare workers' views of infant care as more 'attuned' or more 'structured' ($\alpha=.76$, $.78$, respectively). The study, held via questionnaires supplemented by phone call interviews, encompassed 98 infant class caregivers from different settings. Settings were grouped into three age ranges: 3-5, 6-8, and 9-11 months. The study assessed the Baby Care Questionnaire (BCQ, Winstanley & Gattis, 2013), a sleep safety questionnaire, and a sleep care quality scale. The findings revealed that most settings reported fixed sleep times. Sleep care quality was significantly reduced with increasing babies' age. In many settings either children did not have two naps (specifically, in 25% of the settings serving infants 9-11 months) or they were awoken from their morning sleep (about 50% of the settings). Sleep safety knowledge was low. These facets were related to caregivers' views, group size, caregiver experience, and the age range of infants in the class. The study suggests that greater attention should be given to infants' sleep in childcare.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B4 - Symposium

Discussant: Joana Cadima

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.168

Paper 3: Sleep and the rise of cortisol: Comparing Dutch and US daycare

Presenting author(s): Paul Leseman, Utrecht University

Co-author(s): Charles Super, Sara Harkness, University of Connecticut

Abstract: Aim. In healthy children, diurnal cortisol follows a pattern of a steep rise in the morning, a decline by noon, and a slow gradual decline throughout the afternoon. Preschool children attending full-day childcare have been found to show a deviant pattern, with the expected decline by noon, but a steep rise again in the afternoon. This finding has been interpreted as indicating that daycare is stressful and a risk for child development (Vermeer, 2006). The present study challenges this interpretation: (1) by relating children's diurnal cortisol to activities; and (2) by comparing children's diurnal cortisol in Dutch and US daycare. Method & Results. Children (2-4 years; NNL = 25, NUS = 35) were observed, using an interval method to code activities. Saliva samples were obtained at 9:00, 12.00 (before lunch), and 15:00 (after nap), and assayed for cortisol. Despite the more quiet classroom and ample sleep time in a separate room, Dutch children revealed the deviant steep rise of cortisol in the afternoon, while the US children showed the falling pattern. This divergence could be explained by activities and sleep. In the Dutch centers, children could sleep as long as needed in a separate room. In the US, stretchers were placed in the classroom, while light and noise were insufficiently reduced. Discussion. Waking up after a good sleep in the afternoon, more so in the Dutch than the US centers, is like waking up in the morning and the rise of cortisol is not an indication of stress.

Conference program

Wednesday, 10th July

Session B

Session B4 - Symposium

Discussant: Joana Cadima

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.168

Paper 4: Parental practices regarding infant sleep

Presenting author(s): Monique L'Hoir, Wageningen University and Research

Co-author(s): Floortje Kanits, Magda Boere-Boonekamp, University of Twente; Adèle Engelberts, Zuyderland Medical Center, Geleen/Sittard; Edith Feskens, Wageningen University and Research

Abstract: Introduction: Understanding parental adherence to safe sleep recommendations is crucial for Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) prevention. We aimed to assess compliance with safe sleep recommendations among Dutch parents of infants and explore reasons for non-adherence. In another study we analyzed whether Instagram images are compliant with safe sleep recommendations.

Methods: 2870 parents participated filled out an online questionnaire distributed through Youth Healthcare organizations in the Netherlands. Furthermore, 514 Instagram images were analyzed on compliance with the criteria: supine sleeping position, own cot or crib, sleep sack, and an empty bed.

Results: Adherence to safe sleep recommendations was relatively high, with most infants placed in the supine position. Room-sharing practices increased significantly since the last survey in 2017, especially for infants aged 0-6 months. There were positive trends in the use of sleep sacks and avoidance of duvets and large soft toys in beds. Improving sleep and/or reducing crying of infants were often mentioned reasons to deviate from the safe sleep recommendations. Parents heavily relied on internet and social media for safe sleep information. However, only 6 (1.9%) of the found Instagram images was consistent with the four criteria.

Discussion: Adherence to safe sleep recommendations improved compared to 2017. However, challenges persist, such as bed-sharing with young infants. Parental perception of infant sleep quality and its association with sleeping position and place warrants further research to develop possible interventions to support parents. The significant reliance on internet and social media underscores the need for monitoring online safe sleep information.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.168

Paper 4: A comparative study on teacher-parent relationship in ECE and primary Education across six European countries

Presenting author(s): Valentina Pagani, University of Milano-Bicocca

Co-author(s): Pauline Slot, Utrecht University; Efthymia Penderi, Democritus University of Thrace; Helga Norheim, University College of Southeast Norway; Olga Wyslowska, Krzysztof Bulkowski, University of Warsaw

Abstract: The positive relationship between teachers and parents has long been recognized as a protective factor for all children, particularly those who are at a higher risk of academic failure due to their immigrant background or low-income status. This relationship plays a crucial role in promoting children's well-being and successful school functioning throughout their (pre)school career. However, the nature of this relationship changes across different grades as a reflection of the distinct histories and cultures of the two institutions, resulting in different understandings, expectations, values, and teaching practices. This paper presents the findings of a comparative study conducted across six European countries (England, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Poland) that explores the nature of the relationship between teachers and parents of low socio-economic status (SES) and ethnic minority backgrounds, with a focus on the differences between early childhood education and primary education. The study involved an online survey completed by 449 early childhood and primary school teachers, covering questions related to their background, culturally sensitive classroom practices, classroom diversity, and their relationship with parents. The results indicate that early childhood teachers tend to report comparatively more positive and less negative relations with parents compared to school teachers. The implications of these findings for improving the teacher-parent relationship, particularly in the primary school context, will be discussed.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Teamwork, leadership, and provider support as a prerequisite for the use of ICT in preschools

Presenting author(s): Sebastian Then, University of Bamberg

Co-author(s): Franziska Cohen, University of Education Freiburg; Lars Burghardt, Matthias Borgstede, Yvonne Anders, University of Bamberg

Abstract: The digitalization of the society influences pedagogy in early childhood education. ICT be used to promote children's learning of children. Practice shows the professionals controversial beliefs on ICT in educational settings. The effects of the team, the preschool headteacher, and the provider on the usage of ICT in preschool settings is still unclear. In this study, we gathered data from 266 preschool teachers in 97 preschools. We used path analysis to identify associations between professional facets, teamwork, structural facets, the use of ICT with children in general as well as for educational purposes. We also examined the relations between the perception of an organizational concept for digitalization (POCD) and the beliefs about ICT between preschool teachers and headteachers as well as the support by the preschool provider. Structural facets were only linked to general ICT use, not educational use. Self-efficacy and teamwork correlated positively with both general and educational ICT use. POCD and positive ICT beliefs related specifically to educational ICT use. The POCD and the beliefs of the headteachers were significantly associated with the POCD and the beliefs of the preschool teachers. High provider support was associated with a higher POCD and higher beliefs of the headteacher. These results show that a clear distinction between ICT activities is crucial. Educational ICT use needs planning, self-efficacy. Beliefs and headteachers influence ICT use. Nevertheless, provider support is vital for pedagogical practice.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Profiteers vs. non-profiteers from an instructional support - further training: An explorative analysis

Presenting author(s): Heike Wadepohl, Leibniz University Hanover

Abstract: High quality instructional support in daycare centers has a positive effect on child development (e.g. Antulic & Drovodelic, 2021). However, it is usually only observed rarely and in low quality in practice (in sum Egert et al., 2020; Wadepohl & Bethke, 2023). Accordingly, there is a high need for further training in this area (Mackowiak et al., 2021). This is where the KoAkiK training program comes in, with the aim of further developing teachers' professional skills in the field of cognitively activating instructional support. However, the results of the comprehensive evaluation study are rather sobering (Schomaker & Wadepohl, 2022). For this reason, we use an exploratory approach to investigate which intervention group-teachers benefited from the further qualification and which did not, as well as whether and if so how the two groups (profiteers vs. non-profiteers) differ from each other. The grouping of the 68 teachers in the intervention group is based on the difference values of the CLASS results on the Instructional Support domain in free play: 47.1% of the teachers have improved whereas 52.9% have not. In a second step, demographic data of the teachers as well as self-reports on pedagogical orientation and health- and motivation-related scales were included in the analyses. The results show a significant group difference with regard to the age of the teachers as well as their pedagogical orientation after the further qualification. These results are discussed against the background of current literature and with regard to the following (explorative) analyses.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C2 - Paper session

Chair: Eva Pölzl-Stefanec

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Motor skill learning across toddlers with varied language proficiency

Presenting author(s): Esther Adi-Japha, Bar-Ilan University

Co-author(s): Mona Sharon Julius, Levinsky College of Education; Shari DeVeney, University of Nebraska

Abstract: Purpose: The aim of the present study was threefold: To determine if motor skill proficiency was delayed and to describe differences in procedural motor learning between toddlers with and without early expressive language delay; To identify universality in procedural motor skill learning behaviors across cultural-linguistic diverse backgrounds. Method: The study involved 54 children (24- to 36-months of age), 23 of whom were identified as having an expressive language delay. Further, 16 participants were American English-only speaking and 38 were Israeli Hebrew-only speaking. After motor and language skills were assessed using a variety of measures, each child and participating parent were introduced to a non-symmetrical-shape insertion task so that procedural motor learning skills could be observed. This block insertion task was observed for each child at three time-points and included a transferability task (same task, new non-symmetrical shape). Results: Results indicated that children with early expressive language delay were statistically significantly more likely to also exhibit fine motor deficits than peers without language delay, regardless of primary language/country of origin. Further, participants with language delay demonstrated a significant difference in transfer task completion compared with peers. Finally, although participants in the U.S. sample depicted lower fine motor skills, higher shape insertion error rates, and slower insertion times, skill learning was universal across the cultural-linguistic backgrounds. Conclusions: Differences in motor skill proficiency were universally associated with language delay status, indicating support for the notion that language acquisition deficits may extend beyond the linguistic system.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C2 - Paper session

Chair: Eva Pölzl-Stefanec

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.172

Title: What is participation and how do children with disabilities participate in ECEC?
A systematic review

Presenting author(s): Janina Dott, Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

Co-author(s): Ulla Licandro, Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

Abstract: Inclusion in early childhood education and care (ECEC) follows the goal of equal participation for all children. As a consequence, more and more studies aim to analyze the participation of children with disabilities. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) defines participation as “involvement in a life situation” (WHO, 2001, p. 10), but how the construct is understood varies a lot. Therefore, a systematic review was conducted to answer the question on how studies define and operationalize participation in inclusive ECEC and what the major findings of these studies are. A search of peer-reviewed articles in scientific databases and journals relevant to the field led to 24 eligible studies being identified. They were analyzed using a narrative synthesis approach. Overall, participation seems to be a fuzzy construct with no universal definition and operationalization. The studies often referred to different theoretical frameworks, but there were similarities: Involvement and engagement were the most used constructs for operationalizing participation and they were often used synonymously. Especially engagement seems to represent a key outcome when studying participation in inclusive ECEC. The findings of the included studies suggest that children with disabilities show lower levels of participation in daily ECEC than peers without disabilities, influenced by different personal and environmental factors. It becomes apparent that interactions with peers and adults seem to play a major role. Nevertheless, there are mixed findings and the specific factors leading to successful participation have to be studied in more detail.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C2 - Paper session

Chair: Eva Pölzl-Stefanec

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Specialist teachers and their role in creating an inclusive preschool environment

Presenting author(s): Magdalena Boczkowska, Anna Błaszczak, Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych

Co-author(s): Beata Papuda-Dolińska, Katarzyna Wiejak, Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych

Abstract: The paper aims to present the research findings conducted in the "Accessible School for All" UNICEF project, where specialist teachers are being prepared for the role of accessibility learning advisors. The main objective of the project is to enhance the competencies of specialist teachers (educators, psychologists, special education teachers, speech therapists) in providing adequate support tailored to the needs of all target groups (children/students, parents, teachers). Approximately 200 teachers from 60 preschools underwent pre-test measurements before engaging in the project activities, focusing on variables such as knowledge of inclusive education, inclusion practices, creativity of specialist teachers, professional role identification, opinions, attitudes, and concerns regarding inclusive education, opportunities for applying the principles of accessible education, and self-efficacy. Questionnaire methods were used in the study. The research results have been collected and are undergoing analysis. The research model includes comparing pre-test and post-test results while controlling for the influence of factors related to participation in project activities (training, consultations, supervision). The research results will reveal relationships between the variables under investigation. Additionally, moderating factors such as years of experience, age, number of students with migration experience in the institution, and number of students with special needs in the institution will be taken into account.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C3 - Symposium

Discussant: Jan Lenhart

Chair: Jan Lenhart

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Fostering children's social-cognitive and emotional competences

Children's social-cognitive and emotional competences include their ability to represent others' mental states (theory of mind), to recognize the affective state of others (emotion recognition), and to mirror others' affective states (empathy) (Happé et al., 2017). These competences contribute to children's future academic and economic success, mental health, interpersonal relationships, and quality of life (e.g., Depow et al., 2021; Ewing et al., 2016; Lecce et al., 2017). As early childhood is a meaningful period for the socialization of social-cognitive and emotional competences (e.g., Denham, 2007; Wellman & Liu, 2004) and a number of children do not reach adequate competence levels (Wiedebusch & Petermann, 2011), different intervention approaches have been developed for fostering these competences. In the present symposium three intervention approaches for doing so are presented. The first contribution examines whether a story intervention featuring stories that address characters' desires, (false) beliefs, and emotions can improve children's understanding of others (i.e., theory of mind) and whether talking about the mental themes increases gains. The second contribution presents a training of pre-service preschool teachers in conducting conversations that promote empathy and examines its effect on children's empathy development. Finally, the third contribution introduces the acceptance of a narratively structured, interactive learning app and its effects on children's social-cognitive and emotional competences.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C3 - Symposium

Discussant: Jan Lenhart

Chair: Jan Lenhart

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 1: Effects of a story intervention on preschoolers' theory of mind

