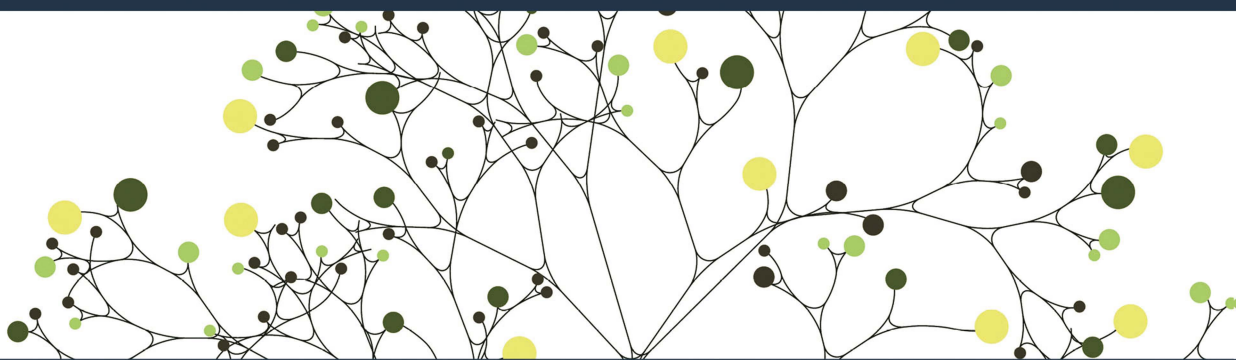


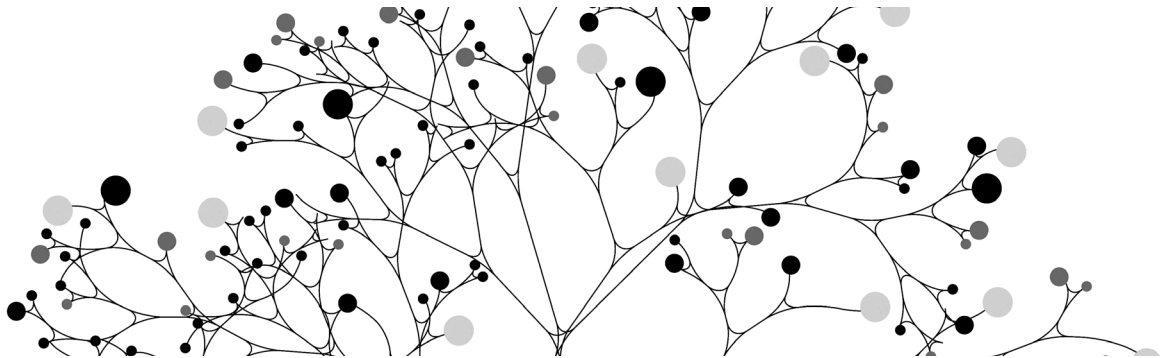
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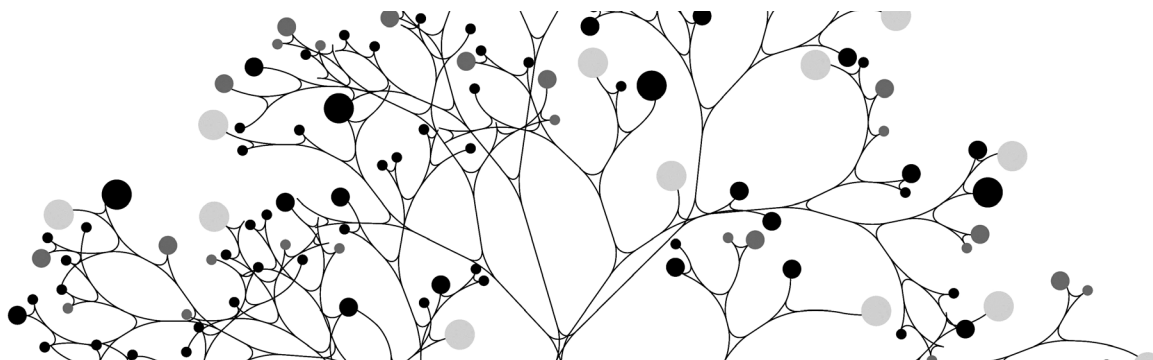
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Mihaela Ionescu is an early childhood education expert with a PhD in Educational Sciences. She is the Program Director of ISSA (International Step by Step Association), a membership association that connects professionals and organisations working in the field of early childhood development (www.issa.nl). She has been working for the last 20 years as a researcher in the education field, as an education policy developer, trainer and manager of programmes aiming to improve the quality of early childhood education and care services. At ISSA, she is primarily involved in strategic planning and in coordinating programmes and resource development aimed at providing equitable and high quality early childhood services in countries from ISSA regions, by strengthening and supporting ISSA members' capacity to work with professionals, parents, administrators and policymakers. Over the years she has worked as an international consultant for UNICEF and World Bank projects in countries in the CEE/CIS region.

Cynthia D. Jackson is the Senior Vice President of the Educare Learning Network at the Ounce of Prevention Fund. She received her Master of Science in counselling and health education from the University of North Texas and Bachelor of Science in community and school health education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As Senior Vice President, Cynthia works with senior leadership to implement the mission and strategic plan for the Ounce of Prevention Fund, specifically leading the work of advancing centre-based quality. She oversees Lead Learn Excel, an instructional leadership professional development initiative. In collaboration with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and Educare Learning Network of schools, she guides the Educare Learning Network through high quality innovative early childhood practice, research and policy efforts. Prior to joining the Ounce, Cynthia was National Director of Training and Technical Assistance for Healthy Families America at Prevent Child Abuse America.

Sonia Jackson is Emeritus Professor at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education, University College London. She has led numerous research studies on the health and education of children and youth in out-of-home care, including the EU-funded YiPPEE project, and has published extensively on these and related topics as well as on her other main research interest, preschool childcare. Recent co-authored books are *People Under Three: Play, Work and Learning in a Childcare Setting* (Routledge, 3rd edition, 2015); *Improving Access to Further and Higher Education for Young People in Public Care* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2014) and *Educating Children and Young People in Care: Learning Placements and Caring Schools* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2015). In addition to her academic work, she is active as an advocate for disadvantaged children and a member of organisations that promote their well-being. In common with some of her earlier studies, her current research on the youngest children in foster care explores an overlooked subject crossing conventional subject boundaries.

Lucky Jacobs began his child and youth care career in 1998 as a volunteer teacher at Thutong Ya Bana Special School in South Africa for children living on the streets, with no prior experience of

working with children. Driven purely by passion and personal energy he spent two years at this centre learning child behaviour ‘on the hoof’. In 2001 he trained as a professional foster carer and became foster parent to a young teenage boy. This training opened his eyes to the world of child and youth care and he was privileged to lead the very first team of 12 community-based child and youth care workers as a project manager when the Isibindi programme was first launched in his community in 2003. A year later he was appointed assistant mentor to supervise two additional teams of community-based child and youth care workers for five years, facilitating many special programmes with groups of young people. Thereafter he became a trainer and assessor and moved into training in 2008 to train newly recruited child and youth care workers, leading to the award of the Further Education & Training Certificate in Child Care Work, the minimum qualification required to work with children in South Africa. In 2013, Lucky joined the government institution known as Lerato Place of Safety as a child & youth care supervisor in charge of the child care unit.

Jytte Juul Jensen has been Associate Professor and Senior Researcher at VIA, Pædagoguddannelsen, Aarhus, Denmark. She has for many years been training pedagogues, the early years professionals, and her latest research project is on Danish pedagogues’ understandings of Danish practice in early childhood services. She has undertaken a wide range of cross-national work, including research, and given numerous lectures and papers at international conferences in many European countries, as well as outside Europe.

Jacqueline Jones is currently the President and CEO of the Foundation for Child Development. She served as the first Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning in the US Education Department. Previously, she was the Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Early Childhood Education in the New Jersey State Department of Education. For over 15 years Jacqueline served as Senior Research Scientist at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton. She is a board member on the National Academies’ Board on Children, Youth and Families and served on the National Academy of Sciences committee that produced *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* (2015). She attended Hunter College of the City University of New York (CUNY) and earned a Master’s and PhD from Northwestern University.

Yoshie Kaga is Programme Specialist in early childhood education and care (ECEC) at UNESCO, Paris. Since 1998, Yoshie has supported various ECEC projects around the world to strengthen early literacy development, gender-sensitive early childhood practices, ECEC policy, governance and workforce development. She is currently managing the Survey of Teachers in Pre-primary Education (STEPP) Project, implemented in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Namibia, the Philippines, Togo and Viet Nam. Her publications include *Caring and Learning Together: A Cross-national Study on the Integration of ECCE within Education* (Kaga, Bennett and Moss, UNESCO, 2010) and *Investing against Evidence: the Global State of Early Childhood Care and Education* (Marope and Kaga, eds., UNESCO, 2015). She has a Master’s in Social Anthropology of Development from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and a PhD in Education from the UCL Institute of Education, University College London.

Sharon Lynn Kagan is the Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Early Childhood and Family Policy and Co-Director of the National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Professor Adjunct at Yale University’s Child Study Center. Scholar, pioneer, leader and advocate, she has helped shape early childhood practice and

policies in the United States and throughout the world. She has worked on early childhood programmes and policies in over 70 countries in seven regions of the world and is recognised internationally and nationally for her accomplishments related to the care and education of young children, authoring over 200 articles and 13 books. She is the only woman in the history of American Education to receive its three most prestigious awards: the 2004 Distinguished Service Award from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the 2005 James Bryant Conant Award for Lifetime Service to Education from the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education.

Shin Ji Kang serves as Associate Professor in the Department of Early, Elementary, and Reading Education and Fellow of the Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Terrorism and Peace at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. She is a critical praxis researcher attempting to bridge the divide between practitioners and researchers. She has two major foci in her educational research: teacher beliefs and refugee education. While learning about teacher spirituality and efficacy beliefs, she has endeavoured to better understand teachers' lives. Another thread of her scholarship on refugee education emerged from critical and spiritual consciousness on her identity in relation to global society. She is currently working with North Korean refugee students and South Korean service providers to address diversity and justice. An example of her research can be found in the recent article: Postcolonial Reflection on the Christian Mission: The Case of North Korean Refugees in China and South Korea (*Social Sciences*, 2016, 5(4), 67).

Venita Kaul is currently Professor Emerita Education and Executive Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development (CECED), Ambedkar University Delhi. Prior to this assignment she was Professor and Director of School of Education Studies and Founder Director of CECED, Ambedkar University Delhi. Her past assignments also include Senior Education Specialist in the World Bank and Professor and Head of Department of Preschool and Elementary Education at the National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi. She has led several Education projects within and outside India and been on several national and international committees. She has a PhD in Psychology from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and has several national and international publications in Education and Child Development to her credit.

Portia Kennel is a Senior Advisor to the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, having previously served as Senior Vice President, Program Innovation, at the Ounce of Prevention Fund and Executive Director of the Educare Learning Network in the United States. She has more than 25 years of experience designing, implementing and scaling effective, research-based early childhood education and family support programme models. In 2000, she created the first Educare School in Chicago to serve young children from birth to 5 years old. As the Executive Director of the Educare Learning Network, she led the national expansion of the Educare model to a diverse range of communities. Her work is grounded in an understanding of early childhood development, teaching practices, family systems and clinical issues related to working with families in low-income communities. She holds a Master's degree in social work from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is a ZERO TO THREE Fellow.

Nicole Klinkhammer works as Senior Researcher at the International Center Early Childhood Education and Care (ICEC) at the German Youth Institute in Munich. Currently, the focus of her work is quality development and assurance within early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems, especially with regard to aspects of governance. In her PhD at the University of

Halle-Wittenberg she did a discourse analysis on the changing construct of childhood within German early childhood education policies. After studying political science, sociology and educational science at the University of Bonn and the University of Aalborg, Denmark, she held a fellowship and worked as a research associate at the German Youth Institute. From 2004 to 2008 she worked on a variety of projects concerning the conceptual development and flexibilisation of ECEC services, and from 2008 to 2012 held a postgraduate fellowship of the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation.

Emily Seulgi Lee is a doctoral student at the University of Georgia, pursuing her PhD degree in the Department of Educational Psychology. She graduated from Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Educational Studies. Emily has worked closely with North Korean refugee students in South Korea as a programme coordinator, implementing after-school intervention programmes that provided aide in the North Korean students' acculturation process. Her work, *Preparing for Reunification: Yeomyung School's North Korean refugee remedial education program*, was featured at the Annual Conference for Association for Childhood Education International in 2015. Her current research interests include using social network analysis to explore the role of friendships and clique memberships in child development. More specifically she is interested in understanding the importance of interpersonal relationships in the socialisation/acculturation process of minority students (immigrant students, international students, refugees, etc.) in elementary school.

Hui Li, PhD, is Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education (ECE) at the University of Hong Kong, where he is the Director of the Master of Education (MEd) programme and Coordinator of the MEd (ECE) specialism. His research interests lie in early Chinese literacy, developmental psycholinguistics, early childhood curriculum and pedagogy, and educational policy. He has published more than 160 academic works including books, book chapters and journal and conference papers. He is the co-associate editor of *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, as well as editorial board member of *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *Early Education and Development*, *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, and *International Journal of Early Years Education*.

Eva Lloyd is Professor of Early Childhood in the Cass School of Education and Communities at the University of East London. She is Director of UEL's International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare (ICMEC), which she co-founded in 2007 with Professor Helen Penn. Eva's research focuses on early childhood policy, in particular the marketisation and privatisation of early childhood provision and its relationship to child poverty and social exclusion. She has published widely on this topic, including a 2014 evidence review of the links between early childhood provision and poverty for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, an independent British development and social research organisation (<http://roar.uel.ac.uk/3865/>). In the course of her career Eva has gained extensive experience of early childhood policy articulation and evaluation processes, collaborating with policy makers in the UK and beyond. Her background is in psychology and she also spent 15 years working for children's NGOs. In 2013, Eva was awarded an Honorary OBE for services to education.

Seeng Mamabolo is a Sesotho-speaking person who stays with Xhosa speaking people, who began her journey as a residential child and youth care worker in 1996 with Bethany Children's Home in Mthatha, Eastern Cape. After completing a Diploma in Child and Youth Care from the University of South Africa in 2003, she began working for the National Association of Child Care Workers in 2006 as an Isibinidi Mentor. In 2009, Seeng became an Isibindi Senior Mentor

in the Eastern Cape Province and then went on to obtain a BTECH degree in Child and Youth Care in 2014 from Durban University of Technology. In 2016 Seeng began working as a Provincial Programs Manager for the Eastern Cape Province and has also facilitated child and youth care training in Zimbabwe.

