Charles Sturt University

Children's Voices Conference 2026 (CVC2026) Proceedings

Children's Voices Centre
Charles Sturt University

Edited by
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Acknowledgments

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Welcome

Welcome to the Children's Voices Conference (CVC2026).

CVC2026 is an interdisciplinary international conference that provides a platform for sharing research about innovative methods, theories, and partnerships with children, families, and practitioners. It supports social justice both during childhood and in the childhood sector.

CVC2026 is organised by the Charles Sturt University Children's Voices Centre and is an opportunity to present research in a virtual online space. CVC2026 showcases the work of seven outstanding keynote presentations as well as 144 oral presentations.

- **STREAM 1: Creating a more inclusive world for children: International interdisciplinary research**
- **STREAM 2: Children Draw Health Global Online Gallery**

CVC2026 is held entirely online and asynchronously from 1–3 September 2026. There is no registration fee, and there are no fees to present or view the presentations.

https://childrensvoicesconference.csu.domains/

At the time of finalising this book (mid-August 2026), we had 1289 registrations from 63 countries/regions!

Papers are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 10, and SDG 17.

Our hope is that this conference supports social justice during childhood and in the childhood sector across the world. Thank you to everyone who has been involved in organising, presenting, and participating in CVC2026. We particularly thank Professor Neena Mitter (Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Research), who has championed our endeavours. Thank you, everyone.

Associate Professor Kathy Cologon, Distinguished Professor Sharynne McLeod, and Associate Professor Tamara Cumming
Charles Sturt University Children's Voices Conference 2026 Conference Co-chairs

Dr Carolyn Gregoric
Charles Sturt University Children's Voices Conference 2026 Conference Secretary

Emma Hayes
Charles Sturt University Children's Voices Conference 2026 Conference Administrator

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of all the lands on which we meet today. We also pay respect to Elders past, present, and emerging, and extend that respect to other Indigenous people who are present.

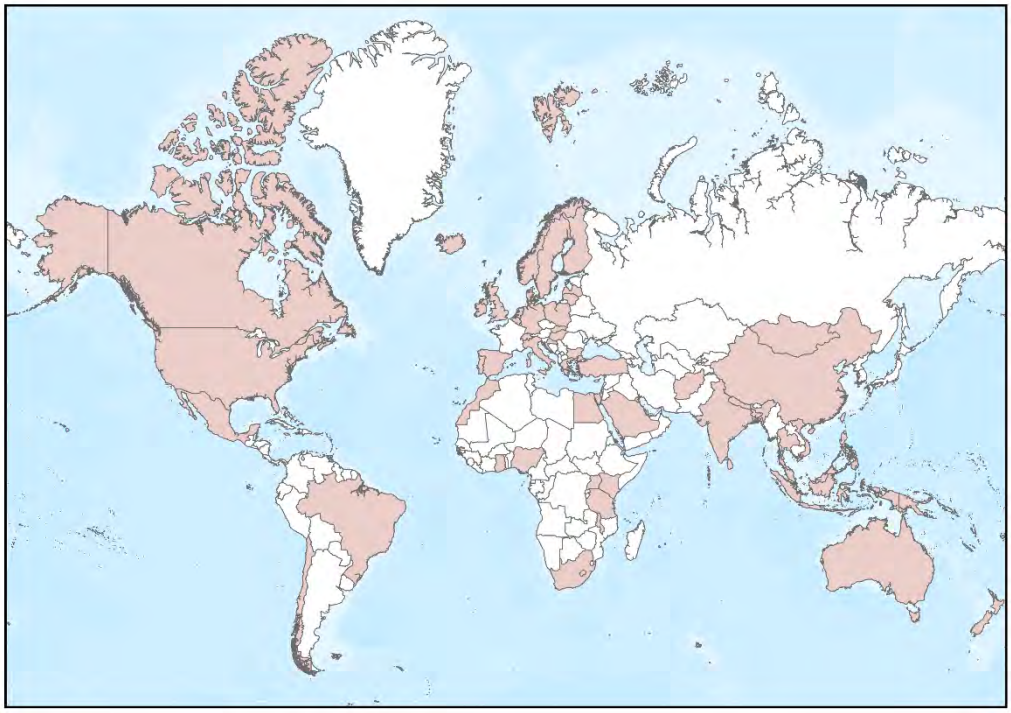
We acknowledge the Wiradjuri, Ngunawal, Gundungurra, and Biripai (or Biripi) peoples of Australia, who are the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which Charles Sturt University's campuses are located.

The children at Towri MACS Centre in Bathurst, NSW, Australia have shared their acknowledgment of country with us and given us permission to use it for CVC2026: https://youtu.be/cEg2ga0VYus. Thank you, Towri MACS children, families, and staff.

Welcome to Everyone

The CVC2026 Conference Organising Committee is delighted to welcome our keynote speakers, presenters, and attendees. At the time of finalising this book over 1289 people had registered from 64 countries/regions:

Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hong Kong SAR China, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Macao, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Türkiye, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.



Map created by Simon McDonald, Spatial Analysis Network, Charles Sturt University
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS

Children's Voices Conference 2026 (CVC2026)

CVC2026 showcases the work of seven outstanding keynote presentations, oral presentations, and children's drawings across two streams.

STREAM 1: Creating a more inclusive world for children: International interdisciplinary research
Presentations CVC2026-601 to CVC2026-744 https://childrensvoicesconference.csu.domains/

Topics

- Children's rights, voices, and perspectives
- Children's inclusion
- Children's communication
- Children's learning and activities
- Children's health and disability
- Children's services workforce and policy

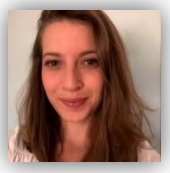
You can learn about international interdisciplinary research by watching 144 peer-reviewed presentations from across the world.

STREAM 2: Children Draw Health Global Online Gallery
https://www.csu.edu.au/research/childrens-voices-centre/research/childrens-health

Children from across the world were invited to "draw (or create) a picture about their health and healthcare" then answer a few quick questions to describe their drawing.
The 200 drawings and creations from children across the world show us:

- What makes you healthy? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lwedfy8_MB8
- Where do you go to get healthier? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=365OwVm4oRs
- Who helps you be healthy? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jATxwhYCyV4
- What your ideal hospital or health service looks like? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-X-z4gFDOg

CVC2026 Keynote Speakers and Plenaries



1. Amplifying the voices of children with disabilities in the health sector: An overview of WHO initiatives
Dr Mélanie Gréaux
World Health Organization, Switzerland

2. Leaving no child behind: Global trends and transformative actions in early childhood development and parenting support
Dr Chemba Raghavan
UNICEF Global Center of Excellence, Nairobi, Kenya

3. Beyond Fauxclusion: Generative listening for an inclusive world
Dr Zinnia Mevawalla
University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

4. Weaving play into the national fabric: What can we learn from international leaders in children's right to play?
Robyn Monro Miller AM
Play Australia (IPA Australia Inc), Australia

5. Stories that shape us: ABC Kids Early Education and the power of reflective media engagement
Laura Stone
Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) Kids, Australia

6. Introduction to the future with Future Council
Ella Simons
Future Council, Australia

7. Panel 1: Children's perspectives on the Australian Disability Discrimination Act: Barriers, fairness and belonging
Panel 2: Child friendly healthcare: Children's perspectives from the Children Draw Health project
Children's Advisory Group with Associate Professor Kathy Cologon
Charles Sturt University Children's Voices Centre

CVC2026 Abstracts

CVC2026	Presentation Title	Country	First Author
601	Listening as inclusion: Co-constructing emotionally safe spaces with children and practitioners	United Kingdom	Jayne Carter
602	Beyond access: Centring children's voices in inclusive digital early childhood practices in resource-constrained contexts	Nigeria	Adedayo Olofinnika
603	Bringing neurodiverse learners' voices to life through participatory action research	New Zealand	Kate Kernaghan
604	Children's insights about health and healthcare can advance health equity for children with disabilities across the world	Australia	Sharynne McLeod
605	Enhancing participation and voice in early childhood classrooms: A scoping review of inclusive practices for children with developmental delays	Nigeria	Adenike Marquis-Otoijamun
606	Home-school-community collaboration programs for 0- to 6-year-old children: A scoping review	China	Jinjin Lu
607	Youth perspectives: Experiences with a multidisciplinary weight management service, a qualitative study	Australia	Shen Meei Chia
608	Children draw playing: Interdisciplinary insights from drawings from 10 countries	Australia	Carolyn Gregoric
609	Using digital storytelling in teaching foreign languages to young learners	Poland	Kamila Wichrowska
610	What should we call play? Teachers' discursive negotiation of play's legitimacy in schools	Australia	Brendon Hyndman
611	Early childhood educators' confidence and willingness to teach STEM: A systematic review with a focus on engineering	Australia	Rajy Xavier
612	Understanding and responding to children's vulnerability: What educators need from professional learning	Australia	Alison Watson
613	Views of preschoolers on digital technologies	Israel	Ora Segal-Drori
614	Co-designing the English classroom: Amplifying adolescent voice, agency, and belonging	Australia	Alice Elwell
615	Inclusion and play-based learning: Visual narratives on the Australian early childhood organisation's websites imagery	Australia	Nilufar Jahan
616	Pathways to inclusion for LGBTIQ+ families: Learning from families' voices in maternity and child and family health	Australia	Cyrena Hunt-Madden
617	Listening to families: Access to support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with communication needs	Australia	Cyrena Hunt-Madden
618	Listening beyond words: Supporting children's voices through multimodal expression in diverse classrooms	United States	Sultana Yasmeen Jamal
619	From voice to action: Embedding children's environmental rights through measurable participation in early childhood education	Australia	Gabby Millgate
620	Children's perspectives: 'Inclusion is playing together'	Australia	Arifa Rahman
621	"Belonging is not the same for everyone: Children's diverse experiences of inclusion in mentally healthy schools	Australia	Kim Andreassen
622	Children draw playing: Insights from 101 children in Mongolia	Australia	Carolyn Gregoric

623	Intelligibility in Context Scale: A speech screening tool for kindergarten students in Tasmania	Australia	Sharynne McLeod
624	Artificial intelligence and communication disorders: Enhancing access to language assessment for multilingual children	Canada	Insiya Bhalloo
625	Characteristics of speech production and lexical use in toddlers: A play environment with a dog compared to a play environment with a doll	Israel	Gitit Mor-Itzhakniya
626	Preparing to protect? Early career nurses' engagement with mandatory reporting of child maltreatment in Australia: Preliminary results/findings from a qualitative study	Australia	Sarah Stenson
627	Involving children who stutter or clutter and their parents in speech-language pathology education	Ireland	Amy Connery
628	Between mistrust and engagement: Supporting participation of Roma children in Poland – A literature review	Poland	Paulina Domek
629	Using storytelling to support children's engagement in a local government community consultation project	Australia	Felicity Dunn
630	Sustaining children's scientific literacy in the early years: A four-phase framework for educators	Australia	Goutam Roy
631	The family day care system in Australia: Supporting families and addressing workforce challenges	Australia	Thi Thao Vu
632	Post-COVID reading delays: Insights from South Africa	South Africa	Sandra Stark
633	Syllable-based assessment of whole-word phonology in Persian-speaking children with social communication disorder	United States	Pegah Nikrah
634	How little kids learn their languages: Developing an evidence base for young children learning Aboriginal languages in central Australia	Australia	Carmel O'Shannessy
635	Continuity of learning for children transitioning to school: Perspectives from Australia and New Zealand	Australia	Jessamy Davies
636	"Heads up reader": Content warnings in young adult literature	Australia	Kasey Garrison
637	Redefining ability: Role of technology in amplifying the voices of children with special needs	India	Madhurima Chakraborty
638	Play as a voice: Supporting social competence in neurodivergent children in inclusive early childhood settings	Australia	Masud Ahmmed
639	Embedding children's voices in early years practice: Applying the Lundy Model in community contexts (Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Advisory Group)	Australia	Carmen Cappello
640	Pedagogy, sustainability, and global dialogue	New Zealand	Lisa Winiata
641	The development of phonetic complexity in Urdu-speaking children	Hong Kong	Saira Ambreen
642	A children's visual analogue intelligibility scale	Israel	Leah R. Paltiel-Gedalyovich
643	Beyond the classroom: The impact of outdoor mathematics activities on preschool teachers' beliefs and self-efficacy	Türkiye	Çağla Banko-Bal
644	Bridging the implementation gap: Inclusive classroom strategies to support learners with dyslexia	Indonesia	Naima Nosirova
645	Beyond translation: Underserved families seeking asylum share what cultural recommendations are needed when participating in intervention	Australia	Sarah Bartlett
646	"Little Libraries" for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	Australia	Sharynne McLeod
647	Reaching every child: Evidence from a multisensory, play-based inclusive education program across diverse global contexts	Australia	Mandy Lau
648	Including children in disaster preparedness across regional Australia's high-risk communities	Australia	Lucia Wuersch

649	Children as partners in practice: Co-designed resources for participation, feedback, and shared decision-making	Australia	Kylie Matusewicz
650	Capturing children's voices beyond words: Quantitative methods for coding vocalisation and gesture in early communication	United States	Megan Burkhardt-Reed
651	Drawing belonging: Refugee and migrant children's voices of starting early childhood and primary school in Aotearoa New Zealand	New Zealand	Hazel Woodhouse
652	More than fun and games: Children's play as a cultural practice and a human right	Slovakia	Lilla Garayova
653	Children with disabilities' views and experiences of engaging with the health sector: Scoping review	Australia	Kate Freire
654	Negotiating agency and rights: Consent practices with infants and toddlers in ECEC settings	Australia	Sonia Sin
655	Pragmatic experiential education and democratic learning environments for youth	Australia	Will Dobud
656	Children's voices through materials: Identity, clay, and meaning-making in early childhood	Australia	Jasmine Crane
657	Representations of disability in picture books: Issues of inclusivity and literary quality	Australia	Amanda Niland
658	Intersectionality, neuro-inclusive education, and holistic child development in rural early childhood education in Nepal: A reflective field inquiry	Nepal	Sahas Bhandari
659	Resources in 131 languages and dialects about children's speech development, assessment, and intervention	Australia	Helen L. Blake
660	Beyond counting: Supporting early algebraic thinking in children with Down syndrome through family-led intervention	Australia	Kathy Cologon
661	Children's voices in early years read-alouds	United Arab Emirates	Vahide Yigit Gencten
662	Preschool teachers' perspectives on emergent literacy in young children	India	Sunila John
663	Healthy minds, mighty kids: Student voice in whole-school mental health education	New Zealand	Elisabeth Price
664	Making visual art visible beyond sight: Anti-ableist pedagogy, children's participation, and inclusive artmaking	Australia	Kathy Cologon
665	Creating evidence-based guidelines for culturally responsive clinical practices: Supporting accurate diagnosis of speech sound disorder in Icelandic-Polish speaking children	Iceland	Kathryn Crowe
666	Assessment of inclusive education practices in the Schools Division of Batangas City	Philippines	Rosalina Panganiban
667	The Nigerian children's parliament: Adult structure or children's space?	United Kingdom	Ewajesu Okewumi
668	Translating early childhood policy: How teams of educators negotiate quality for children	Australia	Jessamine Giese
669	Difficulty of phonological tasks in Polish-speaking preschoolers with and without speech sound disorders	Poland	Agata Trębacz-Ritter
670	Aspects of early childhood speech in Louisiana	United States	Lindsey Bergeron
671	"What do children want?": Educators' interpretation of children's voices in creating equitable learning environments in school-age educare	Sweden	Maryna Rosen
672	Risk of early literacy difficulties in Polish-speaking preschoolers with speech sound disorders	Poland	Agata Trębacz-Ritter
673	"This is me": Children's drawings as multimodal meaning-making, identity construction and participation in early childhood	Malta	Josephine Deguara

674	Checking outside the box: A practical checklist for holistic assessment of speech sound disorders	United States	Malachi Henry
675	Checking inside the child: A case example of children's perspectives on speech sound disorders	United States	Alexis Moser
676	Reconceiving the dot: How children navigate competing discourses in early childhood art education	Australia	Kathy Gelding
677	A bibliometric analysis of shared book reading in children with autism spectrum disorder	India	Christeen Aleena Thomas
678	Play-based formative assessment as a catalyst to showcase children's capabilities and sustain high-quality mathematics pedagogy and practice	Australia	Jo Grimmond
679	Digital inequality and children's inclusion in education	India	Piyalee Mandal
680	From voice to influence: Co-constructing curriculum using Lundy's participation model	Australia	Nadia Wilson-Ali
681	From silos to shared pathways: Designing a cross-sector early childhood interagency network in a reforming system	Australia	Lauren Haskins
682	Art-based pedagogy and meaning-making among blind schoolgirls in India	India	Shafali Chadha
683	Co-constructing inclusion and anti-ableism through the mosaic approach	Australia	Aliza Salvador
684	Toys like me and you: Children's voices, representation, and anti-ableist pedagogy in early childhood	Australia	Aliza Salvador
685	Assessing ethnolinguistic vitality and language transmission through institutional support: The case of Amazigh children's programming on Tamazight TV in Morocco	Morocco	Ibrahim Bouylagman
686	Equitable start: Accessible early learning and childcare for survivors of gender-based violence	Canada	Lisa Lalonde
687	The potential of visual arts in supporting young children's sustainability understandings	Australia	Ljiljana Ferguson
688	Amplifying children's voices with child-led project-based learning	Australia	Ririn Yuniasih
689	Inclusion with joy: How a puppet engaged children with disabilities in participatory research	Australia	Olivia Karaolis
690	Children's and family caregivers' voices in deafblindness research: A protocol for an international qualitative study supporting the development of ICF Core Sets	Canada	Shirley Dumassais
691	From "correct English only" to full voice: How a Lagos teacher used bilingual storytelling (Yoruba English) to create inclusive literacy circles for early learners	Lagos	Abayomi Olaofe
692	Indigenous children's voices on well-being: Belonging and connection	New Zealand	Mira Azzasyofia
693	The flow of childhood as a conceptual framework for interpreting the children's voice	Sweden	Maryna Rosen
694	Challenging barriers to inclusion through a social relational lens in early childhood	Australia	Katie Wright
695	Co-regulation as an ethical imperative: A regulation-first adaptation of Theory-U for children's voice research	Australia	Geraldine Harris
696	Mathematics anxiety and inclusive learning experiences in children with Down syndrome: A review of current evidence	Australia	Mansoureh Moghtadaie Pozveh
697	Did remote learning change anything? Student outcomes and the reality of post-pandemic pedagogy	United States	Kelly Maloney

698	Between ”that’s boring” and ”one more time”: Preschoolers’ voices in the evaluation of a mobile story-listening game for children at cognitive risk for dyslexia	Malaysia	Mellisa Chin
699	When no one speaks: Silence, image, and child agency in picture books	Egypt	Dalia Mostafa Abdulrahman
700	Collaboration between speech pathology and education to screen children’s speech	Australia	Felicity Laurence
701	The spoon and ”good care”: Rethinking infants’ rights in early childhood education	Australia	Nadia Di Martino
702	Understanding the mental number line of children with Down syndrome	Australia	Thi Hong Dung Phan
703	Gender-responsive pedagogical practices in early childhood care and education in Vietnam: A qualitative study	Vietnam	Tú Nguyen Thi Cam
704	When inclusion becomes meaningful: Family voices in early childhood education	Australia	Hediye Gul Ozdemir
705	Supporting multilingual learners in Icelandic preschools: Interaction of educators’ beliefs, practices, and institutional conditions	Iceland	Berglind Jónsdótiir
706	Culturally responsive methods of assessing and diagnosing speech sound disorder in Lithuanian-Icelandic multilingual children: A converging evidence approach	Iceland	Zivile Vaisyte
707	Including children’s voices in a neurodiversity-affirming theatre program	Australia	Kelsey Philpott-Robinson
708	Conceptual development in preschool-aged children	Iceland	Sara Kristín Þorleifsdóttir
709	Language difference or language disorder? Developing culturally responsive scoring guidelines for a test of Icelandic	Iceland	Rebekka Rán Magnúsdóttir
710	Icelandic speech-language pathologists’ practices with multilingual and linguistically diverse children and adults	Iceland	Katla Einarsdóttir
711	Lookup: Beyond the screen, the future of childhood	Australia	Noah Lewis
712	Does this intervention work? Fidelity measurement in a preschool-based vocabulary intervention	Iceland	Halla Jónsdóttir
713	From invisible question marks to unconditional belonging: Family narratives of inclusive education	Australia	Kathy Cologon
714	Improving interpreted-mediated interactions in early intervention: Insights from professionals supporting families of children with hearing loss	Iceland	Kathryn Crowe
715	Facilitating children’s participation in early childhood education	Indonesia	Putri Ayu Wulandari
716	A visual play assessment framework: A systematic approach to tracking children's development through play	Australia	Fangfang Fan
717	A bioecological analysis of children draw playing	Australia	Lindsay Smith,
718	Hearing Young Voices: Methodological approaches to studying intercountry adoptees (Ages 0–12) in Ireland	Ireland	Simone McCaughren
719	Exploring the demographic and contextual determinants of student dropouts in the School Division Office of Batangas City: Inputs for program development	Philippines	Marc Elmer Perez
720	Cultivating digital empathy: Children’s voices on identity, ethics, and coexistence in a hybrid digital world	Switzerland	Emma Nowotny Villegas
721	Strengthening digital readiness in the Schools Division Office of Batangas City: An international computer and information literacy anchored study of digital learner competence in grades 6 and 10	Philippines	Marc Elmer Perez
722	Seeds of leadership: A qualitative study on school leaders’ experiences in curriculum implementation and management practices in the Schools Division of Batangas City	Philippines	Marc Elmer Perez

723	Voices of children from migrant and refugee backgrounds: How mindfulness-based art interventions can support their psychosocial well-being	Australia	Sara Javadian
724	Children's conceptual learning through culturally responsive pedagogy in the early years: A literature review	Australia	Muhammad Alamgir Hossain
725	The feasibility of the P.E.A.C.E. pack anti-bullying program in Western Mongolian schools	Mongolia	Altaituya Burnee
726	The impact of climate change on the development of children in Greece: A narrative review of communication, education, play, and place experiences	Greece	Evangelia Kyritsi
727	Capturing children's voices to inform child-centred outcomes in paediatric hearing care	Australia	Ella Boyce
728	Voices unheard: Early childhood classroom through a critical lens	India	Sukanya Singh
729	Children's voices in communication: Linking subjective experiences, drawings, and neural measures	Canada	Ruochen Ning
730	Towards consistent standards for assessing the severity of speech disorders in children: An analysis of diagnostic practices of Polish speech therapists	Poland	Zuzanna Kaszkur
731	Right to information and participation in children's digital journalism: A comparative study between Portugal and Brazil	Portugal	Ana Cátia Ferreira
732	"The mighty six": Drawing on children's participation rights to (re)imagine physical education and physical activity experiences with autistic students	United Kingdom	Stella Gkegka
733	Changing how children speak: Effects of syntactic intervention on spontaneous language in autism spectrum disorder	Portugal	Mafalda Azevedo
734	The right to musical knowledge: Curricular policies and music education in local Brazilian public schools	Brazil	Valter Junior
735	Play "makes the world happy": Children's voices about play in the world	Australia	Belinda Downey
736	Play environments for blind and low vision children: Findings from a scoping review	Australia	Fatemeh Aminpour
737	Understanding the representation of children with disabilities in Hindi cinema	India	Vidya Vishwakarma
738	Assent in action: Exploring ethical practice in arts-based research with young children	Australia	Tamara Cumming
739	Understanding the voices and learning experiences of children with autism in inclusive educational settings	Nepal	Saguna Thapa
740	Children as meaning-makers: Home-educated children's photo-narratives of learning, belonging and participation	United Kingdom	Jeannette Simpson
741	Children's interactions with peers vs educators during play: A multimodal s tudy of their potential to promote language learning	Australia	Trevor Carroll
742	Looking to hear: Engagement, dialogue, and encounters unpacking children's voices in the context of play	Australia	Brooke Bailey
743	Exploring similarities and differences between the early years learning framework (EYLF), Australia and Sri Lanka's national early childhood curriculum framework: Implications for early childhood practice	Sri Lanka	Yasaara Kaluaratchi
744	Preparing teachers for play: A Playwork-informed approach to children's rights and inclusion	Australia	Sophia Stirling

CVC2026 Topics

Topic	Presentation no.
Children's rights, voices, and perspectives	602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 613, 614, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 628, 629, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 643, 649, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 661, 663, 666, 667, 669, 670, 671, 673, 674, 675, 676, 680, 681, 683, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 692, 693, 694, 695, 697, 698, 699, 701, 704, 707, 710, 715, 716, 717, 718, 720, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 731, 732, 734, 735, 737, 739, 740, 742, 744
Children's inclusion	601, 602, 603, 605, 606, 612, 614, 615, 616, 618, 620, 624, 627, 628, 632, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 644, 647, 648, 650, 653, 657, 658, 664, 667, 674, 675, 679, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 689, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 699, 702, 703, 704, 707, 710, 713, 719, 722, 723, 724, 726, 727, 731, 733, 735, 736, 739, 742
Children's communication	601, 609, 617, 618, 621, 623, 624, 625, 627, 633, 635, 638, 640, 641, 643, 645, 646, 649, 650, 659, 665, 668, 669, 670, 673, 674, 675, 677, 685, 689, 691, 695, 700, 705, 706, 709, 711, 712, 716, 718, 721, 729, 731, 733, 740, 741
Children's learning and activities	602, 605, 606, 608, 609, 610, 611, 614, 619, 622, 625, 629, 630, 632, 633, 644, 645, 646, 647, 655, 656, 660, 662, 664, 668, 671, 672, 676, 677, 678, 680, 682, 684, 685, 687, 688, 691, 693, 696, 697, 698, 702, 703, 708, 711, 715, 716, 719, 720, 721, 724, 725, 726, 728, 730, 734, 735, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743
Children's health and disability	604, 621, 625, 626, 632, 637, 643, 645, 647, 649, 653, 655, 657, 662, 663, 665, 677, 684, 690, 694, 696, 698, 706, 707, 709, 710, 711, 714, 723, 725, 727, 733, 736, 737, 738
Children's services workforce and policy	601, 610, 611, 615, 619, 626, 628, 631, 658, 668, 671, 686, 700, 703, 704, 705, 714, 722, 734, 743

CVC2026 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG	Goal	Presentation no.
SDG 1	No poverty	671, 682
SDG 3	Good health and well-being	601, 606, 607, 608, 610, 612, 616, 617, 621, 622, 623, 625, 626, 628, 629, 636, 642, 645, 646, 649, 650, 652, 653, 658, 659, 662, 663, 665, 671, 674, 675, 677, 681, 688, 690, 692, 695, 696, 700, 701, 704, 706, 707, 709, 710, 711, 714, 717, 718, 723, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 732, 733, 735, 736, 738, 740, 744
SDG 4	Quality education	601, 602, 604, 605, 606, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 651, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 666, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 678, 679, 680, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 691, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 708, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 724, 725, 726, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743,
SDG 5	Gender equality	602, 603, 613, 620, 682, 703, 737
SDG 8	Decent work and economic growth	611
SDG 9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	611, 695
SDG 10	Reduced inequalities	611, 695, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 608, 610, 611, 612, 613, 615, 616, 617, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 626, 628, 632, 634, 635, 637, 638, 639, 641, 644, 645, 646, 647, 649, 651, 652, 653, 654, 657, 659, 660, 664, 665, 671, 673, 674, 675, 679, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 691, 693, 694, 695, 696, 700, 701, 704, 705, 706, 709, 710, 713, 714, 716, 725, 728, 731, 733, 734, 736, 737, 742
SDG 11	Sustainable cities and communities	606, 619, 629, 648, 658, 726
SDG 12	Responsible consumption and production	687

SDG 13	Climate action	619, 640, 687,72
SDG 14	Life below water	708, 712
SDG 15	Life on land	633, 670, 708, 712
SDG 16	Peace, justice and strong institutions	605, 608, 628, 649, 654, 667, 671, 683, 684, 685, 694, 695, 718, 720
SDG 17	Partnerships for the goals	601, 602, 604, 608, 622, 623, 633, 645, 646, 647, 649, 651, 658, 659, 667, 670, 677, 681, 682, 686, 687, 690, 700, 704, 711, 716, 730, 743

Malaika (7 years), from Uganda, drew this picture for our Children Draw Health Global Online Gallery and said: “I drew a hospital because that’s where I pick up health.”

Scientific Review of Presentations

We invited researchers and postgraduate students from across the world to submit abstracts to share their work on innovations to improve the lives of children, families, and practitioners during childhood or in the childhood sector. Papers employing qualitative and/or quantitative methods, reviews (e.g., scoping and systematic reviews), and scholarly theoretical papers were welcomed.

All abstracts were peer-reviewed by the CVC2026 Scientific Committee. After review, we accepted 144 oral presentations for CVC2026 and the revised abstracts are published in these proceedings.

Submitted oral presentations are available online at the CVC2026 website (1–3 September 2026). Most are 10-15 minutes in length and can be viewed via the conference website and Charles Sturt University YouTube channel. The presenters agreed that their papers could remain online after the conference.

Elsa (7 years) from Iceland drew this picture for our Children Draw Health Global Online Gallery and said: “You need to be outside to be healthy. You feel sad and annoyed if you are inside.”

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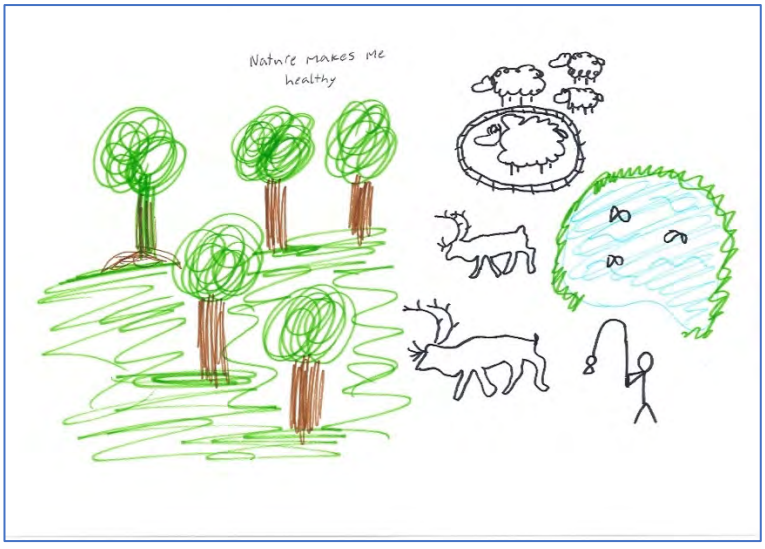

Ella (15 years) from Norway drew this picture for our Children Draw Health Global Online Gallery and said: “Nature makes me healthy. It also makes my grandparents happy.”

Making the most of CVC2026

CVC2026 is fully online, so you can view the presentations at any time during the conference (1–3 September 2026) in any order you choose. We have prepared this guide to help you make the most of your registration and attendance at CVC2026 – whether you are accessing the conference as part of a group or on your own.

Ideas for how to select which on-demand presentations to view

- Listen to at least some of the keynote speakers; they are highly respected researchers and speakers – you will benefit from listening to any (and all) of them.
- Choose a presentation according to a topic, keyword, or SDG (Sustainable Development Goal).
- Register and join live Yarning Discussions to engage with other conference participants. These sessions will not be recorded. All attendees will receive a certificate of participation.
- Think about an issue you want to learn more about. Is there a presentation that might inform your understanding of or approach to that issue?
- Think about how presentations could help inform your practice, your approach to documentation, supporting children's communication, or your service policies.
- Look for names you recognise and you want to hear more about what they are working on now.
- Look for research from a particular area or a particular country.
- Think about what you could learn by watching a presentation from outside your immediate area – whether you come from education, nursing, speech pathology, physiotherapy, psychology, libraries, or another area – you will find the others' perspectives fascinating and useful to your practice.
- Choose something you know nothing about but that seems interesting – you never know what you might learn and what new possibilities it opens!

Ideas to prompt group discussion and personal reflection on the presentations

1. What new ideas did the presentation raise for you – about practice, theory, or other approaches?
2. How might you alter your practice based on what you have learned?
3. What's your one 'gold nugget' from this presentation? What difference could this make to you?
4. What surprised you?
5. What didn't you understand? How could you find out more?
6. What did you learn about that could inform interprofessional work – especially between you and other professionals?
7. What would you like to know more about? How could you follow up on that? Have a look at the presenters' websites and any links they provided.
8. What ideas or approaches could be applied to your work as a team?
9. What short-term goal/s could you develop based on your learning from the presentation and conference as a whole?