Presenting author(s): Jan Lenhart, University of Bamberg

Co-author(s): Anja Leppert, Marlene Maechler, University of Bamberg

Abstract: Stories are widely used in early childhood to foster a broad range of skills, including language, social-cognitive and emotional competencies. In the present study, we examined whether a story intervention featuring stories that address characters' desires, (false) beliefs, and emotions can improve children's understanding of others (i.e., theory of mind). We also examined whether talking about the mental themes increased gains. To do so, we conducted an experiment in a small-group setting, in which 79 preschool children (mean age: 5 years and 4 months) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. In the first condition, children listened to two stories and discussed mental themes that were contained in the stories. In the second condition, the same two stories were presented, but story topics unrelated to mental themes were discussed. In third condition, two non-fictional books were read and their content discussed. In the pre- and posttest, a set of different theory-of-mind tasks, assessing diverse desires, false beliefs, and appearance-reality differences, were conducted. In the posttest, children's behavior in a modified disappointing-gift task was observed. We found children's performance in the theory-of-mind tasks increased significantly in both story conditions, whereas there was no increase in the non-fiction condition. There was no significant difference between the two story conditions. The intervention had no effect on children's behavior in the disappointing-gift task. The findings indicate that a short intervention using stories with mental themes can indeed foster children's understanding of others, but this does not necessarily transfer to children's behavior.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C3 - Symposium

Discussant: Jan Lenhart

Chair: Jan Lenhart

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 2: A shared book-reading intervention program to promote preschoolers' empathy

Presenting author(s): Rotem Schapira, Levinsky College of Education and Tel Aviv University

Abstract: The study explored the contribution to children's empathy of an intervention relying on emotion discourse surrounding shared book reading (SBR). This study is innovative by focusing on pre-service teachers nearing the end of their studies, as well as concentrating on the emotional discourse between the pre-service preschool teacher and small groups during repeated SBR with narrative and didactic books. Participants included 20 female pre-service preschool teachers and 77 preschoolers ($M=54.95$ months, $SD=23.19$); there were 34 males and 43 females. The pre-service preschool teachers learned and practiced conducting conversations that promote empathy. Each pre-service teacher randomly selected an intervention and control group of four children each. The intervention group included six meetings with SBR and discourse surrounding two books, while the control group had six meetings of book reading without discourse. Before and after the SBR meetings, the teachers evaluated the children's empathy and expressive vocabulary, which served as a control variable. Results indicated a significant overall improvement in empathic ability for both groups, with a notable gender difference. Males initially exhibited lower empathy than females but made significant progress after the intervention. The results suggest that interventions targeting pre-service teachers' understanding of emotion discourse can positively impact children's empathic abilities, with implications for both teacher training and ongoing professional practice in early childhood education. Continued research is needed to further explore the effectiveness of such interventions and their long-term effects on children's empathy development.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C3 - Symposium

Discussant: Jan Lenhart

Chair: Jan Lenhart

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 3: Fostering preschool children's socio-emotional competencies with an interactive learning app

Presenting author(s): Astrid Wirth, University of Vienna

Co-author(s): Nico Nußer, Mobile Software AG Germany; Efsun Birtwistle, University of Nottingham; Anna Mues, Frank Niklas, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität; Birgit Landman, University of Vienna

Abstract: Learning apps for preschoolers are now widespread and can positively impact on children's competency development (Herodotou, 2018). However, in the realm of social-cognitive and emotional learning, the data is currently limited (Wu & Kim, 2019). In our study, we investigated the acceptance and effects of a narratively structured learning app on children's social-cognitive and emotional competencies, such as emotional knowledge, emotion recognition and prosocial skills. As part of a pilot study with $N = 11$ Viennese children (55% female) in the final year of kindergarten, the acceptance of the app was examined. The children had an average age of $M = 5$ years, 11 months ($SD = 3.55$), with 72% speaking a language other than German at home. The children played a sequence of the app for 5 minutes each followed by a short interview. The majority of children rated the app as "very good" on a smiley scale of 1 to 5 ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 0.39$), and expressed a desire to continue playing ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.77$). In an interventional study design, the app will be used with a larger sample of children in Germany and Austria. We anticipate that the app's use of exercises in perspective-taking, emotion recognition, and empathy-enhancing narratives can promote the social-cognitive and emotional competencies of children. The results of the interventional study are available at the time of the presentation and will be discussed together with the pilot study findings.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C4 - Symposium

Discussant: Giulia Gabriella Pastori

Chair: Paul Leseman

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Curriculum and pedagogy in center-based care for under threes

While the past decades have seen a rise in cross-disciplinary research into infant development and learning, this research has hardly reached quality frameworks and curriculum guidelines for professional childcare for the youngest (Dalli & White, 2017). According to this research, also infants and young toddlers should be recognized as agentive social beings, with a drive to explore the physical and social environment, and to learn. Yet, there is reluctance to define and implement age-appropriate educational curricula for the youngest based on these insights. In most countries specific curriculum guidelines for under threes are lacking. In some countries, curriculum guidelines are formulated for the entire age range from 0 to 6 but these are mostly considered developmentally inappropriate for the youngest. In some countries, such as Sweden, national curriculum guidelines specifically address educational quality for under threes, but educators report to struggle with the implementation (e.g., Franzén, 2015). Lack of domain-specific pedagogical content knowledge on the development and learning of infants and young toddlers is an explanation. As a consequence, the predominant orientation in childcare for the youngest remains to provide bodily care and emotional support, while educational support remains underemphasized (McDowall Clark & Baylis, 2015). This symposium aims to address this lacuna. Studies from Portugal and The Netherlands report on the importance of motor development, object-space exploration and well-timed language input, relate facilitation of exploration to children's emotional wellbeing, and discuss the need for enhancing domain-specific pedagogical content knowledge among educators.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C4 - Symposium

Discussant: Giulia Gabriella Pastori

Chair: Paul Leseman

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.152

Paper 1: Wellbeing and engagement in center-based care for infants: importance of motor exploration

Presenting author(s): Merel Bredeveld, Utrecht University

Co-author(s): Pauline Slot, Paul Leseman, Utrecht University

Abstract: Aims. The importance of motor development in infancy is confirmed by a large body of research, showing that the successive stages of motor development enable children at each stage to interact differently with the physical environment and to acquire new knowledge through exploration. Facilitating infant exploration could improve the educational quality of early daycare and raise outcomes in the cognitive domain, yet could harm emotional quality. A key question, thus, is how exploration is related to the emotional wellbeing and engagement of infants in center-based daycare.

Method. Sixty-two childcare centers participated with one group per center. In each group, during four episodes, infants were observed on wellbeing and engagement. Following Laevers, wellbeing was defined as the expression of enjoyment, autonomy, relaxation, openness and self-confidence. Engagement was defined as the expression of high concentration, perseverance and drive to explore. Type of activity was coded based on the dominant activity during episodes. Global quality was assessed with the CLASS Infant and ITERS-R.

Results & Discussion. Fine- and gross-motor exploration was observed during 35% of the episodes. Wellbeing and engagement were highest for fine-motor exploration in designated areas within age-homogenous and lowest for non-exploratory activities within age-heterogenous groups (significant main and interaction-effects). Global quality was unrelated to the outcome measures. Domain-specific process and environmental quality, however, was. Facilitating exploration, while withholding activities that do not yet match infants' competences, fosters wellbeing and engagement, but may require age-homogenous grouping.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C4 - Symposium

Discussant: Giulia Gabriella Pastori

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.152

Paper 2: Educators' knowledge of infants' motor development and exploratory play in infant daycare

Presenting author(s): Mariska Venema, Utrecht University

Abstract: Aims. Early language learning depends on two key mechanisms: engaged object-space exploration by the young child and well-timed input of verbal labels and descriptions by the adult caregiver that match the child's exploration behavior. This, so-called, Exploration Embodied Attention (EEA) model has been thoroughly tested in the lab, but applications in childcare for infants are rare. This ongoing study examines the effects of a professional development program, using Lesson Study to support educators in applying pedagogical content knowledge of EEA when designing, providing and guiding exploration activities in infant daycare. Results of the pre-intervention measurements will be shared.

Method. We developed a pedagogical content knowledge questionnaire (with 28 situational judgment items), measuring (student) educators' understanding of infants' exploration behavior and recognition of well-matching, well-timed language input. The questionnaire was pilot-tested among 150 student-educators at two ISCED levels. After adaptation, the questionnaire was administered to 14 educators in 4 infant daycare centers, where also global process quality (CLASS Infant), domain-specific facilitation of exploration, and infant wellbeing were assessed.

Results & Discussion. The studies among (student) educators revealed satisfactory psychometric properties of the questionnaire and confirmed the expected differentiation between ISCED levels and work experience. The final paper will report the relationships between educators' pedagogical content knowledge, the global and domain-specific quality of the centers, and infants' emotional wellbeing. Findings will be discussed within the overall debate on developmentally appropriate curriculum frameworks for 0-3.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session C

Session C4 - Symposium

Discussant: Giulia Gabriella Pastori

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.152

Paper 3: Educators' beliefs and educator-child interaction quality in Portuguese infant-toddler classrooms

Presenting author(s): Joana Cadima, University of Porto

Abstract: Aims. It is increasingly acknowledged that the first three years of life are foundational for child development and that sensitive and stimulating teacher-child interactions are crucial for young children's positive development (Norris & Horm, 2015). Scholars suggested that high-quality interactions require contextualized decision-making and an in-depth knowledge of specific developmental characteristics (Loizou & Recchia, 2018; Shin & Partyka, 2017). However, teachers' perspectives on developmentally appropriate practices for infants and toddlers remain poorly understood. Therefore, this study examines educators' ideas on child development and developmentally appropriate practices and their potential links to observed interaction quality in Portuguese infant and toddler classrooms.

Method. Participants were part of a broader intervention project focused on teachers' professional development. This study uses data from the pre-test. Participants were 49 educators working in infant and toddler classrooms. Classrooms were observed by trained observers using the CLASS (CLASS-Infant, CLASS-Toddler). Educators reported on their beliefs using the Views on Infant/Toddler Development and Care scales (CUPID, 2018).

Results & Discussion. Findings showed that participants adopted a child-centered learning approach and agreed on the importance of close relationships. They also recognized their power to influence child development. In regard to interaction quality, both infant and toddler classrooms were characterized by moderate levels of emotional support, but fewer opportunities to support their learning and development. Findings will be discussed in terms of how educators' ideas are connected to fostering responsive, stimulating interactions as part of high-quality experiences in ECEC.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Keynote

Professor Heidi Lesscher
Utrecht University

Time: 11:30-12:30

Location: 0.410

Title: Healthy play better coping: An interdisciplinary perspective on play

Abstract: Play is considered essential for the healthy social, emotional and cognitive development of individuals. A lot of our current knowledge about the impact of play on the development of brain and behaviour stems from play research in rats. We know that rats that were isolated during the stage of their lives in which they play most, essentially depriving them of social play behaviour, develop reduced and dysfunctional social behaviour, enhanced anxiety-like behaviour and impaired cognitive control. Our recent studies on social play in rats have shown for example that individual variations in social play in rats predict the resilience to loss of control over substance use. Moreover, I will show data for rats that were allowed to play in a more risky environment, which resulted in greater cognitive control and corresponding long-lasting changes in the functioning of the prefrontal cortex. In my lecture I will also discuss how these findings translate to humans and what the implications are of restrictions in play, for example for children that suffer from a chronic disease.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D1 - Paper session

Chair: Anne-Elina Salo

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Valuing playful teaching for game-technology-supported affect-focused mathematics teaching

Presenting author(s): Mei-Shiu Chiu, National Chengchi University

Co-author(s): Wee Tiong Seah, The University of Melbourne; Hsin-Min Chen, I-Ping Wan, National Chengchi University

Abstract: Game technology has become widely utilized in educational settings to enhance student learning in both cognitive and affective approaches. However, relying solely on game technology is insufficient to engage students optimally, and incorporating playful teaching is rather essential. This study compares two teachers' approaches to valuing pedagogy (VP) in implementing an affect-focused mathematics teaching design with technological support. Valuing pedagogy involves employing teaching methods aligned with educational values, operationally characterized by perceived, implemented, and received curricula. The study collected data, including interviews, teaching videos, and classwork, to understand the content of the teachers' three curricula. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, three distinct teacher roles for VP (VP's ABC) were identified: Affective human players, Behavioural socializing facilitators, and Cognitive knowledge guides. Additionally, such an analysis identified two distinct valuing pedagogies. Incorporating playful teaching combines VP's ABC with teachers' perception of students as natural learners, supported by playful emotions and intensive social interactions to facilitate cognitive knowledge. Valuing game technology focuses on making students tech-savvy and emphasizes VP's BC, with students becoming testers for technology. The VP of playful teaching creates a positive class atmosphere, while that of game technology generates a neutral one. The findings suggest that a subtle infusion of playful emotions into game technology may be crucial for creating a positive learning environment in mathematics education.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D1 - Paper session

Chair: Anne-Elina Salo

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Ordering skills in young children and associations with math abilities

Presenting author(s): David Munez, National Institute of Education / Nanyang Technological University

Abstract: Recent years have witnessed an increase in research on how numeral ordering skills relate to children's mathematics achievement (a quick search on ERIC-EBSCO yielded over 400 contributions during the last five years—which is equivalent to the number of results from 2000 to 2018). The ability to discriminate whether a string of three Arabic numbers (e.g., [3-5-8]) is in order has emerged as a robust predictor of arithmetic and math achievement in both children and adults. The current study investigates numeral ordering skills in preschool children and the association with different mathematical skills. Specifically, the study focuses on whether numeral ordering skills are domain-specific skills and the explanatory role of these skills in young children. One hundred 5-year-olds were presented with order discrimination tasks involving numbers, letters, and months of the year. Children's symbolic comparison skills, number line estimation skills, and math problem solving abilities were also assessed. Findings revealed that numeral ordering skills are domain-specific skills. Furthermore, the contribution of numeral ordering skills to math problem solving was independent of that of other basic numerical skills such as symbolic comparison skills. In line with studies with older children, findings provide evidence of the role of numeral ordering skills as sensitive and specific predictors of mathematical achievement.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D1 - Paper session

Chair: Anne-Elina Salo

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Preschool teachers' language scaffolding in early science education in heterogeneous groups

Presenting author(s): Ada Haen, University of Hamburg

Co-author(s): Ilonca Hardy, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt; Henrik Saalbach, University of Leipzig; Miriam Leuchter, RPTU Landau; Mirjam Steffensky, University of Hamburg