Sandra Mathers is Researcher at the University of Oxford. Her main research interests are the quality of early years education and care, and the relationships between quality and children's development. Sandra's research is strongly policy-focused and she has led a number of large-scale government evaluations of early childhood initiatives. Her most recent research studies have considered whether disadvantaged children receive comparable quality early years provision to those from more advantaged backgrounds, and explored the early years experiences of children in care. Sandra is currently leading the development and implementation of an early years professional development intervention designed to improve children's oral language skills, which is being tested as part of a randomised controlled trial.

Helen May is an Emeritus Professor of Education and former Dean of the University of Otago College of Education (2006–2011) New Zealand as well as an Adjunct Professor at the Victoria University of Wellington. She has been involved in advocacy and advisory roles covering a range of early childhood policy initiatives. She is the author of a number of books and papers on the history, politics and pedagogy of early years education.

Nora Milotay is Policy Analyst at the European Parliamentary Research Service, working on issues of European social policy at the Economic Policies Unit. A historian by training, she holds a BA Hons from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, an MA from the Central European University, Budapest and a PhD from the University of Cambridge. After having worked on several aspects of education policy in Hungary and for many years at the European Commission, from 2010 onwards she has built up European policy cooperation within the field of early childhood education and care that has gained an increasingly important role within the Europe 2020 strategy. She lead the thematic working group of member states' experts on early childhood education and care (ECEC) within the Open Method of Coordination (2012–14) that has prepared a proposal for a quality framework in ECEC in 2014. With a background in both research and practice, her focus is on the intersection of research, policy and practice.

Peter Moss is Emeritus Professor of Early Childhood Provision at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education, University College London. His interests include early childhood education and care; the workforce in children's services; the relationship between care, gender and employment; the relationship between early childhood and compulsory education; social pedagogy; and democracy in children's services. Much of his work has been cross-national, in particular in Europe. He has been coordinator of the European Commission Childcare Network and of the International Network on Leave Policies and Research; editor of the multi-lingual magazine *Children in Europe*; and co-editor of the book series *Contesting Early Childhood*. Recent books include *Loris Malaguzzi and the Schools of Reggio Emilia* (co-edited with colleagues from Reggio Emilia, Routledge, 2016); *Transformative Change and Real Utopias in Early Childhood Education* (Routledge, 2014); *Radical Education and the Common School: A Democratic Alternative* (with Michael Fielding, Routledge, 2011); *Early Childhood and Compulsory Education: Reconceptualising the Relationship* (as editor, Routledge, 2013); and *Social Pedagogy and Working with Children and Young People: Where Care and Education Meet* (edited with Claire Cameron, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011).

Michelle J. Neuman is Program Director for Early Childhood Development at Results for Development (R4D), a global non-profit organisation, in Washington, DC. She has faculty affiliations with the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Victoria, British Columbia. Throughout her career, Michelle has taken a comparative approach to study policies and programmes for young children around the world. Her recent research focuses on strategies to strengthen and support the early childhood workforce globally and on financing early childhood programmes in low- and middle-income countries. In her previous roles at the World Bank, the Open Society Foundation, UNESCO and the OECD, she led analytical work and provided technical guidance to government officials to inform the design and implementation of early childhood systems. She has an undergraduate degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and a PhD in Politics and Education from Columbia University.

Milagros Nores is Co-Director of Research at the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). She earned her PhD in Education and Economics at Columbia University and an EdM in Educational Administration and Social Policy from Harvard University. She previously worked as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Taubman Center in Public Policy, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. Her expertise and interests are in early childhood development, data-driven policy development, evaluation design, economics, cultural diversity and English language learning. Milagros' current research includes an early childhood study in Colombia, a study on parent-child educational practices for minority children in the United States and evaluations of West Virginia's and Seattle's preschool programmes. She also participated in the seminal benefit-cost analyses of the Perry Preschool programme. Milagros also supports the work of various organisations working in Latin America and Asia.

June O'Sullivan is Chief Executive of the London Early Years Foundation (LEYF), a social enterprise which currently runs 38 nurseries across 11 London boroughs. She is also an inspiring speaker, author and regular media commentator on Early Years, Social Business and Child Poverty. June is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Director of Early Arts, Trustee of London Hostels Association, Non-Executive Director of Social Enterprise UK, and Founding Member of International Early Years. June was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2013, for her services to London's children. She was awarded the Social Enterprise UK Women's Champion Award in November 2014 and in February 2015 she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Middlesex. June is a published author, with a Master's in Primary and Early Childhood Studies and an MBA from London South Bank University.

Alula Pankhurst was Associate Professor in Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University. He joined Young Lives as Ethiopia Country Director in 2009. His role involves coordinating Young Lives research work in Ethiopia and leading on topics including urban relocation, child work, early marriage and violence against children as well as early childhood. Alula has also worked in the Wellbeing in Developing Countries project at the University of Bath, and is also a lead researcher for WIDE, a longitudinal study of community change in rural Ethiopia. He has co-edited books on *Children's Work and Labour in East Africa* (2015), *The Rights of Children in Ethiopia* (2016) and *Change and Transformation in Twenty Rural Communities in Ethiopia* (2017).

Marcela Pardo holds a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and a Master of Arts in Educational Psychology, Early Childhood. She is Associate Researcher at the University of Chile's Center for Advanced Research in Education, and coordinator of its Early Childhood Education area.

Her research comprises studies on early childhood teachers' professional identity, as well as policies for early childhood teachers' initial preparation and professional development. Her recent publications include *Estado del arte y criterios orientadores para la elaboración de políticas de formación y desarrollo profesional de docentes de primera infancia en América Latina y el Caribe*. Proyecto Estrategia Regional Sobre Docentes (with Cynthia Adlerstein, OREALC-UNESCO Santiago, 2016); and Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education in Chile: Tensions between Public Policy and Teacher Discourses over the Schoolarisation of Early Childhood Education (with Christine Woodrow, *International Journal of Early Childhood* 46(1), 101–115, 2014.). She gratefully acknowledges funding from PIA-CONICYT Basal Funds for Centers of Excellence Project FB0003.

Jan Peeters is the Director of VBJK, Centre for Innovation in the Early Years, at Ghent University (Belgium). He was involved in international policy-oriented research commissioned by the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture: *Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care*, (2009–2011), and the *Study on the Effective Use of Early Childhood Education and Care in Preventing Early School Leaving* (2013–2014). He was the promoter of the Eurofound research *Working conditions, training of ECEC workers and quality of services – A systematic review* (2013–2015), about the link between Continuous Professional Development and Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care and outcomes for children. He is an expert in policy advocacy and was consultant in five UNICEF projects, to increase the quality of ECEC in CEE/CIS countries (2012–2017). He is co-editor of a book *Pathways to Professionalism in Early Childcare Education and Care* (Routledge, 2016) and the author of many articles on professionalism, diversity and policy in ECEC.

Brecht Peleman is Junior Researcher and Project Manager at the Centre for Innovations in the Early Years (VBJK) and the Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy (Ghent University). His research topics concern experiences of children in general and more specifically of those living in a vulnerable situation transitioning to school; quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); and professionalisation. Brecht was a member of the research team of the Eurofound study *Working conditions, training of early childhood care workers and quality of services – A systematic review* (2013–2015). Brecht is also involved in projects about pedagogical coaching, the transition to pre-primary education, school-aged childcare and family day care. He has developed several training tools to support ECEC practitioners.

Nkidi C. Phatudi is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Early Childhood Education, College of Education at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. The position requires her to provide leadership and vision to the department so that it remains relevant in pursuance of early childcare development research and education. She supervises postgraduate students and is responsible for English First Additional Language pedagogy. She participated in the EU–Department of Higher Education (DHET) funded project involving universities around the country. Consequently, she produced open educational resource (OER) learning materials. She is the treasurer of the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAECE) and has a Special Interest Group (SIG) in the association for mother tongue learning group. She has contributed the chapter *Restoring Indigenous Languages and the Right to Learn in a Familiar Language: A Case of Black South African Children in Children's Rights and Education: International Perspectives* (Peter Lang, 2013).

Frances Press is Professor, Early Childhood Education in the School of Teacher Education, Charles Sturt University, Australia. She has a long-standing interest in early childhood policy

and its impact on the quality of the education and care services provided to infants and young children, including the experiences of children and families. Frances, along with her colleague Christine Woodrow, has written extensively on the impact of the marketisation of early childhood education and care in the Australian context.

Birgit Riedel is Head of the Education and Provision of Services of the Welfare State for Children Section at the German Youth Institute in Munich. The current focus of her work is on developments of policy and governance in ECEC services and how they impact on inequalities between children of different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Another strand of her work comprises international comparative analyses of childcare systems and policies. More recently she has been involved in research on refugee children's access to ECEC. Birgit studied Political Science in Vienna where she worked as Researcher at the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. She was involved in international projects focusing on various areas of welfare state reform such as care for the elderly, civic engagement and early childhood education and care.

Jack Rossiter joined Young Lives at the University of Oxford in 2015 as an Education Research Officer working on Ethiopia. Prior to joining Young Lives he was a civil servant and ODI Fellow in the Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, with specific responsibility to support the development of the country's fifth Education Sector Development Programme. He has previous experience in a large NGO and as a consultant in the private sector. Jack is interested in the policy links between Young Lives' research and implementation through the Ministry of Education. Currently, Jack is involved in the delivery of Young Lives' third Ethiopia school survey and Young Lives' research support to the Ministry of Education to improve the design and implementation of pre-primary education in Ethiopia.

Jessica L. Roth is the Research Assistant to Sharon Lynn Kagan at the National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) at Teachers College, Columbia University. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Arts in Narrative Psychology from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, with a minor in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Studies. In her time at NCCF, she contributed research and analysis in a number of areas including the cultural content of early learning and development standards, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programmes, international early childhood systems and infrastructure, and children's transition from preschool to kindergarten.

Shipra Sharma is currently Senior Project Associate with the Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development (CECED), Ambedkar University Delhi. Prior to this she was associated with Pratham Delhi Education Initiative. She has a Master's degree in Human Development and Childhood Studies from Lady Irwin College, Delhi University. Currently she is leading the technical assistance unit in CECED for providing technical policy and programme-related support on Early Childhood Education (ECE) to the states of West Bengal, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Specific areas of support include developing evidence-based strategies for the capacity building of functionaries of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS); curriculum restructuring and reviewing preparation of training modules and conduct of evidence-based training in the area of ECE with a view to bridge the gap between research and practice.

Antonia Simon is a researcher and programme leader of the MSc Systematic Reviews for Social Policy and Practice. She has extensive experience of undertaking and managing mixed-methods

research projects involving children and families. She has over 20 years' experience of analysing official statistics, administrative, cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Additionally she leads systematic review projects. Most recently, she led a research study examining the provision and usage of childcare in Britain (ESRC funded). Her research interests include the childcare and social care workforces, ECEC provision and usage, and child health and wellbeing, including food and poverty.

Mere Skerrett of Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Māhuta, Ngāti Unu, Ngāti Pīkiao and Ngāti Pākeko tribal groupings, (Indigenous to Aotearoa/New Zealand), is an enthusiastic supporter of the regeneration of indigenous languages, having dedicated much of her career to establishing and working in Kōhanga Reo (Māori language nests) and Kura Kaupapa Māori (the schooling extension of Kōhanga Reo). She is also interested in equity issues as they relate to Māori as Tāngata Whenua (the people of the land), women's issues, children's rights and social justice. She is also an applied linguist and keen to grow the spaces at the interface between indigenes and their colonial counterparts in counter-colonial contexts. A recipient of numerous awards, her most recent is the Te Pā Harakeke Award of commitment to Kāi Tahu (South Island tribal grouping) whānau and leadership in te reo Māori in 2015. She is currently a Senior Lecturer, Victoria University of Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Anne B. Smith[†], Emeritus Professor at the University of Otago College of Education, passed away after a short illness not long after she submitted her chapter for this *Handbook*. She had a long and distinguished career spanning four decades of research and vigorous policy advocacy for children and their families in Aotearoa/New Zealand. She founded the Children's Issues Centre at the University of Otago New Zealand and was its Director from 1995 to 2006. She was the recipient of numerous research and community awards. Her books include *Understanding Children and Childhood: A New Zealand Perspective* (5th edition, Bridget Williams Books, 2013); and (with colleagues) *Children's Voices, Research Policy and Practice* (Pearson, 2000); *What does it mean for children to be citizens? International perspectives; Learning in the Making: Disposition and Design in Early Education* (Sense Publishers, 2010); and *Children's Rights: Towards Social Justice* (Momentum Press, 2016).

Dawn Tankersley, Ed.D., has worked as an early childhood education consultant and program specialist for the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) and for Open Society Foundations/Institute (OSF/OSI) for the last twenty years as a trainer, program advisor, researcher, and materials developer in Central/Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and South America on the topics of quality early childhood care and education, respect for diversity, bilingual education, and social justice. She is the lead author on many of ISSA's materials pertaining to the *ISSA Principles of Quality Pedagogy* as well as ISSA's recent publication, *A Quality Framework for Early Childhood Practice in Services for Children Under Three Years of Age*.

Zorica Trikić is a Psychologist and holds a Master's degree in Education and Human Resources Development. She has more than 25 years' experience in the early years sector, working with children, parents, communities, educators, early childhood development professionals and policymakers with a special focus on the most vulnerable groups, especially Romani children. She has experience in developing training and professional development programmes, with a special focus on quality in early childhood services, respect for diversity and social justice issues. She has also participated in the development of different policy reports and by-laws, as well as in international working groups. Since 2014, Zorica

has been Senior Program Manager at ISSA (International Step by Step Association) where she is in charge of several ISSA initiatives such as Embracing Diversity, the early childhood development response to immigrant and refugee crises, and building the capacity of home visitors through Supporting Families for Young Children's Wellbeing: Resource Modules for Home Visitors.

Michel Vandenbroeck is Head of Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Ghent University, Belgium (<http://www.ugent.be/pp/swsp/en>). In collaboration with the Centre for Innovation in the Early Years (www.vbjk.be), he conducted many innovative projects, including professional development projects on diversity in early childhood care and education. His current research is on family policies and early childhood education policy and practice, with a particular focus on issues of diversity and processes of inclusion and exclusion. The voices of children and families with migrant histories and families living in poverty in both childcare and kindergarten are a recurrent theme in his studies.

Jingying Wang is a PhD student at the University of Hong Kong, where she is studying educational policy development and implementation in Chinese societies. Her research interests lie in early childhood education, primary education and the sociology of education.