Ideas for engaging with live events: Launch and Yarning Circles

Launch

The launch of the Children's Voices Conference (CVC2026) will be held on Tuesday 1st September, 2026 ay 1:30pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time). Conference attendees can view the event live via the provided Zoom link, or at a later time on the conference website.

Yarning Circles

Register and join live Yarning Circles to engage with other conference participants. These sessions will not be recorded. All attendees will receive a certificate of participation.

CVC2026 has scheduled opportunities to engage in Yarning Circles with an international audience in mind. Check your local time zone.

Yarning Circles are based on Australia's First Nations concept of inclusive dialogue, sharing knowledge, building relationships, and coming together to listen and learn. They draw on lived experiences and professional practices to bring together different perspectives from around the world. They provide an opportunity for delegates to come together to discuss key themes from the conference, to share knowledge, and to discuss issues of importance to them and children.

Yarning Circles are participant-led and facilitated by topic experts. Before joining, you may wish to view some of the related on-demand presentations to spark discussion within the yarning circle.

During the Yarning Circles, you are welcome to listen, even if you do not want to contribute.

There are multiple ways to engage, such as verbally or via chat.

To register for the Yarning Circles please visit: Yarning Circle – Children's Voices Conference

After the Yarning Circles, reflect on the discussion and how this may impact your practice/research. If you are particularly interested in a topic and others are as well, this is an opportunity to develop further connections.

Children's Voices Centre

A beacon of innovation and inclusivity, empowering ALL children
to communicate, collaborate, and create a better future for themselves and the world.

The Charles Sturt University Children's Voices Centre (CVC) aims to conduct world-leading, interdisciplinary research with global reach and impact that amplifies children's voices, and champions children's communication rights, learning, health, and development emphasising inclusivity, diversity, social justice, equity, capacity building, and innovation.

CVC conducts transformative interdisciplinary research across six themes:

1. Children's rights, voices, and perspectives
2. Children's inclusion
3. Children's communication
4. Children's learning and activities
5. Children's health and disability
6. Children's services workforce and policy

CVC promotes holistic practices and bridge gaps between:

People: children, families, communities, practitioners, professionals, policy makers,

Settings: homes, early childhood education and care centres, schools, health and disability services, community, civic, leisure and recreation settings,

Disciplines: education, allied health (speech-language pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychology, social work, paramedicine), nursing, communications, media, data science, and more and

Bodies: government departments, universities, national and international organisations.

Located in rural Australia, CVC emphasises children's communication rights regardless of geographical, ability, linguistic, cultural, economic, and educational barriers backgrounds, enhancing children's access to, participation in, and outcomes from equitable, quality programs and services, workforce sustainability, and transformation of social, policy and organisational conditions that enable social justice.

CVC foregrounds the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and serves as a conduit for children to be heard by those responsible for building an inclusive better world for everyone.

CVC2026 Keynote Speaker 1

Amplifying the voices of children with disabilities in the health sector: An overview of WHO initiatives

Dr Mélanie Gréaux, World Health Organization, Switzerland

Biography: Mélanie Gréaux is a consultant for the WHO Disability Programme where she leads global initiatives to advance health equity for persons with disabilities. She collaborates closely with governments, organisations of persons with disabilities, and research partners to strengthen the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in the health sector, including through participatory approaches that amplify the voices of children and their families in shaping policies and services. With a clinical background in speech and language therapy and a PhD in inclusion and rehabilitation from the University of Cambridge, Mélanie brings expertise in communication, child development, and inclusive health systems.

Background: Children with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to accessing quality health care, and their perspectives remain underrepresented in health policy development. Recognising this gap, WHO has strengthened processes to embed disability inclusion and the participation of children with disabilities in global and national health system transformation.

Aim: To provide an overview of WHO initiatives that centre the voices of children with disabilities and to introduce the methodology of the Disability Inclusion Guide for Action, which integrates the voices and experiences of children with disabilities in health system planning, implementation, and monitoring – as illustrated by its recent implementation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Method: The Disability Inclusion Guide for Action provides a methodology for health ministries to conduct a situation assessment, unpacking gaps and opportunities to strengthen inclusive health systems and to develop a concrete action plan supported by a monitoring process. This methodology centres consultative and participatory approaches, including focus group discussions with children with disabilities and their families.

Results/findings: Structured engagement with children with disabilities and their families is a fundamental step to uncover critical gaps and opportunities needed to make national health systems more inclusive. In Côte d'Ivoire, children with disabilities highlighted barriers such as the discriminatory attitudes of health care providers and communication barriers. Their parents often faced financial difficulties and stigma in their community. All emphasised that when health services are accessible and inclusive, they feel safer and more empowered to participate actively in their care.

Conclusion: Amplifying the voices of children with disabilities and their parents into health policy processes is both feasible and transformative. The Disability Inclusion Guide for Action provides a practical roadmap for health ministries to mainstream disability inclusion in their health systems through inclusive, participatory processes.

Implications for children and families: WHO helps to make your voices heard by health ministries. By taking part in the Disability Inclusion Guide for Action, you can shape health care that works for you and help design policies and services that truly meet your needs.

Implications for practitioners: By advocating for the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Guide for Action in your country, you can help ensure that children with disabilities receive care that truly reflects their rights and priorities.

Keywords: children's voices, health, interdisciplinary, innovations, international communities, policy, qualitative methods

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026 Keynote Speaker 2

Leaving no child behind: Global trends and transformative actions in early childhood development and parenting support

Dr Chemba Raghavan, Global Lead, Early Childhood Development,
UNICEF Global Center of Excellence, Nairobi, Kenya

Biography: Dr. Chemba Raghavan worked in UNICEF HQ in New York from 2018-2026 as Senior Advisor in Early Childhood Development. Prior to joining UNICEF HQ, Chemba worked in the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) as the Regional Focal Point of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and as ECD/Education Specialist. Chemba has also served as a Technical Expert for UNESCO in Bangkok, and Research Advisor in the Asia Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC). She has several years of experience as Senior Researcher/Assistant Professor in academia in the United States. Her areas of expertise include child development, parenting, cross-cultural lifespan human development and family studies, gender socialization, family friendly policies, research methods and statistics. Chemba holds a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies from Pennsylvania State University, USA.

Background: The early years of life represent a critical window for shaping children's health, learning, well-being and future opportunities. UNICEF works with governments and partners to strengthen early childhood development (ECD) systems and ensure that every child, regardless of circumstance, can thrive.

Aim: This keynote address will focus on how countries are being supported to strengthen ECD policies, programs, and parenting support interventions for the most marginalised and underserved populations. A central focus of the keynote will be equity, examining how global partners are working to reach the most marginalised communities.

Methods: The keynote will include a brief global overview of global trends in ECD and parenting support, followed by concrete examples of how countries are scaling integrated ECD and parenting support services that address barriers faced by those most at risk of being left behind.

Results: The keynote will highlight results from UNICEF's global work on ECD in 2025, as well as specific country ECD program results.

Conclusions: The keynote will close with key learnings and recommendations from the global ECD space, as well as areas requiring further expansion.

Implication for children/families: In this keynote, you will learn more about tools and resources that support young children and families to thrive through early childhood development (ECD) programs and policies.

Implications for practitioners: In this keynote, you will learn more about practical examples of integrated, culturally responsive and inclusive ECD programs that center the voices of children, caregivers and communities to reach the most marginalised populations.

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 1: No Poverty
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions

CVC2026 Keynote Speaker 3

Beyond Fauxclusion: Generative listening for an inclusive world

Dr Zinnia Mevawalla, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom (zinnia.mevawalla@strath.ac.uk)

Biography: Dr Zinnia Mevawalla is a Lecturer in Early Years Education at the University of Strathclyde. She has had the privilege of learning, teaching, and researching with children, families, practitioners, and diverse communities across the world, including Australia, Cambodia, India, Timor-Leste, and the United Kingdom. Zinnia's research focuses on disability studies and inclusive education in early childhood. This work spans participatory, play-based and arts-informed methodologies, emphasising the importance of critical consciousness and the rights of children in early childhood.

Background: Inclusive education is a recognised human right with well-established benefits for children, families, and societies the world over. Yet, from early childhood onwards, ableism has remained a common lived experience. This is sustained by the enduring myth of the "normal" child, which reproduces exclusion. Dominant, unquestionable, and "comfortable assumptions" (Barone & Eisner, 2012) about disability give rise to Fauxclusion – that is, practices that appear to be inclusive, but which are exclusionary. As a result, those committed to inclusion can feel isolated in spaces that claim to value belonging. In this context, generative listening emerges as a necessary construct, recognising that there is a need to listen and feel understood to belong.

Aim: Moving beyond "bell curve thinking" (Florian, 2026) and the bureaucratisation of inclusion, this presentation draws on the concept of generative listening as a relational praxis for creating a more inclusive world for children (Cologon et al., 2019). In doing so, it challenges tokenistic, co-opted, and systematised versions of inclusion, instead foregrounding what we can do within everyday work.

Method: Informed by research data from the Changing Hearts and Minds Programme (CHAMP) – a joint research and knowledge exchange project running with 60 leaders from early years settings across Glasgow – this paper forwards a framework for generative listening focused on: (a) disrupting taken-for-granted norms, (b) centring marginalised voices, (c) supporting critical consciousness, (d) sharing meaning-making, and (e) mobilising transformative action.

Results/findings: CHAMP findings highlight that meaningful change is driven by people, not bureaucratic systems (which often position Fauxclusion as inclusion). The research emphasises the potential of using generative listening as an everyday praxis for making the world more inclusive.

Conclusion: Listening and belonging are co-dependent experiences because inclusion is a daily, unfinished encounter lived out in the context of relationships. Generative listening offers a relational pathway for challenging ableism, resisting Fauxclusion, and sustaining praxis.

Implications for children and families: When generative listening is practised, you are welcomed as you are, your experiences are taken seriously, and you do not have to explain or change yourself in order to belong.

Implications for practitioners: Practising generative listening asks you to work alongside children and families, question ideas of who or what is "normal", to resist Fauxclusion, and to engage in ongoing reflection and action to transform processes of exclusion.

Funding: Glasgow City Council, Scotland, UK

Keywords: generative listening, children's voices, belonging, inclusion, ableism

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026 Keynote Speaker 4

Weaving play into the national fabric: What can we learn from international leaders in children's right to play?

Robyn Monro Miller AM, Play Australia (IPA Australia Inc), Australia

Biography: Robyn Monro Miller AM is CEO of Play Australia, Australia's national peak body for children's play, and President of the International Play Association (IPA World). A 2024 Winston Churchill Fellow, Robyn travelled to eight countries to examine international approaches to children's right to play. She is a recognised leader in play advocacy, child rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and community development. Robyn was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2024 for her service to children and children's services.

Background: Children's right to play is enshrined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), yet in Australia this right remains significantly under-realised. Internationally, a small number of jurisdictions have embedded play sufficiency into legislation, policy, and funding frameworks in ways that produce measurable improvements in children's lives. As a Churchill Fellow, the presenter undertook study to examine these approaches and consider their application to the Australian context.

Aim: This presentation shares the findings of the Churchill Fellowship report *Weaving Play into the National Fabric*, which examined international policy and practice models that centre children's voices, protect time and space for play, and translate the right to play from aspiration into lived reality.

Method: Robyn engaged in direct observation, practitioner interviews, site visits, and policy analysis across the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand, and Canada. Sites visited included outdoor adventure playgrounds, forest schools, local government play planning offices, national play organisations, and community-led play spaces. Key informants included play workers, planners, researchers, child rights advocates, and government officials.

Results/findings: Eleven consistent themes emerged across high-performing jurisdictions. These include legislative play sufficiency duties that require local governments to assess and address children's access to play, investment of philanthropy and government, the role of grass roots organisations in driving innovation, children's voices at the centre of provision; and strong national advocacy bodies that connect research, practice, and policy. In each context, children's voices were actively sought and used to shape the spaces and services available to them.

Conclusion: Australia has the foundations, the research evidence, and the advocacy networks to become a global leader in realising children's right to play. What is missing is the political will to weave play into a national policy architecture. Drawing on international comparators and the UNCRC framework, this presentation makes the case for a coordinated national approach that legislates for play sufficiency, invests in the play workforce, and places children's voices at the heart of planning and decision-making.

Implications for children and families: You have a right to play, and this research shows what is possible when governments take that right seriously. The lessons from countries around the world can help make sure that you have safe, exciting, and freely available places to play in your community, and that your voice is heard when those places are planned and built.

Implications for practitioners: This research affirms the vital role you play in realising children's right to play. It points to the power of trained play workers, child-centred planning processes, and advocacy grounded in the UNCRC, and offers practical models from international jurisdictions that you can draw on to strengthen your own practice and systems-level advocacy.

Keywords: play, children's voices, policy, child rights, well-being, international communities, community services, government, interdisciplinary, innovation

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026 Keynote Speaker 5

Stories that shape us: ABC Kids Early Education and the power of reflective media engagement

Laura Stone, Early Childhood Education Producer, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC Kids), Australia

Biography: Laura Stone is the Early Childhood Education Producer at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and leads ABC Kids Early Education, a free online destination with curriculum-aligned resources for the Australian early education and care sector. Laura builds collaborative opportunities for early learning and educator engagement through world-class ABC Children's video and audio content, along with accompanying written teaching and learning materials. Engaging her skills and knowledge as an early childhood teacher and early years consultant, Laura works together with teams at ABC Kids Originals and ABC Kids Commissioning and Development to contribute a valuable early childhood perspective to the ABC Kids slate. Laura is motivated by partnerships and research opportunities with subject matter specialists to ensure excellent early childhood messaging is embedded in all facets of engaging and entertaining ABC Kids media. Colleagues include Big Ted and Jemima!

Abstract: Multimodal story telling helps children make sense of themselves and the world around them. This keynote from Laura Stone at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation explores how ABC Kids partners with educators and researchers to use children's media as a springboard for reflection, play, inclusion, and social justice conversations.

Through ABC Kids initiatives including iconic programs such as Play School, Laura invites delegates to consider how intentional media engagement can support stronger outcomes for children, families and communities.

Keywords: media, play, inclusion, social justice, innovation

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026 Keynote Speaker 6

Introduction to the future with Future Council

Ella Simons, Future Council, Australia

Biography: Ella Simons is a climate justice and youth advocate, based in Melbourne. From her early teens she has been an outspoken voice in the fight for environmental and social change, MCing and organising School Strike 4 Climate between 2019 and 2022 as well as representing Australia as the youth delegate at the PreCOP 26 conference in Milan in 2021. She assisted in leading the Make it 16 campaign to lower the voting age which saw support from politicians across the country. She is the first Youth CEO of Future Council, a global council inspired by Damon Gameau's most recent film.

Background: I will explore my journey to the climate movement and the shaping of a new global project - Future Council. Millions of children around the world are frustrated by the dire lack of action to protect the planet and their future. Until now, their only avenue to express these concerns has been protesting on the streets. Director Damon Gameau (2040, That Sugar Film) takes eight children on an epic adventure across Europe in a school bus powered by biofuel. Their mission is to better understand the planet's predicament, explore solutions and, most importantly, take the conversation from the streets, into the boardrooms of some of the world's largest polluters and most influential companies. Their bold, hopeful journey leads to the creation of a Future Council: young changemakers working with big business to shape a better world. Future Council is a child-led movement that inspires and empowers young people to lead and take positive action for our future. It connects with businesses so members can help shape sustainable ideas and co-design regenerative products that benefit the planet. It also shares trusted knowledge, helpful resources, and clear paths for action with its global community. Any young person aged 9 to 16, anywhere in the world, can join. It's a chance to connect with like-minded peers, learn from world-class experts, and help make real change. Future Council will be part of schools, businesses and institutions - unlocking wonder and creativity, and bringing a much needed morality to decision making.

Implications for children and families and practitioners: You will better understand the work of the Future Council and its design practices.

Key words: children's voices, families' voices, Indigenous voices, communication, community services, early literacy, education, government, health, interdisciplinary, innovations, international communities, review, vulnerable communities, wellbeing.

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 14: Life Below Water
- SDG 15: Life on Land
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026 CVC Children's Panels

Children's Voices Centre (CVC) Children's Advisory Panels

Panel 1: Children's perspectives on the Australian Disability Discrimination Act: Barriers, fairness and belonging
Presenters: **Finbar, Zac, Chloe, Jocelyn, Greta, Knox, Biju, and Nayantara with Associate Professor Kathy Cologon**

Panel 2: Child friendly healthcare: Children's perspectives from the Children Draw Health project
Presenters: **Jocelyn, Knox, Greta, Biju, Nayantara, Finbar, Zac, and Chloe with Associate Professor Kathy Cologon**

Representatives from the Children's Voices Centre (CVC) Children's Advisory Group share their perspectives and learnings from participating in national and international projects through two key panel discussions. Speaking together from the Charles Sturt University television studio, the children reflect on what they learned through designing, participating in, and analysing children's drawings from around the world in Children Drawn Health Project. The children also share from their experiences developing a submission to the review of the Australian Disability Discrimination Act. Across both panel discussions, the children have important key messages to share in the hopes of creating a more inclusive world for all children. The panel presentations are introduced by Associate Professor Kathy Cologon, who has the privilege of working closely with the children throughout the work of the Children's Advisory Group.

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CVC2026-601

Listening as inclusion: Co-constructing emotionally safe spaces with children and practitioners

Jayne Carter, Ignite Education Ltd, United Kingdom

Background: Children's sense of belonging is shaped not only by relationships with peers and adults but also by the emotional climate practitioners create. While inclusion is often framed as a structural or curricular issue, children's own accounts highlight the importance of feeling listened to, safe, and emotionally held. This study explores how children's perspectives on belonging can inform and transform practitioner learning cultures, particularly in early years settings where emotional labour and workforce pressures shape daily practice.

Aim: The study aimed to understand how children describe experiences of belonging and emotional safety, and how these insights can support practitioners to reflect on and strengthen inclusive practice. It also sought to explore how listening to children can act as a form of professional development that enhances practitioner confidence, identity, and retention.

Method: Using a participatory, child-centred approach, children aged 3–6 contributed drawings, photographs, and conversational reflections about moments when they felt included or excluded. These artefacts were shared within practitioner learning groups who used structured reflective dialogue to explore implications for practice. Ethical approval was granted by an institutional review board, with full parental consent and child assent. Practitioner reflections were analysed thematically.

Results/findings: Children emphasised small relational gestures—being greeted warmly, having time to talk, being invited into play—as central to feeling included. Practitioners reported that engaging with children's perspectives deepened their understanding of emotional safety and prompted shifts in communication, routines, and team culture. Many described renewed professional purpose and increased confidence in responding to children's emotional needs.

Conclusion: Children's voices offer powerful insights into what inclusion feels like in practice. When practitioners engage with these perspectives collaboratively, they strengthen both relational pedagogy and their own professional identity. Embedding children's voices within professional learning cultures can support more inclusive environments and contribute to workforce well-being and retention.

Implications for children and families: You helped us understand what makes you feel safe and included. Your ideas show adults how to make your learning spaces kinder, calmer, and more welcoming.

Implications for practitioners: You can use children's perspectives to deepen your reflective practice, strengthen relationships, and create emotionally safe, inclusive environments that support both children's well-being and your own professional confidence.

Keywords: children's voices, inclusion, belonging, professional learning, early childhood education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-602

Beyond access: Centring children's voices in inclusive digital early childhood practices in resource-constrained contexts

Adedayo Olofinnika, Early Childhood Institute, Nigeria

Background: Creating an inclusive world for children demands more than digital access—it requires intentional efforts to ensure that young children's voices, rights, and developmental needs shape how digital environments are designed and experienced. This paper centres children's participation and inclusion as foundational principles for advancing equitable early childhood development in resource-constrained contexts, with evidence drawn from Nigeria.

Aim: The paper introduces the G-SAFE Framework—Guided use, Socio-Emotional Safety, Age-Appropriate Exposure, Family-Embedded Use, and Environment-Aware Design—as a context-responsive model that positions caregivers and educators as intentional facilitators of safe, meaningful, and child-led digital engagement.

Method: A mixed-methods study involving 150 participants—children aged 5–8 (*n*=30), caregivers (*n*=90), and educators (*n*=30)—examined how young children experience learning, communication, and participation across physical and digital spaces. Data were collected through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and child-friendly participatory activities. Thematic and descriptive analyses were conducted. Ethical approval was obtained from the Early Childhood Institute's Research Ethics Committee; informed consent and child assent were secured throughout.

Results/findings: The findings reveal that digital technologies serve as powerful enablers of inclusion when children's perspectives are centred and caregiver capacity is intentionally strengthened. However, unregulated exposure deepened exclusion, particularly among children in underserved communities. The findings underscore the importance of centring children's voices, strengthening caregiver capacity, and developing policies that embed participation rights into early childhood digital governance. The G-SAFE Framework offers educators, caregivers, and policymakers a transferable, evidence-based model for equitable and safe digital engagement—particularly for children in resource-constrained contexts such as Nigeria and beyond.
Conclusion: This paper contributes original empirical and practice-oriented evidence to global discourse on children's inclusion, rights, and learning, offering insights for practitioners and policymakers committed to building truly inclusive early childhood systems.
Implications for children and families: When your voices are heard, your feelings are respected, and your family is involved, technology can help you learn, explore, and belong—safely and confidently. You deserve digital spaces that are designed with you in mind, wherever you are.
Implications for practitioners: You have the power to make digital spaces inclusive. By guiding children intentionally, prioritising their socio-emotional safety, and partnering with families, you can transform technology into a meaningful tool for every child's learning and participation.
Keywords: children's voices and participation, inclusive early childhood development, digital inclusion, safe digital engagement, G-SAFE Framework

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-603

Bringing neurodiverse learners' voices to life through participatory action research

Kate Kernaghan, The University of Waikato, New Zealand

Background: Neurodiversity has gained prominence in education research, yet many studies rely on assessments and surveys that overlook the lived experiences of neurodiverse learners and their teachers. Such approaches risk silencing those most affected and limiting meaningful change. This study used participatory action research (PAR) to centre neurodiverse learners' voices and examine how their perspectives shaped teachers' engagement, reflection, and pedagogical decision-making.

Aim: The research aimed to co-create movement-based approaches that supported inclusion within a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. Conducted in two primary classrooms, the study drew on the shared expertise of teachers and an academic researcher to translate neurodiverse learners' insights into practice. The aim was to challenge deficit-based models and foster classroom environments that promote agency, belonging, and inclusive participation for all learners.

Method: Participatory Action Research was undertaken in two primary classrooms in a semi-rural New Zealand school. Two teachers collaborated with an academic researcher to design, implement, and refine movement-based practices within a UDL framework. The procedure centred ongoing cycles of reflection and adaptation to ensure neurodiverse learners were heard, included, and supported. Ethical approval was granted by The University of Waikato Human Research Ethics Committee, and informed consent processes were followed for all participants.

Results/findings: Neurodiverse learners developed a stronger sense of belonging, using movement to regulate emotions, build relationships, and have their strengths recognised. Teachers observed increased emotional and social awareness, more time on task, and reduced behaviour-management demands. Movement functioned as a regulative and relational tool that enhanced engagement when multiple options were offered. PAR ensured neurodiverse learners' voices shaped practice, prompting educators to adapt their pedagogy and move beyond deficit-based approaches.

Conclusion: Movement-based, participatory approaches can meaningfully amplify neurodiverse learners' voices and strengthen inclusive teaching. This study demonstrates how PAR and UDL-aligned practices can transform classroom environments, challenge deficit thinking, and offer practical pathways towards more responsive and equitable education.

Implications for children and families: You can feel safe, supported, and included here, and your ideas and feelings matter in every decision we make together.

Implications for practitioners: You can use these insights to strengthen your practice, helping you notice children's needs earlier and create environments where every learner feels understood and supported.

Keywords: participatory action research, neurodiversity, learners, inclusion, disability, education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-604

Children's insights about health and healthcare can advance health equity for children with disabilities across the world

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Carolyn Gregoric, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Helen L. Blake, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Belinda Downey, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Kathy Cologon, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Katharine Freire, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Tamara Cumming, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Kathryn Crowe, University of Iceland, Iceland
Mélanie Gréaux, World Health Organization, Switzerland

Background: This research was informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to promote children's health (Articles 23, 24, 25) and children's communication rights to receive and impart information and ideas regardless of frontiers (Articles 12, 13).

Aim: The aim of this study was to undertake research to understand children's perspectives about health and access to healthcare, particularly for children with disabilities. Child-focused participatory action research was employed where children co-created the research, were research participants, and analysed the research.

Method: Institutional ethical approval, parent consent, and child assent were obtained.

(a) 24 children co-designed the following questions: "What makes you healthy?" "Who helps you be healthy?" "Where do you go to get healthier?" "What would your ideal hospital or health service look like?"

(b) 126 artworks were submitted by children from 18 countries, including 60 drawings by children with disabilities or health conditions.

(c) Eight children analysed the artwork to generate themes about children's health and healthcare.

(d) Eight children created an advocacy presentation

Results/findings: Children (n=126), including those with disabilities, felt happy about their health (82.54%) and healthcare (72.22%). Having a healthy body and mind involved: "food, friends, doctors, rainbows, hospitals, abilities, workout and sports, energy, and stuff". Children with disabilities focused more on hospitals and doctors and were less likely to include friends, grandparents, animals, nature, supermarkets, and vegetable gardens to keep them healthy. The co-researchers indicated they had been given space, voice, audience, and influence.

Conclusion: Three areas of policy action were proposed at World Health Organization meetings in Geneva and Fiji: (a) Promote child-friendly practices across healthcare, (b) Enable co-creation of child-friendly services and environments with children with disabilities and families, (c) Train healthcare workers in communication strategies that are appropriate to different ages and capacities.

Implications for children and families: Children's artworks and insights can be viewed in the Children Draw Health Global Online Galleries: https://www.csu.edu.au/research/childrens-voices-centre/research/childrens-voices.

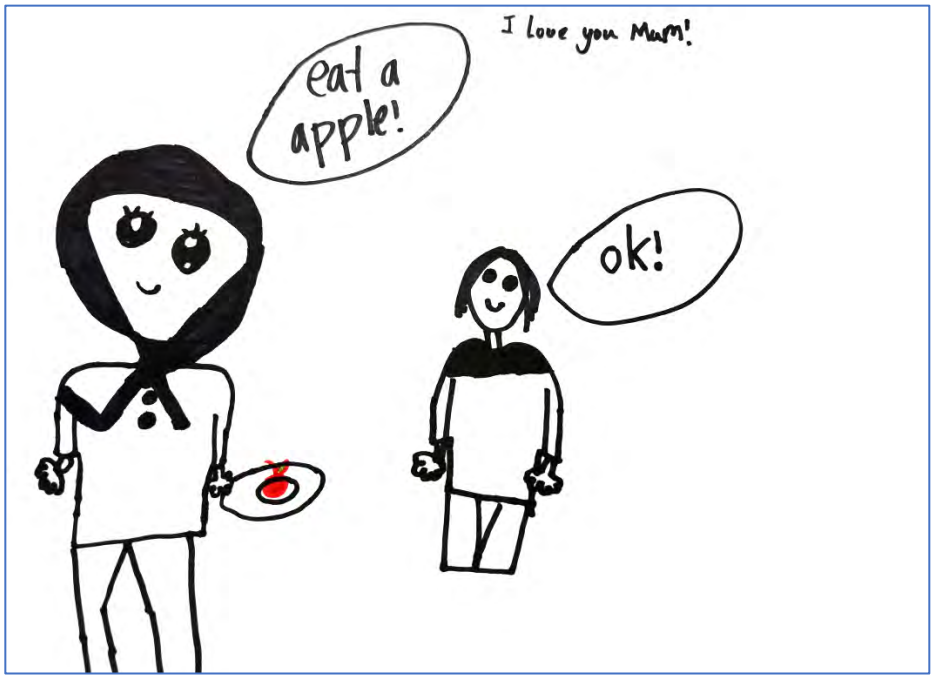
Implications for practitioners: Children can contribute expertise to the development and implementation of policies and practices relating to healthcare.

Funding: This research was supported by Charles Sturt University's Children's Voices Centre

Keywords: health, children's voice, children's advisory group

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals



Rahda (9 years), from Australia, drew this picture for our Children Draw Health Global Online Gallery and said: "My mum giving me an apple."

CVC2026-605

Enhancing participation and voice in early childhood classrooms: A scoping review of inclusive practices for children with developmental delays

Adenike Marquis-Otoijamun, Inclusive Minds.ed, Nigeria
Chidubem Precious Ezurike, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Background: Creating inclusive early childhood classrooms is essential to advancing social justice and ensuring every child's right to participate and be heard. However, children with developmental delays often experience barriers that limit their engagement, agency, and sense of belonging. While inclusive education is widely advocated, there remains a need to synthesise evidence on practices that meaningfully support both participation and voice in early learning environments.

Aim: This study aims to map and synthesise existing research on inclusive teaching practices that enhance participation and amplify the voices of young children with developmental delays in early childhood classrooms.

Method: A scoping review methodology was adopted to examine peer-reviewed literature on inclusive practices in early childhood education. Studies were identified through systematic database searches and screened using defined inclusion criteria. Data were charted and analysed thematically to identify key practices and patterns. As this study did not involve human participants, ethical approval was not required.

Results/findings: The findings highlight that differentiated instruction, play-based and child-centred approaches, visual supports, and assistive technologies support participation and engagement. Teacher mindset, reflective practice, and collaboration with families and specialists were critical in enabling children's voices to be recognised. Limited research was found in low-resource and culturally diverse contexts.

Conclusion: This study reinforces that participation is a fundamental expression of children's voice, agency, and inclusion. Moving beyond access to meaningful engagement is essential in creating inclusive early childhood environments where every child is heard, valued, and supported.

Implications for children and families: You deserve to learn in classrooms where your voice matters, where you feel included, supported, and able to participate fully in ways that reflect who you are.

Implications for practitioners: You play a key role in creating inclusive classrooms by using strategies that support participation, listening to children's voices, and adapting your teaching to meet diverse needs.

Keywords: Inclusive education, children's participation, children's voice, developmental delays, early childhood education, social justice in education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-606

Home-school-community collaboration programs for 0- to 6-year-old children: A scoping review

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Tong Lin, Wenzhou-Kean University, China
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Background: Home-school-community collaboration (HSCC) has become a key strategy for fostering holistic early childhood development through shared responsibility among families, preschools, and communities. Although research on HSCC for young children has increased, studies focusing on the 0–3 age group remain scarce, and among those addressing children aged 0–6, few meaningfully involve community participation.

Aim: The aim of this scoping review is to systematically map and synthesise international evidence on home-school-community collaboration programs for children aged 0–6 in order to develop an integrative typology and derive practical implications for localising culturally responsive and sustainable collaboration practices within China's early childhood education system.

Method: This scoping review synthesises 45 peer-reviewed studies published between 2014 and 2025. The review followed the five-stage framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley and reported according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). Four major academic databases, ERIC, PsycARTICLES, SocINDEX, and Web of Science (WoS), were searched to ensure broad coverage of the literature across the education, psychology, and social science domains. The search timeframe spanned 2014 to 2025, which reflects a decade of recent research developments.

Results/findings: Most studies draw on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Epstein's Six Types of Involvement Framework on school-family-community partnerships, and discuss five major program types: professional development, parental empowerment, community-based integration, digital engagement, and health or sustainability initiatives. Effective collaboration depends on co-designed structures, shared leadership, and trust-based relationships linking families, educators, and local organisations, yet challenges such as limited institutional capacity, fragmented governance, and varying definitions of 'community' persist.

Conclusion: This review proposes a typology that connects collaboration design with developmental outcomes and contextual conditions, and offers insights for a transition towards community-embedded, sustainable, and culturally responsive early childhood education in diverse cultural contexts.

Implications for children and families: When schools, families, and communities work together, you benefit from stronger support, more learning opportunities at home, and a caring environment where you can grow, thrive, and feel connected every day.

Implications for practitioners: You are the vital bridge connecting families and communities. To build these trusting partnerships, you need dedicated time, targeted training, and systemic support to thrive as a relational facilitator.

Keywords: home-school-community collaboration, early childhood education and care, parental engagement, community participation

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

CVC2026-607

Youth perspectives: Experiences with a multidisciplinary weight management service, a qualitative study

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Slavica Krstic, NSW Health, Australia
Fang Lin, NSW Health, Australia
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Sarah Dennis, The University of Sydney, Australia

Background: In Australia, 27.7% of children aged 5–17 years are overweight or obese, with rates rising to 37.3% in southwestern Sydney. Priority populations, including Aboriginal, CALD, and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, are disproportionately affected. Many adolescents in the Growing Healthy Kids service already show comorbidities, including prediabetes (75%) and abnormal lipid profiles (52%). Although the program shows clinical benefits, there is limited research on adolescents' experiences, particularly in priority populations.

