
COMMENT

A new feature in this issue of *Early Childhood Folio* is an interview with an experienced researcher talking about three important messages from research. It is fitting that the first interview is with Emeritus Professor Anne Smith who is renowned for her exemplary research in child development, early childhood education and children's rights, and her advocacy for good quality early childhood education. "It's a cost to society not to invest in good, quality early childhood education", and "children need to be treated as experts in their own lives" are two of her key messages. These themes also lie at the heart of most of the articles in this issue, which present research-based evidence about how early childhood teachers find out more about children's perspectives, experiences, and thinking, and how to enhance teaching and learning. All but two of the articles were derived from qualitative research in early childhood centres.

The articles address teaching and learning within a diverse range of domains, including young children's playfulness, thinking capabilities, challenge and rule breaking, emotional well-being of infants and parents, multiple literacies, and mathematics competencies. They offer challenges and insights for teachers to think about in their work with young children, and offer a valuable basis for enhancing pedagogical practice. Three of the articles are from studies undertaken through Ministry of Education funded projects that involve teachers and researchers working in partnership: the Centre of Innovation (COI) and the Teaching Learning and Research Initiative (TLRI) programmes. These programmes are generating a steady source of research-based material that is of real theoretical and practice value, and that benefits from the researcher-teacher partnership.

Novel ways of upholding children's rights and finding out children's and families' perspectives are discussed in some articles. These ways include gaining children's "assent" to participate, using a persona doll to investigate children's views of rights, "just talking to children", use of photography, child conferencing, and collaborative drawing to find out about children's views of their outdoor experience, and family interpretation of the origin and meaning of children's literacies.

This is a bumper issue of *Early Childhood Folio*, with more than the usual articles and including the new *Spotlight on Children's Issues* feature. It has been prepared for publication in time for the 2007 Early Childhood Convention, in the knowledge that it will provoke keen interest.

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