Abstract: Several studies indicate that preschool teachers' use of language scaffolding during learning activities, such as their questioning, supports both the vocabulary and domain-specific conceptual knowledge of young children. However, the process of scaffolding children's language is not well understood in early science education, especially in groups of children with varying language skills. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate teachers' language scaffolding, especially their questioning, and to compare the differences in language scaffolding between groups of children with high and low language skills (referred to as high- and low-risk groups). We analysed 64 video-recorded science activities in German preschools with preschool teachers working with groups of 2 to 7 children. A low-inference scoring system for preschool teachers' questions in early science education was used, which differentiated between questions of increasing complexity related to scientific content and potential to stimulate language production. Additionally, the high-inference CLASS Pre-K scoring system was used to assess the dimension of Language Modelling. The results indicate low to mid-range quality in Language Modelling in both groups with high- or low-risk. Further, teachers asked only few questions that are assumed to particularly stimulate children's language production. Teachers in high-risk groups ask significantly more questions overall (including explanation and justification questions). Thus, the results indicate that preschool teachers differentiate their language scaffolding strategies to group heterogeneity. However, the limited use of questions that particularly stimulate children's language production may be concerning, as active verbal participation is crucial for individual learning.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D1 - Paper session

Chair: Anne-Elina Salo

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Playful fraction learning in low- and middle-income countries: A case study from Kosova

Presenting author(s): Kreshnik Begolli, University of California

Co-author(s): Eda Vula, University of Prishtina; Vanessa Bermudez, Siling Guo, University of California; Blerina Tafolli, Njomza Selimi, University of Prishtina; June Ahn, Drew H. Bailey, Katherine Rhodes, Lindsey Richland, Andres Bustamante, University of California

Abstract: Playful learning holds tremendous potential to enhance educational policies and practices (Espinoza et al., 2023), desperately needed in low and middle-income countries, home to 90% of the global child population who are experiencing acute learning poverty (UNESCO, 2023). The need is notably higher in fragile and conflict-affected states (UNESCO, 2023), home to 1 billion people (IMF, 2022). In the fragile and conflict-affected state of Kosova, the current study employs Design Based Implementation Research (DBIR) and Randomized Control Trial (RCT) approaches to build upon two previous, play-based RCTs called KOSOVAR PROJECT NAME (KPN)—a basketball game refashioned to teach fractions and decimals based on the science of learning. In this study, we investigate whether a co-designed KPN intervention delivered across 3-weeks can successfully scale to 3 new schools with 25 teachers and 652, 4th and 5th graders. We report our final model (preregistered at WEBSITE) with a compliant sample, controlling for pretest score, teacher, and grade level. Fourth and fifth graders randomly assigned to the KPN program improved on 13 out of 16 rational number outcomes compared to business as usual, with moderate to large effects. This work is of broad interest to developmental scientists, particularly those working to reduce learning poverty in low- and middle-income contexts as well as scholars engaged with playful learning, early number, and rational number concepts. It highlights a research approach that capitalizes on the community's cultural funds of knowledge to inform intervention design through iterative cycles of DBIR and RCT.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D2 - Paper session

Chair: Wilfried Smidt

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Playfulness and wellbeing in early adolescence

Presenting author(s): Carolina Araya, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Co-author(s): Valeska Grau Cardenas, David Preiss, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Abstract: In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding how playfulness is expressed in adulthood. It has been conceptualised as a personality trait and defined as the ability to experience or (re)frame everyday situations as stimulating, engaging, and/or entertaining. Studies show that playfulness is associated with subjective well-being in adults. However, little research exists on how this relationship is expressed in adolescence. To address this gap, this study investigated the relationship between adolescent playfulness and "experienced well-being", that is, with their perceived psychological problems and strengths. One hundred and forty students from grades 7 and 8 (ages 12 to 14) participated in the study, of which 56% were boys. They completed three self-report scales selected for their robust psychometric properties. The results show three profiles of adolescent playfulness relative to experienced well-being: those who display other-directed playfulness are more disruptive and impulsive, and adolescents expressing whimsical playfulness are associated with more emotional problems. In contrast, those who identify with an intellectual facet of playfulness show more psychological strengths, namely, good relationships with their families, abilities to give and receive affection, and sound perception of their mental functioning. Also, they perceived themselves as competent in school. The findings allow us to better understand playfulness's role in adolescents' psychological well-being. Eventually, they could contribute to developing pedagogical and school counselling strategies that benefit adolescents.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D2 - Paper session

Chair: Wilfried Smidt

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Playfulness, attentional dispositions and creativity: A pilot study in Chilean students

Presenting author(s): David Preiss, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Co-author(s): Valeska Grau Cardenas, Carolina Araya, David Torres Iribarra, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between playfulness, attentional dispositions (mindfulness and mind wandering), and creativity in a sample of middle-school students. Thus, 142 students from two schools in Santiago, Chile, answered Spanish measures of the OLIW playfulness questionnaire, the Daydreaming Frequency Scale, Positive and Negative Mind Wandering scales, and the Child Acceptance and Mindfulness Measure. A smaller set of students took a divergent thinking test, a verbal remote associations test, and a figural remote associations test. The four subscales of the OLIW had positive associations with Positive Mind wandering. The Whimsical subscale was positively associated with the three scales of mind wandering and negatively with mindfulness. We then tested whether the mind wandering and mindfulness scales predicted each one of the OLIW subscales. All models were significant and in all of them, Positive Mind wandering predicted each OLIW subscale, controlling for Negative mind wandering, Frequency of Daydreaming, and Mindfulness. Negative mind wandering also predicted the Whimsical subscale. As regards the relationship between creativity and playfulness, we only found an association between the figural remote associations and the OLIW questionnaire total score. Thus, the pilot produced mixed results. The self-report measures worked well in our sample, and we believe their use can be scaled up in a more sophisticated study. The results suggested that there might be an association between constructive positive mind wandering and playfulness. Unexpectedly, our results showed that playfulness was not systematically related to divergent and convergent creativity. Further research is needed.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D2 - Paper session

Chair: Wilfried Smidt

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Title: The compensatory role of preschool experiences in early achievement gaps

Presenting author(s): Jin Sun, The University of Macau

Co-author(s): Qianjin Guo, University of Pittsburgh

Abstract: Aims: This study examined the status quo of early achievement gaps and the role of children's preschool (indexed as school quality and school SES) and family (indexed as parental involvement at home) learning experiences in early family-SES related achievement gaps in different developmental domains with a sample from Hong Kong. Methods: Their development in the domains of Academic Learning, General Knowledge, Fine Motor, and Gross Motor was assessed individually with the simplified Hong Kong Early Child Development Scale (HKECDS) and the Movement Assessment Battery for Children. Preschool quality was evaluated with the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised Version (ECERS-R) and the primary caregivers reported both mother's and father's involvement in children's learning at home. Results: Hierarchical Linear Modelling indicated the existence of family SES-related early achievement gaps in the domains of Academic Learning, General Knowledge, and Fine Motor. Children from families of low SES were more likely to benefit from high school quality. The differences between children's Family SES and School SES were beneficial for children's performance in Academic Learning and General Knowledge. Parental involvement at home was not found to serve as a protector for children from families of low SES. Discussion: The results provided nuanced evidence on how children's early learning experiences mattered in early achievement gaps in various developmental domains. Efforts to narrow the early achievement gaps are particularly suggested to be executed at the preschool level to enhance preschool quality and the diversity of preschool learning experiences.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Executive functions in atypical language environments: Deaf children of hearing parents

Presenting author(s): Klara Hermes, University of Bamberg

Co-author(s): Sabine Weinert, University of Bamberg

Abstract: Executive functions (EF) play a crucial role in various aspects of development, especially during the preschool years. EF – often conceptualized as inhibition, shifting and updating – increase significantly during early childhood, with language skills playing an important role. Language learning opportunities are often reduced for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children of hearing parents. They have lower mean language skills compared to their typical hearing (TH) peers, which may negatively affect their EF development. Previous research with school-aged samples suggests that DHH children exhibit lower EF compared to TH children. However, there is limited information on the EF development of young DHH preschoolers. This study aims to assess EF and language skills in 32 DHH and 33 TH children at two measurement points over a six-month period (36 to 48 months at t1). EF measures cover inhibition, shifting and updating. Oral language measures cover receptive grammar and productive vocabulary. Nonverbal intelligence is controlled for. Preliminary cross-sectional results show differences in language skills between the two groups, but no significant differences in early EF performance, although EF were descriptively lower in DHH children. In both groups, set shifting was the only EF measure that was significantly associated with language skills. Longitudinal assessment will be completed by the conference and will contribute to the understanding of EF in atypical language environments and whether this impacts early EF development. The results may indicate whether strategies to promote EF should be implemented in early intervention programs for DHH children.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Children's values

Presenting author(s): Agnieszka Dominika Laskowska, University of Bialystok

Abstract: The basis for studying values in children is to refer to Schwartz's theory of values and to adopt a motivational level in defining values. The conducted research aims to determine the values that are important for 6-year-old children. So far, the research has covered 70 six-year-old children attending selected kindergartens and preschool departments in Białystok (the research is currently being continued and expanded to include additional groups of six-year-old children from selected provincial cities in Poland). The research method used is the analysis of work products, with drawing analysis as the tool.

The research adopted the classification of values by Leon Dyczewski, which is an expanded classification of Max Scheler's values. The author identified eight groups of values: hedonistic, vital, material, sociocentric, aesthetic, ethical, cognitive, and religious.

From the analysis of the data collected so far, it can be concluded that the surveyed children most often indicated sociocentric values as important in their lives (81.4%). The next positions were occupied by hedonistic values (17.1%), material values (14.3%), religious values (11.1%), cognitive values (5.7%), vital values (4.3%), and aesthetic values (4.3%).

The objects presented by the children in their drawings, which are important to them, are a valuable source of information allowing for adjusting the process of education and upbringing in such a way that it corresponds to the sphere of the child's closest development.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Analyzing self-regulation's links to preschool behaviors and primary school academic competence

Presenting author(s): Aashna Doshi, University of Bamberg

Co-author(s): Sabine Weinert, University of Bamberg

Abstract: Much of the research investigating school readiness in preschool/early primary school children has either focused on the self-regulatory (SR) facets of executive functions (EF) or effortful control (EC) as predictors to social/behavioural problems and academic competence in the early primary school years. However, studies that bring these constructs together in one investigation are lacking. Hence the present study explores this issue by analysing the associations between both the facets of SR – EF and EC (between ages 3-5) to prosocial behaviour and behavioural problems, namely peer relationship problems, hyperactivity, and conduct problems (at age 5), and children's academic competencies, i.e. mathematics (at age 6), receptive vocabulary and scientific literacy skills (at age 7). Furthermore, many individual (e.g. non-verbal cognitive functioning) and family characteristics (socio-economic status) were included as controls. These associations were analysed using the starting cohort 1 dataset from the German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS-SC1) from ages 3-7 with a sample of 1, 931 children participating at age 7. The results from the regression analysis showed only the SR facets of EC to be associated with prosocial behaviour and problem behaviour. However, the SR facets of inhibitory control, phonological working memory, and EC were mostly found to be significantly associated to mathematics (at age 6), vocabulary and scientific literacy (age 7; p)

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Validating self-assessment measures for quality of center-based childcare: A meta-analysis

Presenting author(s): Simon Hay, Leiden University

Co-author(s): Harriet Vermeer, Anja van der Voort, Harold Nefs, Leiden University; Ruben Fukkink, Universiteit van Amsterdam

Abstract: Aim Self-assessment is often used to assess and improve the quality of childcare. Therefore, a clear view of the reliability and validity of self-assessment procedures is needed. Method Three-level meta-analyses were conducted regarding convergent (1) and predictive validity (2) of self-assessment measures ($k = 25$). The electronic databases PsycINFO, ERIC and Web of Science were searched, and a search was conducted in Google Scholar. We included both published (peer reviewed) and unpublished studies in our sample. We followed the PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021), and we rated the quality of included publications (National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, 2013). Results The meta-analysis regarding convergent validity ($k = 13$, $ES = .45$) revealed a significant association between self-assessment ratings and ratings with validated measures (ERS or CLASS) of ECE quality ($r = .38$). Studies with lower methodological quality (for example studies not reporting sample size justification or attrition) reported somewhat higher correlations. Unpublished publications reported slightly lower correlations regarding convergent validity. The meta-analysis regarding predictive validity of self-assessment ($k = 15$, $ES = .71$) showed a small significant association between self-assessed ECE quality and child outcomes (social or cognitive development) ($r = .09$); there were no significant moderators. Regarding the reliability of self-assessment rating, the internal consistency showed mixed results. Inter-rater reliability was generally high. Discussion The current meta-analyses results complement earlier research (Károly, 2014; Perlman et al., 2016; Ulferts, 2019). Possible explanations for positive association regarding convergent validity could be publication bias, selective reporting of results, and methodological differences.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Diving into preschoolers' coping strategies with emotions: A mixed method study

Presenting author(s): Canan Peker, Middle East Technical University

Co-author(s): Beyza Hamamci, Middle East Technical University

Abstract: Emotion regulation (ER) fosters children's social competence and academic performance (for review; Harrington et al., 2020, Robson et al., 2020). The study's aims are twofold. Firstly, it is to examine the relationship between ER and coping strategies. Secondly, it is to make an in-depth exploration of children's expression of these coping strategies in challenges that they encountered. To reach the aims, a triangulation-design mixed method study (Fraenkel et al., 2011) is employed. The data is collected from the 113 preschoolers (64 boys; $M=66.65$, $SD=15.88$). Quantitative data is collected using Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC; Shields & Cicchetti, 1997; Batum & Yağmurlu, 2007) and Emotion Regulation Strategies Questionnaire (ERSQ; Gölcük, 2020). Meanwhile, to collect qualitative data, researchers handed parents an activity sheet to fill out with children, including an expression of a challenge the children encountered, their feelings, and their coping ways in line with the challenge. Correlational analysis is used to analyze quantitative data. The qualitative data is analyzed by two researchers with a deductive thematic analysis driven by the theoretical base of interest (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is based on ways of coping having eight forms of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies, confrontive coping, distancing, self-controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, planful problem-solving and positive reappraisal (Folkman et al., 1986). The bivariate correlation revealed that there is a relationship between ER and distraction strategy ($r=.206$; p