Aim: This study aims to explore adolescents' perspectives on their experiences with Growing Healthy Kids (GHK), a multidisciplinary weight management service, evaluating their overall satisfaction and identifying areas for improvement in service delivery, acceptability, and effectiveness.

Method: A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews explored the perspectives of adolescents living with obesity who received care through the GHK service. Interviews were conducted between July 2022 and July 2023 by a non-treating clinician, either face-to-face or by telephone, with written consent obtained beforehand. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed thematically in NVivo by three independent researchers. Ethics approval was granted by the SWSLHD Human Research and Ethics Committee.

Results/findings: A total of 22 adolescents were interviewed. Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed four key themes: (i) initial experiences and feelings, (ii) perceptions of service delivery, (iii) impact of the service, and (iv) recommendations for improvement.

Conclusion: This study emphasises the benefits of multidisciplinary, tailored interventions that meet the unique needs of adolescents in weight management services. It identifies emotional challenges such as anxiety and judgment, highlighting the importance of clear communication, empathetic care, and supportive environments. Participants expressed a need for long-term support, flexible appointment options, and access to resources such as gym equipment. These findings suggest that extending access to services and offering adaptable care can enhance effectiveness and support positive health outcomes.

Implications for children and families: You told us you feel more comfortable and supported when you meet clinicians face-to-face, in a safe and non-judgmental space where your needs are listened to, and when appointments fit better around school and daily life.
Implications for practitioners: You can improve your service by providing person-centred, face-to-face care, giving clear information before the first visit, and offering flexible, longer-term support that aligns with adolescents' preferences and helps improve their health and well-being.
Keywords: adolescent, perspective, experience, obesity, weight management, service delivery, multidisciplinary

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-608

Children draw playing: Interdisciplinary insights from drawings from 10 countries

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Muhammad Hossain, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Janine Krecko, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Arifa Rahman, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Azizur Rahman, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Mehdi Rassafiani, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Goutam Roy, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Lindsay Smith, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Van H. Tran, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) states that children have the right "to engage in play and recreational activities". Drawings are not only a form of play, but also a tool for researchers to gain insight into children's play.

Aim: The aim of this study was to consider how children draw themselves playing using an interdisciplinary approach to analyse the drawings.

Method: During the 2024 Early Childhood Voices Conference, children were invited to draw/create an artwork of themselves playing. Drawings were submitted from 83 children aged 1–12 years from 10 countries. With the children's assent and parents' consent, the drawings were uploaded to the Children Draw Playing Global Online Gallery https://earlychildhoodresearch.csu.domains/early-childhood-voices-conference-2024/children-draw-playing/. The Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee gave approval to analyse the drawings using the following frameworks: descriptive, developmental, and focal points.

Results/findings: Descriptive. Most participants (83.1%) depicted physical or active play and playing outside (72.3%). Most children (74.7%) drew themselves playing with someone and portrayed themselves as happy (81.9%). Over half of the drawings included man-made objects (72.3%) and representations of nature (65.1%).

Developmental. A statistically significant positive correlation between age and the ability to draw a human figure was observed.

Focal Point. Focal points of relationships and connection (63.9%), play equipment (60.2%), and positivity (80.72%) were observed in many drawings.

Conclusion: Through drawing, children creatively contribute insights into their play, including who they play with, when and where they play, and how they feel about play. Interdisciplinary insights enhance professionals' understanding of children's play and can inform decision-making about play spaces.

Implications for children and families: Children's concept of "play" mostly involved physical and active play with others.

Implications for practitioners: Children's perspectives should be considered when designing and evaluating play spaces in homes, educational settings, and communities.

Funding: This research was supported by Charles Sturt University's Children's Voices Centre

Keywords: children's voices, playing, drawing, arts-based methods, Convention on the Rights of the Child

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-609

Using digital storytelling in teaching foreign languages to young learners

Kamila Wichrowsk, University of Warsaw, Poland
Paulina Marchlik, University of Warsaw, Poland

Background: The increasing integration of digital technologies in education has highlighted the need for future language teachers to develop digital pedagogical competencies. Digital storytelling (DS) is a great approach to teaching foreign languages due to its potential to increase creativity and engagement and to give children freedom to express themselves. However, preservice teachers have limited knowledge of how DS tools can be used in education. Exploring their motivations and expectations is important for understanding how teacher education courses can prepare future teachers.

Aim: This study aims to explore preservice TEFL teachers' motivations for enrolling in a digital storytelling course as well as their perceptions of its importance for their teaching practice. The study also investigates their prior knowledge of DS and identifies their expectations and learning needs. By analysing these perspectives, the research seeks to better understand how teacher education programs can design courses that effectively support the development of digital and pedagogical competencies in future language teachers.

Method: The study was conducted with 16 preservice TEFL teachers enrolled in a digital storytelling course at a university. Data were collected through an anonymous questionnaire administered to the whole class. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the survey. Completion of the questionnaire was considered informed consent, and all responses were collected and analysed anonymously.

Results/findings: The findings indicate that participants had very limited prior knowledge of digital storytelling: over 80% reported knowing little or nothing about the concept before the course. Most of them considered digital storytelling important in teaching English to young learners. Participants reported enjoying reading stories and found the topic attractive. Their reasons for enrolling included curiosity about the method, the appealing course title, the need to choose an elective course, and an interest in learning practical digital tools for use in language teaching.
Conclusion: The findings highlight the need to introduce DS more explicitly in teacher education programs. Although preservice teachers recognised its potential in teaching English to young learners, their initial knowledge of the approach was limited. At the same time, their interest in stories and digital tools suggests strong motivation to develop these skills. Integrating practical training in digital storytelling can therefore help future teachers combine creativity, technology, and language pedagogy, preparing them to design engaging learning experiences for young learners.
Implications for children and families: With digital storytelling, you'll be able to create your own unique story that tells, in your own words, about a topic close to your heart.
Implications for practitioners: With DS, you'll be able to help pupils create their stories. This will boost their motivation, engagement, and show that their efforts have a real outcome in the form of a video. A DS project will show children that learning a foreign language can be practical and interesting.
Keywords: digital storytelling, teaching foreign languages, young learners, technology, children, teachers

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-610

What should we call play? Teachers' discursive negotiation of play's legitimacy in schools

Brendon Hyndman, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Play is widely recognised as important for children's learning, well-being, and development, yet it often occupies an uncertain place in formal schooling. Existing research has largely examined the benefits, barriers, and provision of play, with less attention to the terminology through which play is framed, interpreted, and legitimised in schools. This creates an important gap, as educational language can shape whether play is understood as central, credible, and worth protecting.

Aim: This study explored how teachers across diverse international contexts described, reframed, and contested terminology for play and recess in schools, and what these choices reveal about the negotiation of play's legitimacy and authenticity within contemporary education systems.

Method: Data were drawn from the broader TOPPING study, an international mixed-methods survey examining teacher perspectives on how play could be better valued and prioritised in schools. This analysis focused on qualitative responses from 135 in-service teachers across 25 countries to one open-ended prompt: "What terminology should be used for play and/or recess in schools, and why?" Responses were analysed using a qualitative thematic approach informed by discursive framing perspectives. Ethical approval was granted by Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol H22401).

Results/findings: Four themes were generated. First, teachers described rebranding play for institutional legitimacy, often aligning play with learning-focused language. Second, some teachers resisted relabelling to preserve play's intrinsic, child-led, and joyful qualities. Third, teachers drew on competing semantic pathways of legitimisation, including well-being, inquiry, development, agency, movement, and nature. Fourth, terminology functioned as an audience-oriented professional strategy, with language selected to resonate with parents, school leaders, colleagues, and policy environments.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that play is negotiated in schools not only through policy, time, and provision, but also through language. Terminology can make play more institutionally legible, but it can also risk narrowing or instrumentalising what makes play educationally and developmentally valuable. Language should therefore be recognised as an important site of advocacy and tension in efforts to protect play in contemporary schooling.

Implications for children and families: The language schools use to describe play shapes how it is valued. When play is framed as learning, well-being, or development, it may gain greater legitimacy in schools. Understanding this can help you recognise how schools support children's play and why it matters for their development.

Implications for practitioners: You can use language strategically to advocate for play in schools. Framing play in ways that resonate with families, leaders, and policy priorities may strengthen support, while still protecting play's child-led, joyful, and developmental qualities.

Keywords: play, recess, terminology, framing, legitimacy, teachers, schools

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-611

Early childhood educators' confidence and willingness to teach STEM: A systematic review with a focus on engineering

Rajy Xavier, Ikon Institute of Australia, Australia

Background: Children's engagement with STEM in the early years is shaped by the confidence and readiness of the educators working alongside them. Despite broad recognition of STEM's importance in early childhood education, a persistent gap exists between educators' positive dispositions towards STEM and their capacity to enact STEM pedagogy, with engineering remaining the least understood and least embedded component in early childhood settings, both in Australia and globally.

Aim: This paper presents a systematic literature review examining early childhood educators' confidence and willingness to teach STEM, with a specific focus on engineering – exploring why this gap exists, what sustains it, and what professional learning approaches show promise in expanding and enriching STEM-related learning opportunities for young children.

Method: This study is a systematic literature review and did not involve human participants; therefore, formal ethical approval was not required. Drawing on empirical research published since 2020, the review analyses key studies across Australian and international early childhood contexts, synthesising findings related to educator confidence, preservice preparation, and professional identity in relation to STEM and engineering pedagogy.

Results/findings: The review reveals a compounding cycle constraining children's access to engineering experiences: inadequate preservice preparation, conflation of general inquiry with STEM-specific competency, and professional identity tensions that position STEM as belonging to formal schooling. MacDonald et al. (2021), O'Neill et al. (2023), and Wan et al. (2021) collectively highlight that engineering is the dimension of STEM educators feel least prepared and least confident to teach.

Conclusion: When educators lack confidence in STEM – particularly engineering – children's learning activities are narrowed and opportunities for rich, integrated STEM engagement are lost from the earliest years. Addressing both the capability and dispositional dimensions of educator readiness is essential for ensuring young children have access to the full breadth of STEM learning experiences, on which their development and future participation in society depend.

Implications for children and families: When your child's educators feel confident teaching STEM, your child gets more opportunities to explore, question, build, and problem-solve in ways that build lifelong curiosity and thinking skills — starting from their earliest years.

Implications for practitioners: Your confidence in STEM — especially engineering – directly shapes the learning experiences you make available to children. This review highlights targeted professional learning pathways that can strengthen both your knowledge and your sense of professional identity as a STEM educator.

Keywords: STEM, early childhood education, engineering, early engineering education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-612

Understanding and responding to children's vulnerability: What educators need from professional learning

Alison Watson, Federation University, Australia

Background: Vulnerability involves exposure to short- or long-term risk. Children experiencing vulnerability, particularly those in marginalised communities, often face constraints on inclusion, well-being and future opportunities. Professional learning and development is essential for strengthening early childhood educators' and teachers' practice and improving outcomes for all children. Participation depends on workplace conditions, supportive leadership and opportunities for embedded learning.

Aim: This research explores how early childhood educators and teachers in Gippsland, Victoria, are supported through professional learning to educate and care for children experiencing vulnerability. Although well-trained educators are key to high-quality, inclusive education, significant learning gaps persist in areas such as trauma, attachment, and children's social and emotional development. These gaps affect educators' capacity to support children's inclusion and well-being.

Method: This qualitative, interpretative case study drew on Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological framework, Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus, and an early childhood professional learning framework. Ethical processes included approval, informed consent, voluntary participation and pseudonyms. Thirty-three educators and teachers completed an online survey, with nine participating in follow-up interviews and reflections, ensuring a strong representation of professional voices.

Results/findings: The findings show that although professional learning and development is necessary, inconsistent approaches lead to fragmented implementation. Educators reported insufficient support to recognise and respond to children's vulnerabilities. Despite this, inclusion, well-being, and social justice remained central to their practice.

Conclusion: The study highlights the need for accessible, contextualised professional learning and broader policy reform. When it is relevant, collaborative, and aligned with real-world practice, educators feel equipped to support inclusion and well-being and drive positive change.

Implications for children and families: Educators are here to provide you with a safe, high-quality place to learn and grow, and when well prepared, they can help you and your child thrive even in challenging times.

Implications for practitioners: Contextualised professional learning strengthens pedagogy, equipping you to educate and care for vulnerable children with greater confidence, understanding, and impact.

Funding: This doctoral research was partially funded by an Australian Government Research Training Program stipend and fee-offset scholarship through Federation University Australia.
Keywords: children's vulnerability, equity and inclusion, child well-being, contextualised professional learning and development, marginalisation

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-613

Views of preschoolers on digital technologies

Ora Segal-Drori, The Academic College Levinsky-Wingate, Israel
Islam Abu Asaad, Sakhnin College for Teacher Education, Israel

Background: In light of the increasing recognition of children as active participants in the research process, rather than passive subjects, research is increasingly focusing on children's perspectives. This paradigm shift necessitated the creation of child-centred methodologies that position children as co-constructors of knowledge. This approach is grounded in Article 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which affirms every child's right to freedom of expression, through any medium of their choice—be it artistic, oral, written, or otherwise.

Aim: A review of the existing literature reveals a paucity of studies specifically exploring young children's perspectives on digital technologies. Accordingly, the present study aimed to examine young children's views on digital technologies in their lives.

Method: Thirty Arab children from Israel, aged 4 to 6 years, took part in in-depth interviews about digital technologies in their lives, which included their taking pictures and drawing using digital devices at home. The interviews were analysed using content analysis. Children and their parents assented to participate, and they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results/findings: The findings yielded information regarding digital devices in children's day-to-day lives, their entertainment and learning purposes, gender differences in use, digital devices as an opportunity for social interactions, and restrictions on the use of digital technologies.

Conclusion: Adults are encouraged to mediate digital technologies more effectively; for example, in relation to emergent language and literacy and gender aspects, while also aiming to reduce unnecessary restrictions.

Implications for children and families: It is recommended that you listen to children's voices, views, and needs about digital technologies in their lives. Doing so may help support a more effective and meaningful integration of digital technologies at home.

Implications for practitioners: It is important that you listen to children's voices and views regarding digital technologies. It is also recommended that you mediate the use of digital technologies more effectively in educational settings and adapt them to children's needs and perspectives.

Keywords: digital technologies, children's perceptions, research with children, children's voice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-614 – WITHDRAWN

Co-designing the English classroom: Amplifying adolescent voice, agency, and belonging

Alice Elwell, Queensland Academy for Creative Industries, Australia

Background: Adolescents' participation in decisions that affect their learning is central to inclusive education. Secondary classrooms often have tightly prescribed curricula, making student voice and agency especially important.

Aim: This presentation explores how listening to student voices through co-design in senior English classes can inform teaching practice and enhance adolescent agency, engagement, and classroom culture.

Method/approach: The study is conceptual, drawing on a four-year practitioner inquiry at a secondary high school. It reports on the decision to include Year 11 and 12 English students to make decisions about what is studied in class. Focused on my practice as a teacher and leader, the presentation reports on how iterative reflection on these contributions shaped classroom practice and culture.

Results/findings: Incorporating student input through co-design led to increased engagement, richer learning choices, and greater collaboration among students. Classroom culture became more inclusive and responsive, with students demonstrating ownership, responsibility, and the confidence to contribute meaningfully to learning discussions.

Conclusion: Co-design provides a framework for reflective teaching that amplifies adolescent voice and agency, showing how participatory approaches can transform secondary classrooms into collaborative and socially meaningful learning environments.

Implications for children and families: You will hear how students' ideas and choices can influence learning, making school more interesting, relevant, and meaningful.

Implications for practitioners: You will hear about how you can use student input to adapt teaching, broaden learning options, strengthen engagement, and foster inclusive, collaborative classrooms.

Keywords: agency, voice, co-design, curriculum, secondary English

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-615

Inclusion and play-based learning: Visual narratives on the Australian early childhood organisation's websites imagery

Nilufar Jahan, Gurdian Childcare and Education, Australia
Abm Ahasan Raqib, Monash University, Australia
Fatema Taj Johora, Australian Catholic University, Australia

Background: Over the past few decades, Australian early childhood education and care (ECEC) has undergone significant reform driven by policies promoting inclusion and play-based learning. These principles are central to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), which expects services to provide equitable play experiences for children with diverse intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs. Increasingly, organisations communicate these commitments through website imagery. However, limited research has examined how inclusion and diversity are visually represented in digital platforms.

Aim: Through the visual analysis of website imagery, this study examines how inclusion and play-based learning are visually represented in the websites of major Australian ECEC organisations, drawing on the EYLF V2.0, Reggio Emilia principles, and visual semiotics theory.

Method/approach: A qualitative visual analysis was conducted on 59 photographs from six Australian ECEC provider websites. Images depicting children engaged in play-based learning were purposively selected and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. As the study used publicly available data, ethical approval was not required.

Results/findings: The findings show that inclusion is predominantly represented through shared participation, equitable access to resources, and aesthetically designed environments, positioning children as capable learners. The learning environment is frequently positioned as a "third teacher", while images also reinforce organisational branding and values. However, representation is uneven. Cultural inclusion and diversity are minimally visible, and visible features of disabilities are absent.

Conclusion: Organisational websites function as marketing tools and influential public texts that communicate a provider's pedagogical values, inclusion commitments, and philosophical identity. This study has significant implications for the implementation of digital communication by ECE service providers and for the updated EYLF.

Implications for children and families: You and your child are more likely to feel welcome and included when early learning services reflect diverse cultures, abilities, and family identities in their environments and communications.

Implications for practitioners: You can strengthen inclusive practice by making diversity visible in your centre's images, including cultural and family representations, embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in everyday play, and showing support for children with disabilities.

Keywords: inclusion, play-based learning, Reggio Emilia approach, visual analysis, early childhood education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-616

Pathways to inclusion for LGBTIQ+ families: Learning from families' voices in maternity and child and family health

Cyrena Hunt-Madden, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Adam Johns, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, NSW Health, Australia

Background: Creating a more inclusive world for children requires listening to and acting on the voices of diverse families. LGBTIQ+ Australians experience poorer health outcomes than the general population, driven by barriers such as stigma and discrimination. For LGBTIQ+ parents, these barriers shape early parenting experiences and influence how children and families engage with maternity and child and family health services. However, the voices and experiences of these families are often underrepresented in service design.

Aim: To elevate the voices of LGBTIQ+ families and identify barriers and enablers to inclusive, family-centred care within maternity and child and family health nursing services in south eastern Sydney, Australia.

Method/approach: A co-designed needs analysis centred on lived experience was undertaken, informed by primary empirical data, including a consumer experience survey (75 LGBTIQ+ consumers), walking evaluations (13 LGBTIQ+ consumers), a staff learning needs assessment (54 staff), and 24 service audits. This approach privileged family voices as critical drivers of service improvement. This project was approved by the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) Health Research Ethics Committee as a quality improvement project (QAQI/8October2024/5).

Results/findings: Families identified barriers including heteronormative language, staff knowledge gaps, limited recognition of diverse family structures, and inadequate data systems. They also described what inclusion looks like in practice: respectful and affirming care, visible signals of inclusion, and services that recognise and partner with diverse families.

Conclusion: Embedding families' voices in service design is critical to inclusive health systems. Partnering with LGBTIQ+ families can inform practical, system-level changes that support inclusion in everyday care and improve engagement and outcomes for children.

Implications for children and families: When families' voices are heard, children experience safer, more inclusive care where their identities and family structures are respected.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners can support inclusion by building capability, embedding affirming practices, strengthening data collection, and creating visible signals of inclusion, while actively amplifying children's and families' voices.

Funding: This project was funded by the NSW LGBTIQ+ Health Funding Pool.

Keywords: families' voices, professionals' voices, health, inclusion, qualitative methods

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-617

Listening to families: Access to support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with communication needs

Cyrena Hunt-Madden, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Ebony Lewis, University of New South Wales, Australia
Alison Purcell, Western Sydney University, Australia
Rona Macniven, University of New South Wales, Australia

Background: Families' voices are central to understanding children's communication needs. Strong speech, language, and communication skills support children's connection to culture, community, learning, and well-being. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more likely to experience speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN), shaped by the ongoing impacts of colonisation and inequitable access to services. Despite the importance of early support, children's needs are often identified by parents but not met by services.

Aim: To identify the parent-reported prevalence of SLCN in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0–6 years) and to explore service gaps, barriers, and facilitators to accessing support, as reported by parents. The author team includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers with expertise in public health and speech-language pathology.

Method/approach: This longitudinal study analysed data for 474 children from the Footprints in Time: Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children. Children were aged between six and 24 months in Wave 1, and were followed up annually across Waves 1–6. Quantitative analyses examined prevalence and factors associated with access to support, while qualitative content analysis explored parent-reported barriers and facilitators. Approval to access data was obtained from the Australian Department of Social Services and noted by the UNSW Human Research Ethics Committee.

Results/findings: Nearly half (47%) of children were identified by parents as having SLCN; however, only 48% of those identified accessed support. Parents' voices highlighted key service gaps, including limited availability, a lack of awareness of services and their benefits, and challenges navigating systems. Facilitators included recognition of need, particularly where children had additional health or developmental concerns. These findings demonstrate a disconnect between children's identified needs and access to responsive, culturally safe services.

Conclusion: Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's communication needs remain unmet, despite being recognised by families. Embedding parents' voices in service design is critical to addressing inequities and creating inclusive, accessible systems that support children to thrive.

Implications for children and families: When families are heard, services are better able to respond to children's communication needs, supporting connection, participation, and well-being.
Implications for practitioners: You can improve access by partnering with families, strengthening culturally responsive practice, increasing service visibility, and adopting public health approaches that prioritise prevention, early identification, and equity.
Keywords: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, speech-language and communication needs, access to services, public health

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-618

Listening beyond words: Supporting children's voices through multimodal expression in diverse classrooms

Sultana Yasmeen Jamal, Independent Researcher, United States

Background: Inclusive education requires recognising that children express their thoughts and identities in multiple ways beyond spoken language. In multilingual early childhood classrooms, some children may struggle to communicate verbally, leading to their ideas and perspectives being overlooked. This study explores how multimodal approaches can support children's voices and participation in diverse learning environments.

Aim: The aim of this paper is to examine how multimodal expression—such as drawing, gestures, play-based interaction, and storytelling—can support children's communication and inclusion in early childhood education. It focuses on how educators can create learning environments where all children, especially multilingual learners aged 5–8, are able to express themselves and participate meaningfully in classroom activities.

Method/approach: This paper is based on a qualitative conceptual analysis of existing research and classroom-based pedagogical practices related to multimodal learning and inclusive education. It draws on published literature in early childhood education, communication studies, and inclusive pedagogy. No human participants were directly involved in this study; therefore, ethical approval was not required.

Results/findings: The findings suggest that multimodal strategies significantly enhance children's ability to express ideas, particularly for multilingual and shy learners. Approaches such as visual storytelling, drawing, and play-based communication help educators better understand children's perspectives. These methods also increase engagement, participation, and confidence in classroom interactions.

Conclusion: Expanding communication beyond spoken language is essential for creating inclusive early childhood classrooms. Multimodal learning allows children's voices to be recognised and valued in diverse educational settings. Educators play a critical role in interpreting and supporting these varied forms of expression to ensure equity and inclusion in learning environments.

Implications for children and families: Children can share their ideas in many ways, not only by speaking. Drawing, playing, and showing work help teachers understand thoughts and feelings. Children's voices matter in many forms, and different ways of expressing ideas are valued in learning journeys.

Implications for practitioners: Educators can support children's voices by encouraging multiple forms of expression beyond speech. Using drawing, play, and storytelling helps teachers better understand learners and creates inclusive classrooms where all children can participate, communicate, and succeed.

Keywords: children's voices, multimodal learning, inclusive education, early childhood education, communication, multilingual learners

This presentation relates to the following **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-619

From voice to action: Embedding children's environmental rights through measurable participation in early childhood education

Gabby Millgate, Woden Valley Early Learning Centre; Australian Association for Environmental Education, ACT, Australia

Background: Children's voices are widely recognised in policy frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, yet in early childhood education they are often enacted as values rather than measurable systems. This creates a gap between children's expressed experiences and the decisions that shape their environments. In the context of climate change, well-being, and early learning, there is an urgent need for practical mechanisms that enable children's perspectives—particularly in relation to nature and outdoor environments—to inform everyday practice and system design.

Aim: This presentation aims to demonstrate how children's voices can be operationalised through a measurable, repeatable mechanism in early childhood education. It introduces the Access to Nature Survey as a tool to capture children's lived experiences and explores how these insights can be translated into changes in environments, routines, and educator practice. It also aims to position the Nature Pedagogy Leader as a key workforce role enabling children's participation, ecological literacy, and regulation through access to outdoor environments.

Method/approach: This practice-based study draws on implementation within an early learning setting. The Access to Nature Survey was used to document children's access, choice, and engagement with natural environments. Observations, educator reflections, and changes to programming informed an iterative response model. A Nature Pedagogy Leader role supported educators and children, particularly those who regulate best outdoors. Ethical practice was guided by existing service consent processes, with children's participation embedded in everyday pedagogical interactions rather than formalised research procedures.

Results/findings: The findings indicate that children's participation becomes more visible and actionable when supported by structured mechanisms. The survey revealed patterns in access, preference, and engagement that directly informed changes to environments and routines. The presence of a Nature Pedagogy Leader increased educator confidence, supported program consistency, and enabled greater inclusion of children who benefit from outdoor regulation. Additionally, the use of an ecological literacy song helped children build a shared language and identity in relation to the natural world.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates that children's voices can be embedded as a structured, actionable system rather than an aspirational value. By integrating the Access to Nature Survey with a Nature Pedagogy Leader role, early learning settings can translate children's perspectives into real-time environmental and pedagogical change. This approach operationalises children's rights, supports regulation and well-being, and builds ecological literacy, offering a scalable model for participatory, climate-responsive early childhood education.

Implications for children and families: You can expect your child's voice to be heard and acted on in meaningful ways, shaping their environment, daily experiences, and connection to nature, while supporting their well-being, confidence, and sense of belonging.

Implications for practitioners: You can use simple, structured tools to listen to children and translate their perspectives into practice, while a Nature Pedagogy Leader supports you to embed

outdoor learning, strengthen programs, and better meet children's regulation and well-being needs.

Keywords: children's participation, children's rights, ecological literacy, mature pedagogy, early childhood education, environmental education, child voice mechanisms, outdoor learning, education policy

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 13: Climate Action

CVC2026-620
Children's perspectives: 'Inclusion is playing together'

Arifa Rahman, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Lucia Zundans-Fraser, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Shukla Sikder, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: In the early years, children learn, develop, modify, and redefine concepts and actions through play. According to Vygotsky (1993), every child can learn and develop within a sociocultural context, regardless of differences. Understanding inclusion in the early years is a crucial matter to explore from diverse viewpoints, including children's voices. To explore understanding of inclusion, children's perspectives were examined, including their understandings of inclusion expressed during story times.

Aim: This study aims to understand how children develop an understanding of inclusion through everyday activities and the process of concept formation of inclusion within a purposively created social situation created by educators.

Method/approach: Using a cultural-historical research methodology within a qualitative study design, two intentionally planned story times were created using the book *The World We Can Build*. This was followed by discussions using purposeful questioning in two preschool centres in the central west of New South Wales, Australia. Around 50 minutes of observation and audio data were analysed using Hedegaard and Fleer's (2008) three levels of interpretation. The study has ethics approval with a protocol number H24276.

Results/findings: The findings reveal that children aged 4–5 can develop concepts related to inclusion in the presence of an object (a book) and a sign (social interaction about the book) on a social plane, and concept formations occurred in three stages, which reflected Vygotsky's theory of concept development. Firstly, children guessed the meaning of the term 'inclusion' by subjective impressions, which means guessing associated everyday words, such as 'include' or 'including' or 'us', which were subjective. Later, children linked objects by proximity, such as 'they do not gift me cards, they don't include me'.

Conclusion: An intentionally planned story time can create conditions for children to learn and develop concepts related to inclusion and inclusive practices, thereby developing higher psychological functions, such as voluntary attention and concept formation. Inclusive books can be a catalyst for children, helping them develop a sense of belonging by conceptualising inclusion.

Implications for children and families: The findings suggest that intentionally using story time with relevant books featuring diversity and inclusion can educate our children about the diversity around them and to be inclusive.

Implications for practitioners: The findings indicate the need for further studies that create learning situations to develop the concept of inclusion and inclusive behaviours in the early years. This could support educators and practitioners in their daily practices.
Funding: This study is funded by an AGRTP (Australian Government Research Training Program) International Scholarship and Charles Sturt University.
Keywords: children's perspectives, inclusion, playing together
This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-621
Belonging is not the same for everyone: Children's diverse experiences of inclusion in mentally healthy schools

Kim Andreassen, Curtin University, Australia
Nicole Sips, Curtin University, Australia
Sharyn Burns, Curtin University, Australia

Background: Schools are important settings for promoting belonging and mental well-being, yet dominant models often assume students can express connection through socially normative behaviours. Children who are neurodivergent, disabled, chronically ill, or living with mental illness may experience belonging, or signal need in different ways. Limited research explores how these children can signal belonging and connection within school environments.

Aim: This presentation explores how children with diverse experiences understand belonging in school, how they signal connection or exclusion, and how these experiences align, or conflict, with expectations embedded in whole-school mental health promotion approaches.

Method/approach: This presentation draws on contemporary research on belonging, inclusion, disability, and school mental health, alongside autoethnographic lived experience narratives. Experiences were gathered via survey (Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee; HREC2026-0277) from neurodivergent, disabled, and/or chronically ill adults reflecting on their schooling, and narratively synthesised with the presenter's own lived experience. Common patterns in how belonging is experienced, signalled, and misinterpreted in schools will be discussed.

Results/findings: Across evidence and lived experience accounts, Act, Belong, and Commit behaviours were often enacted in ways unrecognised by schools. Belonging was described as safety, accommodation, predictability, and relational attunement rather than large friend groups and compliance. Behaviours framed as disengagement were frequently adaptive strategies for well-being, revealing misalignment between universal mental health messaging and children's realities.

Conclusion: If belonging is a relational experience shaped by power, interpretation, and difference, then mental health promotion in schools risks reinforcing exclusion. Reframing belonging through different perspectives reveals opportunities to design inclusive practices that recognise diverse ways of protecting mental well-being.

Implications for children and families: You belong at school even if you show it differently. Your need for connection, safety, and support matters, and you do not need to change to be included.

Implications for practitioners: You may need to rethink what belonging looks like. When you listen to how children describe connection and safety, you can design inclusive mental health practices that work for them.

Funding: The Mentally Healthy Schools Program has received funding from the Stan Perron Foundation.
Keywords: belonging, mental well-being, act belong commit, neurodivergent, chronic illness, disability, mental illness, education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-622

Children draw playing: Insights from 101 children in Mongolia

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Laura Hoffman, Charles Sturt University, Australia
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Lindsay Smith, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Altaituya Burnee, Adjunct, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Mongolia

Background: Although play is a fundamental right under Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), there is limited research capturing the perspectives of children living in Mongolia using child-centred methods such as drawings.

Aim: This study examined how children from Mongolia draw themselves playing using descriptive, developmental, and focal point analysis frameworks.

Method/approach/approach: Participants were 101 children from Mongolia aged three to eight years who submitted a drawing using an adapted version of the Early Childhood Voices Drawing Protocol. Drawings were included in the Children Draw Playing Global Online Gallery 2: Mongolia https://earlychildhoodresearch.csu.domains/early-childhood-voices-conference-2024/children-draw-playing/. A 20-member interdisciplinary research team coded data about drawings. A Mongolian team member guided descriptive, developmental, and focal point analyses. This research was approved by the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Results/findings/findings: The children's drawings highlighted the importance of outdoor play and playgrounds in Mongolian children's lives. While traditional games (e.g., ankle bones) were depicted, so too were manufactured toys (e.g., toy cars and dolls) and technology (e.g., phones). Global sports were represented in many drawings, including basketball, volleyball, and soccer. Focal points of play equipment, positivity and relationships, and connection were most evident. There was no statistically significant correlation between age and ability to draw a human figure.

Conclusion: Depictions of play in Mongolia reflected both local traditions and contemporary influences, including outdoor play, relationships, and a mix of traditional and modern play materials. These child-centred insights can inform culturally responsive play research, practice, and planning.

Implications for children and families: Mongolian children's concept of "play" incorporates cultural continuity and global influences.

Implications for practitioners: Culturally meaningful play should be considered when designing and evaluating play spaces in homes, educational settings, and communities.

