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Editorial

The first article of the *Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*, Volume 9, Issue 2 presents a study from **Eskelinen** and **Itäkare**, who explore how discourses on equity, equality and gender sensitivity are constructed in local Finnish early childhood education and care curricula. Their study revealed that clearer and more concrete child-centered guidance in the planning, implementation and evaluation of gender-sensitive pedagogy in early childhood curricula is needed along with staff training and development for gender equality in early childhood education. **Moilanen** discusses the complex and conflictual demands and expectations on reconciling the work and family lives of lone mothers living in three different countries and working non-standard hours. Non-standard working hours pose many challenges for families, especially for lone mothers, who need support in balancing their work and family lives. In her article, Moilanen introduces several ways in which the government and employers can support not only lone mothers but also families in general.

Hakkarainen discusses the anthropological crisis in relation to early childhood education. He highlights cultural-historical psychology and explores the kind of input that cultural-historical psychology can offer when studying the development of children. Hakkarainen presents the forgotten project plan by Davydov (1988), which introduces a future-oriented idea of early childhood education focusing on promoting the personality development of each child. In the project plan, the main arena for development is the joint play between children and adults. **Kantonen, Onnismaa, Reunamo** and **Tahkokallio's** study focuses on exploring the commitment of ECE students to their future profession as ECE teachers. There is a great need for qualified ECE teachers, but the difficulty is that many ECE teachers decide to pursue other career options after working in ECE for a while. The results suggest that previous working experience, confidence in one's own know-how, and possibilities for developing ECE are factors that contribute positively to the commitment of ECE students in their work and their willingness to continue working as ECE teachers.

Åkerblom and **Pramling** focus on investigating how young children in early childhood science education understand representation. This study employed interviews with 6-year-old children after having participated in a playfully formatted activity in basic chemistry. The results show important differences in how the children show that they understand the forms of representations used in the activity. These differences are critical

to developing representational insight and basic scientific understanding for children in early childhood education. **Flemming** and **Sintonen** discuss the feeling of shame and how these feelings and experiences can influence not only the later life experiences of individuals but also their teacherhood as ECE teachers. Authors state that, e.g., family background, comparing oneself to other children, bullying and social status are some of the early childhood factors that have caused feelings of shame. Furthermore, the educational culture in 1950s has marked the thinking and feelings of these children. However, the feelings of shame are an important topic to discuss openly, including with young children.

Rainio, Kurenlahti, Nurhonen, Pursi, Hilppö and **Lipponen** focus on empathy and compassion in early childhood education communities. In their article, authors present a pedagogical model to support early childhood education professionals in developing cultures of compassion. In a similar vein, **Rutanen** and **Laaksonen** focus on emotional aspects in ECEC. However, their focus is not on children or teachers, but on mothers' views, particularly their development of trust in teachers. The data were collected at a point when a one-year-old child had been attending ECEC for about four months. The analysis pointed to two dimensions linked to the development of trust: predictability linked to a teacher's behaviour, the valuing of their personal characteristics and the teacher's close personal relationships to the child and mother.

Laakso, Pihlaja and **Laakkonen** explore ECE directors' perspectives on inclusion and inclusive leadership and sheds light on the practices of management, leadership and the connectedness of these to the directors' understanding of inclusion. The majority of ECE directors' duties involved different tasks relating to management, and the orientation towards inclusion was connected to the distribution of these duties. The ECE directors had a positive attitude towards inclusion, and a commitment to inclusive values is important for the implementation of inclusive pedagogy. **Lähteenmäki, Pihlaja** and **Laakkonen's** study examined fathers' attitudes towards peer support and the development of father-to-father discussion. The study indicates that peer support is considered important among fathers: father-to-father discussion was essential, especially for first-time fathers. The study also revealed that the need for support gradually decreases after the children's first years.

Tossavainen, Edholm, Faarinen and **Lundkvist** examine Swedish pre-service pre-school teachers' knowledge about negative numbers; almost half the study participants gave a reasonable definition for them. Furthermore, those who were able to correctly define negative numbers performed tasks related to them better than other participants. The study by **Kyrönlampi, Böök** and **Karikoski** discusses obstacles to encounters with staff as experienced by parents in the context of institutional pre-primary education in Finland. Parents' perceptions and experiences of encounters with staff were analysed from the perspectives of Buber's dialogic philosophy and Giorgi's phenomenological psychology. The findings clarify how encounters between parents and staff crystallize in

daily face-to-face discussions and suggest that dialogue between parents and staff requires time, a calm situation, a family-friendly approach and the willingness of parents and staff to work together.

Hedlin and **Åberg** introduce the views and experiences of Swedish pre-school teachers regarding inappropriate and unprofessional physical touching between educators and children. Their interviews, examined in light of the concepts 'becoming' and 'being', showed that rough actions appear to be judged clearly as inappropriate nowadays, but the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate touching may be difficult to draw as part of daily practice. Through the lens of the child as becoming and being, the results highlighted touch as a social and cultural practice of professional concern rather than as a question of individuals' moral and psychological dispositions. **Valkonen, Kupiainen** and **Dezuanni** contribute to the discussion around multiliteracy learning by presenting a case study of digital making with four-to-five-year-old children. The authors explore how new technologies mediate and enable children's interactions around digital making in workshops, which offered possibilities for multimodal learning using the film *Moomins and the Winter Wonderland* as integrative theme. The findings show that the pedagogy of multiliteracies should be carefully considered. The children need support for social participation while using new technologies, and in this, the teachers play an important role.

Vatou, **Gregoriadis**, **Tsigilis** and **Grammatikopoulos** examine Greek pre-schoolers' perspectives about the quality of teacher–child relationships by using the Greek version of the Child Appraisal of the Relationship with the Teacher Scale (CARTS). The results confirmed the reliability and validity of the Greek version of CARTS and revealed four relationship patterns. Most children shared a general attachment with their teachers, with high scores on dependency and closeness dimensions. The teachers in Greek pre-schools tend to perceive children's dependent behaviours as positive (associated with the need of social acceptance from others) and allow them to exist in the classroom. Children and adults also seem to perceive the teacher–child interaction in a similar way. **Honko** and **Mustonen** describe ECE educators' experiences on multilingualism and language awareness practices. The results of this study present both the joys and challenges of multilingualism, but the challenges were reported more than the joys. Most often, the challenges were related to interaction, but the challenges regarding culture and cultural practices as well as attitudes were also reported. However, the joys of multilingualism included language itself and language learning. The children were interested in languages and were proud of their own language.

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