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Assessing cognitive adaptivity in learning supportive interactions via rating

Presenting author(s): Heike Wadepohl, Leibniz University Hanover

Co-author(s): Theresa Johannsen, Fenja Lampe, Katja Mackowiak, Leibniz University Hanover

Abstract: Everyday integrated, cognitively activating learning support in daycare centers is associated with high demands on the skills of professionals and can (so far) often only be observed rarely or in low quality in practice (summarized Egert et al., 2020; Wadepohl & Bethke, 2023). The adaptivity of interactions is considered a central condition for success (Parsons et al., 2018; for language support in ECEC: Beckerle et al., 2021). However, there is currently a lack of differentiated (theoretical) concepts for the conceptualization of adaptivity and instruments for operationalizing facets of adaptivity (Hardy et al., 2019). Based on this research desideratum, we present the newly developed rating scale "R-adaptive cognition" which assesses cognitive adaptivity in learning-supportive interactions in ECEC settings. The R-adaptive cognitive rating was created deductively on the basis of a literature review; the categories were then sharpened inductively by viewing videos from (potentially) learning-supportive situations. The rating consists of five indicators of cognitive adaptivity: Joint Attention, Shared Intentionality, Cognitively Stimulating Impulses, Prolonged Engagement with a Topic and Flow in Interaction. The indicators are rated on a five-point Likert scale; a five-point overall rating is also carried out. In addition, the observed situations are classified according to various characteristics. A review of the quality criteria (e.g. observer agreement) is still pending, but should be completed up to the conference. The R-adaptive cognition rating procedure is intended to contribute to the (time-efficient and global) operationalization of an adaptivity facet, namely cognitive adaptivity in learning-supportive interactions, and thus close a research gap.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: The association of peer group social climate with young children's mastery motivation and attention

Presenting author(s): Johanna Lieb, University of Konstanz

Co-author(s): Yvonne Reyhing, Thurgau University of Teacher Education; Sonja Perren, University of Konstanz

Abstract: Although children in early childhood education and care (ECEC) are cared for in group-settings, the influence of peer group social climate on children's outcomes has received little attention so far. Instead, previous research has focussed on interactions with educators, showing e.g. that high-quality interactions lead to more beneficial learning behaviours, which again lead to more success at school. Since learning is most effective in social interactions and research in adolescence shows positive associations of peer group social climate with mastery motivation, we expect peer group social climate in ECEC to be associated with individuals' learning behaviours. Other relevant variables at the peer group level might be the age composition and the number of children and adults in the group. We will analyse data from 155 children (54.84 male) aged 9.71 to 79.16 months from 22 ECEC groups in Germany. Educators answered questionnaires about children's mastery motivation, sustained attention skills, positive peer relationships and peer aggression. We calculate a multilevel latent covariate model where peer group social climate is modelled as a latent variable by individuals' scores of positive peer relationships and peer aggression to estimate its contextual effect on individuals' mastery motivation and sustained attention skills. Further predictors are age and gender at both levels, and age range, number of toddlers, all children, and adults at the between level. Data collection is complete, and the analysis will be finished by the time of the conference. Implications for research, educational interventions and policies will be discussed based on the findings.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Caregiver depression and child adjustment in ECECs for Ukrainian refugees

Presenting author(s): Thea Calmer, Utrecht University and The Comenius Foundation for Child Development

Co-author(s): Paul Leseman, Utrecht University

Abstract: Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centers can be beneficial for children's and caregivers' well-being, which is especially relevant as their mental health problems can negatively affect each other. Amid the Ukraine war, this study aimed to assess whether parent-teacher child-rearing agreement at ECECs can moderate the bi-directional relationship between caregiver depression and child adjustment in refugees from Ukraine over time. Data was collected for N = 329 Ukrainian refugee caregivers in ECECs across Poland at the beginning and end of the enrollment to the service. Caregiver depression was measured with a short version of the CES-D while child adjustment and child-rearing agreement were assessed with eight and four statements respectively. Preliminary cross-lagged panel analyses indicated a small, negative, and statistically non-significant relationship between child adjustment at T1 and caregiver depression at T2 ($\beta = -.072$, $p = .186$). In line with expectations, the negative association between caregiver depression at T1 and child adjustment at T2 was significant ($\beta = -.097$, $p = .044$). However, contrary to expectations, there was no significant moderation effect of child-rearing agreement on child adjustment at T1 and caregiver depression at T2 (low agreement: $\beta = -.110$, $p = .125$, high agreement: $\beta = .109$, $p = .194$) nor on caregiver depression at T1 and child adjustment at T2 (low agreement: $\beta = .006$, $p = .930$, high agreement: $\beta = -.136$, $p = .079$). The findings highlight the importance of addressing refugee caregiver mental health in ECEC settings to contribute to children's well-being.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D3 - Poster session

Chair: Olga Wyslowska

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: The SPYNKA project and the psychological well-being of mothers fleeing Ukraine

Presenting author(s): Isa Schoonen, Utrecht University and The Comenius Foundation for Child Development

Co-author(s): Paul Leseman, Utrecht University

Abstract: Since the onset of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, millions of residents, predominantly women and young children, have been displaced, seeking refuge in neighbouring countries such as Poland. Amidst this humanitarian crisis, the Comenius Foundation initiated the SPYNKA project to aid Ukrainian refugee mothers and their children. This paper explores the impact of the SPYNKA project on the psychological well-being of enrolled mothers over time. Drawing on a sample of 907 mothers who enrolled in SPYNKA centres, psychological well-being was assessed using a modified version of the Centre for Epidemiological Studies-Depression (CED-D) questionnaire at enrolment and one year post-enrolment. Through a Repeated Measures ANOVA analysis, changes in depressive symptoms were examined. The findings suggest a decrease in depressive symptoms from 0.82 to 0.76, albeit statistically nonsignificant. While the SPYNKA project appears to contribute positively to the psychological well-being of enrolled mothers, significant improvements were not observed. However, the study acknowledges potential limitations, including the reliance on self-reported depressive symptoms and the complex nature of psychological well-being. Future research should explore factors contributing to the well-being of refugee mothers and identify strategies to enhance the effectiveness of support programs like SPYNKA. Understanding the psychological well-being of refugee mothers is critical for informing interventions and policies aimed at mitigating the long-term impact of displacement and conflict on vulnerable populations. The SPYNKA project serves as a valuable initiative in addressing the multifaceted needs of Ukrainian refugee mothers and underscores the importance of continued research and support in humanitarian crises.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D4 - Symposium

Discussant: Vasilis Grammatikopolous

Chair: Vasilis Grammatikopolous

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Teacher well-being in ECEC: Causes, effects and promising interventions

ECEC systems are currently faced with various challenges in many countries, such as staff shortage and increasing heterogeneity in the needs of families and children. At the same time the expectations towards the educational quality of the institutions are increasing. The Covid pandemic may have aggravated some of these challenges. Emotional exhaustion of early childhood teachers is not only a condition that can subsequently turn into burnout and lead to leaving the profession. Emotional exhaustion is also linked to lower educational quality. Against this background, this symposium brings together four contributions that examine the causes and effects of teacher well-being in ECEC as well as interventions to strengthen it. Based on two Dutch studies, the first paper investigates the relations of contextual challenges and teachers' wellbeing and emotional behavior. It also addresses how ECEC settings respond to these challenges. The second paper analyses the association between leadership, team climate and teachers' emotional exhaustion based on data of N = 1,394 German ECEC teachers. The third paper describes the ProW intervention design which seeks to enhance the teaching profession's appeal, improve teachers' motivation, wellbeing, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and reduce burnout through positive behaviour support in ECEC. In the fourth paper, the effects of an intervention program on ECEC teachers' wellbeing and burnout in Greece and Cyprus are explored. The intervention included training on school wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) and integrated aspects from positive psychology.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D4 - Symposium

Discussant: Vasilis Grammatikopoulos

Chair: Vasilis Grammatikopoulos

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 1: Trends in Dutch ECEC teachers' wellbeing

Presenting author(s): Vaso Tiliopoulou, Utrecht University

Co-author(s): Paul Leseman, Thomas van Huizen, Ekin Yurdakul, Ora Oudgenoeg-Paz, Ryanne Francot, Bodine Romijn, Pauline Slot, Utrecht University

Abstract: Aim: The ECEC sector faces several challenges that may affect teacher wellbeing and emotional behavior in the classroom: increasing staff shortages and increasing numbers of children with special needs. While these contextual trends were already observable, the pandemic seems to have aggravated them. Research questions: (1) are these contextual challenges related to teachers' wellbeing and emotional behavior; (2) how do ECEC organizations respond to these challenges?

Method & Results: This paper reports on two studies in Dutch ECEC centers for 0 to 4-year-olds. Study 1 collected data annually from 2017-2023 among teachers and leaders in representative samples. Teachers (n = 440) reported on their wellbeing (indicators: work stress, feelings of inclusion, autonomy, collegial relationships) and were observed with the CLASS. Leaders reported on the impact of the contextual challenges and informed about the organizational climate, including in-service professional development and leadership. Study 2 collected similar data between 2020-2023 in centers operating in disadvantaged areas (teachers: n = 400). Preliminary analyses show significantly decreasing wellbeing, especially after the pandemic. We address the predictive effects of staff shortages and the proportion of children with special needs, and how organizational climate moderates these effects.

Discussion: In the aftermath of the pandemic, structural problems of the Dutch ECEC system have become manifest. ECEC is increasingly bestowed with tasks beyond regular care and education, affecting teachers' wellbeing and the attractiveness of the sector as work place. This requires a re-orientation of required competences, adaptation of in-service professional development and coordination with other services.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D4 - Symposium

Discussant: Vasilis Grammatikopoulos

Chair: Vasilis Grammatikopoulos

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 2: Preventing emotional exhaustion of early childhood teachers through supportive organizational climate

Presenting author(s): Yvonne Anders, University of Bamberg

Co-author(s): Theresia Gabriele Hummel, Elisa Oppermann, University of Bamberg;
Elisabeth Resa, Freie Universität Berlin

Abstract: Early childhood education and care (ECEC) teachers are especially prone to emotional exhaustion – a core component of job burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Previous findings suggest that the social climate of the work environment is particularly relevant to prevent burnout symptoms (Kwon et al., 2021; Trauernicht et al., accepted) and that the team climate, in turn, highly depends on the managers' leadership practices (Cheng et al., 2016; Nasir et al., 2021). The present study empirically tests the assumed relations between leadership, team climate and teachers' emotional exhaustion based on data of $N = 1,394$ German ECEC teachers and the corresponding $N = 205$ center managers. Results of cross-level mediation analyses showed that center managers' leadership practices were positively related to perceived team climate at the center level ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = .020$), which in turn was negatively associated with teachers' emotional exhaustion at the individual level ($\beta = -0.39$, $p < .001$). These links resulted in a small negative total indirect effect from leadership via team climate to emotional exhaustion ($\beta_{\text{total indirect}} = -0.06$, $p < .026$). These findings are in line with theoretical models of organizational quality and previous studies that emphasize the importance of leadership practices for the social work environment and teachers' wellbeing (e.g., Cheng et al., 2016; Nasir et al., 2021; Trauernicht et al., accepted). Implications are that initiatives to prevent emotional exhaustion among teachers should address the ECEC team as a whole, including the center managers, in order to effectively foster teachers' well-being.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D4 - Symposium

Discussant: Vasilis Grammatikopolous

Chair: Vasilis Grammatikopolous

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 3: Teachers' wellbeing in ECEC: Integrating the PERMA & SWPBS approaches in an intervention program

Presenting author(s): Anastasia Vatou, International Hellenic University

Co-author(s): Maria Evangelou-Tsitiridou, Evridiki Zachopoulou, International Hellenic University

Abstract: This paper describes the ProW intervention design which seeks to enhance the teaching profession's appeal, improve teachers' motivation, wellbeing, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and reduce burnout through Positive Behaviour Support in ECEC. To address the challenge of retaining teachers in the profession, many European countries require policies that support and elevate the teaching profession (OECD, 2019). To achieve this, the ProW project aimed to empower ECEC teachers to effectively manage children's challenging behaviors and advance their careers and well-being. The ProW is based on two theoretical models, PERMA and School-Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention Support (SWPBS) model. The PERMA incorporates five key elements: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, which when integrated into teachers' daily routines, can lead to increased well-being. The SWPBS is a comprehensive, data-driven approach to improving school climate by targeting adult's practices through professional development (Sugai & Horner, 2006). ECEC teachers were trained, coached, and supported on PERMA and SWPBS frameworks to enhance their careers, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and well-being. Teachers also were trained on how to clearly define school-wide social values, explicitly teach children expected positive behaviors and routines, and recognize and provide feedback to children. Implementation of positive education programs can promote teachers' well-being.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session D

Session D4 - Symposium

Discussant: Vasilis Grammatikopolous

Chair: Vasilis Grammatikopolous

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 4: Supporting ECEC teachers' sense of wellbeing through an intervention program in Greece and Cyprus

Presenting author(s): Vasilis Grammatikopoulos, International Hellenic University

Co-author(s): Demos Michael, Charalambos Vrasidas, Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology; Vicky Charalambous, Institute of Development; Anastasia Vatou, International Hellenic University

Abstract: Last years, the educational systems are experiencing a global trend of teachers quitting the profession, which results in shortages of teachers (OECD, 2019). Recently, teacher wellbeing has been considered an important aspect of teaching workforce. To this direction, organizations such as the European Commission and the OECD, recently emphasized the importance of examining, evaluating, and monitoring teacher well-being internationally (European Commission et al., 2021; OECD, 2019). The present paper explores the effect of an intervention program on ECEC teachers' wellbeing and burnout in two countries. Participants were 188 ECE teachers from 53 ECE settings in Greece and Cyprus. Data were obtained using the Teachers' Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire and the Maslach Burnout Inventory before and after an one-year implementation. The intervention included training on School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) and integrated aspects from the Positive Psychology. A series of path analysis were conducted to explore direct or indirect effect of the intervention on the two outcomes. The findings revealed that the intervention program had positive effects on ECE teachers' wellbeing and burnout. Policy and practice implications for sustaining ECEC workforce's wellbeing are discussed.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Effectiveness of a video-based parent-child program on executive functions for preschoolers