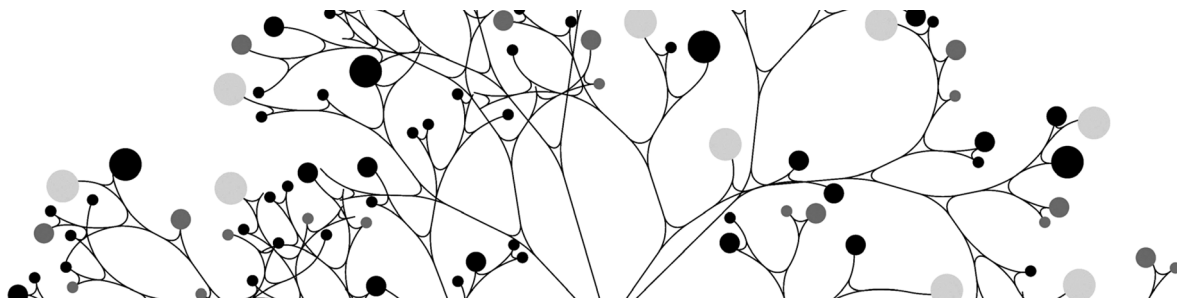
Martin Woodhead is Emeritus Professor of Childhood Studies at The Open University, where he was based from 1977–2013 and pioneered interdisciplinary teaching in Childhood and Youth Studies. International policy studies in early childhood has always been one of his specialist interests, beginning with a major report for the Council of Europe in the 1970s. More recently he was Special Advisor to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in preparation of General Comment 7: Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood (2005) and led on the preparation of the topic guide 'Early Childhood Development: Delivering Intersectoral Policies, Programmes and Services in Low Resource Settings' (2014). Martin joined the Young Lives study based at the University of Oxford in 2005 and has contributed to the development of child-focused survey methods, qualitative research, early childhood and school-based research, including the work reported in this handbook. Martin's extensive publications can be found at <http://oro.open.ac.uk/view/person/mw24.html>.

Christine Woodrow is Senior Researcher in the Centre for Educational Research at Western Sydney University, Australia. Her work is keenly focused on issues associated with quality early childhood education in local, national and international contexts. Using this lens she conducts research on leadership, professional identity, pedagogies for equity, parent engagement, early childhood provision in high-poverty communities and analysis of policies that frame these endeavours. She has led a number of research projects focused on equity and community capacity building in outer western Sydney and in highly disadvantaged contexts in northern and central Chile. Much of her policy analysis work is undertaken in collaboration with Frances Press, with whom she has written a number of articles on the commodification of early childhood and its implications for children, families and the community.

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Introduction: Exploring the Landscape of Early Childhood Policy

Linda Miller, Claire Cameron,
Carmen Dalli and Nancy Barbour

This *Handbook* draws together recent and current research and analytical commentaries relevant to the field of early childhood (EC) policy. Since the turn of the twenty-first century EC policy has become an area of increasing priority for governments globally, and this volume makes a contribution to understanding the scope, scale and diversity of approaches taken by different jurisdictions. The chapters are authored by established policy scholars and authoritative policy actors as well as emergent policy researchers. In inviting contributors for this *Handbook* we had a number of objectives. We wanted to ensure the *Handbook* was truly ‘global’ in that it represented perspectives from across the world and beyond the global ‘north’. Second, we were concerned to reach beyond established figures in the field of early childhood research and give space to emerging talent, such as recent doctoral researchers and architects of innovative practice. For us as editors, ‘policy’ is what happens in practice as much as what is written in policy documents. Third, we wanted

to question what ‘Early Childhood Education and Care’ (ECEC) actually means – and ‘looks like’ – in different parts of the world and thus open up discussion and thinking about ECEC services and their purposes, such as support for families in communities, and to consider emerging issues such as ‘superdiversity’, the increasing ‘marketisation’ of ECEC services and the impact of supranational organisations – like the OECD – on global discourses about ECEC.

For these reasons we adopted a range of methods in finding contributors. Some authors were known to us as colleagues, as co-researchers or as members of the broader early childhood community whose work we had encountered in our professional lives, including at international conferences, often as keynote speakers. Others we deliberately sought out as well-known authors working on major trends and key areas of interest in ECEC. We asked some early career researchers whose work we felt should be reaching a wider audience. We also made sure that we located

experts who were writing about the gaps we discovered in the ECEC policy literature.

As a result, we have a very rich global representation of ideas, practices, theoretical perspectives, experiences and debating points relevant to the development of early childhood policy. No doubt there will still be some omissions but we are delighted that early childhood policy and practice in all continents (beyond Antarctica) are represented in the *Handbook*. Countries in Asia such as Myanmar (Ang), Hong Kong (Li and Wang), China (Chen), South Korea (Lee and Kang), Pakistan (Neuman) and India (Kaul and Sharma) are represented either as case studies or within thematic regional discussions. From Africa we have important discussions of Ethiopian and South African early childhood and family support practices (Woodhead, Rossiter, Dawes and Pankhurst; Harris and Phatudi; Alsopp, Diamini, Mamabula, Jacobs and Fulcher). There are six chapters principally or partly concerned with early childhood policy and practice in North America (Jones; Brown; Horm, Yazijian, Kennel and Stringfellow; Barnett and Nores; Mathers and Ereky-Stevens; Kagan, Gomez and Roth), and, again, they raise issues of cross-country learning or set the reported research in comparative contexts. In all chapters, the issues discussed stimulate ideas for other countries worldwide.

Two contributions address the South American context: Adlerstein and Pardo, whose focus is on Latin American and Caribbean countries; and Neuman, whose discussion of low- and medium-resource countries includes Zanzibar and Jamaica, as well as Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, thus contributing further to the discussion in Asia.

Europe is a significant leader in terms of early childhood policy and practice and that is reflected in the *Handbook*, with 14 chapters represented here, discussing policy (Milotay) and practices from Poland (Gawlicz) to England (Cameron, Dalli and Simon; Eisenstadt; Moss; Mathers and Ereky-Stevens; Lloyd; O'Sullivan; Jackson and Hollingworth) and from France and

Sweden (Kaga), Denmark (Jensen), Germany (Klinkhammer and Riedel) and Belgium (Vandenbroeck; Peeters and Peleman).

Finally, we are pleased to include five chapters from countries in Oceania covering developments in Australia and New Zealand (Woodrow and Press; May; Cameron, Dalli and Simon; Skerrett; Mathers and Ereky-Stevens).

Some chapters are highly international such as those by Young; Tankersley, Ionescu and Trikić; and Smith, which defy classification by continent. All contributors were asked to reflect, where possible, on the applicability of their findings in other country, or resource contexts.

We have sought to combine chapters outlining results of major empirical studies with others that are authoritative literature reviews, collaborative descriptive accounts, models of policymaking and the relationships of policy with research and practice. This variety reflects the variable state of research and policymaking across countries, and the varying ways in which new knowledge is acquired and adopted in action. Each chapter in the *Handbook* stands as a work in its own right; as editors we cannot guarantee complete coherence across the book and the authors are solely responsible for the views expressed. Readers will find that some chapters present interestingly different takes on similar topics, for example what 'early childhood services' or 'readiness for school' might mean in different cultures and contexts. We believe this range of perspectives enables a comprehensive and balanced approach.

WHY EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY?

Growing Participation in ECEC

Why a *Handbook* on Early Childhood Policy? Since the turn of the new millennium participation rates in early childhood services have mushroomed all around the world

with a corresponding expansion of early childhood services, albeit in different forms and of varying quality. In the global ‘north’, changes in social, economic and labour market conditions since the 1980s have transformed the way that families structure their lives, making shared care between home and ECEC services the new context of children’s lives (Dencik, 1989; Singer, 1993). OECD (2016a) figures show that across its member states around 35% of children aged 0–2 years participate in some form of ECEC with a mean average rate increase of five percentage points between 2006 and 2014. For children aged 3 to 5 years, the average enrolment rate is 83.8% across all OECD countries, with some countries having a near universal enrolment rate of 98% or above. Such growing participation rates create challenging policy demands on governments and civil societies to provide the necessary infrastructural arrangements that support the provision of high quality ECEC services.

The Early Years as the Foundation for Later Well-Being

The expansion of enrolment, especially for the younger age groups, stems also from a strengthening discourse of the importance of the earliest stages of life for subsequent development, as many chapters in this *Handbook* show (see also Rebello Britto, Engle and Super, 2013). The OECD (2012) Starting Strong ‘toolbox’ refers to the potential for better child well-being, better foundations for lifelong learning, more equitable child outcomes, more female labour market participation and so reductions in family poverty, and better social and economic development in societies – all as a result of young children’s participation in *high quality* early childhood education and care services. Beyond the OECD, early childhood development and quality lifelong education is a significant target (Goal 4) among the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (United

Nations, 2016). Early education that prepares children for primary school, especially for children who are most at ‘risk of being left behind’ (p. 220), is seen as a cost-effective strategy for eliminating disadvantage and contributing to economic and societal development (Woodhead, Rossiter, Dawes and Pankhurst, this Volume). Governments thus increasingly see ECEC as an investment for the future, tied to economic growth and well-being as well as the development of human capital.

ECEC as Investment for Economic Productivity

This link between children’s care and education and the economic productivity of nations has made the provision of ECEC a national and global priority, shifting responsibility for very young children out of the private space of the family to the public and global space. Rebello Britto et al. (2013) describe this global trend as ‘positive and promising’ (p. 3) but argue that the situation for a majority of young children and families globally ‘is not good’ (p. 3), as we will see in some of the chapters that follow.

Diverse Range of ECEC Services

The increasingly diverse and complex socio-economic and political contexts of ECEC services is very evident in this *Handbook*. Some chapters describe innovative approaches to these issues, including reaching marginalised children and families. Others suggest that low resource does not necessarily mean low quality ECEC, although when resources are low deciding priorities is a challenge. It is clear that some obstacles remain to achieving equitable services, in particular for low-income families and in low-middle-income and ‘fragile states’ defined by the OECD (2016b) as susceptible to political and economic instability, where policy frameworks have insufficient capacity

or are slow to develop. Challenges to policy frameworks are also evident in more economically and politically stable countries, with many reporting major shifts in the ECEC policy landscape through a massive increase in privately owned EC services creating what some call a mixed economy of childcare. In both cases a common theme is the call for systemic approaches to policy, whether this be government-led or in partnership with private providers.

Aim of the Handbook

In this *Handbook* we have aimed for an international and global reach which, although not comprehensive, aims to bring critical attention to the nature of ECEC policy and its relationship to research, service provision, and practice. Simpson and Connor use the term ‘policy literacy’ (2011, p. 2) to argue that it is essential for those committed to working both with and for ECEC services to achieve an awareness of policy and its implications for services and practice in order to understand its impact on the lives of children and families. This would include asking key questions such as: Whose interests does a particular policy ultimately serve? Whose viewpoints are represented (or ignored)? What are the alternatives? How can existing policy be challenged? What is included and what is missed out? (Simpson and Connor, 2011). Our aim is that by including multiple perspectives, this *Handbook* enables readers to take a critical perspective to some of these questions.

Organisation of the Handbook

Content preview

The *Handbook* is organised into five Parts. **Part I** highlights the important relationships between research, policy and practice. As we have noted already, policy interest in ECEC has been growing worldwide and

chapters in Part I document policy levers and drivers for improving services through 11 country or regional case studies. Chapters in Part I serve to remind us of significant common concerns across markedly different local contexts: about quality of services and equity of access; about cost and affordability; and about the balance in focus between care and education in the services on offer. They also highlight that shifts in policy directions are strongly embedded in societal views of children and childhood, as much as they also reflect the political, historical and economic realities that vary tremendously across different regions of the globe, and sometimes within country borders.

Part II addresses critical issues related to ensuring that equitable and high quality ECEC services are accessible to vulnerable children and their parents across different cultures and contexts. We see that national policy frameworks are an important tool for creating enabling spaces for the development and implementation of ECEC services but also that innovative, localised and low-resource interventions have an important role to play. The chapters cover well-established models of ECEC and new initiatives. Themes across chapters include the ‘schoolification’ of ECEC, ECEC as investment in human capital, the funding challenge, and lack of intersectoral coordination.

Part III examines various ways in which ECEC services perform an important function in supporting families. From South Africa we look at how the Isibindi model is working within the communities to help rebuild family life in the face of multiple losses caused by HIV/AIDS. The model of integrating the concepts of care, support and upbringing, as well as broad-based education as a framework for ECEC, is one at the heart of Children’s Centres in England. Chapters in Part III also discuss the position of children in foster care, and the importance of monitoring and supporting good health as a foundation for children’s all-round development.

Part IV presents perspectives on participation, rights and diversity in ECEC. Young children have participation rights through the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), to which almost all countries worldwide are signatories. However, signing and enacting policy to ensure these important rights for children are not the same. Social, economic and cultural climates have influenced how the UNCRC has been interpreted and how countries have responded to the needs of children and families. Likewise, there has been growing recognition of the increasingly diverse societies that we live in and the need for ECEC practice to reflect the diversity of childhoods in order to foster social cohesion.

Finally, **Part V**, 'Future Directions for Early Childhood Policy', explores the knowledge needed to enact informed policy development and protect and improve the lives of children and families. Chapters in Part V explore the economic benefits of ECEC, the lack of access to services for the very youngest children, the possibility of a common framework to define the quality of ECEC services, and whether traditional research agendas and methods will garner the kind of data we need to make informed policy decisions.

PART I THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE: REGIONAL AND COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

Part I is made up of 11 regional or country case studies of ECEC policy spanning six continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America and Oceania. Collectively, they highlight the important relationship between research and policy and the role of socio-political and historical forces in shaping that relationship. A number of discourses connect the chapters, including the focus of ECEC policy on the early years as a time to promote children's overall health

and well-being as well as readiness for school; a time of investment for later economic well-being; a time of promise as well as vulnerability. Instrumentally positioning children as beings-yet-to-become, these discourses compete with others that view children as rights-bearers and 'citizens now', influenced by the global child's rights movement and the policy initiatives of supranational organisations like the World Bank and UNESCO. The discourse of quality, and its frequent competitor quantity, appears in each chapter, accompanying concerns about who pays, in what proportion and with what gain.

Chapter 1 takes us to the policy formation context within the European Union. Milotay offers an 'insider' view of 'evidence-based' policymaking with ECEC policy as the main example. Unpacking the complexity of the term 'evidence-based', Milotay explains that the process of evidence-based policymaking is more complex than a strictly linear relationship between evidence and policy. She argues for more nuanced understandings such as 'evidence-aware', 'evidence-informed', 'evidence-inspired' policymaking, and that there may be no clear 'right' or 'wrong' path to follow.

Chapter 2 illustrates the complexities of ECEC policymaking in the very different social and geo-political context of India. Positioning current policy developments against a critical historical analysis of ECEC provisions across this vast and diverse country, Kaul and Sharma highlight the locally designed and nationally implemented Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programmes as the dominant model of ECEC in India. With an improved economy, in contemporary India young children are increasingly positioned as a human resource and as rights bearers, yet the majority of them are still affected by poverty and inadequate health and educational services. In the context of this challenging policy-practice divide, the authors argue for an overall policy infrastructure that goes beyond the single-window approach of ICDS

and delivers quality, affordable ECEC that meets rising parental expectations for quality education.

