Children's rights and early childhood education

Links to theory and advocacy

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There is still resistance and hostility within some circles to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention), but professionals working with children should be familiar with rights principles and their use in advocating for change. A rights perspective fits well with the new paradigm of Childhood Studies, which is critical of developmental psychology and recognises multiple childhoods, children's agency and competency, and the primacy of children's lived experience. The Convention has been used in advocating for reforms in early childhood services in New Zealand. One example is the development and implementation of our early childhood education curriculum, Te Whāriki. The second example is New Zealand's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education (Ngā Huarahi Arataki), which is focused on improving early childhood education quality and participation. It is argued that child advocacy for better early childhood education policies can be strengthened by the use of the Convention.

Children's rights

Children's rights have been argued about for centuries, and the concept touches raw nerves when adult decisions and actions are put to the test (Stainton Rogers, 2004). 'Rights are entitlements, valuable commodities' which we 'do not have to grovel or beg to get', according to Freeman (1996, p. 70). Children's rights do not receive widespread public or political support in New Zealand, and perhaps even less so in Australia. Children's rights have often been perceived as 'a political hot potato', which, rather than advancing children's interests, jeopardise them (Melton, 2005, p. 655). This is a disturbing state of affairs, and one I would like academics and professionals working on children's issues to fight. There is a responsibility for education about children's rights to be implemented in countries which have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). Article 42 obliges the state 'to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike'. It is particularly important, therefore, for early childhood teacher education and professional development programs to ensure that the principles of the Convention are understood and implemented in early childhood services.

Those who are nervous of children's rights tend to focus on the issue of civil and political rights (participation rights). The idea of children having rights tends to be interpreted as being permissive and giving them too much power and control, while at the same time taking power and control away from parents (or others in authority over children, such as teachers). This 'ideological blindness to the facts at hand and the interests at stake' (Melton, 2005, p. 647) is not productive. Both Australia and New Zealand have signed the Convention and have an obligation to implement it. New Zealand's current relative economic prosperity give us no excuses for failure to implement, although money is far from the major consideration in children's rights. It is important that the ratification of the Convention (in 1990 in Australia and 1993 in New Zealand) should be more than a public relations exercise, with the earliest ratifying countries often having made little progress in implementation (Boyden, 1993, cited by Burman, 1996). In my view, it is a responsibility for researchers, professionals and agencies working for children (including teachers) to keep governments honest and insist they fulfill the promises they made when they implemented the Convention.
Professionals working with children have an important role in advocating for them: by taking a proactive approach towards recognising the rights of all children; and responding by trying to change systems, policies and individuals. Child advocacy involves raising the status of children, increasing their self-determination and the responsiveness and accountability of institutions affecting them (Melton, 1987). Professionals should be educating government and local agencies about the Convention and using it to provide a common basis for understanding, and a framework to plan and operate services for children. Child advocacy is not about undermining the role of parents, families or teachers, nor is it about denying children their childhood.

The Convention provides legal and ethical grounds on which to argue for changes to policy in favour of children's rights. Greater collaboration between agencies concerned with the rights of children in different spheres, and even between different countries, could do much to speed implementation. The Convention is a powerful international treaty, ratified by all but two countries in the world (US and Somalia), which is being used proactively in many countries to persuade governments and communities to support better policies for children. Even if countries do not fully comply with the Convention, ratification of it signals an intention for them to progressively implement it and incorporate it into their domestic law, policies and practice (Ludbrook, 2000). In New Zealand, for example, Article 3 of the Convention (relating to the welfare and best interests of the child) is reflected in Section 4 of the Care of Children Act, 2004. Even without incorporation into domestic law, however, the Convention has persuasive authority and its principles have filtered through into best practice guidelines (for example, the Lawyer for Child Practice Note), government strategies such as the Agenda for Children (Ministry of Social Development, 2002) and the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). The courts use treaties as an aid in statutory interpretation and regard treaty obligations as factors to be considered in the exercise of a statutory discretion (Tapp, 1998). Several important early childhood education policy developments in New Zealand have also used the Convention as part of their rationale, as I shall show later in this paper.

