
Katja Sirvio, Tuulikki Ukkonen-Mikkola, Jonna Kangas, Hanna Hjelt & Elina Fonsén
“I voted with my feet!” Views of early childhood education teacher leavers on the
change in work and operating culture

Concerns about the turnover of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teachers have arisen in Finland over the last decade. In this paper, we examine teachers' (N = 164) experiences of turnover at various stages of their careers. The research was conducted using a multi-method approach combining qualitative content analysis and statistical comparison. Turnover reasons were identified on four levels: the societal, organisational, relational, and personal level. Research shows that the turnover decision consists of several varied factors, and it is not possible to identify a single reason for the turnover. Turnover appears as a process in which the holding power of the profession is gradually lost due to constant workload factors. The turnover was related to factors of intensification and precarisation identified in working life. Backgrounds related to gendered work can also be identified in the context of turnover.

Keywords: early childhood education, teacher, turnover, work organisation, social status