Returning to the global ‘north’, in Chapter 3 Klinkhammer and Riedel argue that Germany has undergone a fundamental shift of social policy from a familialist welfare approach to a focus on social investment and growing human capital – including female labour market participation and seeing children as future citizens. The policy shift has resulted in an instrumental discourse about ECEC as the ‘catch-all’ solution to increasing female labour market participation, and improving the educational chances of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The authors question the hidden price of the policy shift as undermining the three traditional principles of German ECEC provision: a balance of upbringing (*Erziehung*), education (*Bildung*) and care (*Betreuung*). Germany’s disappointing PISA ranking in 2005 is credited with contributing to an increasing schoolification within ECEC. They emphasise the need to be vigilant against the social investment ideology and the accompanying ‘institutionalisation’ of children, proposing that the social-pedagogical tradition of ECEC in Germany can be a useful alternative.

In Chapter 4, Jensen offers a case study of an integrated, universal approach to early childhood education and care in Denmark, and illustrates a distinctively Danish approach to conceptualising practice, as seen through practitioners’ interpretations of videos of practice in three countries – England, Hungary and Denmark. Jensen uses the metaphor of a ‘mud-child’ to envision the Danish ideal of a child as an active co-participant in ECEC services, who is free, active and ‘can find expression most readily outdoors’ (p. 79). However, Jensen finds that this ideal is under threat from a policy-led invasion that is elevating the status of more prescriptive intervention programmes and perhaps sidelining the professional judgement of highly trained practitioners.

In Chapter 5 Kaga provides a comparative analysis of the relationship between ECEC and primary school policy in Sweden and France through the lenses of globalised discourses about ECEC and different views of children and childhood. Kaga’s reflections on the impact of globalised educational evaluations such as PISA on workforce policies in Sweden provide a link back to themes introduced in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 6 the focus shifts to East Asia and the Asia Pacific region which includes countries which the OECD (2013) classifies as ‘fragile’. Ang offers a critical examination of the role of supranational organisations like the United Nations, the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF in making services for children a worldwide policy priority. She challenges us to contemplate how constructions of children’s place in the world reflect cultural and societal worldviews and the need for debate around such constructions and their implications at the level of children’s lived experience. Focusing on Myanmar as a case study, Ang highlights that ECEC policy is a multi-dimensional issue and poses considerable structural as well as conceptual challenges, particularly in resource-limited fragile nations; she argues that equitable ECEC policy requires innovative approaches and continued open debate.

Remaining in Asia, Chapter 7 takes us to Hong Kong and the challenges faced by the government in introducing three years of free early childhood education in a completely privatised market. Li and Wang provide a fascinating insight into how different economic ideologies shape perceptions of what is possible, fair and equitable, not only conceptually but also at the level of policy infrastructure and practical implementation, to ensure what they call the ‘3A2S’ framework: affordability, accessibility, accountability, sustainability and social justice of early childhood education services. Li and Wang explore the likely challenges to the implementation of the new policy as its financial implications play out in practice; they call for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of its impact.

Chapter 8 shifts us geographically to the United States and focuses on historical and more recent ECEC policy as it relates to children under 5 and families living in poverty; the chapter documents changing attitudes and subsequent policy responses over time. Whilst recognising the achievements of some key early intervention programmes such as the Perry Preschool Project, Head Start and Early Head Start, Jones critiques a fragmented system at federal, state and city levels which has resulted in ‘conflicting multiple regulatory systems, separate technical assistance systems, disconnected research agendas, overlapping segmentation of the populations to be served, and wide variability in state certifications [for teachers]’ (p. 141). She argues for a more coherent approach to early childhood services to address the needs of young children and their families.

In Chapter 9 we change continent to Oceania and a first-person account of policy advocacy and change in Aotearoa New Zealand. As a long-time activist, ex-childcare worker, university professor and policy actor, May traces the shifts in EC policy in this small and innovative country which was among the first to move away from a split system of care and education provision and subsequently developed an EC curriculum document – *Te Whāriki* – that has drawn worldwide attention. Along the way, May shows that in New Zealand, as elsewhere, issues of systemic quality infrastructure continue to be a concern, with recent changes to regulations relating to staff qualifications, and ongoing privatisation of the ECEC sector being contemporary challenges.

Returning to East Asia, Chapter 10 is a wide-ranging account of the evolving nature of ECEC policy in China – including the supplanting of the one-child policy with a two-child policy from January 2016. We get a sense of the challenges faced by central and local governments in building a strong infrastructure for quality ECEC provision that is equitably accessible to all children in a country as vast and as populous as China,

including large expanses of impoverished rural areas. In the new social context of the two-child policy, the expected increase in the number of children is likely to further exacerbate existing issues of quantity and quality of ECEC services. Chen argues for a strengthened policy infrastructure, increased funding allocations, a focus on quality assurance and making social equity a top priority.

Part I concludes with a chapter by Adlerstein and Pardo (Chapter 11) analysing the ‘highlights and shadows’ in ECEC policy in Latin America and the Caribbean. Echoing the situation in many other countries, the highlights include the enthusiastic pursuit of strategies to expand ECEC services, strongly supported by supranational organisations; the expansion of coverage of both formal and community-based services, and growing enrolment figures; as well as the development of curricular frameworks and teacher education models. Among the shadows are fragmented policy responsibilities across different governmental agencies, a split-system model of ECEC provision with welfare-style ‘care’ settings for 0–3-year-olds, and a more learning-focused and schoolified provision for 4–5-year-olds, negatively impacting on playful and holistic approaches. Adlerstein and Pardo call for the breaking down of ‘bureaucratic silos’ and ‘service duplication’, and the need to build a systematic database for evidence-based policymaking – again a frequent plea across the chapters.

PART II EQUITABLE EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES: INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE CHILDREN’S LIFE CHANCES

The chapters in Part II are generally framed in terms of intervention programmes to provide education and care, preferably of high quality, to vulnerable and disadvantaged children and their families. Preparation and ‘readiness for school’ is an underlying theme

and for Brown (Chapter 17) is the main focus. We see what this means in diverse contexts through case studies illustrating different approaches to early intervention ranging from a bold project in Ethiopia where the expansion of education has been from a very low base (Woodhead et al., Chapter 13) to an account of a well-established programme in the United States (Horm et al., Chapter 18). Such diversity illustrates how equitable services in ECEC can mean very different things in different country contexts; for example, terms such as ‘preschool’, ‘pre-primary’, ‘readiness for school’ ‘workforce training’ are differently conceived and interpreted – as indeed are the terms ‘education’ and ‘care’. Equity issues are raised around gender, private and public services, and the life chances of children from low- and high-income families. The type, extent and quality of services are closely linked to resources and policy action and inaction but the challenges of evaluating outcomes and impact remain.

The first two chapters in this Part feature South Africa (Harris and Phatudi) and Ethiopia (Woodhead et al.). In Chapter 12, Harris and Phatudi acknowledge that South Africa is a country with a legacy of inequity due to the apartheid system which marginalised its majority population and excluded them from ECEC and primary education programmes. Their chapter focuses on the implications of both community-based initiatives and national policies. Intervention strategies include home visiting in rural areas, parent support focused on health, nutrition and educational stimulation, and training for practitioners/community workers. The authors critique five early childhood programmes featuring innovative approaches but note the challenge of evaluating outcomes and of taking these programmes to scale.

In Chapter 13, Woodhead, Rossiter, Dawes and Pankhurst report on an ambitious project in Ethiopia which is part of a larger Young Lives Project (2010) to scale up early learning across the country via ECEC programmes.

Starting from a very low base the goal is to move from around 25% enrolment in 2013 to 80% by 2020. The authors name the challenges facing ECEC services: ensuring good governance, sufficient resources, well-trained and remunerated teachers and quality, age appropriateness and child-centred curricula and pedagogy.

The message from Neuman in Chapter 14 is that in developing countries, young children who would most likely benefit from quality early childhood development opportunities are the least likely to receive them. Three policy challenges have global resonance: reaching the most disadvantaged with quality services; building bridges across sectors; and filling the funding gap. Neuman profiles innovative solutions to providing ECEC in four developing countries: Kyrgyzstan, Zanzibar, Jamaica and Pakistan, thus offering an optimistic outlook contending that low cost does not necessarily mean low quality.

The historical split in many countries between education and care is described in Chapter 15 by Moss as ‘bequeath[ing] a dysfunctional legacy’ (p. 256); intersectoral coordination is seen as a key factor in achieving quality in ECEC. The chapter asks, ‘What place for “care” in early childhood policy?’ and is framed through the contrasting cases of England and Sweden. Sweden has a fully integrated early childhood system staffed by graduate pre-school teachers and qualified assistants with opening hours that support working parents. Parental fees are a small percentage of the public funding. The chapter explores why, in England, despite the efforts of a Labour Government between 1997 and 2010, integration stalled and confusion continued over the terms *childcare* and *education* in policy documents, in the press and in general usage. The chapter concludes by offering four policy points as a basis for discussion.

Poverty and low-income families are not just the province of developing and low-resource countries. In Chapter 16, in a case study of ECEC in England, Lloyd offers an analysis of barriers that hinder access to

ECEC for children growing up in poverty and a critique of the policy instruments for delivery. The chapter details three policy rationales for the justification of ECEC in England: *social mobility* reflected in publicly funded services; *economic wellbeing*; and *social justice* to eliminate inequalities, underachievement and to support inclusion. Lloyd identifies the challenges for equitable access to quality provision arising from the increasingly marketised early childhood system and highlights the need to revisit the role and location of ECEC within social welfare provision.

In Chapter 17, Brown offers a comprehensive account of school readiness as it has evolved in the United States. He critiques four frameworks through which school readiness can be understood: nativist, empiricist, social constructionist and interactionist. Unpacking the complexity of the construct he recognises ‘the multiple factors that affect children’s growth and learning across all of their developmental domains during childhood and later life’ (p. 287). Whilst acknowledging that large numbers of children enter school lacking the academic and/or social skills needed for later school success, the chapter concludes that school readiness is being narrowly framed by policymakers and other stakeholders and needs to be rethought in the context of cultural and global contexts.

Chapter 18 closes Part II with an ‘insider’ view of Educare, a comprehensive early childhood education programme model in the United States designed to meet the needs of young children and their families who live in poverty. The authors, Horm, Yazejian, Kennel and Stringfellow, include a co-founder of the programme, an administrator and two evaluators. The Educare programme builds on the well-established Head Start programme but with enhanced funding. The chapter describes a range of strategies to effect policy changes that support best practices in early childhood education at the city, state and national levels which could provide insights for countries in the earlier stages of programme development. These include: the

power of public–private partnerships, disseminating research and identifying policy barriers. The authors end on a cautionary note, that funding and systems are needed to support programme coherence, quality and access.

PART III EXTENDING PRACTICE: THE ROLE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES IN FAMILY SUPPORT

The chapters in Part III examine, in various ways, the contribution of early childhood services to addressing social disadvantage and in particular the role of services in supporting families to do so. It is increasingly recognised that to realise the aim of supporting early childhood development as a holistic, multidimensional phenomenon, embracing health, cognitive and social development, and children’s place as citizens of communities, services must engage with families. It is no longer enough to focus just on cognitive outcomes through education at age 3 or 4; nor to provide ‘care’ that suits labour market participation. Young children benefit most when services are integrated, and offer, in addition, critical advice and support that challenges, encourages and guides what happens in the home environment too.

In Chapter 22, Eisenstadt documents an important, perhaps seismic, shift in English policy for young children and families: the introduction by government of area-based integrated care, education and support services aimed at families with young children living in areas of acute social disadvantage, but open to all to avoid stigmatisation of attendees. A national evaluation found that these programmes took a long time to develop, and were subject to changes of governmental direction, but did show benefits for children and positive effects on parents’ behaviour to support children’s development.

Young, in Chapter 23, focuses on the role of health services in promoting children’s wellbeing. She analyses the neuroscientific

background to a well-known epithet in educational research and policy, that early adversity predicts poor health outcomes, and that caring, responsive adults, who foreground communication skills, can do much to alleviate disadvantage if they engage with young children and their parents. She advocates a 'life course health development model' (p. 386), which, in much the same way as the English programmes Eisenstadt describes, address early development from multiple angles, combining health promotion, education and social protection.

O'Sullivan puts the theory into practice in Chapter 19. She describes a new, social enterprise model of 'childcare' which explicitly addresses social disadvantage, by offering nearly half their places free of charge and by having high expectations of all children and of home learning. Knowing that previous research had shown that childcare practitioners often unwittingly had a negative bias against parents living in poverty, O'Sullivan's model puts considerable emphasis on a curriculum of stretching, encouraging and celebrating learning, literacy, language and the expressive arts, all in contexts of nurturing friendship across settings representing high levels of cultural and socio-economic diversity.

In Chapter 20, Allsopp, Dlamini, Jacobs, Mamabolo and Fulcher discuss their work to develop family support practices in South Africa in the particular context where high levels of illness and death of parents through HIV/AIDS, leave the care of children to peers and grandparents. The chapter discusses the work of a community-based care and protection initiative by childcare workers, called *Isibindi (Courage)*, in providing lifespace, in situ counselling, practical help with daily activities, and play. Through 'being, interpreting and doing' (p. 350), Isibindi workers enable carers and communities to work through grief, take responsibility for their health status, and for children's rights to schooling, and for practising parenting without physical chastisement of children.

In all these examples, there are common principles: of the importance of meaningful adult-child and child-child relationships; of the power of formative early development; and of children 'owning' their learning through play and discovery. Also evident is the crucial importance of the highly skilled, finely tuned judgements of practitioners to facilitate both optimal development and family engagement.

Among the most disadvantaged groups of children are those who have been abused and neglected and are looked after by the state. In Chapter 21, Jackson and Hollingworth discuss the extreme paucity of information about the social and educational lives of young children in such alternative care, which in England is family-based foster care. Such care is often highly unstable, as young children can be either adopted or returned to birth parents. Despite this being a crucial developmental period, the quality of children's experience is often given little attention over and above being 'safe'. The authors attribute much of this compartmentalised thinking to conceptual, practical and policy splits between 'care' on the one hand and 'education' on the other – splits which have been endemic in the early childhood education and care sphere, while children clearly need both to thrive. By including these examples of family support in wider contexts than just children attending early education and care services, we can begin to imagine alternatives and possibilities for reconfiguration and conceptual translation.

PART IV PARTICIPATION, RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY

The United Nations issued a sea-changing document in 1989 after many years of deliberation. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) took a clear stand about the rights of all children in terms of provision, protection and participation

throughout the document's 54 articles. Several of the UNCRC articles (e.g. 12, 13 and 14) specifically speak to children's rights to have their own perceptions, opinions and thought processes, while articles 29 and 30 address children's right to both language and religious diversity. With the addition of General Comment 7 from the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2005, the specific needs and concerns of children from birth to age 8 were spelled out, making the document more clearly inclusive of young children and their particular characteristics. The image of young children that emerges from the reading of these documents is clearly one that considers the rights of children as actors, as individuals with agency, as decision-makers and as forces to be reckoned with in their own lives. The UNCRC provides a solid foundation for the collection of chapters in this Part that look at participation, rights and diversity. Each chapter has examined children's rights to be recognised, respected, protected and educated. And all of the chapters examine the diverse contexts in which we live.