Funding: This research was supported by Charles Sturt University's Children's Voices Centre

Keywords: children's voices, innovations, Mongolia, arts-based methods

This presentation relates to the following **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-623

Intelligibility in Context Scale: A speech screening tool for kindergarten students in Tasmania

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Background: Children's speech skills are associated with literacy and socialisation outcomes. At school entry, it is beneficial to screen children's speech to identify which children require additional assessment and intervention. The Intelligibility in Context Scale (ICS) is a free seven-item parent-report questionnaire with evidence regarding validity and reliability as a primary screening tool where children's speech is given an average rating from 1 (never intelligible) to 5 (always intelligible).

Aim: To consider the validity of the ICS as a speech screening tool for Australian children.

Method/approach: Participants were 545 Kindergarten students from 31 Catholic schools in Tasmania assessed in 2025. They were aged 49 to 62 months (M=56.21) and 50.64% were males. Most (87.34%) spoke one language at home, some (10.09%) identified as Indigenous Australians, and some (18.13%) had a disability. Parents (mostly mothers, 85.69%) completed the ICS and answered questions regarding speech and language concerns. The conduct of the research was approved by the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee (H25025).

Results/findings: The average ICS total score was 4.28 (SD=0.65), indicating students were usually (4) to always (5) intelligible. ICS scores were significantly influenced by the students' sex and disability status, and were not significantly influenced by the number of languages spoken by the students or the school's Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage. Parents indicated they were more often able to understand their child (M=4.61) than immediate family members (M=4.42), teachers (M=4.28), friends (M=4.27), extended family members (M=4.25), acquaintances (M=4.13), and strangers (M=4.06).

Conclusion: On average, these students were usually to always intelligible. Although there were similarities to previously published data, the average score was slightly lower (4.28; SD=0.65) than that of NSW children attending early childhood education (4.4; SD=0.7). Scores may have been impacted by sociodemographic differences between the two populations, so future research is recommended.

Implications for children and families: When parents were concerned about their children's speech, children were "sometimes intelligible" (3.53/5). When parents were NOT concerned about their children's speech, the average ICS score was significantly higher (4.56/5), and children were "usually" or "always intelligible".

Implications for practitioners: These data suggest that the ICS may be a useful screening tool for young students across a school district.

Funding: This research was funded by a grant from Catholic Education Tasmania.

Keywords: speech, screening, intelligibility

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-624

Artificial intelligence and communication disorders: Enhancing access to language assessment for multilingual children

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Background: Multilingual children are under-identified for communication disorders compared to monolinguals, due to monolingual-centric assessment practices and limited home-language tools. A shift has begun to identify inclusive strategies, including narratives and non-word repetition tasks. However, a usage barrier is the limited number of bilingual speech-language pathologists (SLPs). Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based translation is emerging; however, it is based on English-centric adult models, which may influence relevance to multilingual children.

Aim: We examine the extent to which AI-based translation can facilitate home-language assessment scoring and identify multilinguals at risk for communication disorders.

Method/approach: Ethics approval was obtained (Pro00151738). After consent, caregivers completed the C-QUEB and ALDeQ language-background questionnaires. We used Zoom to assess 50 multilingual children on home-language narrative storytelling (Edmonton Narrative Norms Instrument [ENNI] and Global Tales) and non-word repetition (Quasi Universal Non-Word Repetition Task). We scored children based on three home-English language translation/scoring conditions: i: AI text translation (via DeepL and Google Translate), ii: translation by a team member, and iii: direct home-language scoring by a bilingual team member.

Results/findings: Our ANOVA indicates significant differences between direct bilingual scoring and AI scoring ($F = 3.4$; $p < 0.01$). We found scoring differences based on the type of AI translation, language distance, and linguistic content.

Conclusion: Our findings support English monolingual SLPs, educators, and psychologists in conducting home-language assessment scoring. Early access to language assessment positively influences a child's long-term language and overall development. We promote diversity in child development and AI research by generating data from underrepresented languages.

Implications for children and families: If you or your child speaks more than one language, our research ensures you can access language assessments in your home language, so you don't miss important language activities and support.

Implications for practitioners: If you work with multilingual children, our research can help you with home-language assessment scoring and identifying communication disorders, even when you don't speak the child's language.

Funding: University of Alberta.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, multilingualism, children, early language assessment, communication disorders

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-625

Characteristics of speech production and lexical use in toddlers: A play environment with a dog compared to a play environment with a doll

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Gila Tubul-Lavy, Ono Academic College, Kiryat Ono, Israel

Background: Environmental factors play a role in early speech and language development, as reflected in the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) framework. While research has traditionally focused on child-internal processes, less attention has been given to how play environments shape vocal production, speech intelligibility, and lexical development. In particular, dynamic contexts such as dog interaction may create unique opportunities for movement, engagement, and communication.

Aim: This study examined how play context (dog vs. doll) influences speech production and lexical development in 22 Hebrew-speaking children aged 2;0–3;0. A total of 821 utterances were analysed across vocal production, speech intelligibility, and lexical diversity.

Method/approach: Twenty-two typically developing Hebrew-speaking children (aged 2;0–3;0) were observed during two home play contexts: play with a dog and play with a doll. A three-minute segment from each condition was transcribed. A total of 821 utterances were analysed across vocal production, speech intelligibility, and lexical diversity. The research approved by the College Ethics Committee (Approval No. 202037-ONO-2024).

Results/findings: Compared with doll-play, dog-play elicited longer vocalisations, more utterances and syllables, greater lexical diversity, and more verb use. No significant differences were found in intelligible or unintelligible words, although phonological processes were more frequent during dog-play.

Conclusion: Play environments actively shape early speech and language development. Dog-inclusive contexts promote increased vocal output, greater lexical diversity, and more flexible speech production, alongside increased phonological variability. This variability may reflect adaptive learning under dynamic conditions rather than reduced performance. These findings highlight the importance of considering human and physical environmental factors within the ICF framework and support the use of varied, movement-rich contexts to expand communicative opportunities in early development.

Implications for children and families: When you create varied play experiences, you support your child's communication and language development.

Implications for practitioners: When you assess and support children's speech and language, consider how play environments, including dynamic contexts such as dog interaction, shape performance, and use these contexts to align environmental features with goals such as intelligibility, lexical use, and vocal output.

Keywords: speech and language development, physical environment, ICF framework, dogs as a developmental context, play environments, early childhood

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-626

Preparing to protect? Early career nurses' engagement with mandatory reporting of child maltreatment in Australia: Preliminary results/findings from a qualitative study

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Angela Fenton, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Allison Hutton, Western Sydney University, Australia

Background: Registered nurses are one of the most trusted professions and are ideally placed to recognise and report suspected child maltreatment. Unfortunately, they report at lower rates than other professions due to barriers, such as knowledge gaps, attitudes, and preconceptions. Improving undergraduate education could help address these barriers.

Aim: To explore factors influencing early career registered nurses' (ECRNs') engagement with mandatory reporting of suspected child maltreatment in Australia.

Method/approach: This qualitative study uses semi-structured interviews analysed through an interpretive approach. Participants include ECRNs (≤2 years post-qualification) and nursing leaders and managers supporting ECRNs in clinical practice. Data collection and analysis are ongoing. Ethical approval was granted by Charles Sturt's Human Research Ethics Committee (H24009).

Results/findings: Early analysis shows gaps in preservice education around recognising and reporting child maltreatment in Australian baccalaureate nursing programs. Both participant groups report ECRNs have limited confidence regarding detection, reporting processes, and system navigation. Some nursing leaders hold misconceptions about maltreatment, particularly neglect and psychological abuse. ECRNs feel under-prepared, with little expectation of encountering child protection concerns. Emotional and ethical challenges, workplace culture, and concerns about out-of-home care are further barriers to reporting.

Conclusion: Preliminary findings suggest current undergraduate preparation may not adequately equip some registered nurses to recognise and respond to suspected child maltreatment, potentially affecting timely child protection responses. Ongoing analysis will further clarify these relationships.

Implications for children and families: Nurses play a very important role in ensuring children are safe. We need to make sure nurses know what to do when they are worried about kids like you, and who can help. They also have to learn to take care of their own feelings, because helping kids can be hard.

Implications for practitioners: Undergraduate nursing curricula should include structured, practice-focused mandatory reporting education covering maltreatment recognition, reporting pathways, and system processes. Organisational culture and leadership also warrant attention to support consistent reporting practice.

Keywords: child abuse and neglect, child maltreatment, mandatory reporting, registered nurses, education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-627

Involving children who stutter or clutter and their parents in speech-language pathology education

Amy Connery, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Background: Speech-language pathologists have reported having reduced knowledge and competence in the assessment and intervention of children who stutter and clutter. This may, in part, be attributed to suboptimal university-level education and training in these areas.

Aim: This study aimed to identify the content taught and the pedagogical practices used by speech-language pathology educators teaching a module on stuttering and cluttering as part of an undergraduate or postgraduate program in speech-language pathology.

Method/approach: Ethical approval for this study was obtained through Trinity College Research Ethics Committee (No:TT90). An online survey was designed with questions reflecting the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE) model for module design (Huntley-Moore & Panter, 2015). Participants were recruited in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA. Eighty-six educators completed the survey. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive data were reported across the seven components of the AISHE model. Qualitative responses from participants were analysed using inductive content analysis.

Results/findings: The results highlighted a wide range of stuttering content areas being taught, with significantly less cluttering content included in modules ($p<.001$). The topics of multilingualism and therapies for acquired stuttering were among the least commonly taught stuttering content areas. Educators' self-reported expertise in stuttering or cluttering was associated with a greater amount of teaching content ($p=.018$). Of those with expertise in the field, 48/61 (78.7%) involved people who stutter or clutter and parents/guardians in module delivery, compared to those who did not report expertise, of whom 13/25 (52%) involved these stakeholders.

Conclusion: This study identified the range of content and pedagogical practices used by educators. The results demonstrated that educators with expertise in stuttering and/or cluttering teach a greater number of content areas and are more likely to integrate individuals who stutter or clutter and their parents/guardians into module delivery.

Implications for children and families: You and your families are experts on stuttering and therefore possess essential knowledge to inform the education of speech-language pathologists.

Implications for practitioners: It is important that you understand and advocate for the role that children and parents play in the education of future speech-language pathologists.

Keywords: stuttering and cluttering, SLP education, involving children and parents in pedagogical practices

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-628

Between mistrust and engagement: Supporting participation of Roma children in Poland – A literature review

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Background: Roma children in Poland continue to experience social, educational, and institutional exclusion that limits meaningful participation. Although inclusion policies exist, formal access to services does not necessarily create trust, safety, or real influence over decisions affecting children's lives. Since 2022, the arrival of Roma families displaced from Ukraine has added further challenges linked to refugee status, interrupted schooling, language barriers, housing insecurity, and anti-Roma prejudice.

Aim: This paper reviews recent literature on how institutional mistrust shapes the participation of Roma children in Poland, including Ukrainian Roma refugee children, and identifies approaches that may support more child-centred and trust-based practice.

Method/approach: This paper is a narrative literature review based on academic literature, Polish and European policy documents, civil society monitoring reports, and practice-oriented publications on Roma inclusion, education, discrimination, child participation, and refugee inclusion. The present version relies only on secondary sources, so ethical approval was not required.

Results/findings: The review identifies three main findings. First, Roma children's participation is constrained by mistrust rooted in historical marginalisation, anti-gypsyism, and repeated experiences of discrimination. Second, Polish policy and practice often frame Roma children mainly through education, attendance, and integration, while participation involving voice, agency, and influence remains less developed. Third, Roma education assistants, cultural mediators, Roma-led organisations, and long-term community-based work are promising trust-building mechanisms, but their impact is weakened when support is temporary or underfunded.

Conclusion: Meaningful participation of Roma children requires more than formal inclusion. It depends on sustained, culturally responsive, and rights-based relationships that make institutions predictable, safe, and accountable.

Implications for children and families: Your voice matters, and you have the right to be heard. But real change happens when trust is built over time. You should feel safe, respected, and included in decisions that affect your life – not just invited, but genuinely listened to.

Implications for practitioners: Roma children should be listened to safely and respectfully, while practitioners should prioritise continuity, anti-discrimination awareness, and cooperation with Roma assistants, mediators, and communities.

Keywords: Roma children, child participation, institutional mistrust, Ukrainian Roma refugees, Poland

This presentation relates to the following **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:**

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-629

Using storytelling to support children's engagement in a local government community consultation project

Felicity Dunn, eQIPd, Australia

Background: The project involved seeking a wide range of community voices to influence the development of a rural council's municipal early years plan, including those of young children. Adopting a similar approach to Marilyn Fleer's Conceptual PlayWorld, the consultation with children about what they value about where they live was elicited by firstly building strong engagement with the topic via a story written specifically for children in the shire and showing places known to them.

Aim: The aim of the project was to ensure young children's voices were included in the development of a local council's early years plan.

Method/approach: A consultant developed a picture book featuring local places. Council officers contacted two kindergartens to invite children to contribute. Educators were invited to read the story to assess suitability. The kindergartens obtained family permission in line with service incursion policies. Participants were 32 children aged 3–5 years. The children listened to the story and were invited to draw pictures of what they love about where they live. The pictures were photographed with each child's permission. As a council-sponsored project, ethics was navigated via seeking educator and family permission, leveraging service incursion and other relevant policies.

Results/findings: The children enjoyed seeing familiar places in a story. They found the story engaging, and after listening to it, were enthusiastic about participating in the drawing experience, contributing many ideas about what they love about where they live, informing the council about children's priorities for the plan. Ideas included the library, the pool, playgrounds, their homes, and time spent with people they care about. Natural environments where children can climb and scramble were also suggested.

Conclusion: Using a relatable story works well to elicit engagement from children to contribute ideas to the community consultation. It was clear that public facilities like swimming pools, libraries, and parks are deeply valued by children, as is the quality of their relationships with key caregivers.

Implications for children and families: Your ideas helped influence your local government's planning of services to meet the needs of young children like you.

Implications for practitioners: When seeking to include children's voices, using a story can be an excellent device to build children's interest in the topic, leading to rich discussions.

Funding: The project was funded by Northern Grampians Shire Council as part of the development of its Municipal Early Years Plan.

Keywords: children's voices, community, local government, story, well-being

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

CVC2026-630

Sustaining children's scientific literacy in the early years: A four-phase framework for educators

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Shukla Sikder, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Children can benefit from the long-term effects of scientific literacy by improving several higher mental skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and informed decision-making, underscoring the importance of sustaining this development. Several studies have investigated factors associated with scientific literacy development or explored the process of scientific literacy development through play and intentionality in the early years; however, the process of sustaining scientific literacy remains a knowledge gap.

Aim: This study examines how children learn scientific knowledge from their science play experiences and apply their learning to similar but new and advanced situations. It also illustrates the possibility of securing the learning for future application by showing evidence of moving from developing to sustaining scientific literacy. The central question is: How do educators support children in their early years from developing to sustaining scientific literacy through play and intentionality?

Method/approach: Using the cultural-historical lens, this study employed a qualitative research design, in which digital video observations of three colour-play activities and short informal interviews with educators were analysed to explore the research question. Three levels of analysis – common-sense interpretation, situated practice interpretation, and thematic level interpretation – were used to analyse both video data and interview responses. Ethics approval was obtained from the CSU Human Research Ethics Committee (protocol number: H23798).

Results/findings: The findings outlined a four-phase process to sustain children's scientific literacy. Educators need to determine a specific science concept for children to develop through a series of play-based activities. Children then become familiar with a specific concept and can apply their primary understanding. The third phase, 'continuration', depends on the complexity of the science concept selected for enhancing children's scientific literacy. Finally, educators support children in developing their higher learning skills, indicating progress towards sustaining scientific literacy.

Conclusion: The development of children's scientific literacy in the early years is a complex process that requires several interrelated and interconnected series of science play experiences based on a specific concept. Through this four-phased process, educators can enhance and foster children's higher-order learning skills, including observation, identification, prediction, questioning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making, to sustain their scientific literacy; however, educators' intentionality is also pertinent.

Implications for children and families: Children: You will understand how a series of science play experiences can sustain your scientific literacy development. Families: You will be aware of how educators can sustain your children's scientific literacy through a series of science play experiences.

Implications for practitioners: You will understand how educators can sustain children's scientific literacy through a series of continuous, interconnected science play experiences and intentional practices.

Funding: Australian Government Research Training Program International Scholarship.

Keywords: sustaining scientific literacy, science play experiences, intentionality, early years, children

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-631

The family day care system in Australia: Supporting families and addressing workforce challenges

Thi Thao Vu, Crown Institute of Higher Education, Australia

Background: In Australia, the family day care (FDC) system provides flexible, home-based early childhood education and care. Amid workforce shortages and increasing demand for accessible childcare, there is a need to better understand how FDC supports families and strengthens workforce sustainability.

Aim: This study examines how the FDC system in Australia supports families' needs and addresses workforce challenges within the early childhood education and care sector.

Method/approach: This study uses qualitative document and policy analysis of publicly available sources related to family day care in NSW, including regulatory frameworks and service information from a Sydney-based FDC service. No human participants were involved, and ethics approval was not required.

Results/findings: The findings indicate that FDC provides flexible and accessible care that supports diverse family needs. The model also contributes to workforce participation through small-scale service delivery; however, challenges remain in regulation, coordination, and long-term educator sustainability.

Conclusion: The FDC model plays an important role in supporting families and addressing workforce shortages. Strengthened policy and structural support are needed to improve the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of this model within the early childhood sector.

Implications for children and families: You can benefit from flexible home-based care that supports your learning and fits your family's everyday needs.

Implications for practitioners: You should consider how flexible home-based models like FDC can support families while responding to workforce challenges in practice.

Keywords: family daycare, ECE Australia educators, early childhood workforce

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

CVC2026-632

Post-COVID reading delays: Insights from South Africa

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Salome Geertsema, University of Pretoria, South Africa
Mia le Roux, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Background: Post-pandemic increases in reading difficulties are often linked to dyslexia, but emerging evidence suggests that many cases may instead reflect delays in foundational learning due to systemic and contextual disruptions. Without clear conceptual and diagnostic frameworks, South African learners risk being misclassified as dyslexic when their difficulties may stem from disrupted early education.

Aim: This study aimed to determine whether the reading challenges of learners with high needs reflected neurodevelopmental disorders, such as dyslexia, or rather context-specific foundational delays.

Method/approach: A descriptive, comparative quantitative design was used to examine reading proficiency among learners at risk of academic underachievement. Standardised diagnostic reading and spelling measures were administered to all participants, with supplementary qualitative data gathered through interviews and questionnaires. Learners aged 8–13 were purposively sampled from a high needs public school.

Results/findings: The findings indicated that most learners' reading difficulties were more consistent with delays in their basic reading foundation. Key contributing factors included mismatches between home languages and LOLT, diminished Grade R attendance, and grade repetition. Patterns of repetition before and after the COVID-19 lockdowns were also considered in relation to academic progression.

Conclusion: This study highlights the need to understand reading difficulties within South Africa's post-COVID educational context. High rates of home-language and language-of-learning mismatch, together with limited Grade R attendance, point to the combined effects of inequality, disrupted early learning, and linguistic barriers on literacy development.

Implications for children and families: Ask about factors that may affect your child's reading, and the best way forward can be explained. Make sure your child undergoes early language screening and that all languages are included in assessments. Intensive literacy support is key!

Implications for practitioners: Integrate modules on referral pathways into preservice and in-service teacher education. Equip yourselves with strategies across diverse linguistic profiles, including code-switching, visual aids, peer-assisted learning, and culturally responsive multidisciplinary teaching methods.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, developmental dyslexia, reading disorders, reading delays, South Africa

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-633

Syllable-based assessment of whole-word phonology in Persian-speaking children with social communication disorder

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Elena Babatsouli, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, United States

Background: Children with social communication disorder (SCD) struggle with implied meanings, indirect language, and non-verbal cues, and often show delays in language abilities. Although SCD's impact on language development is well studied, research on non-English phonological skills—especially syllable measures—remains limited. Correct Syllables and Consonants (CSC) is a refinement of phonological mean length of utterance (pMLU), incorporating a syllable component and simplifying consonant scoring. By assigning one point per syllable peak and per correct consonant, CSC shifts pMLU to a syllable-based, prosodically focused measure.

Aim: This study investigates the utility of the CSC measure for assessing consonant accuracy and whole-word phonological proximity in Persian-speaking children with SCD during a narrative-based intervention.

Method/approach: This study used the CSC (Pye & Stengel, 2025) measure in three Persian-speaking boys with SCD (ages 3;7–5;1) across Initial, Treatment, and Maintenance phases to investigate their syllable and whole-word skills. This study applied Franke and Durbin's (2011) nurturing narrative intervention. Phonetic transcriptions were aligned with audio in Phon (Hedlund & Rose, 2020), with 92% inter rater reliability between two native Persian SLPs. The study is approved by the IRB of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (IRB-24–043- CODI-OTHR).

Results/findings: The CSC results showed consistent syllable-level accuracy across children and phases, with produced values closely matching targets and minimal variation. In contrast, consonant accuracy showed larger target-produced differences and greater variability, particularly in the Initial phase, with partial convergence over time. Whole-word proximity rose from lower Initial values (~0.84–0.93) to consistently high values in later phases (~0.97–0.99), indicating strong alignment with the target; overall variability was driven by consonants, while syllable structure remained stable.
Conclusion: Consistent with Pye and Stengel (2025), these results support syllable-based measures as a stable and central component of whole-word phonology. CSC provides a transparent, clinically informative approach that links prosodic structure to overall phonological accuracy in Persian-speaking children with SCD.
Implications for children and families: You can focus on your child's strong syllable patterns while gently supporting tricky sounds, helping you understand their speech better, and use everyday activities and stories to build clearer, more confident communication together.
Implications for practitioners: You can use syllable-based measures to identify stable prosodic strengths while targeting variable consonant accuracy, allowing you to design interventions that build on preserved structures and efficiently support whole-word intelligibility in children with SCD.
Keywords: correct syllables and consonants (CSC), syllables, children, Persian, social communication disorder (SCD)

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 15: Life on Land
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-634

How little kids learn their languages: Developing an evidence base for young children learning Aboriginal languages in central Australia

Carmel O'Shannessy, Australian National University, Australia
Vanessa Davis, Tangentyere Council, Australia
Jessie Bartlett, Children's Ground, Australia
Alice Nelson, Pudendum School, Australia

Background: There is little evidence about how children learn to communicate in traditional Aboriginal languages in central Australia. Research-informed resources to help health and education professionals better understand children's paths of language development are needed.

Aim: To develop research-informed, accessible tools and resources for families and health and education professionals about children's language development in central Australian Aboriginal languages. To develop a tool to track early vocabulary development.

Method/approach: We recorded interactions between adults and children in 26 families. We transcribed, translated, and analysed the recordings and created a corpus and a suite of tools and resources from this. Ethical approval was received from the Central Australian and Australian National University Human Research Ethics Committees.

Results/findings: We developed a free, local online audiovisual tool, the Little Kids' Word List, and posters and animations that describe research findings in accessible formats. Families interact using embodied speech and hand signs and several languages, and support children's language development in many ways consistent with research across the world, and in local, culturally-specific ways.

Conclusion: Families support child language development in ways consistent with worldwide research and in culturally-specific ways. Multilingualism supports connections to country and culture. The Little Kids' Word List allows children's language strengths to be documented, even if clinicians do not know the local languages.

Implications for children and families: You can use the Little Kids' Word List to see the words your child can say and understand in several of your family's languages. You can see how families support children's language development in the posters and animations.

Implications for practitioners: You can assess children's language development fairly in the languages they speak at home. You can better understand how families interact with young children from the animations and posters.

Funding: Australian Research Council Future Fellowship (#FT190100243 Tracking early language, gesture and sign development of children speaking Aboriginal languages in Central Australia). Australian National University Futures Scheme Award.

Keywords: Central Australia Indigenous languages, assessment, acquisition, development, vocabulary, interaction

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-635 – WITHDRAWN

Continuity of learning for children transitioning to school: Perspectives from Australia and New Zealand

Jessamy Davies, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Hazel Woodhouse, The University of Waikato, New Zealand

Background: A positive transition to school has been linked with successful educational and social outcomes for children. Continuity of learning is widely recognised as an important factor in supporting children's transition from early childhood settings to primary school. Continuity of learning may involve connections across environments, curricula, policies, pedagogies, and relationships between people in different settings.

Aim: To understand the importance of achieving continuity of learning for children as they transition to school.

Method/approach: This research draws on two qualitative studies. The Australian study involved 154 prior-to-school educators, 82 school educators, and 41 educators/policymakers from transition networks in four rural contexts. Data were collected through interviews (Charles Sturt University Ethics Committee, Protocol 301/2012/04). The New Zealand study involved 20 families and educators from three ECE centres and one primary school. Data were collected through questionnaires and online interactions (University of Waikato Ethics Committee, FEDU039/17).

Results/findings: The findings from both studies highlight the importance of opportunities for educators to come together and collaborate both online and face-to-face in order to support children's transition to school. Teacher collaboration is enacted through positive relationships, communication, and mutual respect. Transition practices such as sharing portfolios and transition statements, alongside shared curriculum understanding, supported children's continuity of learning.

Conclusion: Continuity of learning is identified as an integral component of successful transition to school. It is achievable but not automatic. It requires intentional, collaborative approaches from educators in both prior-to-school and school settings that prioritise each child's individual experience. Supporting continuity involves building on children's prior knowledge and helping them feel secure, confident, and connected across settings.

Implications for children and families: You can support your child's transition by sharing their experiences, strengths, and needs with teachers and by building relationships with both early childhood and school communities.

Implications for practitioners: Educator networks that focus on transitions can create opportunities for professional collaboration in which relationships and reciprocal understandings can be built, information shared, and professional respect fostered. From this, continuity of learning for children can be promoted.

Funding: Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grant (DP130104276).

Keywords: transition to school, continuity of learning, teacher networks, early childhood education, qualitative methods

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-636

“Heads up reader”: Content warnings in young adult literature

Kasey Garrison, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Discussions around censorship of literature for young people abound today. Excluding the voices of young readers, teacher librarians, and other professionals can make difficult decisions around content. At the heart of their work is ensuring young people have the freedom to read and develop a habit of reading for pleasure while also balancing a duty of care and the varying developmental levels and interests of young people. This study grew out of an interest in the role of peritext, specifically content warnings, in young adult literature in supporting reading.

Aim: This exploratory research investigates the rise of content warnings included as peritext in young adult literature, the themes identified within the content, and how these messages persuade readers to continue or stop reading.

Method/approach: Our sample includes nominations for an international young adult book award for first-time authors. We examined each title’s peritext and recorded inclusion of 12 categories from the Content Warnings Typology (Charles et al., 2022, p. 8). They were violence, sex, stigma, disturbing content, language, risky behaviours, mental health, death, parental guidance, crime, abuse, and sociopolitical.

Results/findings: The findings show over 20% of the sample included a content warning before the text began, covering a range of topics, with most related to mental health, followed by violence, stigma, and abuse.

Conclusion: This research lays the foundation for future research, including the voices of young adults, to determine if and how they use content warnings to make reading decisions.

Implications for children and families: This research asks you to consider your agency when reading books, including why you choose to read or why you stop reading.

Implications for practitioners: This research asks you to consider how content warnings support or impede young people’s agency to make decisions about what to read.

Funding: CSU Thematics Funding.

Keywords: young adult literature, peritext, content warnings, teacher librarian, school libraries, reader agency

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-637

Redefining ability: Role of technology in amplifying the voices of children with special needs

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Kalyan Banerjee, Adamas University, West Bengal, India
Vishal Kumar, Adamas University, West Bengal, India
Rajesh V.R., Adamas University, West Bengal, India

Background: Children with special needs have gained greater recognition through inclusive education policies and legal protections in the present educational scenario, yet many face barriers in terms of equity, access, participation, personalised support, and social acceptance. As society heads towards the "euphemism vs. identity" debate, the role of technology has shifted from mere "correction" to "environmental synthesis", causing realignment of the world to accept individuality rather than forcing the individual to conform to the world.

Aim: This study investigates the socio-technical impact of emerging technologies on children with special needs, specifically, the redefining of the boundaries of "ability".

Method/approach: Qualitative document analysis is used to identify recurrent dominant themes in policies (Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016; National Education Policy, 2020; National Digital Education Architecture, 2021); institutional guidelines (Central Institute of Educational Technology, 2023; Samagra Siksha, 2018); government reports (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, 2025; Unified District Information System for Education Plus, 2024–25); and articles on technology for the inclusion of children with special needs (Scopus-indexed, 2020–25). The study focuses on Indian school education (children aged 6–18 years).

Results/findings: Thematic categorisation and interpretive synthesis conceptualised differently abled, inclusion, and technological intervention. The findings revealed emerging technologies provide greater acknowledgment of children with special needs, widening the boundaries of 'ability'. Report analysis fostered gaps between theory and inclusive implementation at the grassroots level due to the digital divide and inequity. A review of research articles showed that using assistive and intelligent technologies for these children requires advanced training for special educators and greater government intervention to adhere to sustainable development goals.

Conclusion: Though emerging technologies can redefine 'ability', unequal access and poor implementation limit impact, calling for advanced training, responsible and shared usage of technologies, and policy execution. The study suggests that recent policies must shift from providing just aids to special children towards ensuring the ethical, private, and equitable distribution of AI-driven assistive ecosystems.

Implications for children and families: Assistive and AI technologies may boost your children's unique abilities, increasing their participation in society and helping them gain independence. Your active role in choosing technologies while ensuring ethical use, privacy, and your child's dignity is prime.

Implications for practitioners: Integrating emerging technologies may assist in creating inclusive, personalised learning environments. Your role is to ensure the ethical use of technology, protect the dignity of special children, and advocate for better implementation, bridging the gap between policy and practice.

Keywords: personalised learning, assistive devices and technology, inclusion, children with special needs

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-638

Play as a voice: Supporting social competence in neurodivergent children in inclusive early childhood settings

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Dunia El-Badaoui, Victoria University, Australia

Background: Creating inclusive early childhood classrooms is essential to advancing social justice and ensuring every child's right to participate and be heard. However, children with developmental delays often experience barriers that limit their engagement, agency, and sense of belonging. While inclusive education is widely advocated, there remains a need to synthesise evidence on practices that meaningfully support both participation and voice in early learning environments.

Aim: This study aims to map and synthesise existing research on inclusive teaching practices that enhance participation and amplify the voices of young children with developmental delays in early childhood classrooms.

Method/approach: A scoping review methodology was adopted to examine peer-reviewed literature on inclusive practices in early childhood education. Studies were identified through systematic database searches and screened using defined inclusion criteria. Data were charted and analysed thematically to identify key practices and patterns. As this study did not involve human participants, ethical approval was not required.

Results/findings: The findings highlight that differentiated instruction, play-based and child-centred approaches, visual supports, and assistive technologies support participation and engagement. Teacher mindset, reflective practice, and collaboration with families and specialists were critical in enabling children's voices to be recognised. Limited research was found in low-resource and culturally diverse contexts.

Conclusion: This study reinforces that participation is a fundamental expression of children's voice, agency, and inclusion. Moving beyond access to meaningful engagement is essential in creating inclusive early childhood environments where every child is heard, valued, and supported.

Implications for children and families: You deserve to learn in classrooms where your voice matters, where you feel included, supported, and able to participate fully in ways that reflect who you are.

Implications for practitioners: You play a key role in creating inclusive classrooms by using strategies that support participation, listening to children's voices, and adapting your teaching to meet diverse needs.

Keywords: inclusive education, children's participation, children's voice, developmental delays, early childhood education, social justice in education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-639 – WITHDRAWN

Embedding children's voices in early years practice: Applying the Lundy Model in community contexts (Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Advisory Group)

Carmen Cappello, City of Yarra, Australia
Amy Treyvaud, City of Ballarat, Australia
Kristy O'Toole, Early Childhood Professional, Australia

Background: Children's right to be heard is central to quality early childhood practice, yet the voices of infant children are often overlooked. In community and education settings, there are many opportunities to implement meaningful participation activities, particularly for infants and toddlers.

Aim: This presentation explores how the Lundy Model of participation can be used in early childhood and community contexts to meaningfully embed children's voices, including those of children under three years, in decision-making and everyday practice.

Method/approach: This presentation draws on examples from services engaged with the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network. Participants include early childhood educators, local government practitioners, and children aged birth to five years. Information was collected through observations, practitioner reflections, case studies, and documentation of child-led projects. Ethical approval was granted through organisational governance processes, with informed consent obtained.

Results/findings: The findings show that when educators intentionally apply the Lundy Model (space, voice, audience, and influence), children demonstrate a strong capacity to express preferences and influence their environments. Infants and toddlers can be engaged through non-verbal communication, while older children contribute to co-design processes that shape play spaces, routines, and community participation opportunities.

Conclusion: Embedding structured approaches to participation supports the authentic inclusion of children's voices in early years settings. This work highlights the importance of listening to children in everyday practice and recognising children as active citizens within their communities.