Presenting author(s): Eva Yi Hung Lau, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Co-author(s): Xiaoyuan Wu, Alfredo A Bautista, Carrey Tik Sze Siu, The Education University of Hong Kong; Kate Williams, University of Sunshine Coast

Abstract: Promoting children's executive functions (EF) is a crucial objective of early childhood education in fostering school readiness. While EFs in early childhood are considered highly adaptable through intervention, the outcomes vary across different studies. This inconsistency may be attributed to the limitations of existing EF training programs, which often have a narrow focus and repetitive nature, leading to disengagement and reduced motivation among children. To address these limitations, a four-week video-based training program involving parents and children 5-6 years old (The Parent-child Brain Camp [The Camp]) was developed, specifically targeting the three basic components of EF: inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. This study evaluates the effectiveness of this newly developed program through a randomized controlled trial. Participants were 153 Hong Kong children (Intervention group = 77, Mage = 69.39, SD = 5.90; Control group = 76, Mage = 69.18, SD = 6.38). Results from the two-way mixed ANOVA revealed that while the main effect of Group was not significant ($p > .05$), the main effect of Time and the Time X Group interaction effect were significant. Descriptive statistics indicated that the intervention group demonstrated greater improvements in all EF tasks compared to the control group at the post-test. These findings present initial evidence supporting the efficacy of a cost-effective, video-based parent-child intervention in enhancing preschool children's EFs.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Comparing parent-child interaction during wordless book reading, print book reading and play

Presenting author(s): Sandra Mathers, University of Oxford

Co-author(s): Alex Hodgkiss, Pinar Kolancali, Sophie Booton, Victoria Murphy, University of Oxford

Abstract: Objectives: Early language provides a critical foundation for educational and socio-emotional development, with children's skills on entering school underpinning later achievement. Yet many children do not meet expected levels of oral language ability at school entry, with variation in the linguistic input provided by parents a key explanatory factor. While most parent-delivered shared reading interventions have used traditional text-and-picture books, wordless books have recently emerged as an additional means of facilitating high-quality adult-child interactions. The goal of this study was to investigate the linguistic input naturally provided by parents when sharing a wordless book with their preschool child, compared with text-and-picture book reading and a play activity. Methods: Twenty-two parents completed and recorded each activity at home with their child. Parent input was compared across contexts using a within-studies design, focusing on interactive and conceptual domains: use of open prompts, expansions or extensions of children's utterances and use of decontextualised (abstract) language. Findings: Each context elicited qualitatively different language input. Wordless books and play prompted greater overall use of expansions and extensions than print books; but parents used linguistic expansions more often during book reading than play. Wordless books displayed unique benefits over both other contexts in encouraging parents to use open questions and add contingent conceptual information. Use of abstract language also varied by condition. Conclusions: Findings extend our understanding of how activity context shapes child language learning environments, and indicate that including wordless books alongside text-and-picture books in shared reading programmes could enrich the profile of parent-child talk.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Observing object oriented play

Presenting author(s): Elizabeth Wynberg, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Co-author(s): Annerieke Boland, Hogeschool IPABO Amsterdam/Alkmaar; Femke van der Wilt, Chiel van der Veen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Abstract: All children engage in object oriented play in order to discover the world around them. Despite its universality and developmental value, it has rarely been studied in detail. Therefore this observational study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) What behaviours do children engage in during OOP?; (2) What are fundamental characteristics of physical manipulation during OOP?; (3) How do the behaviours children engage in during OOP develop over time? Using a cohort sequential design, a sample of 96 children between 2- and 4-years-old were split into 6 age cohorts. The children were filmed twice while playing with a fixed set of object and materials. Through event sampling, their play actions and included objects were coded as well as the repetitions they engaged in. The preliminary result showed that, while engaging in object oriented play, children explored the sensorimotor affordances of objects, manipulated them based on function or for dances, and also engaged in some mental manipulation. The combinations the children made became more complex with age and so did the repetitions. Additionally, during the physical manipulation phase, two distinct type of behaviours we discernible: organizing objects based on characteristics like colour or size, and utilizing the functionality and possibilities of the objects, both types ranging from simple to complex actions. Moreover, the data confirmed the developmental progression as proposed by the theoretical framework by Authors (2022). These findings offer valuable insights for educators to observe and guide children's object oriented play effectively.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E2 - Paper session

Chair: Kamila Wichrowska

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Loss of preschool stimulation during the COVID-19 pandemic and children's development

Presenting author(s): David Munez, National Institute of Education / Nanyang Technological University

Co-author(s): Josetxu Orrantia, Verónica Carretón Jareña, University of Salamanca

Abstract: There is robust evidence of the positive impact of preschool stimulation on young children's development. This study investigates the long-term effects of the loss of in-person preschool stimulation during the COVID-19 pandemic on the development of a wide range of numeracy and literacy skills as well as domain-general cognitive skills in young children ($n=211$; 96 females; $\text{Mage}=63$ months). Data for the current study were drawn from a large-scale (multi-cohort) longitudinal study exploring the development of academic skills in young children. The long-term effects (differences between pre- and post-COVID cohorts) were estimated at least one year after the beginning of the pandemic. Overall, younger children were more affected by the loss of in-person preschool stimulation. The results revealed a limited impact of such loss on the development of early numeracy skills across the preschool years. Differences between pre- and post-COVID cohorts were only observed in children who experienced this loss during their first year in preschool (3-year-olds). In contrast, the impact on phonological processing was substantial and observed throughout the preschool years (range=.33 to .50 SD). Younger children exhibited a developmental delay equivalent to approximately one year of (pre-COVID) preschool stimulation. Findings are discussed attending to preschool routines that are aimed at stimulating different skills.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E2 - Paper session

Chair: Kamila Wichrowska

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Practitioners' perceptions of their roles in relationships with parents and children

Presenting author(s): Krystyna Heland-Kurzak, The Maria Grzegorzewska University

Abstract: This presentation delves into the nuanced strategies employed by practitioners in nursery, exploring their relational dynamics with children, colleagues, management, and parents. The study, encompassing 20 caregivers in Warsaw daycare centers through in-depth interviews, utilizes Collins' framework of explicit and implicit knowledge. In pedagogy, these concepts are most often used to refer to negative hidden assumptions and educational programs or silent discipline (Emilson, 2018). The practitioners were observed to be open and friendly when discussing relationships with children, colleagues at work, and the nursery manager/director. However, when it came to discussing relationships with parents, their tone was negative or even avoidant. Data analysis, conducted with MAXQDA 2022 software, reveals distinct strategies applied towards management perceived as trustworthy versus unpredictable. Practitioners emphasize open communication with colleagues and children, employing directness and sincerity. Notably, the "sandwich method" is employed in interactions with parents. The findings highlight the prevalence of informal strategies in caregiver-parent relationships, where hidden relational knowledge, though seeking expression, tends to manifest unilaterally in parental expectations. It was observed that the greatest intensity of informal strategies occurs in the relationship between the practitioner and the parent. In the statements of the surveyed people, it was noted that even if relational tacit knowledge tries to come to light, it occurs essentially one-sidedly in the form of requirements for parents to meet the expectations of the nursery.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E2 - Paper session

Chair: Kamila Wichrowska

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Perspectives on supporting remote education of early primary students

Presenting author(s): Paulina Marchlik, University of Warsaw

Co-author(s): Ewelina Zubala, Kamila Wichrowska, University of Warsaw

Abstract: This paper presents selected results of a qualitative study conducted in Poland at the beginning of 2021, before the third round of distance education. The study was prepared to gain insight into the functioning of youngest pupils in a distance learning environment caused by COVID-19, reasoning that children in the first educational stage (primary school grades 1–3) constitute a specific group of students who have faced considerable difficulties in remote learning. The research can be described as exploratory and descriptive. The study consists of semi-structured interviews with 20 ECE and English teachers working with early primary school pupils and 20 parents of the youngest students of public primary schools from the Masovian Voivodeship. Through multivariate analysis of the data, we gained insights into various aspects, including the tools and organisation of learning during remote education, the methods used, delivery of personal and social education, and cooperation with parents. The findings emphasise the importance of adapting to new conditions and addressing the socioemotional needs of pupils during the pandemic. Personal and social education was conducted focusing on prevention and intervention. Respondents pointed to the value of including elements of play in the working methodology, which kept children engaged. With the emergency remote education, students, their parents and teachers had to find their way around the new reality quickly. Good practices of distance education were developed by teachers, who were required to find ways tailored to the limited skills of the youngest students.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E3 - Paper session

Chair: Roman Sokulski

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Parental assessment of children's socio-emotional and language competences

Presenting author(s): Anna Ratka-Pauler, Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories

Co-author(s): Jan Lenhart, University of Bamberg

Abstract: Parents play a crucial role in their children's development by providing a stimulating environment for learning and interpersonal experiences. An essential aspect for doing so is the parents' ability to accurately assess their children's competences. This study aimed to examine parents' ability to discern their children's language and socio-emotional competences in kindergarten. In particular, the associations between children's competences in one domain and parents' assessment of their competences in the other domain were examined. Additionally, the study analyzed the impact of various structural factors, such as income and siblings, as well as characteristics of the children and parents, including gender age and level of education, on parental assessment of competences. To do so, the study used data (N=1490) from starting cohort 1 of the National Educational Panel Study (NEPS). Initial findings indicate that children's competences predicted parental assessment of socio-emotional ($\beta = -.08$) and language ($\beta = .36$) competences. An impact of the respective other competence domain on parents' judgments was not found. While children's gender did not predict parental assessments, parents' gender had an impact on the assessments. Controlling for actual competences, fathers rated their children's socio-emotional competence more positively ($\beta = .71$) and their language competence more negatively ($\beta = -.31$) than mothers. Parental education positively predicted parents' judgments of social-emotional ($\beta = .13$) and language ($\beta = .15$) competences. Neither migration background nor income predicted the parental assessment of competences. Additionally, to the reported main effects we tested if joint home-learning activities and siblings living in the household increase the association between parents' judgments and their children's competences.

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Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E3 - Paper session

Chair: Roman Sokulski

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.152

Title: "Add Strength" mental health support for refugees – from needs assessment to outcome evaluation

Presenting author(s): Katarzyna Okulicz-Kozaryn, Institute of Mother and Child

Co-author(s): Anna Dzielska, Institute of Mother and Child

Abstract: Background: The war limits children's ability to play, and therefore affects their proper development. Their parents, who feel guilty themselves if they experience even the slightest pleasure, are unable to help them. The "Add Strength" program aimed to improve the well-being of Ukrainian parents and develop their skills to support children in a situation of escaping from the war. Method: (a) The psychological needs of Ukrainian parents were assessed via focus group interviews (n=23) informing the development of the program of 10 x 2-hours workshop sessions; (b) The monitoring of the program implementation was based on the Ukrainian trainers (war refugees themselves) reports; (c) The outcome evaluation used pre- and post- data from participating parents (n=532) and their qualitative feedback. Results: Statistically significant positive changes in subjective assessment of health and well-being (WHO-5); increase use of positive and decrease use of negative coping strategies (MINI-COPE); resilience (CD-RISK); post-traumatic growth (PTGI) in terms of relating to others, acknowledging new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change and appreciation of life; increase in positive parenting practices (acceptance and autonomy) and decrease in excessively demanding, excessively protective, inconsistent attitudes toward a child (Parental Attitudes Questionnaire) were observed (p

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Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E3 - Paper session

Chair: Roman Sokulski

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Quality of family interactions at primary school age - dimensions, stability and influencing factors

Presenting author(s): Sabine Blaurock, University of Bamberg

Co-author(s): Simone Lehl, University of Education Weingarten

Abstract: The quality of interactions between parents and children of primary school age has barely been researched, especially when it comes to interactions that take place outside of specific homework situations, such as in play situations. In order to understand the mechanisms of family interaction quality at primary school age, the underlying dimensions of family interactions (1), their continuity and change over time (2) and, finally, significant influencing factors (3) need to be analysed. Data were drawn from the German DFG-funded BiKS 3–10 longitudinal study with a sample size of 407 families at t1. The analyses are based on parent surveys and a self-developed observation scale, the "Family Assessment Scale", which was measured annually over four primary school years. The results show two confirmatory tested and time-invariant dimensions: "Coconstructive Interaction Quality" (CoQua) and "Responsive Interaction Quality" (ReQua) (1). The latent mean values of the two dimensions are at a good and similar level at t1. The moderate to high latent correlations between the t1 and the change values demonstrate a high stability of individual differences over time (2). The regression analyses show that the CoQua at t1 is positively predicted by the child's vocabulary, as well as the literacy stimulation and the supportive climate in the family at preschool age. The ReQua at t1 is explained by the family's literacy stimulation at preschool age. The results are discussed in the light of the long-term potential of family education programmes, such as the teaching of Dialogic Reading techniques, in early childhood.