In Chapter 27, Smith provides an in-depth discussion of the ways that UNCRC principles can be used to support services and policies for young children. She notes the challenges UNCRC presents to previously held notions regarding children's abilities to fully engage in discourse, idea sharing and other ways of expressing and constructing knowledge. She urges the reader to consider the paradigm of Childhood Studies, a more holistic approach to ECEC, as the pathway to supporting and enacting children's rights.

The history of how Māori children have lost access to their language through colonialism and educational policies that do not respect their culture and heritage gives yet another perspective on children's rights. In Chapter 26, Skerrett provides a fascinating history of the demise of the Māori language in New Zealand and the beginnings of the Kōhanga Reo movement to revive and save the language. She shares how a non-linguist

missionary, Thomas Kendall, created a phonology of the Māori language in the 1800s that provided the basis for a tool for early childhood teachers, many years later, to work with young Māori children. Still needed are policies that support the co-existence of both English and Māori languages in educational settings at all levels.

Vandenbroeck takes yet another view of language learning in ECEC settings and what he calls '(super)diversity' in Chapter 24. He cites the example of classrooms where multiple languages are present, rather than just one or two languages, as an opportunity for pedagogy rather than as a problem to overcome. He challenges a common misunderstanding that suggests there is some knowable norm to which children and families must conform for group-based learning or family support. He warns against the myth of homogeneity while working with children in classrooms or families in support settings. Instead he urges teachers and support group facilitators to view the increasing heterogeneity in ECEC services and families as a platform for understanding and appreciating differences.

Woven throughout the UNCRC document is the subtle expectation that democracy will prevail in the settings in which children live, and in Chapter 25 Gawlicz describes both theoretical and educational practices that embody democratic principles (e.g. Dewey, Bloom, Malaguzzi) as well as actual democratic practices in Poland. As with any theory in practice, the social and political context colours how and what is practised. Gawlicz tells the story of ECEC in a Poland that has previously focused on school readiness and behavioural approaches, predicated on an image of the child as having limited agency and coming to education without previous funds of knowledge. Gawlicz offers an analysis of interviews with teachers who are attempting to embrace democratic practices and explores their ability to overcome obstacles to this end.

In Chapter 28, Lee and Kang's discussion of conditions for North Korean refugee

children challenges so many of the rights of children stated in the UNCRC: to be safe and cared for, to get an education, to be with their families, to have a homeland, among others. The authors tell the tale of children who move from one repressive country to another searching for relief, only to be denied the right to live and be educated as future citizens in those countries. They note the challenges of social connections, food and exploitation. From an ecological systems perspective, their discussion can be seen to highlight the absence of those outer, protective social circles of people that most children take for granted. The issues in the chapter – that seem so critical – are overshadowed by the world's attention on the nuclear threats posed by North Korea. Meanwhile, there are clearly humanitarian threats of which we all should take note.

PART V FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY

The chapters in Part V take us a step back from the case studies, examination of specific interventions, the inclusion of family support and the rights and participation of children, and bring us to some questions about what we need in order to engage in policymaking to improve the lives of all children and families. As in Part I, the complexity of policy development is the theme that links the different chapters in this section. A series of questions about the process of developing informed and relevant policy are engendered: Who gets to inform policymaking? Are all perspectives represented in the process? Do we have the information necessary to help develop policies for young children or are there areas of research needed? Are there infrastructures to be developed in order to engage in the kind of necessary work to improve the lives of families and children around the world?

More specific questions emerge as a result of reading individual chapters. What do we

know about the dimensions of quality in ECEC settings? Have we done the research necessary to identify those dimensions across cultures? Across various economic exigencies? Across the age range of children attending services? Do we have the kind of ECEC workforce to support quality across the age ranges? Do the European Quality Framework and ISSA Quality Framework identify these qualities? Or do we need to develop a framework for considering the many variables defining various policy arenas? There are both process (e.g. appropriate child–adult interactions, curricular choices) and structural (e.g. number of children in the preschool group, professional development of the ECEC professional) issues to consider.

Policy and practice related to children from birth to age 3 has been a neglected area. Two chapters in this Part take on the complex process of ensuring that access to high quality services for these very young children is an important focus of policy agendas. In Chapter 33, Tankersley, Ionescu and Trikić explore five key policy levers and how they can be used to strengthen the quality of programmes for young children, particularly those under 3 years. They do this by examining how the *European Quality Framework on Early Childhood Education and Care* (EQF) was strengthened by ISSA's development of a *Quality Framework for Early Childhood Practices in Services for Children under Three Years of Age*. Through the development of this document, they fostered dialogue around quality and policy development for the very youngest population.

Mathers and Ereky-Stevens, in Chapter 30, comprehensively review international research on the impact of ECEC for children under 3 years of age. They find clear and important benefits of attendance at high quality early childhood settings, especially for cognitive learning, language skills, and – for socially disadvantaged children in particular – social and emotional development. They highlight that the significant features of high quality provision are: warm and

responsive adults who offer meaningful relationships and are focused on communicative skills; rich and complex play with peers; and opportunities for much physical activity. The policy implications focus on issues of access for children aged at least 2 and upwards, and high quality practitioner preparation and their ongoing learning.

In Chapter 29, Barnett and Nores take a slightly different approach to the consideration of quality by examining both the costs and benefits of providing high quality ECEC services. They argue that economic research has strong evidence to suggest that public investments (i.e. provided through public policy) yield high rates of return. In other words, there is powerful evidence to support the fact that provision of high quality services to young children, particularly from socially disadvantaged homes, results in positive life-long impacts. The emphases in their message are recurring themes in this *Handbook*: the importance of government policy and provision that focus on the quality of children's experiences; and the quality of practice by practitioners. The authors suggest that there is often a failure to translate knowledge about quality into policy and practice.

Woodrow and Press provide a different economic analysis of the provision of ECEC services in Chapter 32, as they explore the debate between 'privatization/marketization' and public investment in child-care services in Australia. They document the transformation of ECEC in Australia from publicly funded not-for-profit community-based services to a predominantly market-driven model of provision largely dominated by a publicly listed company called ABC Learning. They discuss the 'spectacular' failure of this company, the government response and the subsequent emergence of an alternative social venture model. They reflect on whether the framing of ECEC services as part of the agenda of women's right to participation in the workforce has had the unintended consequence of supporting the marketisation of childcare as a policy solution.

It is not possible to have high quality ECEC programme without a high quality ECEC workforce. For decades, the field has struggled to define both whether ECEC is/ is not a profession and what the professionalisation of the workforce might look like in terms of policy and practice. In Chapter 35, Cameron, Dalli and Simon compare the integration of the care and education workforces in New Zealand and England, looking at the struggles in terms of policy, politics and lack of political will to invest in early childhood. In part, this is a reflection of the origins of ECEC as a service for very young children – seen as the responsibility of the private domain of the family. It also reflects the connection of ECEC work to the work of women and its historically low status. The New Zealand workforce is highly integrated with unified training for work with children aged 0–5 years and pay parity with primary school teachers, yet even in this 'good news' context, there are signs of retrenchment in policy that remind us of the need for sector advocacy to maintain the gains achieved. This is certainly an example of the vicissitudes of policy.

In Chapter 34, Kagan, Gomez and Roth offer a comprehensive view of ECEC research foci and traditions over the years, looking for guidance that will make the research to policy pathway smoother and more productive. They acknowledge the significant contributions the social sciences have made toward informing policy development. Noting both the valuable contributions and the ongoing debates in the field, they propose a systems approach to research that will bring important sectors together and lead more logically to policy development. The authors note the perennial difficulty that scientists have had in communicating their work in an understandable, translatable form to those who develop policy.

Similar disconnects between research and policy are noted by Peeters and Peleman in Chapter 31. They take this one step further and focus on practice as well. The lack of

common language across these sectors, they say, makes these necessary connections difficult. They offer an example of how these connections can be made through looking at increasing the quality of the ECEC workforce.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from our broad review of the contents of this *Handbook* that a wealth of experience and expertise is contained within the chapters. In collating this sweeping account of the key arguments of the Parts, we have identified what we see as some important themes that signal the preoccupations of governments and communities within particular contexts, or matters that have captured global consciousness. We have identified issues of principled debate (such as public vs private ownership of ECEC services) and others where the concern is more operational than principled (like breaking down bureaucratic silos). In doing so, our hope is that this volume contributes to a better understanding of the scope and limitations of policy in ECEC and offers opportunities for cross-national learning and discussion.

All the chapters show that ECEC policy is not something that happens in closeted offices separate from people's lived reality; often it arises from that lived reality. Policy may be the product of sustained advocacy or the response to a sudden situation that requires immediate attention. Policy can also arise from big-picture drivers and global movements; or from ideological shifts in local contexts. Policy is dynamic and affects services and lives. It creates change, some of which is not always intended. 'Policy' also exists in the non-written and non-bureaucratic form, represented by what happens in practice and by established traditions of practice. Policy can come about without the proper investigation or vetting that it deserves. For all these reasons, ECEC policy

is complex and challenging and deserves our careful attention.

Contemplating this complexity, it is also very clear that we are in no way 'out of the woods' with regards to endemic issues of quality, equity and funding across different settings of all kinds: cultural, socio-economic, political. Moreover, there are new challenges of privatisation/marketisation; increased expectations of returns on investment and calls for accountability; a heightened discourse of schoolification and links to global assessment measures. The issue of human capital development is moving in strongly to change the big picture of ECEC policy, leading to a more instrumental view of what ECEC services should be doing. These all compound existing complexities and are worthy of further consideration as they may point to future directions in early childhood policy.

We will return to these and other themes in the concluding chapter of this *Handbook*. We invite you now to delve into the *Handbook* and engage in your own reflections.

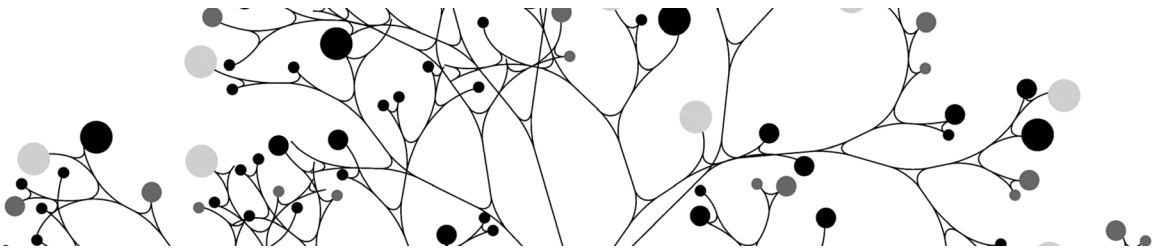
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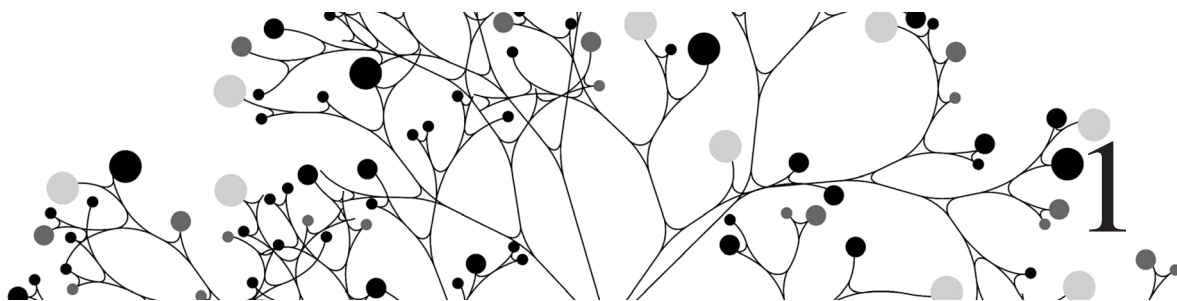
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PART I

The Relationship Between Research, Policy and Practice: Regional and Country Case Studies





Scientific Advice, Policy Formation and Early Childhood Education and Care in the EU: The Intersection of Research, Policy and Practice¹

Nora Milotay

THE THEORY OF SCIENCE ADVICE²

The field in which research, policy and practice intersect makes a very important contribution to policy design. It is a field that everyone, in particular policymakers, enthusiastically refer to as an essential element of efficient policymaking. However, it remains a rather uncharted territory as it is shaped by very complex institutional and legal frameworks. Moreover, the wider cultural context, the institutions, the individuals involved, all strongly influence how the dialogue between these three fields develops.

This chapter will give insight into this ‘uncharted territory’ by looking into European-level early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy formation in the context of education policy and in the wider context of the current scientific advice mechanism in the EU.

The ideas of evidence-based policymaking and scientific advice are attempts to explain and arrange structures around the

interactions between research, policy and practice. The concept of evidence-based policymaking has been (re)invigorated since the beginning of the second millennium. The concept maintains that the decision-making element of the policy process should be based, at least in part, on sound and transparent evidence (Sutton, 1999). This concept of evidence-based policy attempts to reduce uncertainty and risk in policy decisions by basing them on ‘hard data’ about whether the proposed course of action will bring about a desired effect (Bulmer, Coates & Dominian, 2007). Evidence-based policy has become a mantra ever since, seen as an attempt to reclaim policies and strategies from the impact of prejudice. However, an evidence-based approach to policymaking is never straightforward. Narrow interpretations which rely on a strictly linear relationship between evidence and policy have in turn been criticised. More nuanced understandings of evidence-based policy, such as ‘evidence-aware’, ‘evidence-informed’

or even 'evidence-inspired' policymaking, argue that in cases where the scientific base is uncertain or contested, there may be no clear 'right' or 'wrong' path to follow (Holmes & Clark, 2008; Nutley, 2003; Owens, Petts & Bulkeley, 2006).

The concept of science advice goes a step further and delves more into the practice of evidence-based policymaking. It covers all processes and structures aimed at providing scientific knowledge and information to the attention of policy- and decision-makers (EPRS, 2016). Scientific advice in itself is a field of academic study, generating new theories and conceptual models to explain the complex relationship between science and policymaking in different situations and contexts. (OECD, 2015/1, p. 42).

Bridging the gap between researchers and policymakers to improve the decision-making process is a widely recognised challenge (for example, Nutley, Davies & Tilley, 2000). This is particularly the case when there is no clear and unambiguous evidence accepted by all actors. 'The boundaries between science and policy or politics are constantly being renegotiated as part of the political process' (Sarewitz, 2004, p. 386). The policy-making process is not linear and 'it must be understood as a political process as much as an analytical or problem solving one' (Sutton, 1999, p. 32). In these situations it is particularly important to know who produces knowledge, and how, and why they do so and, subsequently, how that knowledge interacts with the policy process. Knowledge means assimilated information and the understanding of how to use it. It also involves negotiation.