Implications for children and families: Children's ideas, feelings, and choices are genuinely listened to and can influence their learning and community environments.

Implications for practitioners: Practical strategies from the Lundy Model can support educators to create meaningful opportunities for children's voices to inform everyday decisions and practice.

Keywords: children's voice, perspectives, Lundy Model, early childhood practice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reducing Inequalities

CVC2026-640 – WITHDRAWN

Pedagogy, sustainability, and global dialogue

Lisa Winiata, Kaitiaki kindergartens, New Zealand

Background: What happens when children's perspectives move beyond consultation and begin shaping pedagogy and systems? This presentation explores the Voices of Children pedagogy, where children investigate local sustainability issues, express their thinking through multimodal forms, and collectively influence educational practice and global conversations about children's futures.

Aim: This presentation examines how the Voices of Children pedagogy positions young children as active contributors to pedagogical decision-making and sustainability action. It explores how children's perspectives move beyond consultation to shape curriculum design, learning environments, and professional reflection, while demonstrating how children's locally expressed ideas can contribute to broader educational and societal conversations.

Method/approach: This participatory inquiry engaged children aged 2–6 across two kindergarten settings through dialogue, child-led research, creative expression, and collaboration. Children explored local sustainability issues using multiple forms of communication. Their contributions and kaiako practice were analysed through reflective review and internal evaluation. Parental consent and child assent were obtained. Children's perspectives were shared internationally, informing global dialogue and policy.

Results/findings: Children identified sustainability issues affecting their local communities through child-led inquiry and collaborative exploration. They initiated actions within their kindergartens and wider communities, positioning themselves as agents of environmental change. Their work has contributed to national sustainability conversations and demonstrated how young children, grounded in a Māori worldview, can act as global citizens influencing dialogue beyond their local contexts.

Conclusion: This work highlights the potential of participatory pedagogy to reposition children not as passive recipients of curriculum, but as active creators of it. When children's perspectives meaningfully shape inquiry, curriculum, and action, they influence practice, community responses, and broader sustainability agendas. Recognising children as capable knowledge-holders strengthens children's rights and affirms their role in shaping more sustainable futures.

Implications for children and families: Your voice can create change. By sharing your ideas and exploring what matters to you, you help shape learning, care for the environment, and influence decisions that affect your future.

Implications for practitioners: When you create space for children's voices, you enable them to move from participants to change-makers. Your practice can transform children's ideas into curriculum, community action, and contributions to wider social conversations.

Keywords: children's rights, global citizenship, early childhood education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 13: Climate Action

CVC2026-641

The development of phonetic complexity in Urdu-speaking children

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Carol Kit Sum To, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Background: The "production difficulty of different speech sounds, syllables, and words" can be referred to as phonetic complexity (Jakielski, 2022, p. 20). The Index of Phonetic Complexity (IPC), originally developed for English, was adapted to Urdu (IPC-Ur; Ambreen, 2023). This tool is based on speech sound acquisition patterns and assigns points for the articulatory characteristics that are acquired late.

Aim: This study examines the development of phonetic complexity in Urdu-speaking children.

Method/approach: The University of Hong Kong Human Research Ethics Committee (EA2005008) approved this study. Prior to data collection, all participants and their parents/guardians received project information sheets, and informed consent or assent was obtained. Data were collected from 208 Urdu-speaking children (aged 2;7 to 6;0) in Pakistan using the Urdu Speech Assessment Test (USAT). Samples were transcribed in Phon software and analysed for complexity. P-IPC-Ur scores quantified developmental patterns of phonetic complexity (independent analyses), while the IPC-Ur ratio compared child productions to adult targets (relational analyses).

Results/findings: The IPC-Ur, like its English counterpart, uses eight factors to assign points based on word shape, length, segment composition, and variegation. Overall, P-IPC-Ur scores increased gradually with age. Varied developmental patterns were seen among the individual IPC-Ur. The IPC-Ur ratio showed that the child productions were less complex than target productions, and the difference between child vs. target productions decreased with age.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates the clinical and theoretical utility of the IPC-Ur as a robust tool for quantifying phonetic complexity in Urdu-speaking children. The findings reveal age-related progression, with distinct developmental trajectories across individual articulatory factors and a narrowing gap between child and adult-like productions. By integrating independent (P-IPC-Ur) and relational (IPC-Ur ratio) analyses, this work advances crosslinguistic understanding of speech sound acquisition and offers a framework for identifying atypical patterns in multilingual populations.

Implications for children and families: Helps explore phonetic development in Urdu, supporting earlier guidance and more targeted support for families.

Implications for practitioners: The IPC-Ur provides a developmentally sensitive way to quantify phonetic complexity in Urdu, using both independent growth and child-adult comparison to inform assessment and intervention planning.

Funding: This work was supported by the General Research Fund from the University Research Council, granted to the second author (Project No. 17614717).

Keywords: phonetic complexity, Urdu, speech sound acquisition

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-642
A children's visual analogue intelligibility scale

Leah R. Paltiel-Gedalyovich, Achva Academic College, Israel

Background: Speech intelligibility, or transfer of a message resulting in successful decoding by listeners, is a basic communication skill. When impaired, negative effects may include impaired emotional, social, and/or educational development. Intelligibility has been investigated cross-linguistically using different methods. One method involves professionals, parents, or others rating children's intelligibility. Children's self-ratings of their intelligibility and how this relates to self-evaluation of well-being have been less investigated.

Aim: The current project aims to investigate what we can learn about how children with speech sound disorders (SSDs) see their own speech intelligibility.

Method/approach: An experimental children's visual analogue self-evaluation of intelligibility scale (CVAIS) was developed. The results from two experiments will be presented. This project has been approved by the ethics committee of the author's academic institution. Experiment 1: Forty children with SSDs completed the scale, while their parents completed the Intelligibility in Context Scale: Hebrew (McLeod et al., 2012). Experiment 2: Thirty children with SSD complete the CVAIS as well as a children's self-evaluation of quality of life (The Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory PedsQL 4.0, Varni et al., 2001).

Results/findings: The results from Experiment 1 show that the children rated their own speech intelligibility significantly better than their parents ($p<0.001$). In Experiment 2, a strong positive correlation ($r=0.78$) was found between children's self-assessments of speech intelligibility and quality of life.

Conclusion: Taken together, the results show that although children are overly optimistic in rating their own intelligibility, a benefit of their positive view of their speech success is that it is positively correlated with a positive evaluation of their quality of life. Furthermore, the CVAIS appeared to be a useful and reliable tool for children's self-assessment of speech intelligibility. In conclusion, the CVAIS is a potential research and clinical tool that gives voice to children's views on their intelligibility and may be incorporated into measuring clinical progress from children's point of view.

Implications for children and families: The CVAIS has the potential to enable children to express their views on their own speech intelligibility and can allow parents to view their children's speech performance from their child's perspective.

Implications for practitioners: The CVAIS can allow you to evaluate the effects of therapy on the child's quality of life by tracking changes in the child's own view of their speech intelligibility.

Keywords: children's voices, families' voices, communication, quantitative methods, well-being

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-643

Beyond the classroom: The impact of outdoor mathematics activities on preschool teachers' beliefs and self-efficacy

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Merve Ketenci Tona, Ministry of Education, Türkiye
Berrin Akman, Hacettepe University, Türkiye

Background: Mathematics learning in early childhood is often confined to classroom settings, limiting opportunities for children's active, experience-based engagement. Out-of-school learning environments offer rich contexts where children can explore, question, and construct meaning through real-life interactions. However, teachers' beliefs and competencies play a key role in whether such child-centred opportunities are effectively implemented.

Aim: This study examines the impact of mathematics activities conducted in out-of-school learning environments on preschool teachers' beliefs about mathematical development and their self-efficacy in organising such environments, with a particular focus on how these practices support child-centred learning experiences.

Method/approach: A single-group pre-test–post-test quasi-experimental design was used. Participants were preschool teachers from four provinces in Türkiye. A six-day practice-based training was implemented in diverse out-of-school settings. Data were collected before, after, and at follow up. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board, and informed consent was secured from all participants.

Results/findings: The findings indicated a statistically significant increase in teachers' self-efficacy regarding organising out-of-school learning environments. However, no significant change was found in their beliefs about mathematical development. This suggests that while practices can shift relatively quickly, belief systems may remain more stable in the short term.

Conclusion: The findings highlight that out-of-school mathematics activities can strengthen teachers' capacity to design child-centred learning environments that support children's exploration and engagement. However, sustained professional development is needed to foster deeper changes in teachers' beliefs, which are critical for the long-term transformation of practice.

Implications for children and families: You can support children's learning by encouraging them to explore mathematics in everyday environments, such as parks, museums, and nature, where they can actively discover and make sense of the world.

Implications for practitioners: You can enhance children's engagement and learning by designing out-of-school experiences that allow them to explore, question, and actively participate in meaningful mathematical activities.

Funding: This study was supported by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) under the 4004 Nature Education and Science Schools Program (Project No: 123B371).

Keywords: out-of-school learning, early childhood education, early math skills

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-644 – WITHDRAWN

Bridging the implementation gap: Inclusive classroom strategies to support learners with dyslexia

Naima Nosirova, Kharisma Bangsa School, Indonesia

Background: Inclusive education is embedded within policy and accreditation frameworks; however, a gap remains between these commitments and their enactment in everyday classroom practice. Learners with dyslexia in mainstream settings frequently encounter barriers related to literacy demands, instructional pace, and limited differentiation. This underscores the need for evidence-informed strategies that support meaningful inclusion. This paper addresses this gap by examining approaches that support learners with dyslexia, shifting the focus of inclusion from placement to active participation.

Aim: This study investigates how classroom-based, evidence-informed strategies can advance children's inclusion, with particular attention to dyslexic learners. It seeks to identify practical approaches that enhance participation, engagement and learning outcomes, while also examining their broader impact on inclusive classroom practice.

Method/approach: This paper adopts a practitioner inquiry approach, drawing on reflective classroom practice within mainstream international school settings. Across iterative teaching cycles, inclusive strategies—including structured phonics, visual supports, and narrative-based techniques—were integrated into routine instruction. Insights are derived from professional reflection and classroom experiences. As this paper reports reflective professional practice and does not involve formal human-subject research or identifiable participant data, formal ethical approval was not required under the institution's procedures.

Results/findings: The findings indicate notable improvements in student engagement, confidence and participation, particularly among learners with dyslexia. Structured phonics supported decoding accuracy, while visual and narrative approaches enhanced comprehension and retention. These strategies also yielded broader pedagogical benefits, fostering clarity, creativity, and metacognitive awareness, as well as more responsive and adaptive teaching practices.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates that effective inclusion is less dependent on additional resources and more on intentional, pedagogically grounded practice. Embedding adaptable strategies within everyday teaching enables a shift from access to meaningful participation, contributing to more equitable learning experiences and aligning classroom practice with children's rights to inclusive, high-quality education.

Implications for children and families: You deserve a classroom that works for you – where you feel confident, included, and ready to succeed. With the right support, you can fully participate, enjoy learning, and show what you are truly capable of every day.

Implications for practitioners: You can embed simple, evidence-based strategies into your daily teaching to better support learners with dyslexia while strengthening engagement and outcomes for all students, making inclusion practical, sustainable, and impactful in your classroom.
Keywords: dyslexia, inclusive education, evidence-informed practice, children's inclusion, classroom strategies, mainstream classroom, special educational needs (SEN), students' voice, visual learning strategies

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-645

Beyond translation: Underserved families seeking asylum share what cultural recommendations are needed when participating in intervention

Sarah Bartlett, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Sharynne McLeod, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Carolyn Gregoric, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Many countries are seeing rapid demographic changes, with increasing cultural and linguistic diversity. It is imperative that children's early intervention services adapt to reflect the cultural needs of their changing communities.

Aim: To understand the perspectives and experiences of caregivers from a multicultural, underserved asylum seeker community in an Australian city, when attending a caregiver-implemented communication intervention. Specifically, to consider: (a) whether surface adaptations; and (b) deep adaptations, were recommended by multicultural underserved families when participating in Western-informed programs for their children with a language delay.

Method/approach: Ethical approval was provided by Charles Sturt University (Protocol number: H23718). This study explored an intervention designed for caregivers concerned about their toddler's language learning called It Takes Two To Talk®. It was delivered through an Australian asylum seeker service. Four multicultural families enrolled, and three completed the intervention. Using phenomenological methodology, descriptive family and child data were combined with qualitative data from field notes, interviews, and a focus group. Deductive thematic analysis was guided by the Cultural Adaptation Checklist (CAC).

Results/findings: All children presented with significant language delay and showed clinically meaningful lexical growth. The CAC captured surface adaptations that (a) maintain cultural practices, and (b) address contextual constraints. Deep adaptations addressed aligning intervention to caregivers' values and beliefs through targeting (a) providing additional content needed, (b) expanding existing content for cultural consideration, and (c) addressing contextual constraints to reach additional communities.

Conclusion: Culturally responsive caregiver-implemented intervention with underserved multicultural families requires surface and deep adaptations.

Implications for children and families: You are central for decisions and implementation of communication supports for your child. Through your voice, intervention needs to engage you and align to reflect your family's values and beliefs.

Implications for practitioners: You will consider opportunities to deliver flexible interventions guided by the voices of caregivers.

Funding: This work was funded by a grant to the Charles Sturt University Rural Health Research Institute from the Commonwealth of Australia represented by the Department of Health (Grant Activity 4-DGEJZ1O/4-CW7UT14) and a Charles Sturt University Australian Government Research Training Program (AGRTP) Scholarship.

Keywords: surface structure adaptation, deep structure adaptation, families seeking asylum, speech-language pathology

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-646

“Little Libraries” for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

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Background: A rural Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) invited speech pathology researchers to develop resources for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. In the research exploratory phase, an acceptable context-specific children’s booklist was co-created.

Aim: Following an earlier research development phase, community access to the children’s book resources was to be co-implemented and co-evaluated.

Method/approach: Ethical approval was gained from the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council. Elders (n=≈20) and children (n=8) from community completed evaluations of the children’s books. Evaluations identified a need for community access to the books, coining the term “Little Libraries”. Consequently, “Little Libraries” (n=4) were collated and placed on display bookshelves in four ACCHO locations for optimal access. Two months later, ACCHO staff (n=46) completed written surveys evaluating “Little Libraries” for their strength and further suggestions.

Results/findings: The responses were strong and supportive. Most of the ACCHO staff had seen the “Little Libraries” (84.8%); most thought that the books would be read (78.7%); and a very high number strongly agreed that “reading to children is important”. Feedback also supported that “Little Libraries” support children’s literacy skills, cultural knowledge, engagement with books and connection to culture. Future recommendations for “Little Libraries” suggested expansion, promotion and support to maintain the books would be valued.

Conclusion: A co-design approach to developing children’s resources, such as “Little Libraries”, created an opportunity to support engagement and connection with culture, communication, and literacy practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and community.

Implications for children and families: Building access to children’s book resources that respect families’ culture through a trusted service provider.

Implications for practitioners: This implementation project has findings specific to one Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service, yet provides an overview of an important process for co-planning, co-implementing, and co-evaluating when establishing any new service.

Funding: This work was funded by a grant to the Charles Sturt University Rural Health Research Institute from the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Department of Health (Grant Activity 4-DGEJZ1O/4-CW7UT14).

Keywords: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children’s books, literature, resources

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-647

Reaching every child: Evidence from a multisensory, play-based inclusive education program across diverse global contexts

Mandy Lau, Reach & Match Inclusive Education, Australia

Background: Children with disabilities are disproportionately excluded from quality early childhood education globally. Inclusive education requires tools, training, and systemic capacity to enable genuine participation. Reach & Match is a multisensory, play-based inclusive education program developed through postgraduate research in inclusive design, now implemented across multiple countries in mainstream, special education, and education-in-emergency settings.

Aim: This presentation examines outcomes of the Reach & Match program on children's participation, learning development, and peer inclusion, and on educator confidence and capacity to deliver inclusive, play-based learning across diverse cultural and resource contexts.

Method/approach: Primary evidence draws from a longitudinal Save the Children impact evaluation in Papua New Guinea, involving baseline and endline child development assessments using IDELA, educator surveys, caregiver interviews, and practitioner observations across three provinces. The evaluation was conducted by Save the Children under their organisational ethical review protocols, with informed consent obtained from caregivers and school authorities. Multi-country implementation evidence from the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Thailand provides further context.

Results/findings: Children demonstrated improvements in letter identification (7.19 to 9.79/20), number identification (7.05 to 10.24/20), addition and subtraction, emergent numeracy, empathy (+10%), and inhibitory control. While the sample was too small for statistical significance, qualitative evidence showed improved attendance, increased peer inclusion, and facilitator confidence. Several children with disabilities transitioned to mainstream school.

Conclusion: Reach & Match demonstrates that an inclusive design-led approach, centred on children's participation rather than deficit, can be implemented sustainably across diverse cultural and resource contexts. Consistent findings across qualitative and quantitative data suggest that play-based, multisensory tools paired with structured educator training can meaningfully advance inclusion in early childhood settings, including in humanitarian contexts.

Implications for children and families: Too many children with disabilities sit on the edges of their classroom, watching others learn. This research shows that play-based, multisensory learning can change that, for your child, and for every child in the room.

Implications for practitioners: You don't need specialist expertise to make your classroom more inclusive. Reach & Match gives you practical, play-based tools and structured training to support children of all abilities to participate, connect, and learn together.

Funding: Program implementation and evaluation were supported by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Save the Children.

Keywords: inclusive education, play-based learning, disability inclusion, early childhood, multisensory design, educator capacity

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-648

Including children in disaster preparedness across regional Australia's high-risk communities

Lucia Wuersch, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Regional Australia is experiencing cascading disasters, including droughts, bushfires, and floods. These repeated crises contribute to disaster fatigue, reducing preparedness and decision-making across communities. Children are among the most vulnerable members of society, particularly during emergencies, yet disaster management and risk communication frameworks rarely recognise them as active participants in preparedness. National and state disaster frameworks give little attention to the needs of children and childcare services, which also face limited funding and workforce shortages.

Aim: Research on how children understand and respond to emergency warnings remains scarce. Current approaches heavily rely on parents or caregivers, even though disasters often separate children from adults. This research aims to review the literature on disaster preparedness of children and their ecosystems. Such research is essential to better understand the experiences, knowledge, understanding, and capacities of children living in disaster-prone communities and to inform more inclusive and effective disaster preparedness strategies.

Method/approach: This study employed an integrative literature review methodology. A literature search was conducted using the terms 'child*' AND 'disaster preparedness' AND 'Australia' across the scholarly databases EBSCOhost (74 records), ProQuest (59 records), and Scopus (278 records). The search was limited to publications from 2021 to 2026 (last five years), yielding a total of 411 journal articles and books. After removing duplicate records, 280 publications remained. These were then screened individually for relevance against the study's inclusion criteria, resulting in a final sample of 35 scholarly works to which selected websites were added.

Results/findings: The review identified educational institutions, such as childcare centres, as critical in disaster preparedness, with evidence highlighting regulation, leadership, communication, training, and community networks as key enablers. However, childcare centres remain largely confined to consultative roles despite policies promoting community engagement. Overall, the review found that existing research predominantly examines children's broader support systems rather than children's own perspectives, leaving their voices largely absent from the evidence base.

Conclusion: Collectively, the findings reveal important gaps in both research and policy, highlighting the need to strengthen the inclusion of children's and childcare educators' perspectives in emergency management planning and disaster resilience initiatives. The identified gap in children's voices within disaster preparedness research underscores the need for empirical studies that explore children's perspectives on preparing for future climate-related crises.

Implications for children and families: The outcomes of the literature review show the need for research that can help children increase agency when separated from families and caregivers in crisis situations and assist parents in supporting their children on this journey.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners, such as childcare centre directors, should include children's perspectives in disaster preparation and emergency management to increase their resilience and agency in times of crisis.

Keywords: disaster resilience, disaster preparedness, children, disaster-prone location, regional Australia, cascading disasters, disaster fatigue

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

CVC2026-649

Children as partners in practice: Co-designed resources for participation, feedback, and shared decision-making

Kylie Matusewicz, Noah's Ark Inc., Australia

Background: Despite growing recognition of children's rights in therapy and support settings, many children do not fully understand their rights, how to participate in decision-making, or how to give feedback or raise concerns. Child-friendly, co-designed resources can help address this gap and support rights-based, child-safe practice.

Aim: This project developed a suite of accessible resources to strengthen children's understanding of their rights, support active participation in therapy and services, and build confidence in providing feedback.

Method/approach: A participatory co-design approach guided development. Children and young people contributed through inclusive, developmentally appropriate creative, visual and paper-based activities with flexible participation supports. Input across developmental stages ensured resources were meaningful, accessible, and relevant. Delivered as a service improvement initiative funded by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, formal human research ethics approval was not required. Strong safeguarding practices included informed caregiver consent, child assent, voluntary participation, and child-safe, trauma-informed principles.

Results/findings: The process informed the development of a suite of child-friendly resources, including posters, handouts, conversation prompts, simple online games, an animated recording, and a social story. Companion resources were also developed for caregivers to support children's participation where direct access may be limited.

Conclusion: Embedding children's perspectives in resource design supports the development of materials that are meaningful, accessible, and relevant to children's experiences. Co-design approaches strengthen the relevance and usability of resources across diverse developmental and communication needs.

Implications for children and families: These resources support children to understand and exercise their rights, participate confidently in services, and raise concerns. Families are provided with practical strategies to support their child's voice.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners gain tools to promote participation, transparent communication, and child-centred, rights-based practice.

Funding: This work was supported by a grant from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Keywords: children's rights, child voice and participation, co-design, child agency, rights-based practice, child-friendly resources, family-centred practice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-650

Capturing children's voices beyond words: Quantitative methods for coding vocalisation and gesture in early communication

Megan Burkhardt-Reed, University of Tennessee Health Science Center, United States

Background: Understanding child communication requires approaches that reflect its multimodal nature. Young children communicate through vocalisations, gestures, facial expressions, and emerging words before speech is fully conventionalised. However, research and clinical frameworks rely heavily on speech-based measures, which often under-represent multimodal behaviour. This limits our ability to detect developmental variability and may obscure communicative competence in children who are not yet relying on speech. More inclusive methods are needed to capture communication across modalities.

Aim: This presentation introduces a quantitative multimodal coding framework for analysing vocalisation and gesture in naturalistic settings. The goal of the framework is to support analysis of communicative variability across children with diverse developmental profiles, including those who rely on non-verbal or emerging communicative forms. Ethical approval was obtained through institutional review board procedures for observational video and audio recording with caregiver consent.

Method/approach: The method uses video-based behavioural coding to analyse longitudinal child interaction data. Vocal and gestural forms are coded in parallel. Communicative acts are classified along four dimensions: modality (vocal or gestural), form (modality-specific features), communicative function (intended meaning or purpose), and social directivity (whether the act is socially oriented). This allows direct comparison across developmental time. The first cohort (*n*=10) was observed at 4, 7, and 11 months during parent-infant interactions. The second cohort (*n*=12) was observed at 13, 16, and 20 months during caregiver-child play sessions.

Results/findings: Across more than 9,000 communicative events, the framework captured systematic, quantifiable patterns of multimodal communication. In the infant cohort, prelinguistic vocalisations occurred substantially more frequently than gestures (3903 vs. 752 events) and were significantly more likely to be socially directed (34.6% vs. 17.7%). In the toddler cohort (4729 events), vocalisations outnumber gestures, though their distribution varied across communicative functions. Vocalisations were more often socially directed than gestures. The framework captured how relations between modality, function, and social directivity change across developmental time.

Conclusion: Overall, this framework enables direct quantitative comparison of vocal and gestural communication across early development. It provides a structured and transparent approach for studying multimodal communication and supports more inclusive and developmentally sensitive models of child communication.

Implications for children and families: Children communicate in many ways beyond speech, and this approach helps better recognise and understand how your child expresses meaning.

Implications for practitioners: This framework helps you systematically capture and interpret vocal and gestural communication, supporting more complete assessment of early communicative variability beyond spoken language.

Keywords: multimodal communication, quantitative coding methods, early language development, gesture and vocalisation analysis

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-651

Drawing belonging: Refugee and migrant children's voices of starting early childhood and primary school in Aotearoa New Zealand

Hazel Woodhouse, University of Waikato, New Zealand
Sally Peters, University of Waikato, New Zealand

Background: Articles 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirm children's rights to express their views and be heard. For refugee and migrant children, starting early childhood or school involves navigating new languages, relationships, and environments. Approaches that centre children's voices are important for understanding these experiences.

Aim: This study aimed to foreground refugee and migrant children's perspectives on starting early childhood or school in Aotearoa New Zealand, with a focus on belonging, participation, and inclusion.

Method/approach: This study received ethical approval (Division of Education Research Ethics Committee at the University of Waikato, FEDU009/26). A participatory, child-centred qualitative approach was used, using dialogic drawing activities where 12 children drew and discussed their experiences of starting early childhood education or school. Participants were refugee and migrant children aged 3–8 years, reflecting on recent transition experiences. Parental consent and child assent were obtained. Drawings and conversations were analysed thematically to explore and represent children's perspectives.

Results/findings: An analysis identified four themes. Children described friendships, feeling safe, and supportive relationships as central to belonging. They demonstrated agency by helping peers and families through translating and sharing routines. Learning English and new skills strengthened confidence and participation. Children also identified language barriers and unfamiliar environments as challenges, while recognising responsive school practices that supported inclusion. Dialogic drawing generated rich insights into children's transition experiences.

Conclusion: The dialogic drawing approach enabled meaningful insights into children's lived experiences and supported their right to be heard. Findings show that refugee and migrant children actively contribute to inclusive learning environments when their voices are recognised and valued.

Implications for children and families: You can support your child by listening to their experiences and sharing their voice with teachers. Parents in this study emphasised that when children feel heard and understood, they are more confident and able to participate and belong.

Implications for practitioners: You can support children by using simple approaches like drawing and conversation to listen to their voices, helping you understand their experiences and strengthen their sense of belonging and inclusion.

Funding: Teaching Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) funded research for 2026.
Keywords: children's voices, participatory research, dialogic drawing, refugee and migrant children, inclusion, belonging

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-652 – WITHDRAWN

More than fun and games: Children's play as a cultural practice and a human right

Lilla Garayova, Pan-European University, Slovakia

Background: Although enshrined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the right to play remains one of the most consistently neglected rights in international children's law. Despite a clear legal basis and well-documented developmental, cultural, and psychosocial importance, play is widely treated as a leisure concession rather than a binding entitlement. It is routinely sidelined by States Parties and, strikingly, by the very body charged with monitoring the Convention — the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Aim: This study aims to critically examine how meaningfully the right to play has been recognised, monitored, and enforced under the Convention since its adoption, and to assess whether the issuance of General Comment No. 17 in 2013 has produced any measurable shift in State Party practice. It seeks to make visible a pattern of neglect, identify which children are most affected, and propose a system of indicators by which compliance with Article 31 can in future be measured, reported, and held to account.

Method/approach: The study uses original empirical doctrinal analysis of every Concluding Observation (n=646) and General Comment (n=26) issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child up to June 2025, coded for explicit references to the right to play, its dimensions (time, space, materials, playmates), and the specific groups of children addressed. The findings are triangulated against State Party reports and secondary literature on play and child development. The study analyses publicly available legal instruments and contains no human participants; ethical approval was therefore not required.

Results/findings: Only 132 of 646 Concluding Observations (20%) explicitly mention the right to play, and most do so in formulaic, superficial terms. Of the 26 General Comments, only 10 reference play, and just one — General Comment No. 17 — is dedicated to it. The 2013 Comment has not produced a discernible shift in State Party practice.

Conclusion: Where play is addressed, it is overwhelmingly framed in terms of physical play areas, while playtime, materials, and playmates are largely absent. Children in poverty, with disabilities, refugees, and those affected by conflict are most consistently overlooked.

Implications for children and families: You have the right to play—not as a treat, but as a protection guaranteed under international law. Your time, your imagination, your friendships, and your space to simply be a child are not extras. They matter, and they are owed to you.

Implications for practitioners: You are often the last line of defence for a right the law has forgotten. When you protect playtime, design inclusive play spaces, or advocate for play in policy, you are doing rights work—and your documentation of what children need can drive the indicators this field still lacks.

Keywords: right to play, children's rights, Article 31 CRC, General Comment No. 17, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-653

Children with disabilities' views and experiences of engaging with the health sector: Scoping review

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Sharynne McLeod, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
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Natalie Ellis, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Cherie Zischke, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Lindsay Smith, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Lysa Dealtry, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Sarah Verdon, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Claudio Dionigi, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Mélanie Gréaux, World Health Organization, Switzerland

Background: Children with disabilities, including those with chronic health conditions, are more likely to need to engage regularly with health services than other child populations. It is currently unclear which populations of children with disabilities have been asked about their experiences of engaging with the sector and what methods have been used to ensure that children's voices have been heard.

Aim: This review aimed to determine which populations of children with disabilities have been involved in research seeking their perspectives on health services and which methods have been used.

Method/approach: A systematic search of relevant databases was conducted. Peer-reviewed studies published between 2011 and 2025 were included based on eligibility criteria. Data were tabulated and mapped according to key charting categories, and a content analysis of key themes of child voice findings was completed.

Results/findings: 10388 records were identified for screening; 63 reports from 59 studies were eligible for inclusion. Twenty-two percent (n=13) of the included studies investigated children's perspectives in low-to-middle-income countries. Fifty-eight studies conducted interviews or focus groups with children, but only 38% (n=22) of those studies reported additional activities to support children's voices as part of their methodology, such as artmaking, photo-elicitation, or role play. Key themes from a content analysis of child voices and experiences with the health sector will also be presented.

Conclusion: It is now over thirty years since the release of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has increased awareness of the importance of hearing from children on issues that affect them. This review maps what children with disabilities say about their experiences with the health sector and highlights the need for health research to be conducted in ways that support children's voices.

Implications for children and families: This work maps what children with disabilities have told researchers about health centres and health professionals, such as doctors and nurses. The results can be used to improve the healthcare of children with disabilities.

Implications for practitioners: This work summarises what children with disabilities have said about accessing healthcare. The results can be used to improve children with disabilities experiences with healthcare and allow practitioners to gain a greater understanding of children's experiences.

Funding: This research was supported by Charles Sturt University's Children's Voices Centre

Keywords: children's voices, health, disability

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-654

Negotiating agency and rights: Consent practices with infants and toddlers in ECEC settings

Sonia Sin, Macquarie University, Australia

Background: Consent is often understood as a verbal yes/no response, overlooking how infants and toddlers communicate preferences, boundaries, and refusals. This study conceptualised consent as a rights issue in policy, assent and dissent in research ethics, and an expression of agency in education.

Aim: This study aimed to foreground bottom-up understandings of infants' and toddlers' voices by examining how assent and dissent were expressed in everyday ECEC interactions, how these voices shaped participation, and how educators recognised, interpreted, and responded to them.

Method/approach: This qualitative case study was conducted in an infant-toddler room in a Sydney ECEC setting. Data were generated through observations, field notes, photographs, researcher reflections, and a focus group with educators. Ethical approval was granted by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee, with informed consent obtained from families and educators.

Results/findings: The findings showed that infants' and toddlers' voices were multimodal and often ambiguous. Educators could both enable and constrain whether these voices were given weight. Without recognition and response, children's voices risked remaining agentic expressions rather than enactments of rights.

Conclusion: As a pilot study, this research showed that infants' and toddlers' voices were present in everyday ECEC interactions, yet often subtle and difficult to interpret. Children's rights were enacted when their voices influenced educators' practices, requiring ongoing interpretation, reflexive negotiation, and attention to educators' assumptions.

Implications for children and families: You are brave and capable of sharing what you want, do not want, or are unsure about. Your gestures, gaze, babbling, smallest movements, and silences are your voice.

Implications for practitioners: You are continually interpreting what infants' and toddlers' voices mean, staying open to them changing their minds, and considering how those voices should shape their ways of being, relating, and participating.

Keywords: children's rights, agency, assent/dissent, early childhood, infant-toddler

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-655
Pragmatic experiential education and democratic learning environments for youth

Will Dobud, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: While researching for Kids These Days: Understanding and Supporting Youth Mental Health (co-authored with Nevin Harper), I grew increasingly aware of the limitations of over-interventionist, pathologising approaches to youth support. This led to a deeper engagement with the principles of pragmatism and democratic education. This presentation highlights experiential learning, democratic participation, and meaning making through lived experience as antidotes to modern erosions of youth autonomy and connection.

Aim: This presentation explores some of the knowledge gained through conversations with a range of experts in youth mental health and child development. The aim of this presentation is to argue for a shift from an adult-driven, curriculum-centred approach to learning to collaborative, experience-rich settings that foster agency, critical thinking, and community.