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Session E

Session E3 - Paper session

Chair: Roman Sokulski

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Interaction quality in the home science environment: Associations with children's science learning

Presenting author(s): Henning Dominke, University of Hamburg

Co-author(s): Julia Barenthien, Mirjam Steffensky, University of Hamburg; Lars Burghardt, University of Bamberg; Elisa Oppermann, Leipzig University

Abstract: From early on, the family plays a crucial role in fostering their children's science development, particularly through joint interactions in the Home Science Environment (HSE). However, limited understanding exists regarding the quality of interactions between parents and children exploring science together, how interaction quality relates to children's science learning, and how distal factors, such as parents' science interest and family socioeconomic status (SES), interplay with interaction quality. In the context of shared science book reading, this study aims to investigate relationships between interaction quality, children's science learning (i.e., science knowledge, science engagement), and distal factors. Using a high-inference approach, this study explores generic and domain-specific dimensions of interaction quality between 61 parent-child dyads in the HSE. Whereas parents provided high-motivationally support, instructional and science-specific support were rather low, with high variance across families. Instructional and science-specific support were associated with children's science knowledge and engagement, but not their motivational support. Similarly, parents' science interest and family SES were positively associated with their instructional and science-specific support. However, no significant associations were found with parents' motivational support. Our results reveal initial insights how parents support their children in the HSE and how interaction quality relates to children's science learning. Further, we add to the limited evidence that distal factors such as parents' science interest and family SES influence the interaction quality within the HSE. We suggest that future studies could investigate parent-child interactions extending beyond the HSE to better understand the important role of the family for the children's science learning.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E4 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Magdalena Molina Ramirez

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Investigating a framework for quality ECEC in diverse systems

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings are a central learning environment for children, in which they acquire and develop competencies and skills. Numerous studies found effects of high quality processes on academic outcomes such as literacy, mathematics, socio-emotional skills (e.g. Vandell et al., 2016). The ERiK ("Development of Frameworks in ECEC") project observes the preconditions and frameworks of the German ECEC system using selected indicators that reflect its quality as part of the KiQuTG (Act on Good ECEC) monitoring. The multi-perspective and multi-level approach of the monitoring maps and integrates the views of several stakeholders in the German ECEC system at the various governance levels (macro, meso and micro level) and is conceptually based on the Structure-Orientation-Process-Model (Anders & Oppermann, 2024) and the Context-Input-Process-Impact-Model (Stufflebeam, 1969).

This symposium discusses three contributions within the newly developed multi-level and multi-perspective approach of ECEC quality: Paper 1 explores the factors influencing the satisfaction of family day-care workers with the expert advisory services provided by youth welfare offices. Paper 2 investigates the significance of workplace culture and awareness of COVID-19 regulations as an expression of leadership for process quality in ECEC. Paper 3 analyses the extent to which structural characteristics, pedagogical beliefs and processes affect children's well-being in day-care centers.

The symposium brings together different aspects of quality in the ECEC system, highlighting the importance of governance and leadership in creating necessary preconditions for childrens' well-being. The theoretical and political implications will be discussed with an expert in the field.

Conference program

Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E4 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Magdalena Molina Ramirez

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 1: Exploring the role of expert advisors in German family day-care services

Presenting author(s): Nadira Tursun, German Youth Institute

Co-author(s): Melina Preuß, Lisa Ulrich, German Youth Institute

Abstract: In the German early childhood education and care (ECEC) system, family day-care plays a pivotal role in ensuring the legal entitlement to childcare for children under the age of three. Expert advisors are essential for the local support structure, as they play a decisive role in fostering and ensuring quality in family day-care (Schoyerer & Wiesinger, 2017). Nevertheless, the impact of expert advisors on professional practice remains unclear. Moreover, the task profile and professional identity of expert advisors are still difficult to define (Heitkötter et al., 2012).

This study aimed to explore the role of expert advisors for family day-care workers (FDCWs) by investigating factors influencing the satisfaction of FDCWs with the provided expert advisory services. Based on the 2022 ERiK surveys, subjective perspectives of FDCWs and contextual factors within each youth welfare office districts were taken into account.

The findings suggested that regular and intensive contact with expert advisory services, along with a positive collaboration with youth welfare office personnel, positively affected the satisfaction levels of family day-care workers. However, more research including the perspectives of expert advisors is needed to get a better idea of the ways expert advisors can impact both practice and satisfaction among FDCWs.

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Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E4 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Magdalena Molina Ramirez

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 2: Workplace culture and awareness of COVID-19 regulations as an expression of leadership

Presenting author(s): Janette Buchmann, German Youth Institute

Co-author(s): Theresia Pachner, Johanna Romefort, German Youth Institute

Abstract: 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, which in turn impacts child development (Anders & Oppermann, 2024). However, empirical evidence for this assumption is scarce.

This study investigated such indirect influences of ECEC leadership in an especially challenging time, the COVID-19 pandemic. Of particular interest was whether workplace culture and awareness of COVID-19 regulations within day-care centers – as an expression of leadership – influenced the extent to which (a) childrens' needs could be met and (b) educational tasks could be fulfilled.

Cross-sectional large-scale data of leaders and pedagogical staff in German day-care centers from the ERIK-Surveys 2020 was used to conduct hierarchical regression models. The results indicated that workplace culture and awareness of COVID-19 regulations within day-care centers was significant for the extent to which (a) childrens' needs could be met and (b) educational tasks could be fulfilled. In conclusion, the empirical results demonstrated the importance of leaders in creating working conditions that promote childrens' education and well-being and highlight the need for further political measures to strengthen ECEC leaders.

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Session E

Session E4 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Magdalena Molina Ramirez

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 3: Predictors of children's well-being in ECEC settings – let's ask children

Presenting author(s): Magdalena Molina Ramirez, German Youth Institute

Co-author(s): Lisa Leßner, Theresia Pachner, Sina Fackler, Susanne Kuger, German Youth Institute

Abstract: The well-being of children is an important indicator for the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC), but has only been researched scarcely so far (Laevers & Declercq, 2018). In this regard, the perspective of children as main recipients of day-care center services is highly relevant when researching quality in the ECEC system. This study ... examined the following research question: What factors are associated with children's well-being in day-care centers?

The data is based on the standardized children's survey conducted as part of the ERiK study in 2022. Children aged 4 to 7 from day-care centers in Germany were surveyed using a specially developed, child-friendly, playful standardized survey instrument. The final sample included $n=479$ children. Additionally, interviewers, parents and the ECEC institutions were interviewed.

Using a stepwise logistic regression, the association of various factors with the subjective well-being of children in day-care centers was investigated and explained about 21% of variation within child-wellbeing. Results indicated positive effects of a high level of participation and a high-quality educator-child interaction on the subjective well-being of children. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors associated with the well-being of children and the methodological development of research with children.

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Thursday, 11th July

Session E

Session E4 - Symposium

Discussant: Wilfried Smidt

Chair: Magdalena Molina Ramirez

Time: 15:30-17:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 4: Collaborative governance and ECEC quality

Presenting author(s): Lies van de Kuilen, Dutch Inspectorate of Education

Co-author(s): Paul Leseman, Utrecht University; Inge de Wolf, Maastricht University

Abstract: A continuous high quality early education program requires collaboration and coordination between ECEC programs and services at the local level. In this paper, we addressed the question how local governments, in a decentralized, split and hybrid system, like the Dutch ECEC system, cope with the challenges of ensuring high ECEC quality, supporting and involving parents, and strengthening the continuity between pre-primary ECEC centers and primary school kindergarten. We used data from studies conducted in 2016 and 2019 by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education among pre-primary ECEC centers and kindergartens of primary schools, and data on local network governance from a study by the Inspectorate in 2020. Without a priori hypotheses on particular configurations of local networks or its influence on ECEC quality, we conducted a cluster analysis to identify clusters of municipalities and related the identified clusters to four ECEC quality measures: emotional process quality, educational process quality, parent involvement, and pedagogical continuity. We found four distinct configurations of local network governance and statistically significant associations between the particular network governance configuration and three of the four quality measures (educational process quality, parent involvement and pedagogical continuity) in the sample of pre-primary ECEC centers and one in the sample of kindergartens (pedagogical continuity), with trending similar results for the other quality aspects as found for pre-primary ECEC. The governance mode characterized by formalized, collaborative, equity mission-driven, interactive networks with strong inspirational governance, was found to be strongest positively associated with ECEC quality.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Support children in challenging life situations with professional guidance

Presenting author(s): Monika Hofer-Rybar, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria

Co-author(s): Simone Breit, University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria

Abstract: "The study focuses on childhood learning processes that are socially embedded in early childhood institutions. Accordingly, the conditions within the childcare facility, as well as pedagogical support, play a central role in the quality of children's developmental processes. When children encounter specific stressors during their development, risk and protective factors interact in a complex structure. In this, the institutional setting and professionals also exert influence. Consistency and dependability in relationships, along with an empathetic attitude and solidarity from professionals, serve as supportive factors. The study's dataset comprises written vignettes provided by 17 professionals. These narratives present retrospective descriptions of interactions with children experiencing difficult life circumstances during their time in kindergarten, wherein the professionals encountered behaviours they found demanding. In their reconstructions, the authors demonstrate, through a sequential content-analytical approach, exemplary selected interaction situations, to what extent the educational professionals meet the quality requirements for professional development support even in the context of challenging situations. The findings of the study show, that the early childhood educational environment can serve as a protective factor for children during challenging times throughout their development. Furthermore, the results are beneficial to childhood learning and development processes within a social context, initial teacher training, and ongoing professional development in early childhood education."

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Playful pedagogies in Irish primary schools: Embedding play in teacher-led learning

Presenting author(s): Lisha O'Sullivan, Mary Immaculate College

Co-author(s): Emer Ring, Maurice Harmon, Marie Ryan, Mary Immaculate College

Abstract: "A growing corpus of research affirms the potential of playful pedagogical approaches in the primary classroom (Mardell et al., 2023; Parker et al., 2022; Zosh et al., 2018). While playful approaches to learning are well established in the early years, primary education is associated with formal, seat-based, instructional approaches (Gray & Ryan, 2016; Parker et al., 2022). Moreover, as children move through the primary grades, learning tends to become less playful (Parker et al., 2022). In Ireland, with the publication of a new Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools, embedding playful pedagogies in the curriculum is a current policy priority. To investigate the perspectives and practices of teachers working across junior and senior infants (4-, 5- and 6-year-olds) and first and second class (7- and 8-year-olds), an online survey was distributed to schools nationally. The findings presented in this paper relate to teachers' integration of play across the subject areas of the curriculum and the strategies they report using to make teacher-led learning playful. Findings suggest that teachers are integrating play, to some degree, across the various subject areas of the primary school curriculum. Findings also indicate that teachers are currently using a diverse range of strategies to make teacher-led learning experiences playful. As teachers will be tasked with operationalising the new curriculum, understanding current practices can support curriculum implementation. "

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F1 - Paper session

Chair: Antonia Zachariou

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.168

Title: Socioemotional skills and resilience in early childhood education

Presenting author(s): Katarzyna Bobrowicz, University of Luxembourg

Co-author(s): Anke Maria Weber, University of Luxembourg, Jean-Pierre Thibaut, University of Burgundy, Angélica Mendes, University of Luxembourg

Abstract: Resilience, the ability to overcome serious hardship, is intertwined with lifelong well-being and achievement. Previous research suggested that highlighting the importance of resilience in early childhood and care (ECEC) curricula may boost children's adaptability to challenge. Therefore, placing resilience at the core of ECEC curricula has the potential to significantly improve child's quality of life, both in the short and the long term. In this mixed methods study, we investigated whether resilience and relevant, related skills (such as self-regulation, self-efficacy, persistence and perseverance, decision making) have been explicitly supported by policy-makers. To this end, we screened ECEC curricula from fifty-four countries to identify whether (1) relevant child's skills, traits and behaviours are represented in the curricula and to what extent, and (2) whether there is a correlation between representation of relevant child's skills, traits and behaviours, and explicit inclusion of resilience in the curricula. We found that resilience was more likely to be explicitly supported in the countries with a strong representation of socioemotional skills, but not persistence and perseverance or decision making. Socioemotional skills were most represented among the relevant, related skills, and, furthermore, resilience was represented only in one-fourth of the curricula. This shows that socioemotional skills were typically recognised as important ECEC outcomes, but much work remains to be done in terms of the explicit support of resilience in ECEC curricula.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F2 - Paper session

Chair: Joanna Smogorzewska

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.162

Title: The association of executive functions and science problem-solving in primary school age

Presenting author(s): Jonas Schäfer, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau (RPTU)

Co-author(s): Timo Reuter, Miriam Leuchter, Julia Karbach, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau (RPTU)

Abstract: "Executive functions and problem-solving skills develop significantly in primary school age and are both closely associated with action control and goal-directed behavior. Executive functions enable children to use learning opportunities. Problem-solving is a central component in STEM education. However, only few studies have focused on the question how children's problem-solving performance is supported by their executive functions. In this study, we aimed to investigate whether executive functions predicted science problem-solving skills in primary school age. 477 primary school students (6-8 years, $M = 7.43$, $SD = 0.65$; 229 female) completed a set of three problem-solving tasks on gear and block constructing as well as tasks measuring executive functions (inhibition, flexibility, working memory). Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the three dimensions of executive control significantly contributed to problem-solving performance. Problem-solving performance was mostly associated with flexibility ($\beta = .51^{**}$), followed by working memory ($\beta = .23^*$). The impact of inhibition was not significant ($\beta = .06$). We conclude that particularly working memory and flexibility support controlled, goal-directed science problem-solving in primary school children. Moreover, we argue that inhibition is not essential for problem-solving performance when the task does not entail task-irrelevant objects. Taken together, our findings make an important contribution to cognitive research on STEM learning."