The Convention provides an internationally accepted standard to be applied to basic human rights affecting children. Freeman (1995) argues that, while the Convention is not the final word on children's rights (because it is a result of international compromise), it goes well beyond any previous international documents and reflects a world consensus on the status of children. Melton believes that the Convention is unusual in the breadth of its coverage.

Not only is the Convention a nearly universally adopted expression of respect for children as persons, but it is also unparalleled in its conceptual breadth. No other human-rights treaty directly touches on so many domains of life. (2005, p. 648).

It is a document of reconciliation which treats parents and children with respect. It has had a major impact on other fields, including law, welfare and health. The following quote from the Principal Family Court Judge in New Zealand, referring to a new law, the Care of Children Act, 2005, illustrates well the different perspective on children associated with the Convention:

Children are citizens and social participants in their own right. This is a fundamental shift from the old adage 'children should be seen but not heard'. No longer are children to be thought of as the property of their parents, unwarranted of consideration until the attainment of adulthood. Children are human beings and entitled to the same degree of respect as adult human beings. ... This position of being people unto themselves, while also being dependent on others, is clearly recognised in the pre-eminent human rights instrument specific to children. That is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). As the most widely adopted human rights document in history, ratified by 192 countries, UNCROC provides a powerful backdrop to the Care of Children Act. (Boshier, 2005, p. 7).
The Convention relies on moral pressure, dialogue and cooperation rather than strong enforcement mechanisms. It helps make children visible, challenges governments and others to question their assumptions, and values children as people in their own rights today, rather than what they will become tomorrow. The United Nations’ involvement in monitoring the implementation of the Convention keeps state agencies on their toes and helps child advocates to press their case. It also provides useful independent feedback to countries on their policies and practice for children and promotes the visibility of childhood in law and society. The Convention is compatible with the rethinking about childhood occurring in contemporary social science, which I will discuss in the next section.

There has been, since the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s in New Zealand, an increase in the number of children who have experienced poverty; high rates of suicide amongst young people; lack of access to basic health care; a serious problem with the exposure of children to violence (New Zealand has the third-highest rate of deaths by homicide in the OECD); ineffective childcare and protection systems; and lack of equal access to high-quality education for children from different backgrounds. We therefore have little to be smug about in New Zealand in the arena of children’s rights, despite much more attention having been paid to them in the past five years, and several major improvements, especially in early childhood education. Equal access to good-quality early childhood education is something which can contribute to ameliorating poverty, preventing ill-health and reducing inequities of access to other services, so it is a tool to promote children’s rights. Advocates of early childhood education reform in New Zealand have found the Convention to be a useful strand in the thread of arguments we use to promote change.

I have argued elsewhere (Smith, 2000) that, despite the lack of explicit mention in the Convention, it is highly relevant to early childhood education. The preamble talks about the prime importance of the family and family support, and the special safeguards and care needed by children. Articles 28 and 29 refer to the rights of children to education. Article 29 says the education of the child should be directed to ‘the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential’. In order to adequately fulfil Article 29 so that children are to reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement, they should experience a rich environment in infancy and early childhood. There is strong international evidence now (Barnett, 1999; Smith, Grima, Gaffney & Powell, 2000) that, especially for children in poverty, experiencing high-quality early childhood education can produce lasting effects on educational and social outcomes.

There are other the Convention articles which are also important for early childhood education (see Smith, 2000), but it is participation rights, in particular Articles 12 and 13, that are the most challenging. Article 12 says the views of children should be taken into account in decisions affecting them (according to age and maturity). Article 13 says children have the right to express their views and to be given information. Article 12 is ‘the linchpin’ of the Convention (Freeman, 1996) which recognises children’s personality and autonomy—children as people and not just objects of concern—and that children must be listened to. Article 13 is equally important in setting out children’s rights to give and receive information. These articles accept that children are full human beings with rights and dignity, and accord respect to their identity (Pufall & Unsworth, 2004). Participation rights are very important within a societal context where adult authority and power is absolute. Children’s participation in society supports a sense of belonging and inclusion but, more importantly, teaches children how they can bring about change.