Method/approach: This is a conceptual and reflective presentation that draws on insights from the research process on youth mental health and child development, as well as the presenter's background in experiential education and social work. No human participants were involved in data collection for this specific work; it synthesises philosophical, historical, and practice-based sources. Ethical approval was not required as this is a scholarly reflection without empirical participant data.

Results/findings: The findings suggest how interference, over-intervention, and ideological safetyism may undermine youth development. Pragmatic experiential education, emphasising "learning by doing", democratic classrooms, and Hull House-style community engagement, offers a counterapproach. John Dewey's continuity of experience, Jane Addams' practical democracy, and William James' focus on meaning-making from action emerged as key frameworks for rebuilding autonomy and resilience in youth settings.

Conclusion: Pragmatic experiential education and democratic learning environments prioritise youth as active co-creators rather than passive recipients. This matters because it addresses root causes of youth mental health challenges by restoring agency, real-world competence, and meaningful relationships, moving beyond symptom-focused fixes towards sustainable, humanistic growth.

Implications for children and families: You are the hero of your own story. We see you as capable crew members ready for real adventures—trust your experience, make choices, and learn by doing what matters to you and your community.

Implications for practitioners: You can create democratic, experiential spaces that treat youth as active participants. Step back from over-intervention, prioritise genuine relationships and shared inquiry, and let lived experience drive learning and growth.

Keywords: experiential education, democracy, pragmatism

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-656

Children's voices through materials: Identity, clay, and meaning-making in early childhood

Jasmine Crane, Educational Leader, Australia

Background: Children's voices within early childhood education are often positioned as something that must be verbally expressed or documented by educators. This can unintentionally limit the many ways children communicate meaning, identity, and emotion. Drawing upon Reggio Emilia principles and the "hundred languages of children", this presentation explores how children express themselves through clay, charcoal, paint, movement, and mark-making, advocating for deeper observation and authentic meaning-making through children's interactions with materials.

Aim: This presentation aims to encourage educators to reconsider how children's voices are recognised within early childhood settings by exploring how meaning, identity, and communication can be expressed through children's interactions with materials. It seeks to highlight the importance of observation, interpretation, and relational pedagogy in creating more authentic and inclusive opportunities for children to be seen, heard, and understood beyond verbal language alone.

Method/approach: This presentation draws upon reflective pedagogical practice within an Australian early childhood setting involving 12 children: four nursery (12–18 months), four toddlers (2–3 years), and four kindergarten children (3–5 years). Observations of clay, charcoal, paint, natural brushes and mark-making explored non-verbal communication and symbolic representation. Informed family consent was obtained, and ongoing child assent was respected throughout the inquiry.

Results/findings: The inquiry found that children expressed identity, communication, and meaning in developmentally diverse ways through their interactions with materials. Nursery children explored identity through charcoal and mirrors, toddlers expressed themselves through painting with natural brushes, and kindergarten children represented aspects of identity through clay. Sustained observation enabled educators to recognise children's voices beyond verbal language, revealing the value of intentional observation and material-rich experiences in understanding children's perspectives.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that children's voices are expressed not solely through words, but through meaningful interactions with materials that communicate identity, emotion, and belonging. Slowing pedagogical practice enables educators to observe more intentionally, recognise children's perspectives more authentically, and value the many ways children make meaning. Reframing children's voices in this way supports more inclusive, responsive, and relational early childhood practice.

Implications for children and families: Your child's voice is not only heard through words. Through art, children communicate their ideas, emotions, and identities in many different ways.

Implications for practitioners: You are encouraged to move beyond educator-led questioning and instead deeply observe how children communicate through materials. You can create more authentic, inclusive, and meaningful opportunities for children's voices to be seen, heard, and understood.

Keywords: abstract, art, slow pedagogy, clay, identity, children's voices, materials, meaning-making, early childhood

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-657

Representations of disability in picture books: Issues of inclusivity and literary quality

Amanda Niland, The University of Sydney, Australia

Background: This paper shares research into representations of disability in picture books. The research was inspired by recognition of the right of all children to see themselves and their lives represented respectfully and inclusively in picture books, and the right of all children to picture books with literary qualities that engage their imaginations through aesthetic richness, interesting stories, and opportunities to empathise with well-developed characters. When children have access to books they can enjoy and identify with, they are more likely to develop a lifelong love of reading.

Aim: This study aimed to explore the inclusivity and literary quality of picture books portraying disability that have been recommended as inclusive.

Method/approach: The 35 picture books explored were recommended by six not-for-profit literacy or disability advocacy organisations – in Australia and the UK. The research involved a content analysis that was informed by an understanding of literacy as a social practice, picture books as reflectors of ideology, and a social model of disability. An evaluative framework that combined criteria for analysing inclusivity in representations of disability adapted from previous research with new criteria for analysing literary qualities, developed from literary studies of picture books, was used for the content analysis.

Results/findings: The findings indicated that despite recommendations, some books were not inclusive, and a minority rated highly for literary qualities.

Conclusion: The findings indicate the need for more inclusive and imaginative picture books that portray disability.

Implications for children and families: Authors, illustrators, publishers, librarians, and teachers need to know what you think about picture books with disabled characters – whether these books are inclusive, and whether they are interesting and fun to read and explore.

Implications for practitioners: This research offers you a framework you can use when selecting picture books that portray disability, to evaluate how inclusive and engaging they are for children.

Keywords: picture books, disability, inclusion, imagination, literary quality, children's rights

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-658

Intersectionality, neuro-inclusive education, and holistic child development in rural early childhood education in Nepal: A reflective field inquiry

Sahas Bhandari, Kathmandu University, Nepal

Background: Rural children often face intersecting disadvantages, including poverty, geographic isolation, linguistic diversity, food insecurity, parental outmigration, and limited access to trained early childhood educators, which can hinder early learning and development. Although early childhood education increasingly promotes culturally responsive, neuro-inclusive, and holistic approaches, little is known about how these overlapping factors shape children's learning experiences in rural Nepal. This evidence gap limits the development of contextually relevant and inclusive educational practices.

Aim: To understand how intersectionality, neuro-inclusive education and holistic child development can inform inclusive early childhood education in rural Nepal and to formulate an integrated framework for educators and practitioners: Intersectional Neuro-Inclusive Holistic Development (INIHD).

Method/approach: The reflective practitioner inquiry was carried out in 12 community ECEC centres within the rural community of Nepal, over five days. Children aged 2–6 years and informal discussions with facilitators were observed. Thematic analysis of data was conducted through intersectional, neuro-inclusive, and holistic approaches using a reflective field diary, structured observations and practitioner conversations. Good practice was adhered to with the sites, facilitators, and children all being anonymised and ethical principles followed.

Results/findings: Children faced multiple barriers, such as language mismatch, a lack of trained facilitators, poverty, and food insecurity. There was low awareness of neurodiversity and neuro-inclusive teaching. The literacy and numeracy development of students received the great majority of classroom attention, with social, emotional, physical, cultural, and linguistic development being underdeveloped. The study identified low cost and culturally responsive strategies and offers the INIHD (Including Needs Identification in rural ECEC) framework as a practical planning tool for rural ECEC.

Conclusion: More than just more funding is needed to improve rural early childhood education. Children's intersecting identities, developmental diversity, language and culture, and classroom contexts should be better acknowledged and reflected in educational policy, teacher preparation, and classroom practice. The proposed Intersectional Neuro-Inclusive Holistic Development (INIHD) framework provides a realistic solution to the challenge of inclusive, culturally responsive, and holistic child development in rural Nepal and other resource-constrained contexts.

Implications for children and families: Children learn in a place that celebrates their language, culture, developmental diversity, and strengths.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners can champion inclusivity in culturally responsive, neuro-inclusive, and holistic teaching with local resources.

Keywords: reflective inquiry, rural, ECEC, Nepal, intersectionality, neuro-inclusive, education, holistic child development, Tamang community, practitioner

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-659
Resources in 131 languages and dialects about children's speech development, assessment, and intervention

Helen L. Blake, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Sharynne McLeod, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Children around the world learn to communicate using the languages in their environment, learning to speak or sign one or more of 7,000 languages. However, when children do not communicate in the dominant language of their country of residence, most speech-language pathologists (SLPs) report that they rarely provide support in children's home language(s), due to the lack of assessment and intervention resources about multilingual children's speech.

Aim: This presentation challenges communication professionals' long-held belief that there are few assessment and intervention resources for supporting multilingual children's speech by describing the resources curated on the free Multilingual Children's Speech website.

Method/approach: Over two decades, multilingual researchers, professionals, and translators have collaborated to provide access to global knowledge about children's speech development, assessment, and intervention. The resulting collaborations have been curated within the Multilingual Children's Speech website https://www.csu.edu.au/research/multilingual-speech/home that was launched in 2012 and extensively updated in 2024.

Results/findings: The Multilingual Children's Speech website includes 1,337 mostly-free resources in 131 languages and dialects, including 16 of the top 20 most spoken languages in the world, as well as many minority and Indigenous languages. There are 658 speech acquisition studies in 55 languages, 423 speech assessment resources in 77 languages, and 178 speech intervention resources in 21 languages. The resources include journal articles, books, book chapters, theses, and video presentations by global researchers. There is also information about how to work with children who speak a language you do not speak.

Conclusion: The children's speech acquisition, assessment, and intervention resources curated on the Multilingual Children's Speech website should prove useful to professionals, including SLPs, teachers, and linguists who support multilingual children's communication across the world. These resources also highlight the benefits of multilingualism and international collaborations in building diverse interdisciplinary knowledge.

Implications for children and families: You may find resources in your own language on the website, such as a validated parent-report questionnaire freely available in 71 languages and videos about speech development in 48 languages. These resources can support your child's communication in any language they speak.

Implications for practitioners: You don't have to be multilingual yourself to work with multilingual children in their home language(s). You can access speech acquisition, assessment, and intervention resources on the Multilingual Children's Speech website to support you in providing culturally responsive practice.

Keywords: children's speech development, multilingualism, speech acquisition, assessment, intervention

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-660

Beyond counting: Supporting early algebraic thinking in children with Down syndrome through family-led intervention

Kathy Cologon, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Patterning is an important foundation for early algebraic reasoning and later mathematical learning. However, research with children with Down syndrome has focused largely on arithmetic rather than broader foundational mathematical thinking. Families are often recognised as children's "first teachers" and may be well placed to support mathematical development through everyday play and routines. As such, families may benefit from structured guidance and practical strategies.

Aim: This study investigated the effects of a 17-week parent-led early numeracy intervention on early algebraic thinking and number skills in young children with Down syndrome. It compared outcomes for children receiving a patterning and early algebra intervention (experimental) with those receiving a counting and number-focused intervention (control). Institutional ethical approval, parent consent, and child assent were obtained.

Method/approach: Twelve children with Down syndrome were randomly assigned to the experimental or control group. The control group was offered the patterning intervention after the study. Parents attended eight group sessions and two individual family sessions within the home. The experimental intervention adapted the Patterns and Early Algebra Preschool program for home use, incorporating visual supports, concrete materials, repetition, scaffolding, and everyday routines. Outcomes were assessed pre- and post-intervention using an adapted Early Mathematical Patterning Assessment and a highest-count sequence task.

Results/findings: At pre-test, groups did not differ significantly on patterning or highest-count sequence scores. Post-test patterning scores favoured the experimental group, with a statistically significant difference and large effect, although the findings should be interpreted cautiously given the small sample. Highest-count sequence scores were higher for the experimental group but did not reach statistical significance.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that young children with Down syndrome can develop early algebraic thinking when provided with scaffolded, visually supported learning opportunities embedded in everyday family life.

Implications for children and families: Patterning is foundational for later mathematical learning. Parent-led mathematical activities may create enjoyable, meaningful opportunities for children to engage with patterning, counting, and mathematical language at home.

Implications for practitioners: The outcomes of this study suggest potential benefits of engaging children with Down syndrome in scaffolded, visually supported learning opportunities embedded in everyday activities.

Funding: A pilot for this study was funded by Macquarie University.

Keywords: Down syndrome, early algebraic thinking, early numeracy intervention, mathematical learning, repeating and spatial patterns, children's rights

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-661

Children's voices in early years read-alouds

Vahide Yigit Gencten, Emirates College for Advanced Education, United Arab Emirates

Background: Picture book read-alouds are a common practice in early childhood classrooms, yet little is known about how children's voices are expressed and shaped in these settings.

Aim: This study examined how children's voices were expressed, conditioned, and functioned during picture book read-aloud interactions in an early childhood classroom, using Lundy's model of children's voice and Rosenblatt's reader-response theory as complementary frameworks.

Method/approach: An interpretive qualitative case study was conducted in a university-affiliated preschool in southeastern Türkiye. Two graduate teaching assistants self-recorded 16 read-aloud sessions over eight weeks with a class of 5–6-year-olds (10–15 children per session). All 3,095 utterance lines were coded using a hybrid system (inductive and deductive) across three themes: Voice Form, Voice Condition, and Voice Function. Ethical approval was granted by the Adıyaman University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (approval no. 115, 02.10.2024). Written consent was obtained from teachers and parents, and verbal assent was obtained from children.

Results/findings: Children's voices took 10 distinct forms during read-alouds; knowledge contribution, prediction, and personal connection were most frequent. Teacher invitations dominated interactional conditions, yet for every two instances of uptake, one led to closure or redirection, leaving children's contributions without influence. Personal connection emerged predominantly under peer-mediated conditions rather than teacher prompting. Embodied voice, though least frequent, was the form most dependent on specific interactional conditions. Resistance was directed more often towards peers.

Conclusion: Children in read-aloud contexts are active, socially embedded meaning-makers whose voices are shaped as much by interactional conditions as by pedagogical design.

Implications for children and families: When you share books, and someone asks what you think, your ideas matter, even if the conversation moves on quickly. Your connections to stories, your predictions, and your experiences are all real and valuable contributions that deserve to be heard.

Implications for practitioners: When you invite children's voices during read-alouds, consider whether your responses extend children's thinking or close it down. Genuine participation requires not just creating space for children to speak, but allowing what they say to meaningfully influence what happens next.

Keywords: early literacy, reading, early childhood education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-662

Preschool teachers' perspectives on emergent literacy in young children

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Shalini Mathew, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India
Monica Bellon-Harn, Appalachian State University, United States

Background: Children gain meaningful literacy experiences from a very young age, even before receiving formal reading and writing instructions in school. In the preschool years, preschools and early child learning centres play a major role in facilitating the emergent literacy experiences.

Aim: The present study examines the perspectives of 123 preschool teachers from two preschool types (Private and Anganwadi) on emergent literacy in the Indian context.

Method/approach: Using a semi-structured interview, the preschool teachers' perspectives were sought on the activities and methods used for teaching young children, activities they considered to enhance children's participation in the learning process, the teaching materials that were available in their setups, their ways of involving parents in children's learning, and the features they observed in children who exhibited some difficulties in reading. Ethical approval and informed consent from the study participants were obtained before the study began.

Results/findings: The teachers reported the use of emergent literacy activities, including literacy in play, shared book reading, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, emerging reading and writing skills, and the concept of books and print. Preschool teachers encouraged parental involvement to support their child's literacy development. Although the preschool teachers were aware of some common red flags related to reading-writing and oral language deficits, a lower percentage for each listed feature was noted.

Conclusion: The study findings echo the need for regular in-service teacher training programs focusing on emergent literacy-based activities and sensitising preschool teachers regarding the early red flags for learning difficulties in preschool years.

Implications for children and families: You, as parents, can be actively involved in your child's learning activities, in their native language and cultural contexts.

Implications for practitioners: You need to focus on foundational skills for enhancing language-literacy skills in young children.

Keywords: preschool children, preschool teachers, emergent literacy

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-663

Healthy minds, mighty kids: Student voice in whole-school mental health education

Elisabeth Price, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Background: Mitey is the first whole-school approach to mental health education in Aotearoa New Zealand for students aged 5 to 13 to be shaped by peer-reviewed research and underpinned by a bicultural framework. In response to Aotearoa's youth mental health crisis, the Sir John Kirwan Foundation and Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland co-created Mitey. The design responds to diverse school communities and includes a developmental learning progression that reflects children's cognitive and emotional development.

Aim: Drawing on Māori concepts of well-being alongside Western perspectives aligned with the national curriculum, the aim is to explore how students describe their understanding of mental health.

Method/approach: This presentation reports findings from a four-year evaluation of Mitey, with a particular focus on student voice. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 60 primary-aged students aged 5 to 13 from 10 participating schools. The schools were purposively selected to reflect variation in school type, socioeconomic context, and ethnic composition. Ethics approval was granted by the Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (reference number: 3282).

Results/findings: Students described increased awareness of emotions in themselves and others and reported being more confident naming feelings and seeking support when needed. Many noted they were more able to "check in" with classmates and recognise when someone might need help. Students also described mental health as part of everyday life rather than something separate or difficult to talk about. Across schools, students demonstrated growing understanding of coping strategies and language for well-being, and linked this learning to real-life situations.

Conclusion: Evaluation findings highlight students' growing knowledge, understanding, skills, and confidence to talk about mental health and well-being. Student voice provides valuable insight into how whole-school mental health education can strengthen children's understanding of mental health and well-being.

Implications for children and families: Whole-school mental health education can help children develop the language, confidence, and understanding needed to recognise emotions, seek support, and care for others. Families have an important role in reinforcing this learning through everyday conversations about mental health and well-being.

Implications for practitioners: Whole-school mental health education enables educators to embed conversations about mental health in everyday teaching and learning. Shared language across the wider school community can strengthen students' confidence to recognise emotions, seek support, and care for others.

Keywords: mental health education, whole-school approach, student voice, bicultural framework

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-664

Making visual art visible beyond sight: Anti-ableist pedagogy, children's participation, and inclusive artmaking

Kathy Cologon, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Zinnia Mevawalla, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom
Olivia Karaolis, University of Notre Dame, Australia

Background: Children's participation in early childhood education requires more than physical presence. It requires space, voice, audience and influence, including for children who communicate, perceive, and participate in diverse ways. In visual art experiences, participation is often shaped by sighted assumptions. This can limit opportunities for children who are blind or have low vision, unless educators rethink artmaking from an anti-ableist starting point.

Aim: This presentation explores how visual art can be made visible beyond sight through inclusive artmaking with young children and families. It examines how anti-ableist pedagogy can support children's agency, joy, belonging and meaningful participation.

Method/approach: The study draws on a yearlong community playgroup project with 16 young children aged 10 months to 6 years and their families. Grounded in anti-ableist pedagogy, Lundy's model of participation and Malaguzzi's hundred languages of children, the study used portraiture methodology to capture lived moments of inclusive artmaking. Fieldnotes, sustained observations and co-reflections with educators informed six portraits of sensory-rich art experiences. Ethical approval was obtained from the University Human Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from family members and educators. Active assent was obtained from the children.

Results/findings: Children participated through touch, sound, rhythm, gesture, movement, memory, experimentation, and laughter. Visual art was reimagined through tactile narration, an interactive gallery, a beach excursion, collaborative textured artworks, and a gallery walk. Children's preferences and ideas shaped the curriculum, including the move from tactile gallery exploration to beach-based inquiry and collaborative artmaking. Rather than adapting activities for one child, educators reshaped the pedagogical space so that multiple ways of knowing and expressing were valued.

Conclusion: The study found that anti-ableist pedagogy transforms inclusive artmaking from accommodation into collective reimagining. This benefited all children, as touch, sound, dialogue, and shared sensory exploration became central to the artmaking process. When diverse ways of participating are valued from the outset, visual art becomes multimodal, relational, and joyful.

Implications for children and families: Children and families benefit when every child's ways of communicating, exploring, and creating are recognised as meaningful and influential.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners can strengthen inclusion by designing arts experiences that centre multiple senses, listen beyond spoken words, and allow children's ideas to shape curriculum.

Keywords: anti-ableist pedagogy, children's participation, inclusion, inclusive artmaking, children who are blind or have low vision

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-665

Creating evidence-based guidelines for culturally responsive clinical practices: Supporting accurate diagnosis of speech sound disorder in Icelandic-Polish speaking children

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Thora Másdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Marc Daníel Skipstað Volhardt, University of Iceland, Iceland
Jóna Erlandsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

Background: Speech-language pathologists often lack the proper tools and methods to assess speech sound disorders (SSDs) in multilingual children, putting these children at risk of both over- and underdiagnosis. SLPs in Iceland require evidence-based, culturally responsive methods to accurately diagnose SSD in multilingual children.

Aim: To describe the development of a data-driven method of culturally responsive assessment and diagnostic decision-making using a converging evidence approach, to more accurately differentiate typical multilingual speech acquisition from SSD in Icelandic-Polish multilingual speakers.

Method/approach: Speech samples using a single-word speech production test were collected from 19 Polish-speaking adults who had learned Icelandic as an additional language and 36 Icelandic-Polish speaking children aged 4;2 to 5;0. Analysis identified mismatches typically observed in Icelandic-Polish speakers. Children's samples were analysed using traditional and culturally responsive approaches. Study approval was obtained from Vísindasiðanefnd and Siðanefnd háskólanna um vísindarannsóknir.

Results/findings: A range of phonological processes were identified as part of the typical cross-linguistic interaction between Polish and Icelandic. Measures of the accuracy of children's speech increased when mismatches influenced by cross-linguistic interactions were not counted as errors. Using multiple sources of evidence changed children's diagnosis from 20 with SSD using the traditional approach to only five using a converging evidence approach.

Conclusion: It is possible to develop evidence-based guidelines for assessing multilingual children's speech even for language pairings within small languages, such as Icelandic.

Implications for children and families: You will learn how multilingual children develop speech differently from their monolingual peers and why traditional approaches to assessment and diagnosis are inaccurate.

Implications for practitioners: You will learn how SSD presents differently in monolingual and multilingual children, as well as factors to consider when deciding whether to refer a multilingual child for evaluation by an SLP.

Funding: Menntarannsóknasjóður [219261-051].

Keywords: multilingual, speech production, speech sound disorder, intelligibility, Icelandic, Polish, speech-language pathology

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-666
Assessment of inclusive education practices in the Schools Division of Batangas City

Rosalina Panganiban, Schools Division of Batangas City, Philippines

Background: In the Schools Division of Batangas City, efforts to implement inclusive education continue to expand through the provision of classroom accommodation, differentiated instructional strategies, modified assessment practices, and support mechanisms. These practices reflect the commitment of schools to create learning environments in which diversity is recognised and every learner is provided with meaningful opportunities to participate and succeed. Despite these efforts, gaps remain in understanding how inclusive education has been implemented across schools and how practices influence the academic and social outcomes of learners with disabilities.

Aim: The study sought to assess the inclusive education practices provided to learners with disabilities in general education classrooms within the Schools Division of Batangas City, to identify existing strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement in support of more responsive and effective inclusive education.

Method/approach: Quantitative data were obtained from survey questionnaires answered by school heads and selected teachers who taught learners with disabilities in 40 identified schools. To determine the overall level of implementation across indicators, the average weighted mean was computed. For the qualitative data, particularly the responses related to the challenges encountered by teachers and school heads in implementing inclusive education, thematic analysis was utilised. Before conducting the study, approval was secured from the appropriate school and division authorities.

Results/findings: Accommodation practices in inclusive education positively influenced the academic and social integration of learners with disabilities in general education classes. Academically, these practices ensure access to quality education and support learner engagement, although improvements in performance and behaviour were only moderately evident. Socially, the impact was more pronounced, as inclusive classrooms promoted acceptance, belongingness, tolerance, and positive peer relationships. Overall, the study highlighted that accommodation practices played a significant role in fostering the inclusion of learners with disabilities.

Conclusion: Inclusive education for learners with disabilities was evident in general education classrooms; both academic participation and social integration. However, improvements in teacher preparedness, resources, and support systems remain necessary to strengthen meaningful inclusion and learner outcomes.

Implications for children and families: For families, the study highlights the importance of active parental involvement and close collaboration with schools to support each learner's learning, development, and inclusion.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners, particularly teachers and school leaders, need continuous professional development on inclusive education strategies, differentiated instruction, and disability awareness.

Keywords: inclusive education, assessment, instructional support

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-667

The Nigerian children's parliament: Adult structure or children's space?

Ewajesu Okewumi, The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Background: The African Union Agenda 2040 aspires that all African states have a structure to aid children's participation, like the children's parliament. The recommendation for more structures like the children's parliament begs the question of how successful this model of children's participation has been on the African continent. Nigeria currently has the highest number of children on the continent and is one of the few countries to have established a children's parliament over two decades ago.

Aim: This study explored the experiences of children in parliament and their views on participating in this structure.

Method/approach: A mixed method of surveys and in-depth interviews was used to collect data from 12 members of the National Children's Parliament (NCP) in Nigeria. Ethical approval was obtained from Moray House School of Education and Sports, University of Edinburgh.

Results/findings: The findings reveal the children's parliament as a space for children's participation. How children engage and interact in this space is impacted by the entry method into this space and whose voices are prominent. Diverse issues intersect in how members of the children's parliament experience participation. Children's experience is observed in dialogue and intergenerational relations with both adults and other members of the children's parliament.

Conclusion: This study contributes to knowledge in the field of childhood studies and children's rights and to the debate on whether voice is enough. The promotion of children's participation in the children's parliament should be further interrogated to ensure it supports meaningful participation beyond the tokenism of bringing them into a space.

Implications for children and families: When included in spaces as a representative for children, you should be open to discussing with other children and getting their views heard too.

Implications for practitioners: In creating safe spaces for children to participate and be heard, you should also consider which children are being included and how you would empower them.

Keywords: children, parliament, participation, space, voice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-668

Translating early childhood policy: How teams of educators negotiate quality for children

Jessamine Giese, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Background: Early childhood education and care (ECEC) operates within a complex policy landscape that shapes workforce decision-making and notions of quality. In Australia, the National Quality Framework (NQF), Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), and modern awards articulate competing expectations. While the NQF and EYLF promote teamwork and shared decision-making, modern awards embed hierarchies that influence practice. Understanding how educators interpret and translate these policies directly influences children's ECEC experiences.

Aim: The study aims to locate discourses about teamwork in ECEC and identify the ways educators are enabled and constrained by policy as they make decisions for children.

Method/approach: This qualitative study adopts a Foucauldian lens using concepts of discourse and power to analyse how policy is translated into day-to-day decision-making. Alongside policy documents, data comprised centre documents from four long day care centres and transcripts from four focus groups, one at each centre – including three to eight participants with diverse roles and responsibilities in each focus group. The research received Queensland University of Technology ethical approval (4890). Data captured educators' experiences of translating policy into practice in pursuit of quality outcomes for children.

Results/findings: Three provocations were: Rethinking staffing structures to align collaborative intentions with remuneration realities; Positioning the degree-qualified teacher(s) within teams to harness their professional knowledge; Intentionally appointing Educational Leaders as critical policy brokers.

Conclusion: This research demonstrates that policy is not a fixed directive but is actively interpreted and negotiated by teams within the constraints of workforce conditions. Misalignments between policy intent and industrial conditions shape whose knowledge is valued, how decisions are made, and how quality is enacted for children. This matters because enhancing children's experiences requires greater policy coherence that supports collaboration, pedagogical leadership, and professional recognition.

Implications for children and families: When educators are better supported to interpret well-aligned policy, you experience quality ECEC where your voices are heard, relationships are responsive, and learning and well-being are prioritised.

Implications for practitioners: Analysing how educators bridge policy disconnect in practice offers you actionable pathways forward to strategically realign, consume, and enact policy.

Keywords: early childhood education and care, quality, policy, decision-making, teamwork, discourse analysis, educational leadership, workforce

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-669

Difficulty of phonological tasks in Polish-speaking preschoolers with and without speech sound disorders

Agata Trębacz-Ritter, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

Background: Children with speech sound disorders are the largest group receiving speech and language therapy. Because speech disorders have multiple underlying causes, therapy should include not only articulation training but also exercises targeting phonological skills, which are essential for literacy acquisition.

Aim: To discuss differences in the difficulty of phonological tasks between the groups of preschool children.

Method/approach: The study included two groups of Polish-speaking preschool children (mean age: 81 months): children with speech sound disorders as a primary impairment (*n*=49) and typically developing peers (*n*=44). A ranking of the relative difficulty of phonological tasks was created. High average performance indicated a low difficulty index (closer to 0), whereas low average performance indicated a great difficulty index (closer to 1). The project was approved by the Faculty of Educational Studies Ethics Committee at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (no. WSE-KEdsPB-9/2024/2025).

Results/findings: In both groups, the easiest tasks involved phoneme discrimination (0.05–0.15) and syllable segmentation (0.12–0.21), whereas the most difficult tasks measured phonological memory (0.60–0.77) and syllable deletion (0.53–0.78). Children with speech sound disorders performed worse on phoneme segmentation and blending, syllable deletion, and alliteration recognition (*d* = 0.72–0.96). Although phoneme discrimination and non-word repetition were relatively easy in both groups, significant between-group differences with large effect sizes were observed.

Conclusion: Before children start school, they need phonological training, especially in phonological memory, verbal fluency, and sound manipulation. Children with speech sound disorders need the most support with phoneme segmentation and blending, which are important for reading development. The ranking may help adjust therapy by gradually increasing task difficulty. Non-word repetition and phoneme discrimination tasks may also serve as useful screening measures of phonological skills in children with speech sound disorders.

Implications for children and families: Phonological training is essential for literacy development, and you can practice this at home.

Implications for practitioners: You will know how to gradually increase the difficulty of phonological tasks for children with speech sound disorders who speak a more transparent language.

Funding: Excellence Initiative - Research University, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Poland), no. 140/04/POB5/0018.

Keywords: speech sound disorder, phonological skills, speech therapy, literacy

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-670
Aspects of early childhood speech in Louisiana

Lindsey Bergeron, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, United States
Claire Glaeser, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, United States
Elena Babatsouli, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, United States

Background: Studying children's phonological skills explains how languages/dialects are learned cross-linguistically (McLeod, 2026). Normative data from typically developing children help distinguish typical development and dialectal variation from disorders. Clinicians rely on the Iowa–Nebraska norms (Smit et al., 1990), which do not reflect contemporary English usage nor the rich regional dialectal diversity of Louisiana. The lack of updated, local norms highlights an urgent need for representative phonological data that addresses such regional linguistic diversity.

Aim: This study investigates the developmental speech patterns of English-speaking children (ages 2;0–5;7) in Louisiana, also examining how dialectal use in the family (parents/caregivers' input) is reflected in children's speech.

Method/approach: This study collected phonetic/phonological data from 10 Louisiana English-speaking children (2;0–5;7) and their parents/caregivers, using picture-naming and a lullaby reading/repetition task. Data analyses are in Phon (Hedlund & Rose, 2020). This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (Approval No. IRB-24-076-CODI-OTHR, modified: IRB-24-076-CODI). Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Results/findings: The results show frequent use of cluster simplification, final consonant deletion, gliding, fronting, voicing changes, and segmental/syllabic additions across age groups, with syllable deletion observed among 2-year-olds. These processes decreased with increasing age. PCC values were generally comparable to previous benchmarks; greater variability is seen among younger children and those exposed to region-specific varieties (Cajun, Creole). A few dialect specific patterns include interdental stopping (Cajun and Creole), final consonant devoicing (Creole), and loss of rhoticity in vowels (Cajun).

Conclusion: Our data describe the phonological skills of English-speaking children in Louisiana and highlight the importance of regionally relevant norms. Continued data collection in the UL Lullaby project will develop sensitive dialectal norms, supporting more equitable and accurate clinical practices.

Implications for children and families: Researchers are developing Louisiana-specific speech norms to support children and families, like you, through more accurate identification and treatment of speech disorders, helping prevent later challenges in speech articulation, learning/literacy, and academic achievement.

Implications for practitioners: This study informs you, Louisiana practitioners, to ground clinical decisions in current, regionally relevant data, while accounting for dialectal variation, supporting more accurate assessment, culturally responsive practices, and informed intervention planning across diverse child speakers.

Keywords: Louisiana English, regional variation/dialect, speech, children/caregivers, families

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 15: Life on Land
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-671

“What do children want?”: Educators’ interpretation of children’s voices in creating equitable learning environments in school-age educare

Maryna Rosen, Mid Sweden University, Sweden

Background: Extended education refers to organised education and care provided before and after compulsory school hours. In Sweden, this is provided through School-Age Educare Centres (SAEC), where care, learning, play, and social participation are integrated. In SAEC, children’s voices are recognised as central, yet research focuses on what children say, rather than how their voices are understood. Studies show that children value play, relationships, and choice, while experiencing frustration when they cannot influence activities (Elvstrand et al., 2025; Elvstrand & Boström, 2025).

Aim: This study explores how educators interpret children’s voices in creating equitable learning environments.

