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The work of early childhood education is changing – is expertise changing with it?

Early childhood education (ECE) is changing in terms of both educational work and working life. In ECE, the increased number of higher educated professionals and the clarification of professional expertise have been solutions to face the new challenges. This qualitative research investigated the expertise and the process of change in expertise of early childhood professionals. The data consist of diaries, development plans, and group interviews, and we used discourse analysis as our analytical tool. Three discourses were detected related to the process of change, namely the discourses of

powerlessness, development, and the best interest of the child. Teachers positioned themselves as being in charge of the team's pedagogical activities and holding responsibility for promoting the children's learning. The position of those with a bachelor's degree in social services was constructed through the shared responsibility of the team, and their expertise focused on the well-being of the children. Child carers positioned themselves mainly through their participation in the team, with childcare being their expertise.