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Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F2 - Paper session

Chair: Joanna Smogorzewska

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Transfer processes in ECEC – A systematic review

Presenting author(s): Valerie Bergmann, Nina Hoglebe, TU Dortmund University

Co-author(s): Daniela Ulber, HAW Hamburg

Abstract: In times of uncertain and dynamically changing circumstances, successful transfer of knowledge and skills to the team is crucial for adapting to new developments and fostering sustainable change throughout early childhood education and care (ECEC). However, there is a lack of systematic knowledge on how such transfer processes can be successfully realized (Egert & Kappauf, 2019; Schelle & Blatter, 2023). Therefore, we conducted a systematic review (Gough et al., 2017) to identify characteristics of a supportive transfer environment. Our theoretical framework that guides the review process is based on a transfer model of Baldwin and Ford (1988) and Rank and Wankenhut (1998). Our narrative synthesis (Thomas et al., 2017) of nine studies shows that transfer success in ECEC is influenced by several actors on different levels (individual professionals, team/management, organization, environment). At the professional level, personal characteristics and transfer types (creative, curious, resistant) are decisive. Positive teamwork and leadership also contribute to successful transfer as well as conditions at the organizational level, such as culture and time for implementation. Networks and additional support by the organizations' provider, for instance, improve transfer processes on the environmental level. However, it becomes also clear further research is needed to clarify the roles of the respective transfer stakeholders, enabling them to contribute optimally to the success of transfer with their knowledge and resources.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F2 - Paper session

Chair: Joanna Smogorzewska

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Interpersonal emotion regulation predicts collaboration in playful learning at ages 5 and 10

Presenting author(s): Pablo E. Torres, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Co-author(s): Emily Ranken, University College London, Institute of Education

Abstract: This study analysed whether interpersonal emotion regulation strategies related to levels of collaborative behaviours in playful learning in 5- and 10-year-olds. We analysed children's talk and identified children's interpersonal emotion regulation strategies. Adaptive emotion regulation strategies identified included social cohesion, attention deployment, cognitive change, modulation and adult help seeking strategies. Maladaptive emotion dysregulation strategies included denial/ignoring and deliberate escalation of conflicts. Collaboration behaviours identified included coordination attempts and suggestions of justified play ideas. Results showed no age differences in emotion regulation or collaboration behaviours frequencies. Interestingly, the variance of group coordination attempts depended heavily (37-51%) on group dynamics, and interpersonal emotion regulation explained all this variance across age. Suggestions of justified play ideas did not depend on group dynamics but individual differences. Social cohesion predicted more group coordination attempts across ages, and at the age of 5 'negation' also had the same positive effect. Furthermore, 5-year-olds expressed more suggestions of justified ideas, when they used more social cohesion and distractions from the negative emotional trigger, or the reverse, when they concentrated too much on the emotional trigger, escalating a conflict. Conversely, suggestions diminished when 5-year-olds reactions focused on persuading a cognitive change. Results for 10 year-olds were more intuitive. Their justified suggestions associated to more cognitive change or distracting and to less denying/ignoring or escalating. More social cohesion related to fewer suggestions at this age. Results are discussed with regards to the developmental role of play and developmental differences across ages.

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Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F2 - Paper session

Chair: Joanna Smogorzewska

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Links of intelligence, executive functions, and self-regulated learning in early and mid-childhood

Presenting author(s): Sophia Grobe, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau (RPTU)

Co-author(s): Christina David, Lena Grüneisen, Laura Dörrenbächer-Ulrich, Franziska Perels, Saarland University; Julia Karbach, University of Kaiserslautern-Landau

Abstract: Self-regulated learning (SRL) refers to the monitoring and regulation of cognition, affect, and behaviour in learning contexts. It draws on cognitive resources such as executive functions (EF), cognitive control processes for the regulation of thought and action which are closely related to fluid intelligence. The relation of fluid intelligence and SRL, however, is less clear. Consequently, we sought to analyse the shared associations of fluid intelligence, executive functions (EF), and SRL in preschool and elementary school children, testing a mediational hypothesis in which fluid intelligence operates through EF to affect SRL. Preschool children (N = 136, MAge = 5.9 years, SDAge = 0.4, RangeAge = 5.0 – 6.7 years, % female: 50) and elementary school children (N = 99, MAge = 9.9 years, SDAge = 0.5, RangeAge = 8.8 – 11.8 years, % female: 49.5) completed tests of fluid intelligence, EF (i.e. working memory, cognitive flexibility, inhibition) and SRL. Mediation analyses revealed a significant indirect effect from fluid intelligence via EF to SRL in preschool children: $\beta_{ab} = .11$, 95% CI [0.004 - 0.15] and elementary school children: $\beta_{ab} = .13$, 95% CI [0.037 - 0.175]. There was no significant direct effect of fluid intelligence on SRL in either age group. One explanation for these findings is that EF rather than fluid intelligence accounts for the regulatory aspects inherent in SRL. Therefore, the role of metacognitive monitoring and control in the interplay of fluid intelligence, EF, and SRL is considered. Moreover, implications for interventions to foster SRL will be discussed.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F3 - Paper session

Chair: Mei-Shiu Chiu

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Perspectives of teachers, parents, and preschoolers on physical learning environment design

Presenting author(s): Netta Perry, Bar-Ilan University

Co-author(s): Ornit Spektor-Levy, Esther Adi-Japha, Bar-Ilan University

Abstract: "Physical learning environments wield a profound influence on individuals, particularly during early childhood (EC) development. Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the collaborative synergy between teachers and parents emerges as pivotal in nurturing children's growth. This study scrutinized the collaborative dynamics within a triad involving teachers, parents, and preschoolers (5-year-old) regarding their perceptions of the design and affordances of preschool physical learning environments (Israeli preschools encompassing ages 3–5). All participants belonged to a middle socio-economic status, were Jewish, and spoke Hebrew. The research employed a diverse set of tools: in-depth, semi-structured interviews with teachers (N=6), digital questionnaires featuring open- and closed-ended queries for parents (N=116), and interviews with children (N=116, 53 girls, mean age 64.83 months, SD = 4.06) using the Photograph-Interview with Children (PIC) instrument alongside a Smiley Face Questionnaire. Findings unveiled both correlations and disparities within the triad's perceptions. All participants acknowledged the learning environment's impact on children's knowledge, social interactions, and well-being. While parents and children emphasized the promotion of social interaction, teachers, serving as the environment's architects, prioritized aspects associated with knowledge. Notably, despite parents expressing a desire for consultation on design matters, most teachers raised objections. Moreover, disparities emerged between parents' evaluations of their children's preferences regarding the learning environment and the children's reported choices. This study accentuates the imperative for enhanced communication among teachers, parents, and children concerning the design of preschool learning environments, underscoring the significance of co-agency and coordination to realize educational objectives and augment children's developmental processes."

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F3 - Paper session

Chair: Mei-Shiu Chiu

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Education of migrant children in a detention facility in Poland

Presenting author(s): Roman Sokulski, Olsztyn University

Abstract: The purpose of this research was diagnosing education conducted in detention in a Ketrzyn Guard Center for Foreigners. This research project's objective is description and explanation of the education in an administrative detention. The collective case study (R.E. Stake, 1995) was applied in the research. The research issues took the form of following questions: How do migrants and their families experience education in detention? The research has concentrated on the children and members of their families. Following qualitative methods of data collection have been applied: observation, interview. It has been supplemented by the quantitative methods: surveys, tests, analyses of collected materials. Interviews with the children and parents showed that children in the detention center idealize education. This situation stems from the lack of stability and unfulfilled basic needs, including stability and survival needs. Learning Polish as a foreign language becomes a symbol of independence and the perspective of acquiring freedom. They want to decide about their own future and begin to notice that without sufficient communication skills in a foreign language they will be marginalised and socially excluded. Data obtained from surveys on attitudes to education showed that almost all respondents highly rate education in the detention centre. In the light of this study Guarded Center for Foreigners in Kętrzyn can serve as an example of good praxis for other centres in Poland.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F3 - Paper session

Chair: Mei-Shiu Chiu

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Preschoolers' cognitive and emotional development in educational agricultural farm

Presenting author(s): Ornit Spektor-Levy, Bar Ilan University

Co-author(s): Moshe Castoriano, Bar Ilan University

Abstract: Early science education is important, however, implementing scientific thinking in early childhood is challenging mainly due to a lack of teachers' understanding of the appropriate pedagogy and a lack of confidence in their scientific knowledge. Teaching scientific topics that combine cultural knowledge and children's daily lives, improves their scientific understanding and increases their community identity. Culturally responsive science education (CRSE) seems ideal for mitigating gaps in science achievement worldwide. This study focused on the indigenous Bedouin minority in the south of Israel. Bedouin society is traditionally semi-nomadic, tribal, affected by high levels of poverty. Bedouin children are vulnerable and disadvantaged. The main objective of this study was to reveal Bedouin preschool teachers' attitudes toward integrating culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in their teaching, with a focus on science education. Another objective was to evaluate the impact of a professional development program (PDP) that models community-based CRSE on their attitudes, sense of self-efficacy, and teaching practices. A sample of 54 preschool teachers from the Israeli Bedouin community participated in a CRSE PDP. We used the Preschool Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs toward Science Teaching Questionnaire (P-TABS) and in-depth pre and post interviews to track changes in teachers' attitudes, perceptions and practices. Preliminary results showed positive effects on teachers' attitudes and sense of self-efficacy toward implementing CRSE. The specially designed CRSE PDP supported the preschool Bedouin teachers in implementing community-based CRSE with their preschoolers.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F4 - Symposium

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Chair: Giulia Pastori and Sofia Guichard

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Children as active citizens: exploring children voices about social relationships, school and society

In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognized the right of all children to freely express their views, and the society's responsibility to acknowledge and take those views into account. Participation provides the basis for active citizenship and can benefit both children and communities (Sinclair, 2004). However, despite international recommendations advocating for participation, children and especially the youngest ones are not fully being heard about matters with impact in their lives and well-being (European Commission, 2021). A paradigm shift in educational research has highlighted the need to conduct research with children, considering their perspectives of the social world, instead of exclusively conducting research about children, ignoring their own voices and ideas (Sommer, Samuelsson, & Hundeide, 2010). Thus, recognizing children's right to actively participate in society, the current symposium aims to explore and amplify young children voices on matters affecting their lives and environments. We focus on Portuguese and Italian pre- and primary school children's perspectives on the social world, from their views about proximal relationships and environments, such as social relationships and school, to their opinions on community and societal issues, such as poverty. The discussion will consider the importance of listening to children's voices and promoting their active participation and citizenship, while reflecting on the methodological and ethical challenges of conducting research with children as partners.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F4 - Symposium

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Chair: Giulia Pastori and Sofia Guichard

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.152

Paper 1: Assessing core socioemotional skills through child lens: A study with Portuguese preschool children

Presenting author(s): Patrícia Moreira, University of Porto

Co-author(s): Ana Camacho, Gabriela Silva, Catarina Grande, Diana Alves, Teresa Leal, Joana Cadima, Univeristy of Porto

Abstract: Socioemotional skills are crucial to thrive in an ever-increasing complex world [1]. This study – conducted under Schools 2030 – aims to: (a) introduce own-developed vignettes to assess children's relationship-building, empathy, and problem-solving skills (i.e., hypothetical school-based situations jointly designed with educators); (b) present the results based on preschool children's answers to the vignettes. In this tool, children are prompted with open-ended questions that require them to infer what the protagonists are feeling and what they would do. Their answers are coded based on developmental frameworks for socioemotional learning assessment [1-2]. To achieve our aims, we first conducted a pilot study. Currently, 320 five-year-old children attending Portuguese preschools are being recruited. The pilot study showed that most children made accurate judgments of the protagonists' emotions and offered prosocial solutions to solve the story challenges. In the presentation, we will share results based on data currently being collected. This study will contribute to the understanding of young children's socioemotional skills through their expression, instead of relying on parents' or educators' reports. Implications for age- and context-sensitive assessments of socioemotional skills that emphasize how young children think and solve social problems will be discussed.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F4 - Symposium

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Chair: Giulia Pastori and Sofia Guichard

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.152

Paper 2: What does learning mean? Participatory research with children of a Senza Zaino primary school

Presenting author(s): Martina Rossi, University of Milano-Bicocca

Co-author(s): Giulia Pastori, University of Milano-Bicocca

Abstract: This contribution illustrates the results of a research that voiced children's opinions regarding the meaning and shape of "learning" at school. The qualitative research was based on the student voice's studies and had a participatory research framework [1-2].

Children of a "Senza Zaino" (lit.: 'no backpack') primary school expressed their point of view through brainstorming, ludic techniques such as drawing and photovoice, focus groups and peer-to-peer discussions.

Inviting children to express their ideas on such a broad topic led to arise of multiple themes and learning aspects, including: the role of peers as a source of mutual support; the idea of error as a necessary element for learning; the role of the teacher as a guide who involves and supports pupils and a non-judgmental welcoming environment and climate that links emotions and well-being with learning.

A metacognitive attitude and an intrinsic motivation emerged from children's words.

This research represents a pilot for a wider study within the Senza Zaino school network, to develop a school self-evaluation and improvement model involving children's perspective.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session F

Session F4 - Symposium

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Chair: Giulia Pastori and Sofia Guichard

Time: 9:30-11:00

Location: 1.152

Paper 3: Exploring primary school children's perspectives about the causes and solutions to poverty

Presenting author(s): Sofia Guichard, University of Porto

Co-author(s): Gil Nata, Marina Lemos, Joana Cadima, University of Porto

Abstract: Children are growing up in societies marked by high rates of poverty. Some studies have focused on how children reason about poverty [1]. However, few have described with depth the arguments and ideas involved to explain and solve poverty. The current study focuses on primary school children's perspectives about the causes and solutions to poverty.

Two-hundred and forty-eight children (8-10 years old) participated in an individual interview with a stimulus situation describing a child living in poverty, based on previous research, and were asked about the causes and solutions to poverty. Answers were analyzed through thematic analysis [2].

Children referred to three main types of causes: naïf/fatalistic; individualistic, related to money management or lack effort/abilities; and contextual causes, located in work and society. Children proposed five main types of solutions: naïf or unrealistic; individual remediating actions by people in poverty; individual remediating actions by others; individual self-reliance actions; and a call for social change.

Results will be discussed shedding light on what children think about this pressing social issue.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Keynote

Professor Maciej Karwowski

Institute of Psychology, University of Wrocław

Time: 11:30-12:30

Location: 0.41

Title: Feedback for Creativity

Abstract: Creativity is a skill that can be cultivated; indeed, numerous creativity training programs have proven effective in enhancing the creative thinking abilities of children, adolescents, and adults. Among the crucial elements that drive this learning process is the feedback people receive. However, despite its importance, our understanding of how feedback influences creativity and what types of feedback are most effective is quite limited. This talk delves into the role of feedback for creative thought and action by discussing recent research from the creativity literature, including a unique large-scale naturalistic experiment on almost 40,000 participants. It further shows how and when feedback works or doesn't work, what types of feedback are particularly beneficial, and when pseudofeedback can lead to losing creative chances.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G1 - Paper session

Chair: Katarzyna Bobrowicz

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Participation practices, teacher-child interactions, and children's socio-emotional development

Presenting author(s): Nadine Correia, University Institute of Lisbon

Co-author(s): Helena Carvalho, Cecília Aguiar, University Institute of Lisbon

Abstract: "Children's have the right to express themselves and to have their voices considered in decision-making (United Nations, 1989). Children's participation, considered most meaningful when rooted in their everyday lives, is recommended from the earliest years and described as an indicator of early childhood education (ECE) settings' quality (Sheridan, 2007, United Nations, 1989). Moreover, participation is considered an investment in children's development and well-being (Council of Europe, 2017; Sandseter & Seland, 2016). However, little is known on how and under which mechanisms, teacher practices and teacher-child interactions are associated with children's socio-emotional development. Aiming to fill in these gaps, we conducted two studies, aiming to investigate associations between (a) self-reported and observed ECE teachers' participation practices, observed teacher-child interactions, and children's self-concept and social skills, mediated by children's perceptions of participation, and (b) observed ECE teachers' participation practices, observed teacher-child interactions, and the quality of children's friendships, moderated by dosage. Participants were 336 children (163 boys), aged between 42 and 76 months ($M = 60.14$, $SD = 7.86$), from 58 ECE classrooms in the Lisbon area, Portugal, and their lead teachers. Multilevel mediation and moderation analysis, respectively, were performed. The main findings suggest (i) positive associations between observed participation practices and children's self-concept, mediated by children's perceptions of participation; (ii) positive associations between observed teacher-child interactions' quality and the quality of children's friendships (involvement), moderated by dosage, and (iii) negative, significant associations between observed participation practices and the quality of children's friendships (conflict), moderated by dosage. Important implications will be discussed, for research, practice, and policymaking."