Method/approach: The study is based on action research in four SAECs in Sweden involving 37 educators. Data were generated through collective reflection focused on equitable practice and children’s perspectives. Ethical approval was not required under Swedish legislation. Written informed consent was obtained from all participating educators.

Results/findings: Educators described children’s voices as often implicit, fragmented, or indirectly expressed, requiring interpretation. Participation does not necessarily mean children can influence what they do. Educators describe equity as responsiveness to individual needs, such as being alone or changing activity. Key conditions for equity include autonomy, safety, and opportunities to be oneself. Educators interpret children’s voices through unclear signals, silence, and everyday interactions.

Conclusion: The study suggests that children’s voices become meaningful through educators’ interpretive work in everyday practice. The findings suggest moving beyond understanding children’s voices as direct expressions towards examining how these voices are interpreted and enacted in practice. Further research is needed on professional judgment, interpretation, and the conditions under which children’s voices become visible or remain unheard.

Implications for children and families: Children and families benefit when educators attend not only to what children say but also to their daily actions, emotions, and preferences. This supports responsive learning environments that recognise individual development and provide conditions for navigating developmental transitions.

Implications for practitioners: You need to develop interpretive sensitivity to recognise children’s implicit, indirect, and non-verbal expressions when creating equitable learning environments.

Funding: Mid Sweden University and Sundsvalls Municipality (Grant No. [Dnr MIUN 2021/1080]).

Keywords: action research, children’s voices, equity, interpretation, school-age educare, participation

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 1: No Poverty
- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-672
Risk of early literacy difficulties in Polish-speaking preschoolers with speech sound disorders

Agata Trębacz-Ritter, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

Background: Children with speech sound disorders are the largest group receiving speech and language therapy. Although therapy often focuses on articulation and speech motor skills, these disorders may also affect phonological development and later reading and writing skills. Because children need stable speech and phonological skills before learning to read and write, increasing attention has been paid to literacy-related risks in this group, especially in transparent orthographies such as Polish.

Aim: To discuss whether Polish-speaking preschoolers with speech sound disorders are at higher risk for preliteracy difficulties than their typically developing peers. The project has been approved by the Faculty of Educational Studies Ethics Committee at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (no. WSE-KEdsPB-9/2024/2025). All children participating in the project provided verbal consent to take part in the study at each meeting with the researchers.

Method/approach: The study included Polish-speaking preschool children with speech sound disorders (n=49) and typically developing peers (n=44; mean age: 81 months). We examined predictors of reading and writing, including language abilities, phonological skills, and letter knowledge. Children scoring below the 25th percentile were classified as being at risk for preliteracy difficulties. Risk levels were compared between groups using probability analysis and logistic regression, with odds ratios as effect-size measures.

Results/findings: Children with speech sound disorders were more likely than typically developing children to achieve lower scores in phoneme segmentation (OR=7.24) and blending (OR=7.80). High odds ratios were also observed for language abilities, including vocabulary and grammar (OR=4.77), and for phonological memory measured with non-word repetition tasks (OR=3.25). For letter recognition and naming, children with speech sound disorders were about three times more likely to obtain lower scores (OR=3.83–4.02).

Conclusion: Children with speech sound disorders are at greater risk of difficulties at the beginning of reading and writing instruction than typically developing children. Therefore, speech and language therapy should focus not only on articulation and speech motor skills, but also include phonological training, as speech-language therapists support the development of overall communication skills, including written language.

Implications for children and families: It is essential to provide children with speech sound disorders with phonological training and to support their overall language development in everyday life.

Implications for practitioners: It is important to provide literacy-based intervention for children with speech sound disorders.

Funding: Excellence Initiative - Research University, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Poland), nr: 140/04/POB5/0018.

Keywords: preliteracy, speech sound disorder, early childhood, reading instruction

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-673

"This is me": Children's drawings as multimodal meaning-making, identity construction and participation in early childhood

Josephine Deguara, University of Malta, Malta

Background: Contemporary childhood research recognises young children as competent social actors whose perspectives deserve meaningful consideration (James & Prout, 2015; Spyrou, 2018). Informed by sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978) and social semiotic perspectives (Kress, 1997), drawing is understood as a participatory, meaning-making practice (Kress, 1997; Wright, 2022) that creates opportunities for listening to children beyond adult-centred linguistic expectations (Clark, 2017).

Aim: The study explored how young children use drawings, alongside narratives and interactions, as multimodal forms of meaning-making and communication through which they communicate their identities, lived experiences, emotions, and understandings of the world. It also considered how drawing-based methodologies can support more participatory and inclusive approaches to early childhood research and pedagogy.

Method/approach: Using a qualitative approach, the study involved three four-year-old children in Malta. The data included 223 drawings that were video-recorded. Ethical approval was granted by the University of Malta, Faculty Research Ethics Committee. Institutional permission, parental consent, and children's ongoing assent were obtained.

Results/findings: The findings illustrate children's drawings as rich multimodal representations through which children explored relationships, negotiated identities, communicated emotions, and made sense of everyday and imagined worlds. Family life, fantasy, and popular culture became intertwined within the drawings, revealing layered forms of meaning-making. Children's voices emerged through the interplay of talk, gesture, silence, movement, and narrative.

Conclusion: The study highlights drawing-based methodologies as practices that support children's communication and recognition, while broadening understandings of children's voices and rights to participation (UNCRC, 1989). It further advocates for more equitable and inclusive educational practices aligned with SDG 4 and SDG 10 (United Nations, 2015).

Implications for children and families: Your children's drawings and narratives matter because they offer meaningful insights into their experiences, ideas, feelings, and ways of understanding the world.

Implications for practitioners: Viewing children's drawings as meaningful, communicative practices supports more inclusive and child-responsive pedagogy and research.

Keywords: children's drawings, multimodal meaning-making, identity construction, child participation, communication

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-674

Checking outside the box: A practical checklist for holistic assessment of speech sound disorders

Malachi Henry, Indiana University Bloomington, United States
Alexis Moser, Florida State University, United States

Background: Assessments of paediatric speech sound disorders often emphasise accuracy while overlooking how communication difficulties affect daily activities and participation. Recent evidence shows that speech differences can shape children's social judgments and experiences early in development. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF, World Health Organization) framework highlights the need to assess functional communication and social impact alongside standardised measures of body function.

Aim: This review outlines practical ways clinicians can expand speech sound disorder assessment beyond body function to include activity limitations, participation restrictions, and real-world communication outcomes. We propose a simple, clinically usable checklist for the holistic assessment of paediatric speech sound disorders.

Method/approach: This presentation is a clinically focused review of assessment resources relevant to paediatric speech sound disorders. It synthesises literature and tools spanning speech production, contextualised intelligibility, functional communication, and participation within an ICF framework.

Results/findings: Holistic assessment incorporates tools that capture dimensions of communication not reflected in standardised measures alone. Measures such as the Intelligibility in Context Scale, Focus on the Outcomes of Communication Under Six, and the Speech Participation and Activity Assessment of Children can help identify how speech differences affect everyday communication across listeners and settings and support understanding of social participation. Used together, these tools support eligibility decisions, goal setting, counselling, and progress monitoring.

Conclusion: Holistic speech assessment offers a more meaningful picture of children's communication by linking body function, such as speech errors, to daily life impact, including activity limitations and functional participation. A practical checklist approach can help clinicians document functional needs, support family-centred care, and align intervention with outcomes that matter in children's real-world environments.

Implications for children and families: You deserve an assessment that addresses how your speech affects your daily life, relationships, and participation.

Implications for practitioners: You can strengthen your assessment practice by pairing speech accuracy measures with tools that capture functional communication and participation in everyday contexts.

Funding: Malachi Henry is financially supported by the James E. West Graduate Fellowship, furnished by the Acoustical Society of America. Alexis Moser is financially supported by Grant H325D230049 to Florida State University by the Office of Special Education of the U.S. Department of Education. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Department of Education.

Keywords: speech sound disorders, holistic assessment, functional participation

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-675
Checking inside the child: A case example of children's perspectives on speech sound disorders

Alexis Moser, Florida State University, United States
Malachi Henry, Indiana University Bloomington, United States

Background: In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, speech-language pathologists have a responsibility to incorporate children's perspectives into the evaluation of communication difficulties, including speech sound disorders. Because children's perspectives regarding their speech do not always align with their speech accuracy or parent report, their thoughts and feelings may go unrecognised without direct assessment.

Aim: This literature review examines current research on children's perspectives on speech sound disorders with a case example to illustrate how clinicians can also efficiently and meaningfully incorporate their views into assessment practices.

Method/approach: A school-aged child with residual speech sound errors was invited to draw himself talking to someone, describe his feelings using an emoticon scale, and answer open-ended questions. We used the Sound Effects Study Drawing Protocol, a child-friendly interview method that requires only paper, coloured pens, and guiding questions. Parental consent and child assent were obtained for de-identified use in scholarly presentation.

Results/findings: This case example demonstrates how checking in with children on their communication experiences can surface meaningful insights with minimal time and resources. Responses reflect findings that children with speech sound disorders hold more negative communication attitudes than peers while reporting similar enjoyment of talking. Notably, the child's comments suggested that peers' remarks about his speech were a source of heightened self-awareness, consistent with recent evidence that negative social judgments of disordered speech emerge as early as preschool.

Conclusion: Speech-language pathologists can collect, analyse, and report children's perspectives using practical child-friendly methods, such as drawing and talking. Incorporating children's perspectives into evaluation is both a fundamental right and best practice to inform counselling and intervention.

Implications for children and families: You should be able to express your thoughts and feelings about your speech and the therapy you receive.

Implications for practitioners: You can uphold children's rights by making their perspective an essential part of your evaluation.

Funding: Alexis Moser is financially supported by Grant H325D230049 to Florida State University by the Office of Special Education of the U.S. Department of Education. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Department of Education. Malachi Henry is financially supported by the James E. West Graduate Fellowship, furnished by the Acoustical Society of America.

Keywords: speech sound disorders, children's perspectives, communication attitudes

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-676

Reconceiving the dot: How children navigate competing discourses in early childhood art education

Kathy Gelding, Western Sydney University, Australia

Background: The Australian national early childhood education framework mandates that children learn to identify Aboriginal signs and symbols, and critically recognise stereotypical representations of Aboriginal cultures. In practice, many early childhood education (ECE) settings often restrict engagement to dot paintings from the desert, inadvertently perpetuating the discourse that all Aboriginal art is dot art. Furthermore, engagement with pan-Aboriginal art, while offering a unified identity for diverse Aboriginal nations, can be viewed by several Aboriginal artists as devoid of relevance and meaning.

Aim: My PhD research examined educators' and children's understandings of Aboriginal art to inform the embedding of authentic perspectives in ECE.

Method/approach: Using a case study approach with critical qualitative methods, the study involved observations, focus groups with children, analysis of children's drawings, and interviews with 10 educators and two Aboriginal artists. Using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), the research interrogates how power relations and social practices shape understandings of Aboriginality within the learning environment. The ethics application was approved by Western Sydney University.

Results/findings: This presentation highlights findings regarding children's engagement with three distinct styles: Dot paintings from the Central and Western Deserts; Balarinji Design Studio's pan-Aboriginal art; and Kaylene Whiskey's reconceived dot-iconography-from-comic-to-the-canvas. The findings revealed that the familiar desert dotting techniques and pan-Aboriginal art did not significantly alter children's perceptions about Aboriginal art. In contrast, Kaylene Whiskey's paintings challenged their thinking, creating opportunities to explore complex, multiple, and ambiguous Aboriginal signs and symbols.

Conclusion: The research highlights the challenges and successes of navigating competing discourses in ECE.

Implications for children and families: Reconceiving the "dot" as a dynamic, evolving signifier—rather than a static, homogenous style—enables children to engage with the complex realities of contemporary Aboriginal expression.

Implications for practitioners: I argue that moving beyond stereotypes requires educators to adopt a more nuanced, critical understanding of Aboriginal art.

Keywords: Aboriginal art, discourses, stereotypes, authentic perspectives

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-677

A bibliometric analysis of shared book reading in children with autism spectrum disorder

Christeen Aleena Thomas, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India
Sunila John, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, India

Background: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterised by deficits in social communication and the presence of restricted interests and repetitive behaviours (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). As more children are being diagnosed with ASD worldwide, it becomes critical that rehabilitation specialists explore all possible measures to improve the quality of life of these individuals in social, academic, and professional domains.

Aim: Shared book reading is one such technique used among the ASD population, where, despite a growing body of literature on this topic, the research trajectory, global trends, and thematic evolution of this research domain remain poorly understood. This study aims to help bridge that research gap through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of shared book reading among children with ASD.

Method/approach: The study focused on all publications on shared book reading among children with ASD, taken from the Web of Science database. The search items were selected by using keywords related to 'shared book reading' and 'autism'. Using advanced search features, we systematically retrieved all publications from inception to 13 February, 2025. A total of 54,575 articles were retrieved after the initial search, from which 47 articles were identified as valid for our analysis. The VOS viewer was used as the visual analysis platform to represent the keyword-occurrence analysis and performance metrics (country, journal, co-authorship, co-citation).

Results/findings: The USA, Australia, China, and Brazil were the most prolific contributing nations, accounting for the largest number of publications and citations. Keyword co-occurrence analysis identified five primary thematic clusters (intervention, literacy, language, young children, and autism spectrum disorder). Journal analysis revealed the journals with the highest number of publications for the current topic. Co-authorship analysis showed very few clustered research groups with limited cross-cluster collaboration, suggesting opportunities for interdisciplinary and international partnerships.

Conclusion: This study provides a bibliometric mapping of research on shared book reading among children with ASD, offering a comprehensive overview of the topic, the quality of the existing literature, and priorities for future research.

Implications for children and families: Shared book reading creates opportunities for children with ASD to communicate, participate in shared interactions, express interests, and engage with caregivers in meaningful everyday activities.

Implications for practitioners: Speech-language pathologists, educators, early intervention professionals, and researchers can use these findings to identify evidence gaps, emerging research trends across different parts of the world, and under-researched areas for research planning and developing interventions.

Keywords: children, shared book reading, autism

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-678

Play-based formative assessment as a catalyst to showcase children's capabilities and sustain high-quality mathematics pedagogy and practice

Jo Grimmond, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: There is growing recognition of the importance of early mathematics as foundational for later learning, with research advocating for a more intentional and sustained approach to enhance these capacities. Research suggests educators do not feel sufficiently confident, knowledgeable, or prepared to appraise children's mathematical learning and enact pedagogical decisions to support these capabilities. One way to enrich the early mathematical context is through assessment that is easily embedded within frameworks of practice.

Aim: This qualitative study evaluated the effectiveness of a play-based assessment – the Numeracy and Mathematics Block-Based Assessment (NUMBBA) – when 16 early childhood educators used it with children. The measure aims to embed formative assessment practice within multiple pedagogies for play and learning.

Method/approach: Participants were 16 early childhood educators and 55 3–5-year-old children in their care. The 16 educators were recruited from five not-for-profit services in regional NSW, Australia. Educators were trained in the use of NUMBBA, and they facilitated it with individual children. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with educators to explore the perceived impact and usability of NUMBBA within early childhood contexts. (Ethics approval HE2019/348.)

Results/findings: Semi-structured interviews revealed shifts in educators: knowledge of mathematics and children's abilities; attitudes towards mathematics and assessment; and pedagogy and practice. NUMBBA challenged educators' perceptions of children's abilities by showcasing children's capacities. Educators identified key components conducive to embedding assessment effectively into early childhood contexts.

Conclusion: The findings relating to the design, implementation, and impact of NUMBBA illustrate the potential of an educative measure that builds educators' capacity in mathematics, and the role of assessment in informing pedagogy and sustaining high-quality mathematical practice.

Implications for children and families: NUMBBA is engaging and offers an opportunity for your child to show you skills in patterning, symmetry, and number using blocks.

Implications for practitioners: NUMBBA showcases children's capabilities in patterning, symmetry, and number to inform your practice, aligning with play-based frameworks.

Keywords: play-based assessment, early mathematics, formative assessment, block play, play-based frameworks of practice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:
SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-679
Digital inequality and children's inclusion in education

Piyalee Mandal, Adamas University, India

Background: Digital inequality continues to limit many children's access to education despite the growing importance of technology in learning. Children from rural, low-income, and marginalised communities often lack digital devices, reliable internet connectivity, and digital literacy, restricting their participation in educational opportunities and widening existing inequalities.

Aim: This paper examines how digital inequality affects children's educational inclusion through a literature review, with particular attention to how children's voices, experiences, and perspectives are represented in existing research.

Method/approach: This study employs a narrative literature review of peer-reviewed articles and policy reports published between 2018 and 2025. Relevant literature was identified through Google Scholar, ERIC, and Scopus using keywords including digital inequality, children, digital inclusion, and inclusive education. Studies focusing on children's educational experiences and participation were thematically analysed.

Results/findings: The review indicates that limited access to digital devices, poor internet connectivity, low digital literacy, and inadequate technological support reduce children's participation and engagement in learning. The literature also reveals children's experiences of exclusion, frustration, and unequal learning opportunities, particularly among socially and economically disadvantaged groups. These findings highlight that digital inequality is shaped by multiple social and structural factors.

Conclusion: Reducing digital inequality requires equitable access to technology, improved digital infrastructure, digital literacy programs, and child-centred educational policies. Incorporating children's perspectives into digital education planning can promote more inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all.

Implications for children and families: Ensure equitable digital access and meaningful participation in learning.

Implications for practitioners: Develop inclusive digital strategies that address technological barriers while incorporating children's voices into educational policy and practice.

Keywords: digital access, digital inequality, children's voices, digital inclusion, inclusive education, educational equity

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-680

From voice to influence: Co-constructing curriculum using Lundy's participation model

Nadia Wilson-Ali, Nido Early School, Australia

Background: This presentation shares a consultation project that led to the development of a national curriculum for children from birth to age five. Influenced by Lundy's model of participation, the consultation utilised responsive and participatory approaches to capture children's perspectives.

Aim: To capture children's voices and experiences through observation, discussion, documentation and pedagogical narration within early childhood education and care settings. Children were positioned as capable co-constructors of knowledge whose preferences, interests, and cultural identities could shape curriculum decisions. The project aimed to include both verbal and non-verbal voices of children in the curriculum co-design.

Method/approach: A working group of 24 educational leaders engaged 957 stakeholders, including children, families, educators, and community members, in consultation. Interpretive and relational approaches, critical reflection, professional conversations, and pedagogical narration were used to capture multiple experiences, local knowledge, values, and children's perspectives. This was a practitioner-led inquiry conducted in one organisation. While formal ethical approval was not required, the project went through an internal approval process. Permission to capture children's and educators' data was obtained.

Results/findings: The project highlighted that meaningful consultation with young children is possible through appropriate and responsive practices. It showed how children can contribute meaningfully, both verbally and non-verbally. Consultation revealed the value of family insights, educator reflection, and community knowledge in shaping inclusive, culturally responsive pedagogies.

Implications for children and families: This project helped educators to view you as active contributors to your own learning, with your preferences, interests, and cultural identities shaping decisions. Families' insights into home lives, culture, and relationships helped us understand your context and ensure your voices are represented.

Implications for practitioners: By sharing this project, we hope that you see that meaningful consultation is both possible and beneficial when you take the time to engage in interpretive and relational approaches, including observation, documentation, and pedagogical narration.

Keywords: consultation, curriculum development, early childhood education and care settings, long day care, children's voice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-681

From silos to shared pathways: Designing a cross-sector early childhood interagency network in a reforming system

Lauren Haskins, A Growing Understanding, Australia

Background: Australia's early childhood support system is undergoing major reform, with Thriving Kids and Foundational Supports reshaping how universal, targeted and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports interact. The NDIS funds individualised disability supports in Australia. For families in regional areas, the system remains fragmented. Referral pathways are unclear, services duplicate, and children with mild to moderate needs or complex circumstances often fall between gaps. Coordination structures that once existed have largely disappeared.

Aim: To describe and analyse the design of the Newcastle Hunter Early Childhood Interagency Network (NHECIN) as a replicable, locally led model for cross-sector coordination during reform, and to identify what enables it to translate frontline intelligence into useful information for families, practitioners, and policymakers.

Method/approach: We document NHECIN's governance, cross-sector membership (health, education, NDIS, community and Aboriginal-led services), and four workstreams: service mapping, referral quality, navigation supports, and shared opportunities. Services were mapped across six founding member organisations using a geographic mapping tool, collecting data on eligibility, referral processes, and waitlist times. Mapping will expand to additional providers prior to the conference. No human participant data were collected; ethical approval was not required.

Results/findings: We present NHECIN's design, governance, and early implementation experience. Service mapping has produced a consolidated view across public, private, and community providers, capturing eligibility, funding, language access, and outreach. Process measures including referral completeness, acknowledgment speed, and time to first appointment are being collected. Cross-sector observations point to reduced duplication, clearer immediate actions for families and referrers, and a usable feedback channel between frontline services and reform consultations.

Conclusion: NHECIN shows that a low cost, locally led interagency model can strengthen coordination and navigation during sector reform, particularly in regional settings. By making services visible, lifting referral quality, and creating space for cross-sector dialogue, the network offers a transferable approach for other regions and a practical feedback channel between frontline practice and policy.

Implications for children and families: You shouldn't have to repeat your story or chase services that don't fit. NHECIN exists to make it easier to find the right support at the right time, with clearer pathways and resources written in plain language for you.

Implications for practitioners: You can use NHECIN's service map and standardised referral approach to make stronger, more accurate referrals, avoid duplicating effort across sectors, and contribute frontline intelligence that shapes how reform plays out locally.

Funding: NHECIN is an unfunded initiative coordinated through Let's Grow Together as Secretariat.

Keywords: interagency collaboration, cross-sector coordination, service mapping, early childhood intervention, family navigation, regional health systems

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-682
Art-based pedagogy and meaning-making among blind schoolgirls in India

Shafali Chadha, Research and Development Lead at Inside Me NGO, India

Background: Pedagogical support for blind learners often focuses on Braille, verbal explanation, audio formats, and tactile aids. These are essential but may not always support children to actively construct concepts, spatial relationships, and meanings. Art-based practice remains underexplored as a pedagogical route for learning across subjects.

Aim: This study explores how an NGO-led art-based education program supports blind schoolgirls' learning, concept formation, imagination, and meaning-making within a blind school in India.

Method/approach: The ongoing qualitative study draws on classroom observations and interactions with five blind schoolgirls, four NGO volunteers, and schoolteachers. Data are being generated through child-centred conversations, program observations, and reflective field notes. Institutional permission was granted by the blind school through its MOU with Inside Me NGO; informed consent, child assent, confidentiality, and anonymisation procedures were followed.

Results/findings: The preliminary findings suggest that art-based activities help children make abstract ideas tangible, connect shapes and objects to everyday life, strengthen spatial imagination, express understanding, and engage more confidently with concepts in mathematics, science, EVS, and language.

Conclusion: Art-based pedagogy should be treated as a potential route to meaningful curricular participation, helping children build concepts, interpret the world, and imagine wider educational futures.

Implications for children and families: You should have opportunities to learn through touch, making, stories, and imagination, so that school subjects feel connected to your own world and future.

Implications for practitioners: You can use art-based pedagogy to help blind learners move beyond memorising concepts towards touching, making, explaining, and applying them meaningfully.

Keywords: art-based pedagogy, blind learners, inclusive education, special education, India

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 1: No Poverty
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-683

Co-constructing inclusion and anti-ableism through the mosaic approach

Aliza Salvador, Macquarie University, Australia
Mez Garcia, TAFE NSW, Australia

Background: Creating a more inclusive world requires attention to how children make meaning about disability, access, and belonging. Toys that represent disability can support children's inclusive and anti-ableist meaning-making, but research suggests representation alone is not enough to support inclusion. Further, while toys can reflect dominant social values, children do not passively receive their intended meanings; they reinterpret meanings as they engage with the toys.

Aim: This paper reports on a study exploring how a child-led, relational, and creative design can support meaning-making about anti-ableism and inclusion.

Method/approach: This small-scale study is in partnership between a 5-year-old, non-disabled child, her mother, and a researcher, initiated by the child's curiosity about Wicked's 'Nessa Rose' and accessibility. Informed by a pedagogy of listening and the mosaic approach, toys representing disability are used as provocations for play-based, creative methods. The child led the study through her questions and play interests. Data include reflections, dialogue, and child-created materials, analysed qualitatively to examine how meanings about disability and inclusion are co-constructed. Ethical approval, parent consent, and ongoing child assent were obtained.

Results/findings: The findings suggest that genuine listening is not passive. It involves engaging in dialogue that both supports and extends children's thinking, while also creating space for adults to reflect alongside children and reconsider their own assumptions – in this case, about inclusion and disability.

Conclusion: Effective teaching about inclusion begins with creating spaces where children's views are taken seriously and understandings of inclusion can be co-constructed through play and reflective dialogue.

Implications for children and families: You are valuable contributors to knowledge about inclusion, not merely recipients of adult or teacher understandings.

Implications for practitioners: You can support anti-ableist pedagogy by thinking alongside children about inclusion, rather than treating inclusion as something adults simply 'teach' children.

Keywords: Mosaic approach, anti-ableism, inclusion, toys, representation, disability, play, early childhood education

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-684

Toys like me and you: Children's voices, representation, and anti-ableist pedagogy in early childhood

Aliza Salvador, Macquarie University, Australia

Background: Creating a more inclusive world requires more than just the presence of inclusive resources; it requires pedagogies that support critical dialogue about disability and belonging. Toys that represent disability have been recognised for their potential to support children's inclusive understandings. However, research on how children engage with such toys in early childhood education (ECE) settings remains limited. Further, while toys can reflect dominant social values, children do not passively receive their intended meanings; they reinterpret meanings as they engage with the toys.

Aim: To explore how three early childhood teachers (ECTs) planned for, introduced, and reflected on toys representing disability in preschool classrooms, and how their pedagogical decisions supported children's meaning-making about disability, access, participation, and inclusion.

Method/approach: The study was conducted across three ECE centres in Sydney, Australia, in collaboration with three ECTs. Through cycles of planning, implementation, reflection, and re-planning, the study examined how toys that represent disability could be used in ECE to promote inclusion and anti-ableism. Ethical approval was obtained from Macquarie University, with teacher and parent consent, and ongoing child assent.

Results/findings: The toys did not foster inclusive understandings simply by being present. Instead, they functioned as provocations for critical pedagogy. Three major shifts emerged: from relying solely on the toys to intentionally planning for questioning, reflection, and creative problem-solving; from focusing on 'awareness' and 'difference' to exploring barriers, access, and participation; and from framing inclusion as 'being kind' to understanding it as ongoing anti-ableist practice. Engagement was playful and creative, but also non-linear and sometimes contradictory.

Conclusion: Representation opens important doors, but intentional pedagogy shapes what learning is possible.

Implications for children and families: Children are active meaning-makers who can engage critically with ideas about disability and inclusion when given meaningful opportunities.

Implications for practitioners: Anti-ableist practice requires time, space, and ongoing support.

Keywords: toys, disability representation, early childhood education, inclusion, anti-ableism, play, critical pedagogy

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-685

Assessing ethnolinguistic vitality and language transmission through institutional support: The case of Amazigh children's programming on Tamazight TV in Morocco

Ibrahim Bouylagman, Mohammed First University Morocco, Morocco

Background: Tamazight TV's launch in 2010 marked an important milestone in the visibility of the Amazigh language, an indigenous language of North Africa, within Moroccan broadcasting. After Amazigh was recognised in Morocco's 2011 Constitution as an official language alongside Arabic, children's programming remains underexplored.

Aim: This study assesses Amazigh children's programming on Tamazight TV through ethnolinguistic vitality theory and Fishman's GIDS, treating children's media as a supportive space for language exposure and intergenerational continuity.

Method/approach: This qualitative case study combines document analysis and digital archival audiovisual content analysis. It examines HACA investment records for 2018–2023, SNRT/Tamazight TV sources, and YouTube traces from 2010 to 2026. Materials were analysed chronologically by source type, date, program format, target audience, and language-transmission function. YouTube dates are treated as evidence of digital circulation and preservation, not original broadcast dates unless supported by broadcaster data.

Results/findings: HACA data record no Amazigh investment under "Entertainment for the Emerging Audience" during 2018–2023. Digital archival analysis supports this: despite Tamazight TV's launch in 2010, only a limited number of children-oriented programs and materials were identified. These include Amazigh-dubbed animation (2010); Asarage n Imezyan, a studio-based children's edutainment program (2013–2018); Tissit n Ouharmouch, magazine-style/reportage content promoted in Ramadan 2024 and partly archived in 2026; and An'mmal N'Tamazight, a language-learning program for ages 6–12 available online in 2025–2026.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that Amazigh children's programming remains limited, discontinuous, and weakly archived. Taken together, HACA data and digital archival traces suggest fragile institutional support. This may reduce children's exposure to Amazigh and limit the supportive role of television and digital media in ethnolinguistic vitality and intergenerational transmission.

Implications for children and families: Limited Amazigh children's programming can weaken children's media exposure, language transmission, and the ethnolinguistic vitality of a historically minoritised indigenous language.

Implications for practitioners: Broadcasters, regulators, and media policymakers should strengthen investment, improve continuity, and preserve archives to support Amazigh language visibility and transmission.

Keywords: Amazigh language, indigenous language, Tamazight TV, children's media, ethnolinguistic vitality, language transmission, institutional support, Morocco

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-686
Equitable start: Accessible early learning and childcare for survivors of gender-based violence

Lisa Lalonde, Algonquin College of Applied Arts, Canada
Barbara Leigh Golden, Algonquin College of Applied Arts, Canada
Jade Groom-Pike, Andrew Fleck Children's Services, Canada

Background: This research explores how to support early childhood educators working with mothers and young children in shelters, with attention to children's expression, belonging, and well-being, and access to meaningful early learning. Guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and situated within the Canada-wide early learning and childcare context, the study examines responsive, relationship-based, and trauma-informed practices that honour children's experiences while strengthening educator capacity to create inclusive early learning environments.

Aim: The Equitable Start project aims to address gaps in equitable early learning opportunities for children by supporting early childhood educators in providing play-based learning experiences within shelter settings. We are creating toolkits to support early childhood educators on trauma-informed practices, bibliotherapy resources, and their own well-being. The project documents evidence-informed practice and lessons learned in setting up licensed childcare services in these unique settings. The research and tools will be widely available to share promising practices and findings, so that others may expand upon them.

Method/approach: This is a participatory action research (PAR) project focusing on innovative approaches to access to quality early learning and care. There will be four points of data captured: 1. Documenting the process; 2. Parent experience; 3. Child experience; 4. Early childhood educator experience. The project received initial ethics approval on 27 January 2026 and a second ethics approval in May 2026.

Results/findings: Phase 1 of the research has been completed, with over 1,300 early childhood educators across Canada responding to a national survey exploring their understanding, experiences, and implementation of trauma-informed practice, alongside their self-care practices. Preliminary findings reveal important gaps in early childhood educators' knowledge, confidence, and implementation of trauma-informed practice, while also highlighting challenges related to educator well-being and self-care.

Conclusion: By addressing critical gaps in trauma-informed practice and educator well-being, the Equitable Start project identifies opportunities to strengthen professional learning and foster more equitable, responsive, and nurturing early learning environments for all children.

Implications for children and families: This research aims to represent your experience in accessing responsive, inclusive early learning experiences where your voices, play, well-being, and sense of belonging are valued, while helping the educators you know support, respect, and connect with you during times of transition and healing.

Implications for practitioners: This research will support you in strengthening trauma-informed, relationship-based practices that honour children's voices and experiences in shelter settings, while helping you create responsive early learning environments that foster belonging, well-being, play, and meaningful participation.

Funding: This project was funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada.

Keywords: access, equity, early learning, gender-based violence, pre/post service training

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-687

The potential of visual arts in supporting young children's sustainability understandings

Ljiljana Ferguson, TAFE NSW Higher Education, Australia

Background: The arts are among the oldest and most fundamental forms of personal, cultural expression and communication. Besides their role in preserving cultural identity and facilitating meaning-making, the arts can also provide novel perspectives in exploring complex sustainability issues. This is particularly relevant today due to increasing environmental crises, including climate change, pollution, and the loss of biological diversity. Children are inheriting these environmental challenges, and the arts can provide novel perspectives and languages through which they can explore sustainability by making art and responding to it.

Aim: This literature review included qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies to examine how arts-based pedagogies are used in early childhood for teaching sustainability.

Method/approach: Peer-reviewed journal articles published in English and indexed in Scopus, ERIC, or Web of Science were included in this literature review; book chapters and books related to the search question or keywords were also considered.

Results/findings: The reviewed literature indicates that arts-based pedagogies provide an important contribution to early childhood sustainability education. However, the field remains relatively small, with much of the evidence derived from qualitative case studies.