The complex relationship between research and policy is a two-way street: research feeds into policy but policy in turn shapes research agendas. Research is used to varying degrees in policymaking in different countries, dependent on different organisational dynamics, such as the quality and timeliness of the research, the background and attitudes of researchers and research users, the existing

formal and informal links between researchers and research users, and the organisational culture (Fazekas & Burns, 2012, p. 13). The attempt to de-politicise, whereby important decisions are delegated to expert committees and thus removed from the political negotiation table, can prove problematic (p. 14). Policymakers have a huge role in both defining the policy questions and putting them onto the political agenda. However, they remain individuals who are 'limited' by their own beliefs, world-views and the parameters of their specific organisation. Therefore, the human and broader cultural factors are hugely important in the interaction between research and policy, and the political negotiation is an organic part of the process. Consequently, the ways in which policy learning and policy development happen, and the role of knowledge in this process varies across different systems (Burns, Köster & Fuster, 2016; Fazekas, 2010; Fazekas & Burns, 2012).

Expert knowledge is increasingly important in the agenda-setting process. Therefore, in certain contexts expertise moves over time beyond policy 'informing' and leads to policy 'forming' (Neuman, 2012, p. 612). This fusion puts organisations and experts responsible for knowledge production in a far more powerful position. Here, certain organisations, such as the OECD, can gain the upper hand by both defining problems and suggesting solutions. In the field of education, for example, the international arena is becoming more influential in this respect, all the more so as international players now have access to cross-national data and have more room for experimentation.

In this regard, another aspect of policymaking that deserves greater attention is implementation and its associated dynamics. Taking greater account of the human factor, such as behavioural insights, in decision-making can help in this. Identifying psychological and social influences on behaviour, and accordingly constructing policies that work with them, require a more empirical and experimental approach to policy design

(WDR, 2015, p. 5). The *World Development Report* distinguishes three principles of human decision-making: thinking automatically; thinking socially; and thinking with mental models (culture). ‘Achieving social change in a situation where mental models have been internalised may require influencing not only the cognitive decision making of particular individuals but also social practices and institutions’ (WDR, 2015, p. 12). For example, building trust between disruptive children and non-disruptive ones changes the mental model and produces better outcomes for the disruptive ones, than the results of the disruptive ones who were in the control group (Algan, Beasley, Vitaro & Tremblay, 2013).

While there is increasing interest in using behavioural findings for policy design, there are still many shortcomings to the method, such as bias in projection to the future or the influence of the social environments in which people take decisions (Wilsdon & Doubleday, 2015, p. 154). We do not know much about the unintended consequences of ‘nudges’ (i.e. choice architectures, designs of the environments in which people make choices) with which behavioural governance works. Whilst we can experiment with them in isolated settings, we might miss elements that could, however, prove influential in real settings (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

SCIENCE ADVICE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The scientific advice mechanism within the EU is rather complex because it serves a very diverse community of 28 Member States, plus the EFTA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland) and it addresses very specific needs ranging from ‘providing strong scientific advice in an accessible format; informing the development of long-term policies as well as providing advice during emergencies and crises; and providing advice proactively through foresight

activities and reactively at the request of policy makers’ (EPRS, 2015, p. 1).

The European scientific advisory mechanism has worked over the years with a broad range of institutions: external (e.g. individual researchers, academic bodies), mandated permanently or temporarily (e.g. national or European agencies, or ad hoc expert groups) or internal (e.g. internal research centres, or internal expert bodies that analyse evidence). The latter often works through informal channels. During his second term of office (2009–14), José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, appointed a Chief Scientific Advisor, Professor Ann Glover (2011–14). She was a member of the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA), an in-house think tank of the European Commission that was supposed to advise the President and the European Commission on political, societal and economic issues. The Chief Scientific Adviser was to provide scientific advice and foresight on the future concerning science, technology and innovation as well as to create networks with other scientific advisory bodies in Europe and beyond. This was an important attempt to move towards aligning the different mechanisms and procedures of scientific advice within the EU and strengthen its excellence and independence. The activities of the Chief Scientific Advisor were, however, highly criticised by some and the position was abolished during the new Commission, led by Jean-Claude Juncker.

Drawing on the lessons learned, seeking to further align the EU’s scientific advisory mechanism, the new Commission replaced BEPA with the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), an in-house think tank that only reports to the President of the Commission. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) that has evolved since 1957 from a nuclear research centre to an in-house science service of the Commission, attached to the Directorate General Responsible for Research (DG Research), has now been linked to the whole of the Commission, indicating that the JRC supports the whole organisation with

its knowledge and expertise. Finally, a new Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) has been put into place. The latter replaces the Chief Scientific Advisor with a High Level Group (HLG) of seven distinguished scientists who were nominated through a multi-layer and multi-stakeholder procedure. The new mechanism also contains the establishment of a secretariat that is at DG Research and not only provides administrative support to the HLG but also collects all the available evidence from JRC and from any other Commission services, as well as from the outputs of the Horizon 2020 research programme of the EU. Finally, the newly established Platform of Science Academies should also ensure the transmission of high-quality and independent scientific advice.

Thus, with the introduction of the SAM, the Chief Scientific Advisor has been replaced by seven experts in the HLG, and there is an administrative secretariat that is intended to mainstream all the existing evidence on a given topic and provide administrative support to the HLG. The main operating principles of this mechanism are: excellence, independence, accountability and efficiency (EPRS, 2016).

While the institutional framework has seemingly improved on the practical level, from a policy-making perspective, many issues still need to be addressed. Apart from the institutional challenges, issues emerge around the interdisciplinary character of the evidence and advice needed. Also, the integration of soft, qualitative data (including the social and cultural context) might pose challenges. In relation to that, the broad and shifting interpretations of knowledge in our modern hyper-connected world also add to the complexity of the process of evidence-based policy design. Finally, the roles and also culture of people and institutions who commission advice, produce advice and those who take decisions might overlap or merge, a fact which influences the process and its outcomes (OECD, 2015/1, p. 5).

The OECD suggests ways in which mechanisms should be further developed at national and international level (OECD, 2015/1, p. 42). One of the points it raises is building societal trust in science advice for policy-making, and that within this framework the advisory processes need to be as open and as inclusive as possible. It also claims that international organisations should play an important role within that process.

In this context the EU has a huge potential, not only by supporting empirical research through the Horizon 2020 programme, but also by channelling the research outcomes into policy. It seems, however, that it is so far more successful in channelling research and advice that is directly linked to the policy-making process.

In areas such as education – a soft policy area³ with no binding legislation – ad hoc studies, but particularly peer-learning and peer-review processes, seem increasingly to move centre stage in policymaking. This is a very difficult and complex process as it brings together different models of governance, knowledge and learning (Fazekas & Burns, 2012). Simultaneously, due to the fact that peer-learning and peer-review are processes in place that involve a group of people on a regular basis for a longer time (approximately two years on average), trust and transparency have an important role to play in it and can contribute to successful outcomes. In this process, there is also a genuine back and forth, a real dialogue between research and policy. Consequently, the European process can impact more national-level policymaking and can lead to more successful forms of implementation. To date, the outcomes of the research programme tend to be less directly integrated into policy thinking.

With the new scientific mechanism there is a chance that creating a stronger dialogue between research and policy will be accomplished more on a Commission level. However, it is still not clear how the SAM will collect evidence from existing expert groups, agencies etc. The organisation and

the layers of the mechanism are too complex. At the same time, the newly established system definitely shows a deeper understanding of the importance of the process (i.e. dialogue between research and policy) itself, and of the way the dialogue and cooperation are organised between research, policy and practice.

ECEC IN THE EUROPEAN POLICY ARENA

The main aim of the European-level action in the field of ECEC has been to put ECEC on the education agenda. Currently, there are many debates about the future of education, and about the ways in which we need to 'rethink' the 'old' education paradigm (Biesta, 2016; OECD, 2016). Therefore, there is a niche, a possibility, for innovation and for structural changes. Despite disagreements concerning education's shape and form in the future, there is a strengthening tendency to have a holistic way of looking at it. There is a recognition that education should not only focus on cognitive, but also on social, emotional and physical development. Moreover, the new education discourse encompasses not only formal learning, but also learning within non-formal and informal environments and the idea that learning happens everywhere, at any stage in an individual's life.

ECEC falls, at least partially, outside the confines of the compulsory education system. Despite an increasing recognition of the educational value of ECEC since the 1960s, ECEC systems remain often fragmented. In more than half of the systems, responsibilities for the governance and funding rest with two ministries, and also there are divisions between the administration and governance at both central and local levels. Nevertheless, in an increasing number of countries, close to half of them (Eurydice and Eurostat, 2014; OECD, 2015/2) see governance rest with the education ministry, a fact which shows the

increasing understanding of the educational values of ECEC in practice. Moreover, having the governance in the education ministry facilitates the design, implementation and funding of the initiatives in ECEC that aim at increasing their educational input.

Education is a soft policy area, very much guided by the principle of subsidiarity at European level. There is no binding legislation and only a few tools are available to genuinely influence policies in the Member States: programmes like Erasmus+ in education and training and Horizon 2020 in research; political cooperation, such as under the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Union's ten-year growth strategy (including the European Semester⁴), and the Education and Training 2020 Strategy; and finally the Open Method of Coordination. The Europe 2020 Strategy covers all policy sectors and two out of the five headline targets concern education: early school leaving and tertiary graduates.⁵ The ET 2020 Strategy deals exclusively with education and identifies four main priority areas for intervention: quality and efficiency, lifelong learning and mobility, equity and citizenship, and, finally, innovation and creativity. Within these four strategic areas it defines indicators and targets in order to emphasise the most important areas of intervention. The main benchmarks are: early school leaving, tertiary graduates, participation in ECEC, low achievement in basic skills, employment rates of recent graduates, mobility, and adult participation in lifelong learning. The Open Method of Coordination allows Member States (through their representatives) to participate in peer-learning, peer-review, peer-counselling and to define common objectives, develop reference tools, including indicators and benchmarks for policy development and monitoring. There is, therefore, only guidance at the European level.

Due to the soft nature of education policy at the European level, there are many forces and players at different levels pushing and pulling before a consensus is forged that is accepted at political level. Soft policymaking,

as a complement to hard policymaking, in a centralised environment depends strongly on soft elements such as flexible resources, self-organisation and mobilising commitment (Burns & Köster, 2016). Policymakers need to provide an environment with the necessary and sufficient conditions for the development of soft factors. For instance, enabling good communication and flow of information between stakeholders is just as important as providing sufficient autonomy and flexible resources to stakeholders (Burns & Köster, 2016, p. 226). In an increasingly complex education system we need governance structures that can handle complexity (Fazekas & Burns, 2012).

Because ECEC was a new field of cooperation at the European level and fell outside the confines of education and training proper, there was room to design the process of policy development in a new, more unusual way. Already at the launching phase, i.e. the drafting of the agenda-setting Communication, several stakeholders, experts and international organisations could be on board as they were already in the same boat, addressing similar issues in ECEC. This resulted in the drafting of a Communication on ECEC that had very broad support across very different players both across the Member States and internationally. It was based on the latest research evidence and was politicised, negotiated and settled, resulting in a broad consensus among the European Commission, Member States and beyond, including international organisations. In the next phase, after the Member States had endorsed the agenda, the thematic working group under the auspices of the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) with the task of responding to the agenda set in the Communication, continued this trend. This was partly due to the membership of the working group, and partly to its working methods. It is important to note, that at the time, when the group was active (2012–14), many elements of the working method counted as unique but have since been rolled

out to the other working groups also at DG EAC. Given the diverse governance methods of the Member States in ECEC, two people per country were invited to the group, either from the two relevant ministries or from the relevant ministry or agency and the research world. Members were nominated by the ministries and counted as their voices.

In parallel with these developments, a stakeholder group was set up with 55 members, mainly European (e.g. Eurochild, Save the Children, International Step by Step Association) but also some international organisations, including UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank. This group was not only working on issues of early childhood but also on issues of early school-leaving, as this helped to link the two and bolster the argument that solid, good quality ECEC helps to prevent early school-leaving.

The two groups were supposed to work in parallel but due to some institutional restraints, such as the fact that the names of the members of the working group could not be made public, they have not worked physically together. Moreover, as the working group's activities were not intended to go public before its output was finalised, the dialogue between the two groups was mediated by the European Commission.

Finally, due to the lack of European research evidence that was highlighted while drafting the Communication, several research projects were launched that fed into the policy-making process. These included issues related to the quality of ECEC (as highlighted in the Communication) and to its importance and input into the education process (the competences of the workforce, the importance of ECEC in social inclusion).

The thematic working group worked for two years within the Open Method of Coordination and produced a proposal for a European Quality Framework on ECEC. The working method mainly consisted of collecting existing research and renegotiating this knowledge base with the members of the group, drawing on their experience from

practice and policy. The format was a mixture of in-depth seminars with readings from the most-up-to-date academic literature and presentations from leading academics from around the EU, and peer-learning activities. The latter consisted of three to four day visits to a selected number of EU Member States so as to observe in-depth their ECEC system, and to be able to consult researchers, policymakers and practitioners on the ground. At this event, around three more Member States also introduced their systems from the perspective of the topic that was the focus of that particular peer-learning activity. For example, in Denmark where the main focus of the peer-learning activity was workforce development, the systems of Estonia, Greece and Portugal were also described. The peer-learning activities were prepared and accompanied by background documents describing the focus topic in depth in the host country, as well as by focused questionnaires on each participating Member State. The questionnaires were prepared by the thematic working group members based on the in-depth seminars and follow-up discussions on what the main focus of the policy learning should be.

The final output of the group is a quality framework proposal (Working Group on ECEC, 2014) that can embrace all the different systems of ECEC across Europe and create a common language among them. This, in turn, allows not only for mutual learning in a European context but also for bringing together all the relevant players, including researchers, policymakers, practitioners from the education, social, health and family sector to develop a strategy together in the field in a national, regional or local context. The framework can be used for scaffolding. As it contains guidance in five main areas (access, workforce, curriculum, evaluation and monitoring, governance and funding) that help to develop the quality of ECEC systems, it allows for very different starting points and strategies for development. It also implies multi-stakeholder and multi-level

involvement along the lines that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’, and that policy work on ECEC quality should be guided by child development. The framework proposal’s four main transversal principles are relevant for all the five areas covered. They are: (1) the central focus on the strong and competent child as a partner in the learning process; (2) the importance of partnership between services and families; (3) the concept of a competent system, not only of a competent individual; and (4) the strong focus on process quality.

In sum, the work within the Open Method of Coordination was characterised by the involvement of a great number of players and ‘innovative ways’ of using them, such as a stronger cooperation of relevant sectors at national level, among relevant directorates general at the European Commission, deeper involvement of the stakeholders. Because of the lack of European evidence a lot of direct research was commissioned and then used for the development of the final policy output, and dialogue was carried out with international organisations which had concerns and approaches similar to those of the European Commission.