"Early opportunities for democratic participation nourish a sense of collective ownership and responsibility as well as skills to solve problems in collaborative ways. Perhaps most importantly, children develop a belief in themselves as actors who have the power to impact the adverse conditions that shape their lives. They develop confidence and learn attitudes and practical lessons about how they can improve the quality of their lives" (Rizzini & Thaplyial, 2005, p. 18).

**Theoretical perspectives**
A children's rights perspective is compatible with theoretical developments in the new paradigm of Childhood Studies, though my view is that using the Convention is likely to be much more persuasive in bringing about policy change than using the theory on its own. The child-related professions are accustomed to making assumptions about the needs of children and what is best for them, but this perspective is now being challenged. The traditional conceptualisation of children in terms of needs is a way of imposing a particular set of values on how we treat them (Stainton Rogers, 2004; Woodhead, 1997). Woodhead is critical of a needs focus and the assumptions which underlie them. First, that needs are in children's nature: 'assuming that the needs are a property of children themselves, something that they possess, endowed by nature, and detectable in their behaviour' (Woodhead, 1997, p. 69). Second, that a desired outcome of psychological wellbeing is achievable only when certain needs are met, using a pathological approach to define children's needs. A needs model is based on the idea that normative relationships are valid prescriptions for all of childhood, instead of locally based on dominant models in Western society. Woodhead says needs models promote Western culture and values in the guise of science, and promote a construction of children as the passive recipients of adults' actions rather than as agents:

A 'rights' perspective is serving as a powerful antidote to 'needs' in many areas of policy-making. Children's rights breaks through the web of paternalist, protectionist constructions that emphasise children as powerless dependants, separated-off from adult society and effectively excluded from participation in shaping their own destiny. This is especially true in respect of rights that empower children to participate in the process of defining their 'needs', treatment and destiny. (Woodhead, 1997, p. 81).

Rights, unlike needs, are acknowledged as cultural constructions about the essential entitlements for children. There were 10 years of international negotiation involved in achieving a consensus which received unanimous endorsement from the United Nations. If, instead of focusing on children's needs, we focus on children's rights, there is a very important change in emphasis from 'fixing children' to fit a normative mould, and viewing them as vulnerable and passive, towards children's agency, respecting children's personhood, supporting their participation and resilience to cope with problems, and ensuring that society provides entitlements for them.

Childhood Studies challenges the former dominance of child development as a foundation discipline for child-related professions, and suggests an alternative approach. Instead of being the mute, vulnerable objects of concern, in need of protection and lacking in control, children are positioned within Childhood Studies as powerful and competent social actors. Voice and agency are two fundamental components of Childhood Studies. Voice refers to 'that cluster of intentions, hopes, grievances, and expectations that children guard as their own' (Pufall & Unsworth, 2004, p. 8); and agency 'to the fact that children are much more self-determining actors than we generally think' (p. 8). Agency is how children express their voice. Viewing children as holders of rights involves incorporating the concept of children as agents and social actors, and including their perceptions on their own lives and experiences as an essential input towards creating better conditions of childhood.

The Childhood Studies paradigm grew from the Sociology of Childhood (Mayall, 1994; James & Prout, 1997; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Pufall & Unsworth, 2004). Psychological notions of individual growth and development, independent of context, have been challenged; children are seen as social actors, and social life looked at through its meanings for children in the contexts of specific events. The 'universalising claims of development theory' which provide 'a spurious veneer of coherence on diverse childhood realities' are problematised (Woodhead, 1996, p. 8). Freeman (1998) points out the congruence of vision between the children's rights movement and the sociology of childhood. Both paradigms recognise that children construct their autonomous social worlds; that they are participants in social processes; that they are persons, not property; that they constitute multiple voices rather than a collective and undifferentiated class; and that childhood should be given as high a priority as adulthood (if not higher).
Nevertheless, not all of the critical theorists in the sociology of childhood are supportive of the discourse of children's rights. Burman (1996) argues that the globalisation of childhood has the danger of making general statements about children, and ignoring their particular contexts. She advocates that rights and childhood are local, and that normative definitions of childhood are covertly western. She does, however, believe that a legal rights framework is worth retaining and still necessary in the struggle against structural inequalities.

