



International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood

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Editorial

IJEIEC contributes to progressive social change through encouraging and publishing work by leading national and international scholars, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers in the international field of early childhood education. This edition of IJEIEC is characteristically eclectic. It features articles about anti-bias education, storytelling, children's citizenship and critical reflection, together with reviews of books about children and race and about education in sub-Saharan Africa. For all its eclecticism, this edition of IJEIEC is also a coherent example of the journal's role as a champion of children's rights and social justice.

2009 is the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and IJEIEC extends a warm invitation to authors to submit contributions that both celebrate the Convention's establishment and reflect critically on its achievements and its shortcomings*. The articles in the current edition of IJEIEC can assist us to prepare for the UNCRC's anniversary. Each article examines, in its own way, different ways of knowing young children and their implications for policies and practices in services for young children.

Our relationships with children and our understandings of how they relate to us and to each other depend on our particular ways of knowing young children. If we 'know' young children as bundles of potential whose status and dignity depends on them becoming adults, our ways of being with them will be quite different than if we 'know' them as people with status and dignity in their own right, rather than as potential adults.

Our particular ways of knowing young children can also explain how their lives are influenced by past and present patterns of power, privilege and discrimination. **Louise Derman-Sparks** has won international acclaim for her many years as an advocate of Anti-Bias Education. In her article - *Keep on, Keeping on: Progress, Challenges and Possibilities for Anti-Bias Education* - Louise reflects on the history of Anti-Bias Education, recognising that its successes have happened despite continued attacks from the conservative side of politics. The article is based on Louise's keynote address to the CEIEC's 2008 conference. Its particular interest in countering racism in early childhood settings is complemented nicely by Jane Lane's new book, *Young Children and*

Racial Justice, which is reviewed by **Karina Davis**.

The UNCRC is a continuing influence on the patterns of power, privilege and discrimination in young children's lives. For example, the UNCRC proclaimed young children's right to participate in decisions affecting them and there is increasing international determination to put this into practice. One strategy is to attend to young children's voices and to develop policies and practices that regard young children as citizens and promote their citizenship further. IJEIEC has featured articles examining this strategy (see, for example, IJEICE 3[2]) and this edition features two more. **Jane Page** has recently examined links between young children's emotions and their sense of agency. In her article - *Four and Five Year Old Children's Perspectives on Being Sad: The Intersection Between Young Children's Emotions and Their Experiences of Citizenship* - Jane explores whether and how we can regard children's agency as evidence of their citizenship. **Zsuzsa Millei** reflects critically on the 'citizenship' approach to enacting the UNCRC. In her article - *Problematizing the Concepts of 'Citizenship' and 'Participation' in Early Years Discourses: Are they so empowering?* - Zsuzsa uses discourse analysis to highlight some tensions around the apparently common sense ideas of participation and citizenship in early childhood contexts. Critical reflection also features in our Practitioner Perspective - *Critical Reflections from the Hammock at Swanston Street Children's Centre* - by **Kylie Smith, Greta Swan, Sam Parsons & Sharon Saitta**, who describe how they use critical reflection to change their relationships with the

children in their centre. They advise attention to local circumstances and this is the central message of David Johnson's edited collection, *The Changing Landscape of Education in Africa: quality, equity and democracy*, which is reviewed by **Kylie Smith**.

Finally, as 'globalisation' threatens to homogenize the diversity of local cultures, it is especially important to attend to children's voices and to local circumstances. **Wajuppa Tossa** is highly regarded for her involvement in sustaining and renewing traditional children's stories and tales from cultures in South-East Asia. Her article, *Educating Young Children through Folktales and Storytelling* is based on her delightful keynote to the CEIEC's 2008 conference, in which she showed how apparently simple tales can teach complex lessons. Wajuppa's keynote also showed how eager early childhood audiences are to 'sing along' when offered the chance!

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* If you would like help to contribute an article or review to IJEIEC, or advice as to how you might prepare a contribution, do please contact Kate Alexander:
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