Pedagogy of welcome: ways to support refugee children in Early Childhood Education and Care.

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ISBN: 978-1529605891

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Research questions

• How do very young refugee children experience ECEC?
• Do they share any commonality of experience?
• What can be learned from the actors in this research which can be used to inform pedagogy?
• What are the implications for future practice?

Multi modal methods to capture the child’s voice

FIELDWORK 1
Capturing the child’s voice
- Observations in settings
- Child perspective photos
- Child drawings
- Parental drawings and discussion
- Keyperson semi-structured interview

FIELDWORK 2
- Synthesis of data
- Create visual vignettes with artist
- Share individual vignettes with families
- Share individual vignettes with practitioners

(Clark and Moss 2011; Bertram et al 2008; Tobin 2016; Carr et al 2002; Theron et al 2011)
Foundations of the pedagogy of welcome

Using the dynamism of natural inclusion theory
(Rayner, 2017)

Pedagogy of the Oppressed
(Freire, 1970)

Notions of hospitality
(Gabi, 2021)

Wilkommenskultur
The Pedagogy of welcome

The spirit of welcome

Professional positionality
Making visible the invisible
Creating open dynamic spaces of welcome
Attending to wider concerns

Sensitivity and ongoing attention to:
- power dynamics - ethics - equity - misconceptualisation of the refugee experience
- interrogation of self - professional love - intercultural needs
- the hidden curriculum and unseen culture in setting
- children’s lived experiences - representation through cultural story telling
- child voice - parental engagement practices - attitudes to bilingualism
**Professional positionality**

Possible positional domains in the field

- Domain of experiences
  - Ethnicity
  - Parenthood
  - Displacement
  - Gender
  - Helpful profession
  - Religion
  - Culture
  - Age

- Domain of attitudes
  - Acceptance
  - Openness
  - Authenticity
  - Honest
  - Deeply interested
  - Accurate and adequate representation of experience
  - Giving others a voice
  - Trustworthy
  - Alongsidedness

*(Gaywood et al, 2020)*

Granddaughter of displaced people

Cultural similarities

Mother of large family

Advisory teacher for children who have faced significant challenge

*(Dwyer and Buckle, 2009)*

Residing in the hyphen

Deeply honest reflective personal journal

Humility to know your limitations
Understanding yourself and the invisible influences:

Narratives about refugees which can impact your pedagogy: where they may come from

- Media reporting
- What politicians say
- Your background
- Lived experiences
- The stories we choose to believe
- Unquestioned beliefs
The issue of invisibility

- Refugee children often least seen
- Hidden experiences of micro invalidations
- Unquestioned perceived norms
- Cultural insensitivity

The iceberg of unseen challenges

- language
- culture
- female health issues
- physical and mental health
- mothers concern about impact of experiences
- negative responses from host community
- ongoing impact of war
- disability
Creating open dynamic spaces of welcome

Create adequate space, time and support to develop friendships

Examine parent partnership approaches to ensure they are robust enough to bridge the divide between home and ECEC

Build on multi modal research methods to support children to develop their own narratives about home and ECEC

Offer opportunities for story telling

(Strekalova-Hughes and Wang, 2019)
Attending to wider concerns

**UNHCR**
(United Nations High Commission for Refugees)

1951 definition of a refugee:

“someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”

**Microsystem** | **Exosystem**
---|---
Family | The local authority

**Mesosystem** | **Macrosystem**
---|---
Early Childhood Education and Care setting | Living in the United Kingdom and the impact of policy making

**Chronosystem**
International events

**Equitable practices**

**Negative connotations of certain labels**

**Positionality as saviour and its impact**

(Gaywood et al, 2023)
Other things to remain mindful of:

- Location and sensitive use of power
- The impact of intersectionality
  
  (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016)

- Significant strength of refugees
- Essentialisation
- Emotion
- Negative attitudes to bilingualism
List of references