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G1 - Paper session

Chair: Katarzyna Bobrowicz

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Silent story, loud empathy: Investigating children's empathy on deforestation

Presenting author(s): Sabiha Üzümlü, Middle East Technical University

Co-author(s): Ceren Baser Kanbak, Mine Tanrısevdi, Middle East Technical University

Abstract: The present multiple-embedded case study aims to investigate how young children raised in an urban area respond by categorizing their empathic reactions to deforestation using an eco-friendly silent picture book. In this respect, two five-year-old children who resided in an urban setting and had not experienced any non-urban life participated in the study. The data was collected using an eco-friendly silent picture book with a semi-structured interview. Besides, a play observation with the story characters as toys and a book-like playground was provided with the co-player role of the researchers. The data collected from the transcriptions of the story and play sessions' video recordings was analyzed with the content analysis. The study revealed that the two urban-dwelling children exhibit insufficient empathy towards deforestation and natural life. Mostly indicated empathy category was "attention to others' emotions" and children only noticed the situation of deforestation, but insufficiently exhibited "prosocial behaviors", "sympathy", and "personal distress". This situation was discussed due to children's lack of experience in unfamiliar situation regarding nature which might cause anthropocentric views. Since there might be a possibility of anthropocentric and apathetic behaviors in children towards nature and natural problems in the future, engaging students in nature-based activities and outdoors was suggested to enhance children's empathy towards nature.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G1 - Paper session

Chair: Katarzyna Bobrowicz

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.152

Title: Social studies education in preschool: a theory synthesis of English peer-reviewed publications

Presenting author(s): Daniel Moreau, Université de Sherbrooke

Abstract: "This presentation reports results of a theory synthesis about social studies education in preschool, contributing to the acquisition of the knowledge and social competences needed for the civic life (Halvorsen, 2017). Such an endeavour is needed considering that relevant research about this topic is scattered in various field of research, and that educational intervention pertaining to social studies education are unwittingly provided by educators (Brophy and Alleman, 2008; Serriere, 2019). Moreover, many topics (e.g. multicultural education, citizenship education, education for sustainability, social studies of childhood, etc.) are put forward in the scientific literature, but it is not clear how they relate to each other and, above all, how they contribute to our understandings of the social studies curriculum. Either for theory or educational purposes, there is a need of an integrated framework to attribute meaning to phenomena pertaining to social studies education in preschool. For this purpose, we performed a theory synthesis to elaborate a more integrated theory of social studies education in preschool. Since some attributes of this topics are pervasive in the scientific literature (e.g. social skills, socio-emotional development, etc.), we limited the literature survey to reviews of research. Searching was undertaken in PsylInfo and ERIC databases and yielded 945 results which, after screening, allowed for identification of 49 relevant studies. Data analysis reveal three strands of theory, underlying the importance of the contexts (family and community) youths are immersed in, the sociocultural issues societies are facing (e.g. racism), and the quality of social interactions in the classroom."

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G2 - Paper session

Chair: Pablo E. Torres

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Title: The effects of digital design features on parent-child joint media engagement: a meta-analysis

Presenting author(s): Sandra Mathers, University of Oxford

Co-author(s): Pinar Kolancali, Sophie Booton, Fiona Jelley, Daniela Singh, Lars-Erik Malmberg, University of Oxford

Abstract: This study reviews research on the features of apps, digital games and e-books which influence joint media engagement (JME) between adults and children aged 2-7 years, focusing on interactions which support child learning. We employed robust variance estimation to conduct a multi-level meta-analysis of 18 experimental articles ($n=627$ parent-child dyads, $k=170$ effect sizes), accounting for the interdependence between within-study effect sizes. Findings indicate that JME interactions can be shaped through digital design ($g=0.56$), particularly interactions likely to promote children's oral language development ($g=0.78$). Use of dialogic prompts embedded within e-books ($g=0.84-0.99$) showed particular promise. Although the overall effect for children's wider outcomes was small ($g=0.37$), medium-to-large effects were seen for well-designed studies and researcher-developed apps. The moderator analyses provided valuable information to guide intervention and research design. The primary conclusion is that study quality matters. Retaining only high quality studies resulted in a larger effect size. Significant effects on JME behaviours were identified for peer-reviewed publications and studies employing random allocation of conditions. In relation to intervention design, findings suggest that researcher-developed apps ($g=1.4$) offer a more promising context for JME-enhancing design than commercial apps ($g=0.10$), likely because they align with principles of child development and learning. Though small in scope, this study offers direction for app design and future research; and indicates promise for light-touch, low-cost intervention via JME-enhancing design.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G2 - Paper session

Chair: Pablo E. Torres

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Mobile ECEC - a structural response to the refugee crisis

Presenting author(s): Olga Wysłowska, University of Warsaw

Co-author(s): Magdalena Krakowiak, Comenius Foundation for Child Development

Abstract: "Structural quality of ECEC is considered a prerequisite for process quality, related to children's well-being and learning and to the well-being of ECEC professionals, which in turn is related with children's experiences. The goal of the study was to design a mobile ECEC facility that would meet the specific needs of children under six years of age, their families, as well as educators in communities affected by the refugee crisis. The study was organized into three stages: 1. Semi-structured interviews with 45 educators working in ECEC centres with a predominance of refugee children; photographic documentation and researcher's notes from twenty centres where they work were analysed qualitatively (descriptive analysis). 2. Action research - two facilitators met in several sessions with interdisciplinary group of experts and developed a preliminary version of the design. 3. Consultations - two facilitators worked with a professional architectural studio specializing in ECEC architecture incorporating trauma informed design principles to develop the final design. The first phase of the study identified key elements of the space that are crucial to the quality of the experience of children, educators and parents (as perceived by educators and researchers), e.g. the possibility of dividing the room into min. 2 areas. The second phase verified the design using perspectives of various experts, e.g. the minimum size of the rooms was determined at this stage. The third phase led to adjustments of the design to comply with Trauma Informed Design guidelines regarding e.g. materials."

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G2 - Paper session

Chair: Pablo E. Torres

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.172

Title: Game4CED: The board game as a tool for assessing colour-blindness in early years schools

Presenting author(s): Liliana Silva, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Co-author(s): Alessandro Rizzi, University of Milan

Abstract: From the earliest years of schooling, the introduction of new objects of knowledge is often accompanied by their juxtaposition with colours: the use of colours to identify letters, numbers and figures is common. Some authors claim that colour-blindness can lead to difficulties in school success, although compensatory strategies developed by children may be sufficient to bridge the gap. Textbooks present more difficulties for a colour-blind person. Unfortunately, however, an anomaly in colour perception is diagnosed at a later age, partly because the child's school results may still appear normal due to the complex compensatory mechanisms implemented by the colour-blind, mechanisms that are still far from being fully understood. For an overview of the current situation, this paper reports some considerations on the use of colour in school, together with the results of a preliminary survey on early-years school teachers' knowledge of colour-blindness. Game4CED, an action protocol will be drawn up to support teachers, parents and educators in the use of the ColorFit game as a tool for detecting colour blindness, understanding the condition and dealing with the child's colour vision problems. The Game4CED Toolkit will be an educational tool consisting of videos, teaching materials and booklets to guide children and educators in understanding colour blindness and creating a more inclusive environment and activities.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G3 - Symposium

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Chair: Paul Leseman

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Title: Exploring parent-teacher relationships in highly diverse ECEC contexts across Europe

The family and the childcare or (pre)school context constitute the two basic microsystems according to Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), and connections between these contexts are essential. Through establishing close and reciprocal relations with families, especially disadvantaged parents or those hard to reach, teachers have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the children, plan educational programs tailored to their learning styles and needs and also develop new teaching abilities and interests (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Kroeger & Lash, 2011). Within the context of increasing sociocultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity and relatedly hard-to-tackle inequalities, it is crucial to build a knowledge base on 'culturally responsive relationships' to promote trust, rapport and collaboration between parents and teachers to promote all children's school success. This symposium brings together parents' and teachers' perspectives on the parent-teacher relationship in four empirical papers.

The first study concerns the parent-teacher relationship of 487 parents with a Turkish or Maghreb migration background in three European countries. The second study focused on the parental involvement and relations with teachers of 287 Greek Roma and low-income families.

The other two studies included data of 449 early childhood and primary school teachers from six European countries who reported on dimensions of family-school partnerships and a number of demographic and personal factors. Focusing on both parents and teachers, this symposium will discuss cross-country, within group and between ECEC and primary education differences, providing insights for relevant research, educational policy, transition processes and professional development programs.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G3 - Symposium

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Chair: Paul Leseman

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 1: Turkish and Maghreb immigrant parents' relationships with teachers in ECEC: Associations with family, context and country characteristics.

Presenting author(s): Paul Leseman, Utrecht University

Co-author(s): Rynne Francot, Martine Broekhuizen, Utrecht University; Katharina Ereky-Stevens, University of Oxford; Hande Erdem-Möbius, University of Bamberg

Abstract: Immigrant parents may encounter certain barriers when trying to establish a trustful relationship with teachers at Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centers, although this can be related to a complex interplay of factors at various levels. The current study examined the differences in parents' relationship with teachers across immigrant groups and countries, and its associations with family, context and country characteristics, for parents with a Turkish or Maghreb immigrant background, living in Germany, France, and the Netherlands (N = 487). Multigroup regression analyses showed that across countries and groups, immigrant parents are in general positive regarding their personal relationship with the teacher. The direct associations with demographic characteristics were limited. Personal and cultural characteristics, such as parents' self-efficacy, acculturation attitudes and language proficiency in the national language, were found to be related to the parent-teacher relationship, though differences were found between the immigrant groups and between countries. The findings are discussed in the light of national educational and integration policies in a culturally diverse Europe.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G3 - Symposium

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Chair: Paul Leseman

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 2: Multidimensional parental involvement of disadvantaged families in the Greek ECEC and primary education

Presenting author(s): Ioanna Strataki, Hellenic Open University

Co-author(s): Efthymia Penderi, Democritus University of Thrace; Konstantinos Petrogiannis, University of West Attica

Abstract: Poverty, community conditions and family structure have been identified as three primary antecedents of risk for children's educational success and well-being. However, parental involvement has been identified as a potential buffer to children's achievement gap and behavioural difficulties at school. Parental involvement is a multidimensional construct that describes the way parents and other caretakers from the family context respond to children's formal schooling. The present study uses data from the European research project "ISOTIS" to focus on 287 Greek Roma and low-income families' home-based and school-based parental involvement practices and relationship with the teachers in ECEC and primary school, taking into consideration several structural characteristics of the family environment like parents perceived social support and well-being, material deprivation, family employment status and parental educational level. Based on relevant empirical and theoretical models, the parent-teacher relationship is an important factor that relates to parental involvement practices, mediating the influence of structural characteristics to children's outcomes. Analyses showed that parents tend to report more positive relations with early childhood teachers compared to schoolteachers. When stepwise regression was employed to investigate which of the variables determine home-based and school-based involvement, parent-teacher relationship was found to predict only the primary school-based involvement. Discussion, considering certain limitations of the study, highlights on the specificities of the expressions of the parental involvement of these two disadvantaged groups and the ways educational policy and practice could take them into account to tackle educational inequalities.

Conference program

Friday, 12th July

Session G

Session G3 - Symposium

Discussant: Paul Leseman

Chair: Paul Leseman

Time: 13:30-15:00

Location: 1.162

Paper 3: What contextual and teacher characteristics contribute to relationships with parents of diverse backgrounds? A cross-national study in six European countries

Presenting author(s): Pauline Slot, Utrecht University

Co-author(s): Efthymia Penderi, Democritus University of Thrace; Helga Norheim, University College of Southeast Norway; Valentina Pagani, University of Milano-Bicocca; Olga Wyslowska, Krzysztof Bulkowski, University of Warsaw

Abstract: Positive teacher-parent relations have shown to be positively related to children's social-emotional behavior, academic motivation, and school performance (e.g., Boonk et al., 2018; Castro et al., 2015; Hughes & Kwok, 2007; Sheridan et al., 2012), which is especially salient for children with an immigrant and/or low socioeconomic status (SES) background who are considered to be at risk of academic failure. This study examined positive and negative attributes of this relationship and possible determinants (i.e., teachers' educational level, work experience, diversity-related self-efficacy, adoption of culturally sensitive classroom practices and (pre)school diversity) among 449 early childhood and primary school teachers across six European countries with varying educational and inclusive policies (i.e., England, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Poland). Teacher-parent relations encompassed four interrelated, but distinct aspects: shared beliefs with parents, reciprocity, hierarchy, and problem-related contact. Differential country patterns were visible that could, partly, reflect national policies or curricula. Despite these differences, the adoption of culturally sensitive classroom practices showed consistent associations with teacher-parent relations. Teachers who were more culturally responsive in their classroom showed more shared beliefs and reciprocity in the relation with parents and less hierarchy and problem-oriented contact. This supports the notion of 'culturally responsive partnerships' as specifically important when working with diverse parents. Implications for improving practice concern a stronger focus on developing intercultural competences in pre- and in-service education.

Conference program overview

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