The direct involvement of practitioners – apart from the visits during the peer-learning activities – has still remained the biggest challenge. This is particularly strong in ECEC as the field and the workforce are not professionalised enough, thus practitioners often do not have access to policymaking individually or through representative organisations. Moreover, the more emphasis is placed on scientific data as the main evidence, the less practitioners can be involved (except for maybe local authorities, etc. that are responsible for governance). There are, however, ever more attempts to professionalise the ECEC workforce. In this endeavour, turning members of the workforce into self-reflective practitioners, who often have higher education degrees and are involved in research, is a prevalent approach. Action research is, for example, a way of involving the workforce in both research and policy design.⁶

ECEC AS THE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATOR IN THE EDUCATION FIELD AND BEYOND

As seen above, the European policy-making process in the field of ECEC in recent years has addressed many challenging issues in the dialogue and cooperation between research, policy and practice. It has built up a sustainable process of policymaking that has had an impact at national level. It has managed to address interdisciplinarity, combine hard and soft data, and has started to address more thoroughly the human factor in policymaking while addressing the issue of incentives and implementation of policies. The main, longer-term aim has been to put ECEC on the education agenda, to recognise the entire phase of ECEC as part of the education process.

Our education systems, at any point in time, reflect our society in its diversity, its ingrained values. Currently, education systems are more decentralised and less hierarchical, more interdependent and self-regulated. They are now characterised by multi-level governance where the links between multiple actors operating at different levels are more fluid and open to negotiation (Burns & Köster, 2016).

These features of current education systems put issues of complexity and its management, and the associated issue of trust, at the heart of the education policy-making process. ECEC is a new field in education, still not considered by many as part of education, but it has great potential in introducing innovative ways of linking research, policy and practice, as well as in education governance, by addressing how knowledge is produced and governed.

If we look at the main elements of the OECD's study on how to govern education in a complex world (Burns & Köster, 2016), we can see that the EU's policy work in the field of ECEC corresponds to the main criteria, both in terms of the process (i.e. work in the thematic working group) and of the final output (i.e. the framework proposal). This

study emphasises the importance of an effective governance system that takes a holistic system approach with long-term vision and strategic thinking. It works with many stakeholders in an open dialogue and focuses on the process and, within that, on capacity building. As a result, it helps all actors to acquire and use knowledge for successful policy implementation. It also combines the ideas of vertical and horizontal accountability, as the latter allows for more transparency and the development of ownership.

European policy cooperation and policymaking in ECEC have focused on the process in the first place and not on structures, and they have created a process with the involvement of many relevant players. That work brought about an open, flexible framework proposal, a modern governance framework that can be used in diverse contexts to develop policies in ECEC and that combines the ideas of vertical and horizontal accountability. It generated a Europe-wide, even international, network of policymakers, researchers, experts and practitioners in ECEC. This network, in turn, created trust among its members that has allowed further work and ensured sustainability as well as long-term thinking.

The process was participatory, based on an open dialogue. It allowed the investigation of issues of capacity building as well as simultaneously building capacity in ECEC, as it was mainly focusing on the exchange of information and the creation of knowledge and policy among all participating players. It contributed to the development of a competent system, where capacity was not only built at European level. The European process also triggered capacity building at national level, which then encouraged further local-level capacity building. This process also helped to discover real data gaps in the ECEC field and point to the use, misuse or non-use of data. In some of the areas where research or data gaps were identified, new research was commissioned at European level. The outcomes of this research were integrated into the

final framework proposal. Thus, needs were defined in a realistic and timely manner and were based on system vision.

The framework proposal has a comprehensive whole-system approach to ECEC because the five areas that are tackled are interdependent. The European policy process that has brought together research, policy and practice has helped to digest and reach consensus on what is useful knowledge for policy in the European ECEC arena. In a way, policymakers validated existing research against their policy experience and the practice they have observed in the different Member States.

Finally, the whole process allowed for long-term strategic thinking about the field.

Policymaking at the European level allows for some kind of freedom, ‘out of the box’ thinking and at the same time the promotion of certain agendas that might be difficult to promote at certain times at national level. Setting the policy agenda is hugely important and a big step in strategic thinking. It is essential at this stage that research, knowledge, including politicised negotiation, and consensus building, are involved in this process. For their inclusion then builds ownership and will help the subsequent implementation of policy. This is why the way in which the issue, the agenda is initially set at the European and international level is so important. No less significant is the question of how it is transmitted to the national, regional and local level, and what kind of knowledge steers the system at European and national level. It is a debated starting point – for example, how much quantitative, PISA-like, data should form the premise on which agendas are set in ECEC? The corresponding discussion that was launched at European level has influenced the work of the OECD on its planned surveys concerning ECEC staff and early learning outcomes.

One of the studies commissioned by the European Commission was a first step towards linking ECEC to the school system by investigating how quality ECEC

can address lower levels of underachievement and early school-leaving (European Commission, 2014). This study suggested four driving principles for a balanced education system: efficient, equitable, cohesive and responsive to diversity. If the ECEC field is designed according to the quality framework proposal, it corresponds to these principles and, thus, can impact the currently existing education system, too. In fact, it can function as a ‘disruptive innovator’ that produces fundamental changes in the education sector both in terms of process and content.⁷ First, it targets children who are outside the education system (i.e. in several Member States, parts of ECEC are not considered to be part of the education system and are not governed by the authorities responsible for education), but, second, its methodology, both in terms of pedagogical approach (holistic) and in the way it designs policy in a complex system, can be later rolled out to schools. It is an open, flexible system that focuses on the quality of the process in the first place and promotes the integration of care and education for the whole ECEC phase, from birth to the first year of primary school.

Whether there is a niche, an opportunity for this innovation remains to be seen. Currently, ECEC features increasingly in the education discourse. But European policy cooperation in ECEC is still work in progress, so it remains a question whether this process will really manage to bring about a paradigm shift in ECEC and, thus, potentially in the later stages of compulsory education. In any case, we can see that it was easier to develop this policy in an experimental space, beyond the confines of the Member States’ policy spaces at EU level. The ECEC Quality Framework Proposal (Working Group on ECEC, 2014) has been translated into several languages and has served as a trigger for the organisation of national events around it with diverse stakeholders upon its release in many Member States. Thus, it has served as a ‘meeting place’ based on a consensus and it delivers a coherent, homogenous and transferable language

not only among ECEC relevant sectors, but also among different Member States and different cultural contexts. The relatively open process that brought it about has also allowed for the development of ownership across sectors and actors. Its afterlife – how it will not only lead to a (hopefully upward) convergence of systems but maybe also to the development of more tangible indicators and benchmarks, and even, if necessary, legislation – will give room to further evaluation of the policy process so far.

Finally, as for the broader context beyond the confines of ECEC and education policy, the new science advice process in the EU is developed along similar innovative lines that attempt to handle complexity and strive simultaneously for independence and excellence. The question is how the broader policy-making and stakeholder world can be integrated into this process, so that there is real ownership and consensus behind policy decisions, which then hugely help the implementation process. We can see that the more complex the scientific advisory mechanism is, the more challenging it becomes to develop consensus and develop evidence-based policy that responds to diverse needs. The flatter and more participatory the mechanism, the more the policy will be backed up by the ownership of larger groups and, thus, can be easier to implement. There is a growing body of literature that discusses the democratisation of the scientific advice process (Stirling, 2015). It emphasises the importance of the involvement of both civil society and broader public opinion. This is then all the more important, as the broader public's understanding of the issues will impact the influence of the scientific advice and the policy itself (Madelin, 2015). Finally, science is only one type of evidence; big data, new methods like randomised control trials, can also have a big influence, or the recent growing understanding of the importance of behavioural insight (Wilsdon & Doubleday, 2015). While the latter still requires a great deal of clarification in its methodology, it has

a huge potential to alter the eco-system of expertise.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, to make evidence-based policymaking and the scientific advice mechanism sound and efficient at European level, the very complex nature of the intersection of the space of policy, research and practice needs to be embraced in terms of actors, culture and geography. This chapter has explored these issues in the particular case of education policy and ECEC and has shown that ECEC has the potential to act as a 'disruptive innovator' both in terms of the policy process and the content of the education system. ECEC has been operating, at least in part, outside the confines of the current compulsory education system in most countries. Through its efforts to become part of education, ECEC systems can lead to a change in the school education discourse, in the policy-making process, on the one hand, and in the education process itself, on the other, including curriculum, assessment, etc. The European policy process, which was put into place after the European Commission issued an agenda-setting Communication on ECEC, introduced innovative methods, both in the policy process as well as in the nature of its final output – the quality framework proposal. The latter is an open and flexible structure that can serve as a 'meeting place' for the very diverse actors in ECEC that contribute to the development of the field. It allows for an on-going dialogue (process) among research, policy and practice at any point in time across countries, as well as for developing policies and strategies. In terms of the content of the framework proposal, it puts emphasis, for example, on the need for an age-appropriate curriculum, or on 'care' alongside 'education', and points to the significance of formative and diagnostic assessment; all of which are becoming important in the school education system too.

Consequently, the ECEC discourse and methodology can provide tools for the school education system in these areas.

As for the policy process introduced in the particular case of ECEC, the chapter has shown that European and international policy cooperation with the involvement of a wide range of actors, such as policymakers, researchers and practitioners from different sectors, such as education, health and justice, can impact the ways in which policy, research and practice are linked and governed at national, regional and local level. The European or international context can accommodate out-of-the box thinking and processes, and, if these can be linked to bottom-up demand, they then trickle down into national policy-making systems. As a result, they have the potential to develop more effective policy learning and policy formation mechanisms at national, regional and local level. Moreover, the process that led to the creation of the ECEC quality framework proposal and the process(es) that is triggered at national level by the finished proposal can stimulate policy experimentation (Burns et al., 2016). This experimentation process is vital for the development of tailor-made, local solutions for policy challenges.

means knowledge production and it needs to go through the hurdle of interpretation and legitimisation by experts (expertise) so that it transforms into evidence for policy.

- 3 See the following section, 'ECEC in the European policy arena'.
- 4 In order to support Member States in the implementation of the targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy that Member States have translated into national targets and growth-enhancing policies, the European Commission has set up a yearly cycle of economic policy coordination, called the European Semester. Each year, the European Commission undertakes a detailed analysis of EU Member States' programmes of economic and structural reforms and provides them with recommendations for the next 12–18 months.
- 5 The exact headlines are: reducing the rate of early school-leavers below 10% and at least 40% of the 30- to 34-year-olds should complete third-level education.
- 6 Most recently, for example, the BRIC Erasmus+ project (2014–17) that involves preschool teachers, young children and parents in exploring democratic engagement in public and civic spaces.
- 7 The term of disruptive innovation is used in business and technology literature to describe innovations that improve a product or service in ways that the market does not expect, typically first by designing for a different set of consumers in a new market and later by lowering the prices in the existing market.

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Notes

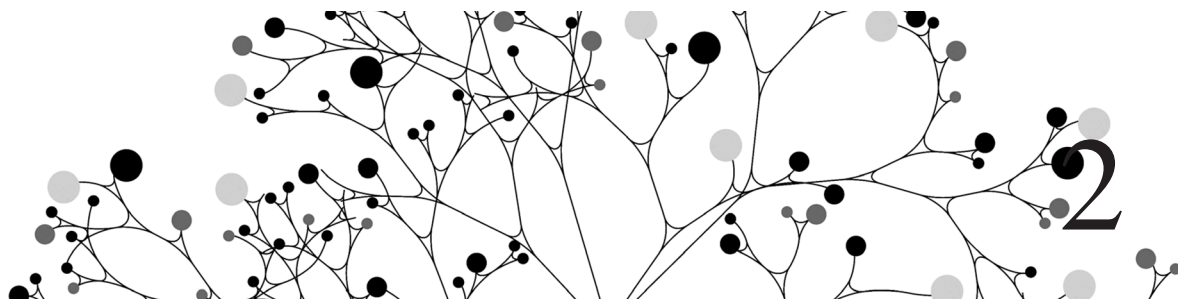
- 1 *Disclaimer:* The content of this document is the sole responsibility of the author and any opinions expressed therein do not represent the official position of the European Institutions.
- 2 In this article, science is conceptualised in its broadest sense and includes the social sciences, humanities, hard and soft data. It can be used interchangeably with the term research. Research

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Early Childhood Policies in India: A Historical Analysis

Venita Kaul and Shipra Sharma

INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGE OF BEING 'INDIA'

India is unique in being the world's largest democracy with a federal structure of 29 states or provinces and seven union territories, collectively known as the Republic of India. India's predominant challenges are its socio-demographic features, primarily its scale and its diversity. The scale comes from its population of 1.3 billion (Census of India, 2011) and the diversity from the co-existence of 2000 ethnic groups, 29 official languages (and many dialects), and from the fact that all the religions of the world are represented in the country. The population size enables India to be proud of its demographic dividend: it has the largest workforce of young people globally. Underlying this pride, however, are concerns which continue to hover on the national horizon regarding the skills of its young workforce, their nutritional and health status, and their employability. These

concerns may originate from, among other factors, the persisting inadequacy of the health and educational support systems available to the large majority of Indian children in their early childhood years, which are the formative years for life (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Cumulative evidence from neuroscience and research in child development and economics unequivocally confirms the critical importance of investing in the early childhood years, since these lay the foundation for lifelong learning and development, and health and overall well-being throughout the life span (Young, 2002). The overall development of children is a product of nature and nurture, with the psychosocial environment playing as important a role as genetics in influencing how they will develop as adults. Since nurturing environments are critical to a child's early development but often not adequately available to children, good quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) – particularly for socially disadvantaged children – can

be a significant intervention and therefore a vital provision. The issue in India is: *do all Indian children have access to an optimal early learning and development environment in these significant years?*

We begin to address this question with a brief review of the current scenario of ECCE in India in terms of existing policies and provisions. In this context, we discuss the stages of development and expansion of the flagship Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in India, which is perhaps the largest integrated public sector programme of its kind in the world for children below 6 years. We then proceed with a more critical and retrospective examination of the historical journey of ECCE through some significant socio-political phases in India's journey that have influenced and led to the current context. The chapter, which derives from an extensive literature review supplemented with primary research and direct policy experiences of the authors, concludes with a summary discussion of key issues that are relevant to the future planning of ECCE in this vast and diverse country.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE) IN INDIA: THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Currently India has approximately 158 million children below 6 years of age (Census of India, 2011), of which an estimated 70 million are between the ages of 3 and 6 (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2011–12). Flowing from the commitments made in Articles 39 and 45 of the Constitution of India (Government of India, 1950), formulated after India's independence from British rule, there has been a clear and consistent recognition by the government of the need to cater to the educational needs and integrated development of all children below the age of 14 years. Over the years this commitment has been reflected, to some extent, in the

government's efforts to ensure a supportive and enabling policy and programmatic framework for ECCE.