Sociocultural theory is also congruent with Children's Rights theory (Smith, 2002) and with Childhood Studies, since it suggests that children cannot develop voice and identity unless space, support and opportunities are available for them to develop their own point of view. Social interaction and participation with others in cultural activities with skilled partners leads to the internalisation of the tools for thinking, enhancing children's competence (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Joseph's (2005) study of children from a Lebanese village showed that children were nested in webs of family relationships, and that their rights and responsibilities were influenced strongly by whom they were related to and whom they knew. '[That] children's rights and responsibilities were delicately negotiated possibilities which had to be constantly worked through known relationships was everywhere evident in practice' (Joseph, 2005, p. 2). This research suggests that participation rights, involving the individual exercise of autonomy and initiative, cannot be separated from opportunities to be responsible citizens in the context of social interactions and relationships.

Childhood Studies also suggests a change in approach to social science research with children. In the past, giving children the opportunity to speak for themselves in research was seen to be violating the rules of good scientific behaviour (Qvortrup, 1994), but now children's agency is acknowledged. Melton (2005) sees the Convention as helpful for social scientists in establishing principles for rights-based research, which would be different from much current child research. He emphasises the importance of respect for the dignity of child research participants, provision of appropriate information for children, non-intrusive and honest research procedures, a focus on children's experience and perspectives, recognition that children are not a unitary class, respect for their diversity, and feedback to children. Melton (2005) also believes that researchers have a responsibility to present their findings in an easily used and understood form to those who are responsible for implementing children's rights (and this would include early childhood teachers).

The relevance of the Convention, and particularly Articles 12 and 13 for very young children, has been pointed out by a number of researchers in early childhood (Alderson, 2000; Alexander, 1995; Clark, 2006; Clark & Moss, 2001; Langsted, 1994; Pugh Selleck, 1996). If children have opportunities in an early childhood centre to be valued as social actors, then this brings about a totally different early childhood climate and environment.

Clark (2006) has written about how ideas of incorporating young children's perspectives have been used as a catalyst for change in the United Kingdom. Children's perspectives on a nursery school class (within a primary school) for three- and four-year-olds were explored, from mapping and photographs, and were used to help design changes to the building and outdoor space. Clark describes how the children reflected on 'what it means to be in this place', and how their reflections informed the architect's brief and were incorporated into the design of the new building and play areas. Treating children as experts had an unexpected transformative effect on other school staff's perspectives on children, despite their initial scepticism. As one teacher said:

*Alison's approach has radically changed the way that we include all of the children in making whole school decisions; we now try to see them as the experts in their experiences* (Clark, 2006, p. 12).

It is this changed understanding of the child that, in my view, is the crucial ingredient in advocating for policy change.
## Changes within early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand

### 1. Curriculum and assessment

A change in perspective on young children is apparent in Aotearoa/New Zealand within our early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. A curriculum model is a very important determinant of what happens in education. It provides a theoretical basis, goals and philosophies for practice, promotes shared understanding and language, and provides a framework for assessment. But most curricula do not provide the opportunity for children's voices to be heard and acted on.

*Te Whāriki*, however, provides an unusual model of embedding children's participation rights within a curriculum. New Zealand is not the first country to have incorporated a respect for children and children's voice into early childhood education. Both the Reggio Emilio movement in Italy and early childhood education and care in Scandinavian countries have provided positive models, with their strong belief in the importance of children's viewpoints and understanding and deliberate efforts to include these in research and practice (Dahlberg & Moss, 1999; Doverberg & Pramling, 1993; Langsted, 1994). As mentioned previously, innovations in the United Kingdom are also occurring (Clark, 2006; Clark & Moss, 2001; Moss & Petrie, 2002).

*Te Whāriki* makes a political statement about children: their uniqueness, ethnicity and rights in New Zealand society (Smith & May, 2006). Its theoretical framework also arises out of Vygotskian sociocultural theory. Instead of being oriented towards instilling specific skills in children, *Te Whāriki* encourages children's autonomy, exploration, commitment and aspirations through relationships with people, places and things. Children are valued as active learners who choose, plan and challenge. This stimulates a climate of reciprocity, 'listening' to children (even if they cannot speak), communication and social interaction; observing how children's feelings, curiosity, interest, and knowledge are engaged by their early childhood environments; and encouraging children to take some responsibility for their own learning. Carr and her colleagues have developed an assessment model involving 'learning stories' and 'teaching stories' based on this curriculum model (Carr, 1998a, 1998b, 1999; Podmore, May & Mara, 1998).