If we were to begin from what is current and then journey backwards, the most significant development in the field of ECCE in the last few years has been the approval of the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy (NECCEP) (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2013b). This is the first policy directed exclusively at young children below 6 years. It provides a vision for ECCE which is to '*promote inclusive, equitable and contextualized opportunities for promoting optimal development and active learning capacity of all children below 6 years of age*' (emphasis added) (p. 8). The term Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), as used in India, is consistent with alternative terminologies used internationally such as Early Childhood Development (ECD) or Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) or Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Optimal early childhood development requires that children have access to: (1) appropriate, affordable, diverse and nutrient-rich food; (2) appropriate maternal and child care; (3) a safe, stable, nurturing environment and opportunities to learn and play; and (4) adequate health services and a healthy environment including safe water, sanitation and good hygiene (UNICEF, 2016).

In 2013, India also revised its National Policy for Children (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2013a), first formulated in 1974 (Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1978). The 2013 revision defines the 'child' as up to 18 years of age and, in consonance with the NECCEP (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2013b), also provides for 'universal and equitable access to quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) of all children below six years of age through a long term, sustainable, multi-sectoral, integrated and inclusive approach for the overall and harmonious development and protection

of children'. Although currently ECCE has been omitted as a fundamental right of every Indian child in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) 2009, (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2009), which covers children only from 6 to 14 years, ECCE is referred to in Section 11 of the same Act which directs all states or provinces of India to *endeavour* to make provision for preschool education of satisfactory quality for all children from 3 to 6 years, to prepare them for school. Additionally, Article 45 of the Indian Constitution (Government of India, 1950) has been amended to articulate the states' commitment to endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children below 6 years of age. These provisions, though enabling, do not allow ECCE to be a legal entitlement of every child below 6 years and the latter has therefore become an issue of protest and advocacy for the ECCE community and civil society (Law Commission of India Report 259, 2015).

This vision of ECCE in India is, as noted earlier, clearly in consonance with the international perspective presented by UNESCO (2016) which defines early childhood as the period from birth to 8 years and describes it as 'a time of remarkable brain growth, these years lay the foundation for subsequent learning and development' (UNESCO, 2016). However, despite this broad consensus across international and national visions of ECCE, some differences do exist. In India the policy defines ECCE as up to 6 years of age and not 8 years as internationally advocated. This early childhood stage is further sub-divided conceptually into two segments: children below 3 years, particularly the first 1000 days, during which nutrition, health care and early psycho-social stimulation are areas of priority, and children aged 3 to 6 years in which preschool education additionally becomes an important intervention.

In terms of programmes and provisions, since 1975 India has had the privilege of designing and implementing the world's

largest publicly sponsored integrated programme for children below 6 years, known as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). This programme provides an integrated package of six services for holistic child development in a life-cycle mode for pregnant and lactating women, for children from birth to 6 years of age, and for adolescent girls. The six services are: supplementary nutrition; immunisation; health check-ups; referral services; preschool non-formal education for 3- to 6- year-olds; and nutrition & health education. These services are delivered through a single window approach by 1.3 million ECCE centres across the country, known as *anganwadi* centres. Each centre is run by a local woman worker and a helper; in total the *anganwadi* centres serve over 102 million beneficiaries from across India (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2015) including over 82 million children below 6 years, and over 19 million pregnant and lactating women. However, issues of equitable access and quality of services persist, often raising the debate of scale versus quality (World Bank, 2004).

The other major provider of ECCE in India is the private sector which has shown steady expansion in the last few decades. This expansion has likely been facilitated by a sharp decline in the population below the poverty line, and the liberalisation and emergence of the market economy. Recent data on private schooling indicates that approximately 40% of children in rural India are enrolled in private schools and the numbers are constantly increasing (Kaul et al., 2017). Since data on the urban scenario is not available due to the absence of any regulatory mechanisms for private schools, or requirement for registration, this estimation of privatisation may yet be a gross under-estimation. While utilisation of private schooling and health services are becoming the preferred choice of most parents and caregivers, the concern is that the quality of provision is not necessarily better than that of public services

(Kaul et al., 2017). We will come back to this discussion later in the context of issues and challenges.

THE HIGHS AND THE LOWS OF ECCE PROVISIONS

Overall, over the last three decades, the policy framework and provisions in India for ECCE, and for children as a whole, have been supportive and enabling, and have translated into positive impact in terms of reaching out to all children below 6 years. However, the India story is notably one of periodic spurts in growth and development nurtured by good, well-intentioned policies and provisions, but accompanied by significant challenges in implementation of the programmes. For example, there has been progress in overall child development indicators, with infant mortality rates halved between 1990 and 2012 down to 44 per thousand births. Similarly, child survival rates have improved with mortality for under-5-year-olds reduced to 56 per thousand in 2012 as compared to 126 per thousand in 1990. Literacy rates have also improved with the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) now enhanced to 99% for primary education, with a distinct reduction in school dropouts. However, it is significant that 60% of children who drop out of school tend to do so prior to Grade 3, between 6 to 8 years of age. Malnutrition rates, though improved, are still higher than those of sub-Saharan Africa with nearly 48% of children under age 5 classified as stunted, denying them the opportunity to grow and develop to their full physical and cognitive potential (UNICEF, 2016).

Access to ECCE has also expanded with currently almost every village possessing an *anganwadi*, as evidenced in a recent three-state longitudinal study (India Early Childhood Education Impact Study, Kaul et al., 2017). The authors recall heart-warming anecdotal experiences of turning up unannounced at *anganwadis* in remote areas of

the country and finding young children being fed a free hot cooked meal; this is no mean achievement, given the sheer scale of India's territory. Over the last decade, the demand for early education has also been visibly expanding. Available data on enrolment and participation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes indicate that about 64.5% of 3-year-olds and 76.3% of 4-year-olds in rural India are attending preschools or *anganwadis* (Annual Status Education Report, 2013). This excludes the urban population for which there is no data and which, if estimated, can significantly enhance the percentage of children attending ECE programmes. The flip side however is that although ICDS is in principle designed to provide comprehensive services including ECCE, in practice in many provinces it serves at best as a nutrition programme (Kaul et al., 2017; World Bank, 2004). With the rise in parental aspirations, parents who can afford it are transferring their 3- to 6-year-old children to private preschools, or in some cases to government primary schools as underage enrolments since they consider these to be better 'education' providers for their children (Kaul & Chaudhary, 2015).

While more than 70% of children below 6 years are currently in *anganwadis* and private schools, the recent IECEI study revealed that the large majority of these children in rural India are entering primary school with very weak conceptual or linguistic foundations (Kaul et al., 2015). There are also gender differences in preschool/primary school participation trends amongst children aged 4 to 7 years, with higher proportions of boys enrolled in private institutions and vice versa. Most children from the lowest wealth quintile (51%) attend Anganwadi centres (AWCs), while most children in the highest wealth quintile (62%) attend private facilities (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2014). The quality of preschool education is also a major issue across public sponsored *anganwadis* and affordable preschools wherein the pedagogy is dominated either by rote memorisation and age-inappropriate

formal teaching or a minimalist curriculum of songs and rhymes. There are a few good practices but these are almost miniscule in number (Kaul et al., 2017). The scope for universal outreach with quality and equity is thus still a long way off.

THE INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (ICDS) JOURNEY: FROM PILOT TO SCALE

The establishment of the ICDS in 1975 has been a major initiative in India, given its scale and comprehensive design, and therefore deserves a fuller discussion of its long and historical journey, from the stage of piloting to that of universalisation (Kaul et al., 2009). It is also important to understand the complexity of the process of operationalisation of this integrated 'single window' programme for child development and ECCE.

After India became a republic in 1950, the Planning Commission was established under the Prime Minister to initiate a formal mechanism of cyclic planning for the country across all sectors at five-year intervals. This process has led to the development of 12 five-year plans to date over the 70 years of India's independence from Britain. The current plan – the Twelfth Plan (Planning Commission, GOI, 2013) – is technically valid till 2017, but the new political dispensation in 2014 replaced the Planning Commission by what is known as the *NITI Aayog*, an acronym for the National Institute of Transforming India, a kind of think tank for the government. Since the five-year plans are perhaps the best sources of information for analysing the shifts over time in the government's approach to provisions for children, the following section provides a brief review of ECCD provisions within the five-year planning cycles, starting from the time of the initiation of the ICDS programme in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974–1979). (All of the Five Year Plan (FYP) documents are accessible from the website:

<http://planningcommission.gov.in/plans/plan-rel/fiveyr/welcome.html>.) As we reflect on the journey of ICDS, what is commendable is the scientific and formative approach adopted for initiating this ambitious programme in the public sector, an approach that was perhaps unprecedented in the social sector in India.

The First Five Years (1975–1980): Establishing the Model

ICDS was initiated in 1975 as a pilot project in 35 administrative clusters of villages. The first five years were essentially spent on trial-and-error and establishing the model of an effective multi-sectoral community-based programme, based on a spirit of volunteerism. Its formative approach is reflected in the significant research and evaluation component of the initiative which was built into the design of the programme. A compilation of evaluation studies conducted on ICDS has been published (National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), 2009a) with the results showing programme amendments based on the evidence from the evaluations. One example of a mid-course change to the programme design was the introduction of more intensive needs-based training to compensate for the lack of available educated women to work in the programme and the consequential need to reduce the eligibility qualifications of workers. Similarly, convergence mechanisms were built into the design of the programme to ensure comprehensive services and support from across sectors.

The Second Five Years (1980–1985): Expanding and Strengthening Institutional Capacity

In the second five years of its existence, i.e. in the early 1980s, the ICDS focused on strengthening and expanding the health infrastructure

and institutional capacity, especially with a view to reducing the incidence of polio and malnutrition. This period saw the introduction of the concept of ‘at risk children and mothers’, based on empirical evidence of endemic infant mortality and morbidity and severe malnutrition. Some weaknesses addressed included the inefficient and inadequate supply of food items, incomplete identification of severely malnourished children and weak integration in service provision at the centre level.

Next Phase (1985–1997): Consolidation of Services and Improvement of Quality

In the next phase, the focus shifted to expanding the coverage of services to children below 3 years, possibly due to the detection of high levels of malnutrition in these critical early years for development. There was also some emphasis on the improvement of service quality through renewed efforts to improve coordination and convergence, strengthen training programmes and improve facilities such as water and sanitation in Anganwadi centres (AWCs). However, with priority given to child survival rather than development, the health and nutrition components of the ICDS received more attention than pre-school education; unfortunately this imbalance persists to this day. The largest challenge in the ICDS has therefore been to ensure that all six services mentioned earlier get equitable treatment and maintain balanced quality.

Last 20 Years to Date (1998–2017): Universalisation of Services

The period of the early and late 1990s which corresponds to the Eighth and Ninth Five Year Plans of the Government of India (1992–2002), was marked by a shift in emphasis to seeing children as a national resource, with high priority accorded to the universalisation of ICDS and policies and programmes for

child survival and development. This led to a rapid expansion of services with the original norm of one centre per 1000 population being reduced to one centre per 400–800 population. The result was the establishment of 1.3 million *anganwadis* or centres across even the remotest parts of India, largely in rural areas. This is a creditable achievement in enhancing access, though neglect of the urban poor and the quality of services remain serious issues.

REVISITING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ECCE IN INDIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

We now delve briefly into a critical analysis of the vision for ECCE in India from a historical perspective, beginning from what was traditionally a socio-cultural construct embedded in Indian scriptures and tradition. We trace the re-emergence of ECCE through the British colonial period and the postcolonial phase right through to more recent neoliberal shifts in the policy environment all the way to what is currently an approved National ECCE Policy of the Government of India (NECCEP, 2013). We argue that the current ECCE policy is mediated by shifting policy paradigms. Initially conceived as a welfare measure for poor children immediately after India’s independence, ECCE subsequently became a vehicle for the recognition of children as a national asset and a policy mechanism for human resource development. More recently the focus on ECCE has become part of an ongoing discourse about children’s rights, positioned as a service to which every child has a fundamental right.

Integrated ECCE: The Concept and its Legacy

The concept of ECCE as an integrated provision for supporting children’s all-round development in the early years is culturally not new to India. Since the Vedic era, the

Ayurveda, which is part of one of the four Vedas or earliest religious scriptures of India developed thousands of years ago, has been guiding early childcare practices, with one of its eight branches clearly dedicated to the care of children. Interestingly, even as early as in the Vedic times ‘the approach to knowledge and understanding of childcare in Ayurved[ic texts] is holistic. The biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural approaches are seen as mutually inclusive’ (Kapur, n.d.). Operationally, the Vedas view both mother and child as a symbiotic unit and emphasise *samaskaras*, or rites of passage, along with prescribed developmental approaches and childcare practices. Based on the age of the child, these *samaskaras* sequence the optimal physical and psychological progress in each phase of the life cycle of the child, marked by distinct developmental milestones (Khalakdina, 2011).

Evidence of this cultural lineage, which was exclusively home- and family-based and passed on from one generation to the next, is manifested in the rich repertoire of infant and child games and lullabies, massages, children’s folk stories, rhymes and riddles and folk toys which have been part of childhoods in India. It is intriguing to see the correspondence of the *samaskaras* stages (Table 2.1) with modern

scientific thought and knowledge regarding childcare and development. An example is the *Annaprashan*, or weaning, at 6 months which is completely synchronous with the current emphasis on exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. Traditional folk toys such as spinning tops, flutes and pouring earthenware vessels were evidently designed to demonstrate basic scientific principles to the child in the play mode. Infant games were largely what we may consider sensorimotor in nature in consonance with the Piagetian developmental stage, and the rhymes, riddles and stories which children enjoy served to immerse them in a rich language environment. While some remnants of these practices may still be visible in extended families, the changes in family structures and the trend towards nuclear families has resulted, unfortunately, in this lineage steadily becoming extinct and being replaced with technology and more modern childcare practices (Ray, 2015).

Postcolonialism and the Emergence of Institutionalised ECCE

Any analysis of the shift from this traditional legacy towards the institutionalisation of ECCE

Table 2.1 Rites of passage and rituals in ayurvedic paediatrics: exemplifying childhood *samaskaras* and their importance as milestones of development

<i>Samskara</i>	<i>Development period</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
Jatakarma	After birth	Rooting and sucking reflexes
Namakarana	10th, 12th or 100th day	Appropriate period for general examination of infants
Niskramana	Fourth month	1. Macular fixation and papillary adjustment 2. Reaction to sounds 3. Head control
Annaprashanna	6–10 months	1. Appearance of first tooth 2. Functioning of digestive system 3. Proper time for weaning
Chudakarana	1–3 years	Examination and care of anterior fontanelle
Karnavedhana	6–8 months	A type of active immunisation (<i>yukti krtabala</i>) initiated with external trauma
Upanayana	6–8 years	1. Fit for education 2. Assessment of intellect

Source: Kumar (1999)