Carr (1999) sees formative assessment as a type of action research, allowing teachers to use ethnographic, interpretive and narrative methods to interpret children's learning stories. 'Learning stories' are a holistic model of assessment, which seek to focus on behaviours which are central to children becoming competent and confident learners and communicators. Teachers, parents and children get excited about the results they produce with Learning Stories (Carr, 2001). Learning stories use many ways of documenting children's stories, such as handwriting, word-processing, scanning photos, and incorporating digital photographs and videos. The stories are also used to conduct a 'short-term review' and 'what next?' so that teachers consider how they might support and extend interests and dispositions. Parents' and children's voices are incorporated in the learning story to encourage them to reflect and extend its documentation and the consequent understanding of it.

The value of children being active participants in their own learning is emphasised in Carr, Lee and Jones's recent work (2004) for the Ministry of Education on early childhood exemplars. They argue that including children's voices, and viewing them as social actors with opinions and views of their own, helps to shift the balance of power in favour of the child, and encourages children to be competent and confident learners. Moreover, such an approach orients children to learning goals which involve mastery, persistence and striving towards increasing competence, rather than to performance goals oriented towards gaining favourable judgements and avoiding failure.
Assessments that include the 'child’s voice' or children making a contribution to their assessments encourage an orientation towards learning goals â€“ Teachers who pay careful attention to children’s voices gain windows into their world views and assumptions. (Carr, Hatherley, Lee & Ramsey, 2005, p. 3 & p. 4).

In the 'Oh, no! That's not right!' exemplar (Carr et al., 2005, p. 8), Lauren tries to print a picture of a basket over a screen-printed picture she has made of a cat. She is not at first happy with it and self-regulates her way through fixing it. She takes control of her own learning, in which mistakes are a normal part. Lauren's strategies for responding to a perceived mistake are noticed and recognised by the teacher. Teachers provided the scaffolding for helping her to get this right, but in response to the child's initiative rather than imposed.

Carr and her colleagues have found that adopting a learning stories approach encourages teachers towards a much more positive belief in children’s competence, involvement of families in assessment, confidence in their own learning goals, willingness to try out new and uncertain things and to consulting with others. Learning stories have the power to excite and energise teachers, parents and children. Parents have become much more interested in and convinced of the extraordinary learning achievements of children in their early childhood centres; they take portfolios home to study, to share with others in the family and to show colleagues at work. Children also treasure and ‘own’ their portfolios. As one teacher said: ‘Everyone wait[s] with bated breath as they hear stories they have heard so many times before, but never lose interest in hearing again’ (Carr et al., 2004, p. 193).

The first time we introduced the children to their stories being on tapes, it was an exciting day. Once the video was playing and children saw themselves they automatically went and got their files and began to look through them as they watched the footage. The videos sparked children’s conversation as they revisited and talked through their learning experiences. I thought this was amazing; children had made very clear links with their files to their videotapes (Carr et al., 2004, p. 204).

Learning stories and Te Whāriki are a good example of respect for children's rights and the new paradigm of Childhood Studies, which is now receiving international recognition (Smith & May, 2006). Children share meaning and power with adults (teachers and family members), have their voices heard and acted on, develop agency through having the opportunity to take initiative and play responsible roles, and have their strengths and interests respected. Such a model encourages children to be active citizens, to take control over their own activities, and to be purposeful members of their communities. It is also a model which gives all children who participate in early childhood education, not a selected group of children (kindergarten children, for example, as opposed to children in home-based care), the opportunity to be active participants in their communities of learners.

2.A strategic plan: Ngā Huarahi Arataki

The development and implementation of a 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education in New Zealand, Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki 2002-2012 (Ministry of Education, 2002), is also related to the new paradigm. The Convention was one of the key documents which underpinned the philosophy of the plan, which involved a unique interplay of research, pedagogy and policy in both the advocacy, implementation and evaluation of early childhood education (Smith & May, 2006).

A strategic plan for early childhood education was part of the Labour Party's election promises; so, when they returned to power in 1999, a series of early childhood policy innovations was introduced, including a strategic plan for the sector. In 2000 the Government appointed a working party, chaired by Anne Meade, to develop a 10-year plan for early childhood (Strategic Plan Working Group, 2001a, 2001b). The focus was on achieving quality participation for all children, and reducing the disparities between Māori and non-Māori, and between Pacific and non-Pacific,
The working group outlined a range of strategies intended to improve the infrastructures of quality participation. Some were restating the ideals of Before Five, but there was a new emphasis given to the Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Treaty of Waitangi and the Principles of Te Whāriki (Strategic Plan Working Group, 2001a, 2001b). The working group positioned a new demand onto the political agenda, ‘for whanau and families to have a universal entitlement to a reasonable amount of free, high quality ECE’ (2001a, p.5). (Smith & May, 2006).

In 2002, the Government's response to the Working Group's report (Ministry of Education, 2002) announced three goals for the country's early childhood education services:

- Increasing participation in quality early childhood education services.
- Improved quality of early childhood education services.
- Promoting collaborative relationships.

The strategic plan foreshadowed new funding and regulatory systems to support diverse services to achieve quality early childhood education; better government support for community-based early childhood education services; and professional registration requirements for all teachers in teacher-led early childhood education services, such as those already applying in the school and kindergarten sectors. The plan set in place a staged process to improve the training of the early childhood workforce—an area where advocates have in the past had difficulty in achieving change. All early childhood teachers in teacher-led services (kindergarten, child care, Te Kohanga Reo etc.) are to be fully or provisionally registered by 2012 (i.e. have three years of training and a year of supervised practice). By 2007, 50 per cent will be registered and by 2010, 89 per cent. Since 2002, there has been an investment of considerable resources towards implementing the strategic plan policies and enhancing the importance of teachers in ensuring quality outcomes for children.

Another really important area, in terms of encouraging participation in early childhood education, is progress towards achieving free early childhood education services. A surprise Government announcement in 2004 promised the introduction of 20 hours a week free education for three – four-year-old children in all teacher-led community-based centres from 2007. This was in addition to existing funding subsidies that provided an ‘almost free’ early childhood education for 15 hours a week in a part-day kindergarten. The announcement was welcomed with some surprise by many in the sector. The original working party had advocated for a ‘child's right to a free education', and this was going some way towards that recommendation, though somewhat more targeted. Initially it was only to be available in community-based early childhood centres, but in 2005 (in response to the private sector's lobbying), the Government extended this policy to cover private centres. The policy is currently being implemented, but with not all centres taking up the funding option. With the next election to take place in 2008, it will be interesting to see if these reforms survive if there is a change of government, or whether we will go down the path of tax relief instead of services for children and families.

Summary and conclusion

A children's rights perspective, linking with developments in Childhood Studies theory, is an important tool to achieve positive changes in early childhood education services. Other fields, such as Family Law, have already been transformed by this alternative philosophy and perspective. Professionals could use the Convention much more proactively to advocate for reforms to early childhood education. Unfortunately, there is resistance in some sectors of the public and in government circles to the concept of children's rights, so it is important for early childhood
researchers and professionals to educate them, and use the Convention to improve children's lives. Constructions of children as social actors and agents, rather than the passive and vulnerable recipients of interventions, are compatible with the Convention and with Childhood Studies theory. The exclusive use of traditional developmental psychology as a foundation discipline in early childhood education is now being challenged. Key features of the new paradigm of Childhood Studies are its interdisciplinary nature, its view of childhood as a social construction and children as active social agents, its emphasis on the diversity of childhoods, and its strong relationship with emerging social policy prioritising children. While Childhood Studies is still evolving, it is relevant to early childhood education because it is 'flexible and responsive to the challenges facing modern childhood' (Woodhead, 2004, p. xi).

I have given two examples from New Zealand early childhood policy development, which illustrate that the new paradigm and a rights framework can promote reforms to early childhood services, recognising the importance of equitable access to a variety of high-quality early childhood services for all children and families, and the value of a curriculum approach which listens to children's voice and views children as partners in promoting their own learning.


**References**