Conclusion: Research interest in this field is increasing; however, the evidence remains relatively limited. Arts-based pedagogies need to be embraced as part of a transformative early childhood curriculum, since the arts make children's sustainability learning visible in profoundly expressive ways.

Implications for children and families: The arts are a powerful incentive for children to learn about themselves and their place in the world.

Implications for practitioners: The intersection of sustainability and art-based pedagogies can offer a deeper understanding of the pedagogical benefits for early childhood curriculum decisions and practices.

Keywords: visual arts, sustainability, early childhood education, young children, materials, found object

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-688
Amplifying children's voices with child-led project-based learning

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Fransisca Ana Rukma Dewi, Early Childhood Care and Development – Resource Centre (ECCD-RC) Yogyakarta, Indonesia
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Background: In the context of early years education (EYE) in Indonesia, children are often the objects of adult-centric policies that leave no space for their voices to be heard and do not consider their perspectives. Project-based learning (PBL) is a teaching and learning strategy that is often adult-centric in practice and can exclude children's voices. Therefore, initiatives involving children in PBL could be transformative in EYE settings, fostering their active contribution to learning.

Aim: This study explores child-led PBL from children's and teachers' perspectives and its implications for teaching practice.

Method/approach: The study involved online interviews with two teachers and five children (aged six to eight years) to explore their perspectives on child-led PBL. With participants' consent, qualitative analysis of interview transcripts and children's work was conducted to address the main research questions: How do children and teachers view child-led PBL? How does child-led PBL amplify children's voices in learning?

Results/findings: The findings indicated that child-led PBL enabled children to actively direct and contribute to their learning. Child participants reported feeling engaged, in charge, and satisfied with the process and outcomes, and identified areas they wished to explore further. Teachers reported that child-led PBL revealed each child's individuality, including their interests, aspirations, ways of expression, and coping strategies.

Conclusion: Embedding child-led PBL into EYE practice in Indonesia can amplify children's voices and nurture their agency and individuality, and provide educators with important insights to improve their teaching.

Implications for children and families: Embedding child-led PBL into EYE practice in Indonesia can amplify children's voices and nurture their agency and individuality, and provide educators with important insights to improve their teaching.

Implications for practitioners: In EYE settings, child-led learning initiatives such as PBL can be a transformative teaching strategy that supports children in developing their individual potential and provides educators with constructive feedback about children's agency in learning.

Keywords: children's voices, children-led learning, project-based learning

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-689

Inclusion with joy: How a puppet engaged children with disabilities in participatory research

Olivia Karaolis, University of Notre Dame, Australia

Background: Respectful, nurturing relationships are essential for children's development and sense of belonging. Early childhood settings should be places of joy, filled with positive interactions between adults and children. Some children face barriers to experiencing this shared joy due to differences in communication. This study describes how a puppet removed these barriers and enabled all children and their teachers to share their perceptions of joy.

Aim: How do all children experience joy in early childhood settings? This study examined the prevalence and perception of joy in four early childhood centres, including educators and young children. The researcher aimed to understand and learn about the people, places, and things that bring children joy.

Method/approach: This qualitative study received ethical approval from the host university (2024/HE000680) and used consent for adults and assent for children. The ongoing study has included four preschools (five classes in total), with 60 children, 18 early childhood professionals, and a puppet named Joy. The research took place over 6–8 weeks in each setting, and data methods included detailed observations, interviews, reflections, and puppet play. Children were viewed as active decision-makers, able to express their views and influence the research activities.

Results/findings: The study found that children experienced joy in their relationships with teachers and friends, as well as in play. Puppetry was an activity that enabled all children to express and share their joy. The puppet also enabled adults and other children to see joy in one another, including children who did not use spoken language or encountered barriers to play and social interactions because of their disability. The puppet removed these barriers to belonging and increased the enactment of joyful moments.

Conclusion: Educators seeking to build joyful relationships with all children should consider the affordances of puppetry.

Implications for children and families: Joy is something we share, and through puppetry, you can see joy in others, feel it within yourself, and express it to those around you.

Implications for practitioners: A puppet can help you see children differently and change the way children see you.

Keywords: inclusion, puppetry, children's communication rights

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-690

Children's and family caregivers' voices in deafblindness research: A protocol for an international qualitative study supporting the development of ICF Core Sets

Shirley Dumassais, Université de Montréal, Canada
Walter Wittich, Université de Montréal, Canada

Background: Children and adolescents with deafblindness experience unique challenges that are often insufficiently represented in existing disability frameworks. Although children have the right to express their views on matters affecting them, their voices remain underrepresented in disability research. Capturing the perspectives of children and adolescents with deafblindness, alongside those of their caregivers, is essential to better understand functioning, participation, and environmental support across diverse contexts worldwide.

Aim: This study centres the lived experiences and perspectives of children and adolescents with deafblindness and their caregivers to identify key aspects of functioning, participation, and environmental factors relevant to the development of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) Core Sets for deafblindness. ICF Core Sets are standardised, evidence-based selections of ICF categories that support improved assessment, service coordination, rehabilitation, and policy development.

Method/approach: This study involves semi-structured interviews and focus groups with children/adolescents living with deafblindness and parents/caregivers of children with deafblindness using ICF Core Set-based exploratory questions. Participants will be recruited across the six regions of the World Health Organization to ensure global representation and diversity in deafblindness profiles, aetiologies, and communication profiles. Ethical approval will be obtained before initiating the study and participant recruitment.

Results/findings: As this study is currently in the planning stage, no findings are yet available. The study will operationalise child participation through inclusive, accessible, and flexible data collection strategies, including adapted communication approaches, rapport-building, and the use of age-appropriate and multimodal methods. Ethical considerations will prioritise informed consent/assent processes, accessibility of participation, safeguarding, and the creation of a supportive environment to ensure meaningful and voluntary engagement of children and adolescents living with deafblindness.

Conclusion: This study will contribute critical international perspectives to the development of ICF Core Sets for deafblindness while emphasising the importance of conducting research with children rather than solely about them. Findings will support the ICF as a more inclusive disability framework, rehabilitation practices, and policies that reflect the priorities and lived experiences of children and families.

Implications for children and families: Your voice and lived experiences can help shape future services, supports, and disability frameworks so they better reflect what matters to children and families living with deafblindness.

Implications for practitioners: You can gain insights from children's and families' perspectives to guide more meaningful, person-centred assessment, rehabilitation, and support planning for children and youth living with deafblindness.

Funding: Shirley Dumassais is supported by doctoral fellowships from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Rehabilitation of Greater Montréal, the Réseau de Recherche en Santé des Populations du Québec, the Vision Science Research Network, and the Université de Montréal.

Keywords: deafblindness, lived experiences, international qualitative research, disability framework, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-691

From “correct English only” to full voice: How a Lagos teacher used bilingual storytelling (Yoruba English) to create inclusive literacy circles for early learners

Abayomi Olaofe, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos

Background: In many Lagos primary schools, an unwritten Correct English Only rule silences children whose home language is Yoruba. This linguistic exclusion reduces classroom participation, especially during literacy activities. Young learners who speak Yoruba or Pidgin at home often withdraw, speak less, or are labelled slow. Yet Nigeria’s National Policy on Education supports mother tongue use in early schooling. The gap between policy and classroom practice creates an urgent need for practical, teacher-led strategies that honour children’s full linguistic repertoires while building English literacy.

Aim: This action research study, conducted by an early years teacher in a Lagos public primary school, aimed to explore how bilingual storytelling (Yoruba and English) can transform exclusive literacy routines into inclusive literacy circles for young learners.

Method/approach: Twenty-two children aged 7–8 years from one Lagos public primary school participated over six weeks. The teacher-researcher conducted daily 20-minute literacy circles where she deliberately alternated between Yoruba and English during storytelling, songs, and retelling activities. Data included audio recordings, teacher journal entries, and observational feedback. Ethical approval was obtained from the Lagos State Ministry of Education and the school’s institutional review board. Parental consent was secured for all participating children. No child identifiers were used in reporting.

Results/findings: Code-switching and translanguaging reduced withdrawal behaviours (e.g., turning away, silence) from 64% to 12% of observed circle time. Children who previously never spoke began volunteering comments and retelling stories using “Yorubaglish” (mixing Yoruba and English). English vocabulary transfer improved; no child lost English comprehension. Participation became more equitable across language backgrounds.

Conclusion: Bilingual storytelling, using a child’s full linguistic repertoire, validates home language while accelerating English learning. When children hear their mother tongue in literacy circles, they feel seen, speak more, and learn better. Policy shifts are needed, but teachers can start today.

Implications for children and families: You don’t have to leave your Yoruba at the classroom door. When your teacher tells stories in your home language, you learn English faster and feel braver. Your voice matters in any language.

Implications for practitioners: You can start tomorrow with zero budget. Swap five minutes of “English only” circle time for bilingual storytelling. Use Yoruba, then repeat in English. You will see quiet children speak and all children’s vocabulary grow.

Keywords: inclusive literacy circles, early learners, code-switching, translanguaging, bilingual storytelling

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-692

Indigenous children's voices on well-being: Belonging and connection

Mira Azzasyofia, The University of Auckland, Politeknik Kesejahteraan Sosial Bandung, New Zealand

Background: Despite growing recognition of the importance of listening to children's voices, Indigenous children's perspectives remain marginalised in research and policy concerning well-being. Listening to Indigenous children is crucial, as they can define what well-being means within their own sociocultural contexts. Research on Indigenous children's well-being, therefore, contributes not only to broader discussions of childhood well-being but also to the development of more culturally responsive policies and practices.

Aim: This research explores Indigenous children's understandings of well-being in one remote Indigenous community in Indonesia, with particular attention to how children describe well-being through their own voices and experiences.

Method/approach: This study employed a socioculturally-oriented narrative research design (Squire, 2013). Data were collected through an adapted mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2001, 2005), using art-based activities in children's art classes as a culturally appropriate tool for listening to Indigenous children's voices. The participants of this study are 60 children from the Suku Lauje ethnic group in Indonesia. To ensure trustworthiness in this study, ethical approval was obtained from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Ref. UAHPEC26295) on 24 August 2023.

Results/findings: The study found that Indigenous children understood well-being primarily through experiences of belonging and connection, particularly in relation to people, places, and ideas. Rather than viewing well-being as an individual achievement, children described it as a process achieved through relational and collective experiences embedded in their community and everyday lives.

Conclusion: Listening to Indigenous children provides important insights into how well-being is understood within Indigenous contexts. The findings highlight that belonging and connection are central to Indigenous children's well-being.

Implications for children and families: This study offers you a deeper understanding of how children's sense of belonging and connection shapes their well-being and highlights the importance of listening to children's perspectives in everyday family and community life.

Implications for practitioners: This study provides you with a relational framework for understanding Indigenous children's well-being by recognising the importance of children's belonging and connections to people, places, and ideas in well-being assessment.

Funding: This research is supported by the Indonesia Endowment Funds for Education (LPDP).

Keywords: Indigenous children's voices, indigenous children's well-being, belonging and connection, Indonesia

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-693
The flow of childhood as a conceptual framework for interpreting the children's voice

Maryna Rosen, Mid Sweden University, Sweden

Background: Over a century has passed since childhood became an object of scientific study. It is a continuum of developmental stages, with transitions described as crises. Piaget showed children think differently from adults, while Vygotsky defined crises as necessary for development and emphasised Piaget was the first to view childhood positively, focusing on what the child has rather than lacks. However, a contradiction remains: the child is viewed as an object of influence or a subject of activity. This is visible in practice and raises questions about how children's voices are interpreted.

Aim: This conceptual paper proposes an approach to understanding development as a continuous process, supporting the interpretation of the child's voice in relation to development.

Method/approach: The study is based on theoretical analysis. It integrates two scientific paradigms: positive psychology (Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory) and cultural-historical theory (Vygotsky's zones of actual and proximal development). The concept also draws on the activity approach and age periodisation.

Results/findings: The flow of childhood is understood as a continuous process of personality development, in which the child acts as a subject of activity at each stage. Development occurs through movement between tasks that are too easy, too difficult, and optimally challenging. Only tasks at an optimal level support development and engagement, corresponding to the zone of proximal development. The concept presents development as a bounded space an individual trajectory unfolds through changes in activity across stages of childhood. It shifts the focus from static characteristics to a dynamic process.

Conclusion: The flow of childhood allows development to be understood as a unified and continuous process. It provides a theoretical basis for moving beyond static views of childhood and emphasises the role of activity in personality development. The concept also offers a structured way to visualise childhood as a developmental trajectory, supporting the interpretation of children's voices in relation to their position within developmental processes.

Implications for children and families: The concept highlights the importance of conditions that support the child's active engagement, interest, and participation in everyday activities. It also enhances adults' ability to better understand children and make more relevant decisions to support children's development and growth.

Implications for practitioners: The approach emphasises the need to create educational conditions that support the child's position as a subject of activity and provide tasks at an optimal level of difficulty to support development.

Keywords: activity, child development, Csikszentmihalyi, flow of childhood, Piaget, Vygotsky

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-694

Challenging barriers to inclusion through a social relational lens in early childhood

Katie Wright, University of Sydney, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Inclusive education is a human right, yet barriers to the inclusion of children who experience disability continue in Australian early childhood settings. Many educators report uncertainty about how to translate inclusive theory into everyday practice.

Aim: This study investigated whether links between the social relational model of disability and educational practice were evident in educators' and parents' reported perspectives and practices in three early childhood centres in Sydney, Australia.

Method/approach: Institutional ethical approval and consent were obtained. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory to position children within interconnected contexts, the study used a sequential mixed-methods design. Eight educators and 30 parents completed online questionnaires about disability, inclusion, barriers, communication, resources, environments, and inclusive practice. One centre director participated in a semi-structured interview. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed to identify barriers to doing, barriers to being, and strategies for challenging these barriers.

Results/findings: Participants generally described their centres as inclusive and recognised that barriers affect children's participation. However, many understandings of disability reflected deficit, medical model, and ableist assumptions. Social relational understandings were evident when participants identified disabling features of environments, communication, resources, and attitudes. Educators tended to describe barriers as changeable, while parents more often emphasised their negative impacts.

Conclusion: The study identified links between the social relational model of disability and inclusive early childhood practice. It also showed gaps between inclusive intentions and understandings of disability in the three centres. Suggested responses included education, mentoring, improved communication, environmental modifications, and personalised practice.

Implications for children and families: Children and families benefit when early childhood centres identify and challenge barriers so all children can participate, belong, and be valued as capable contributors.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners can strengthen inclusion by critically reflecting on ableism, communicating openly with families, and making context-specific adaptations to attitudes, communication, resources, and environments.

Keywords: inclusive education, inclusive early childhood education, early childhood education, children's rights, children's inclusion, quality education, reduced inequalities, barriers, ableism

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-695 – WITHDRAWN

Co-regulation as an ethical imperative: A regulation-first adaptation of Theory-U for children's voice research

Geraldine Harris, Pathways to Resilience, Australia

Background: Children's voice research often focuses on participation, but less attention is given to whether children are regulated and relationally safe enough to participate. Children communicate through bodies, play, rhythm, silence, movement and physiology and words. This regulation-first study suggests that ethical children's voice research begins before data collection.

Aim: To develop and examine a regulation-first process for engaging young children in research. The study explored how children could be introduced to neuroscience and research tools in child-accessible ways, and how co-regulation may support children's readiness and meaningful participation.

Method/approach: This study involved young children in early childhood settings and was conducted with Griffith University ethics approval: GUID 2024/167. The Theory-U informed the process through a regulation-first lens.

Results/findings: The process showed that, ethically, for assent, co-regulation was needed before co-sensing. Children engaged more meaningfully when research tools were introduced through story, song, play, and relationship. The pulse oximeter became part of a familiar rather than an adult-imposed measurement device.

Conclusion: The research suggests that co-regulation is an ethical imperative in children's voice research. Children's participation should not begin with adult questions or data collection, but with the creation of safe, relational, sensory, and temporal conditions. This reframes Theory-U for children as: co-initiate, co-regulate, co-sense, co-presence, co-create, and co-evolve.

Implications for children and families: You and your child should be given time, safety, and clear, child-friendly information before taking part in research, so that children feel safe, understood, and respected.

Implications for practitioners: You should prepare children for participation. Co-regulation is an imperative and an ethical condition that helps children understand, assent, and participate with dignity.

Funding: Funded through Mission Australia CfC (in-kind support from Pathways to Resilience, Griffith University, and C&K).

Keywords: regulation, readiness, ethics

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-696
Mathematics anxiety and inclusive learning experiences in children with Down syndrome: A review of current evidence

Mansoureh Moghtadaie Pozveh, The University of Queensland, Australia

Background: Children with Down syndrome often experience difficulties in mathematics learning that may affect confidence, participation, and classroom experiences. While previous research has mainly focused on cognitive and instructional aspects of mathematics education, less attention has been given to emotional experiences, such as mathematics anxiety and feelings of inclusion.

Aim: This review examines current evidence on mathematics anxiety and inclusive learning experiences in children with Down syndrome. It also explores how participation, emotional well-being, and inclusive educational practices may influence mathematics learning experiences.

Method/approach: This study uses a narrative review to examine recent research on mathematics anxiety and inclusive learning experiences in children with Down syndrome. Relevant peer-reviewed studies were identified through database searches including Scopus, ERIC, and PsycINFO. The review focuses on emotional experiences, classroom participation, and inclusive mathematics education. As this study is a review of existing literature, ethical approval was not required.

Results/findings: The reviewed studies suggest that children with Down syndrome may experience difficulties in mathematics learning that can affect confidence, engagement, and classroom participation. The findings also indicate that supportive and inclusive teaching practices, including adapted learning activities and classroom support, may positively influence participation in mathematics learning. The review further highlights a limited number of studies focusing on children's emotional experiences and perspectives in mathematics classrooms.

Conclusion: The review highlights the importance of understanding mathematics learning as both an academic, and for children with Down syndrome. Greater attention to inclusion, participation, and emotional well-being may help support more positive mathematics learning experiences.

Implications for children and families: You and your children deserve mathematics learning environments where children feel supported, included, confident, and able to participate comfortably in classroom activities.

Implications for practitioners: You can support children with Down syndrome by creating inclusive mathematics learning environments that encourage participation, confidence, and positive emotional experiences in the classroom.

Keywords: Down syndrome, mathematics anxiety, inclusive education, mathematics learning difficulties

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-697

Did remote learning change anything? Student outcomes and the reality of post-pandemic pedagogy

Kelly Maloney, California Lutheran University, United States

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic forced an unprecedented shift to remote learning, often framed as expanding access and inclusion. Yet whether this improved learning experiences—especially for marginalised groups—remains unclear. Much existing research centres on perceptions rather than longitudinal outcomes, leaving critical questions about who benefited and who did not.

Aim: This study investigates whether remote learning meaningfully changed student outcomes and how these changes differed across student populations. It examines whether shifts in grade distributions and attendance reflect improved access, persistent inequities, or a complex post-pandemic reality.

Method/approach: A quantitative causal-comparative design analysed archival data from a Midwestern public high school (2018–2022), including approximately 49,000 grades and multi-year attendance records. Chi-square and ANOVA tests assessed differences across instructional periods and groups. All data were de-identified and approved through institutional protocols.

Results/findings: Statistically significant differences in grades and attendance emerged across periods, but effect sizes were small and patterns remained stable. Disruption was evident—especially increased failures and lower attendance during remote learning—while subgroup differences revealed uneven experiences across student populations.

Conclusion: Remote learning did not fundamentally transform outcomes but revealed how differently students experience schooling. These findings challenge assumptions that changing instructional modality alone improves inclusion, pointing instead to structural supports and learning conditions shaping success.

Implications for children and families: You learn best when you feel supported and included. Whether school is online or in person, what matters most is that it works for you and helps you succeed.

Implications for practitioners: You need to design learning environments that support different students in different ways, rather than relying on delivery format alone to drive success.

Keywords: post-pandemic pedagogy, remote learning, student outcomes, educational equity, inclusion, special education, English language learners

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-698

Between “that’s boring” and “one more time”: Preschoolers’ voices in the evaluation of a mobile story-listening game for children at cognitive risk for dyslexia

Mellisa Chin, Taylor’s University Lakeside Campus, Malaysia
Arabella Xiongyue Dai, Taylor’s University Lakeside Campus, Malaysia

Background: Preschoolers are rarely shy about telling us what they think, and yet their voices are routinely absent from the design and evaluation of educational technologies created for them. This is especially true for serious games supporting young learners at risk for dyslexia, where adult-defined engagement metrics often drown out what children themselves have to say.

Aim: Drawing on the GameFlow model, this study positions preschoolers at cognitive risk for dyslexia as active evaluators of a mobile-based story-listening game, examining enjoyment and feasibility through both their words and their behaviour, and exploring how their critiques can shape inclusive educational technology design.

Method/approach: Ethical approval was granted by NTU’s IRB, with informed parental consent and child assent obtained. Fifty-three children aged 5–6 years participated in a 12-week preventive reading intervention, playing the game four days per week alongside either a phonics-based intervention or control games. A mixed-methods design captured quantitative measures (question response accuracy, training duration, story appreciation ratings, and GameFlow dimension scores) and qualitative insights from children’s spontaneous reactions, story appreciation responses, and observed engagement.

Results/findings: All 53 children completed the intervention. Question accuracy confirmed appropriate difficulty, and stronger initial story appreciation predicted shorter training durations, while accuracy was unrelated to training time. Children’s voices surfaced recurring themes around narrative immersion and character connection, while also flagging GameFlow dimensions, particularly challenge and player skills, that adults had overlooked.

Conclusion: When preschoolers are invited to speak back, they reveal what truly works for them and what doesn’t. This study demonstrates how children’s voices, including their critiques, can meaningfully shape inclusive educational technology design and strengthen early literacy supports for the children who need them most.

Implications for children and families: Your perspectives are invaluable. When you share what captivates you, what falls flat, and what you wish were different, you become genuine collaborators in shaping the digital tools designed to support early reading, ensuring that learning experiences reflect the children who actually use them.

Implications for practitioners: When you position children as evaluators rather than recipients of digital interventions, their critiques become design intelligence. Attending to what preschoolers endorse, resist, and request helps you select literacy tools that engage learners authentically, not merely those that appear so.

Funding: This research is funded by the NTU PPF 1/23 MC grant from Nanyang Technological University.
Keywords: children’s voices, GameFlow, mobile application, early literacy, inclusion
This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-699

When no one speaks: Silence, image, and child agency in picture books

Dalia Mostafa Abdulrahman, Cairo University, Egypt

Background: In early childhood education, children's voices are frequently equated with spoken language. However, many children, including emergent bilinguals and those with communication differences, primarily engage through silence, observation, and visual interaction. Wordless and minimal-text picture books create unique narrative spaces where silence is not a void but a powerful resource for meaning-making. Despite increasing attention to visual literacy and child agency, silence as a deliberate aesthetic and structural strategy in picture books remains under-theorised.

Aim: This paper explores how silence operates as an aesthetic and structural strategy in wordless and minimal-text picture books and examines its implications for child agency and inclusion. It investigates whether such silence can empower marginalised children and proposes ways educators can interpret silence as an active pedagogical force in early childhood settings.

Method/approach: This conceptual paper employs qualitative interpretive analysis of selected wordless and minimal-text picture books. It integrates narratology, visual literacy theory, and relational concepts of agency. As the study involves only textual and visual analysis of published materials with no human participants, ethical approval was not required.

Results/findings: The analysis shows that silence in picture books redistributes interpretive authority from the adult to the child, enabling diverse modes of engagement and meaning-making. This offers strong inclusive potential for children whose voices are structurally marginalised. However, silence can also mask inequalities, highlighting the need for critical pedagogical awareness.

Conclusion: Silence in picture books is not the absence of voice but an alternative, powerful form of expression that aligns with Article 12 of the UNCRC. The paper offers a framework for reading picture book silence as an active aesthetic and political force. This framework challenges narrow definitions of voice and supports more equitable and inclusive early childhood practices.

Implications for children and families: If your child communicates more through looking, observing, and quiet engagement than through speaking, know that this is a genuine and valuable way of participating. Wordless picture books can be special spaces where your child's natural way of engaging is respected and celebrated.

Implications for practitioners: By intentionally including wordless and minimal-text picture books in your classroom, you create safer and more inclusive spaces that honour the agency of all children, especially those who express themselves beyond spoken words.

Keywords: picture books, silence, child agency, visual literacy, inclusion, wordless books, UNCRC Article 12

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-700

Collaboration between speech pathology and education to screen children's speech

Felicity Laurence, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Sharynne McLeod, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Sarah Verdon, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Lisa Johnson, Catholic Education Tasmania, Australia
Kathryn Crowe, University of Iceland, Iceland; Charles Sturt University, Australia
Nicola Ivory, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: It is difficult for a child to be heard when they have a speech sound disorder (SSD). If children with SSD do not receive support in their early years of schooling, literacy attainment is compromised. Catholic Education Tasmania (CET) operates 32 primary schools in Tasmania, Australia's third smallest of 7 federated states and territories. In the past, speech pathologists have worked alongside educational support staff within CET to screen children's speech using a bespoke 10-word screening tool. This speech screening tool was overidentifying students, with 52% of kindergarten children failing the screening.

Aim: CET commissioned a project with Charles Sturt University that aimed to co-design a more efficient, evidence-based universal speech screening protocol.

Method/approach: Screening was attempted with the 1207 Kinder student cohort using the Intelligibility in Context Scale (ICS), a parent and educator (ICSE) report tool. Speech pathologists also screened speech using the International Speech Screener (ISS). The Diagnostic Evaluation of Articulation and Phonology (DEAP) was administered as a benchmark. Speech Pathology contractors completed diagnostic assessments as usual practice. Data collection was embedded within existing school processes, modified collaboratively with teaching colleagues. Ethics approval was granted by Charles Sturt University (CSU) Human Research Ethics Committee (protocol 25025).

Results/findings: Speech was screened with the ICS with 922 students and with 918 of these using the ISS also. Students were identified for additional assessment using ICS (428 students) and/or teacher worry about student's ability to pronounce speech sounds (201 students). The DEAP Diagnostic Screen was completed on 15% of the sample and the Phonology subtest on 24%. Diagnostic speech assessments were completed on 488 students who failed screening. Accurate speech screening is essential, but workflow feasibility in busy schools is equally critical. Joint design of study guidelines and workflow pathways reflected principles of interprofessional practice to accommodate the professional discourses of educators, the student support team, and speech pathologists.

Conclusion: Co-design gave voice to speech pathologist's responsibility for best practice and resource allocation, the student support team's responsibility for workload and data collection feasibility, and CET leadership's fiscal responsibility. An evidence-based speech screening pathway is being designed based on the data from the screening assessments and practitioner's input.

Implications for children and families: We aim to make sure that children's speech is screened using efficient and evidence-based tools will ensure children who need additional support are identified and will avoid in-depth assessment of students who do not need ongoing speech support.

Implications for practitioners: This research hopes to align practice with Principle 4 of the Speech Pathology in Education Practice Guideline from Speech Pathology Australia, respecting the dignity of the child by using least intrusive practices where possible, collecting 'just enough' data to inform decision making.

Funding: This research has been commissioned by the Catholic Education Centre, Tasmania.

Keywords: early childhood education, interprofessional practice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reducing Inequalities
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-701 – WITHDRAWN

The spoon and "good care": Rethinking infants' rights in early childhood education

Nadia Di Martino, JCU and University of Newcastle, Australia

Background: Everyday care practices are central to the early years, particularly in infant settings where children communicate through what Mozère (2007, p. 256) termed "whispering languages". Despite its centrality, care in early childhood education is increasingly blurred and marginalised, often overshadowed by regulatory and educational imperatives. Following calls to re-centre care within early childhood education (Ailwood, 2020; Arndt & Tesar, 2019), this study explores care as a reflective, intellectual, and ethical practice.

Aim: This presentation explores how feeding practices in infant-toddler settings reveal broader micropolitical tensions surrounding professionalism, inclusion, and "good care" in Australian early childhood education. It examines how culturally sustaining care can support infants' rights, identities, relationalities, and ways of being.

Method/approach: Drawing on qualitative data from my PhD research, this presentation focuses on a conversation with Vishnu*, a Nepalese research participant reflecting on feeding practices with infants in a long day care (LDC) setting in Sydney. The broader study received approval from the relevant university Human Research Ethics Committee. This was a qualitative study that employed a DeleuzoGuattarian framework, utilising semi-structured interviews and a focus group.
* Pseudonym

Results/findings: Within the infant-toddler room, spoon-feeding was tacitly positioned as the "correct" and professional approach associated with hygiene and developmental appropriateness. Over time, the participant began to internalise these expectations, contrasting them with eating by hand, which she associated with messiness and backwardness. Simultaneously, she also described hand-eating within her Hindu tradition as spiritually and relationally significant.

Conclusion: Feeding practices emerge not as neutral routines, but as micropolitical encounters shaped by power relations and competing understandings of care. Attending carefully to these everyday moments enables a rethinking of infants' rights beyond protection and participation, towards culturally sustaining care that recognises diverse identities, relationalities, and ways of being.

Implications for children and families: Infants and families have the right to care practices that listen respectfully to their preferences, identities, and cultural ways of being within early childhood education settings.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners need guidance to reflect on how everyday care practices and dominant understandings of "good care" may shape inclusion, professionalism, and daily interactions with infants. Are children being heard?

Funding: My PhD was funded by an Australian RTP scholarship.
Keywords: children's rights, infant, care, culturally sustaining care, feeding, professionalism, inclusion, diversity

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-702

Understanding the mental number line of children with Down syndrome

Thi Hong Dung Phan, University of Queensland, Australia
Rhonda Faragher, University of Queensland, Australia

Background: Children with Down syndrome experience difficulties in learning mathematics, particularly in counting, discriminating quantities, and basic arithmetic. However, the sources of these difficulties remain a mystery. One possible factor may be the mental number line (MNL), our internal representation of numerical magnitude along a spatial continuum. The MNL underlies number sense, an ability to understand, represent, compare, and manipulate numerical quantities, which strongly relates to mathematics learning.

Aim: While the MNL has been widely studied in typically developing populations, little is known about how children with Down syndrome mentally represent numbers. This narrative literature review aims to synthesise existing research on the MNL in children with Down syndrome, examine methods used in these studies, and identify factors that may influence its development – age, educational experiences, general mathematics development, and cognitive and visual-spatial abilities. It also seeks to identify gaps and implications for future research and mathematics teaching.

Method/approach: A literature search was conducted using ERIC, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Search terms included “mental number line”, “number line estimation”, “numerical magnitude representation”, “numerical estimation”, “spatial numerical association”, “spatial-numerical mapping” or “spatial numerical representation”, and “Down syndrome”. Peer-reviewed studies written in English were included.

Results/findings: Only three studies have examined the MNL in children with Down syndrome, all using number-to-position tasks. These studies found children with Down syndrome performed similarly to typically developing children matched on mental-age. However, findings are inconsistent regarding types of spatial-numerical representations used and their relationships with early numeracy skills and visuospatial abilities. Moreover, the absence of position-to-number tasks may limit understanding the MNL in this population, and other factors such as educational experiences, school and home mathematics activities, remain underexplored.

Conclusion: The review highlights significant gaps in knowledge of the spatial-numerical representations of children with Down syndrome and needs for further research. A better understanding of the MNL may contribute to numerical cognition theories and inform effective mathematics instruction and interventions for these children.

Implications for children and families: It will provide effective activities for parents supporting their children learning mathematics at home and help children gain confidence in learning numbers.

Implications for practitioners: It will be helpful for teachers in designing lessons or interventions and use effective strategies that best support their development.

Keywords: mental number line, children with Down syndrome, spatial-numerical mapping

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-703

Gender-responsive pedagogical practices in early childhood care and education in Vietnam: A qualitative study

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Background: Gender-responsive pedagogical approaches in early childhood education play a crucial role in creating equitable learning environments where all children can actively engage. However, societal gender norms continue to influence how early childhood educators organise the classroom environment, communicate with children, assess children's abilities, and conduct care and educational activities. This affects children's self-confidence, enthusiasm, and participation in classroom activities.

Aim: This study explores how gender beliefs influence gender-responsive pedagogical practices among preschool teachers. By examining these processes, the study clarifies some of the micro-mechanisms that contribute to the formation and reproduction of gender stereotypes in preschool classrooms.

Method/approach: Using observations and semi-structured interviews, framed by gender-responsive pedagogy and implicit bias theory, this study examined eight classrooms across two preschools in Nghe An (urban/rural), covering ages 24–36 months to 5–6 years. The researchers recorded teacher-child interactions, environment, communication, assessment, and activity organisation. Eight teachers were interviewed post-observation using 11 key questions. Thematic analysis identified gender-related patterns. Ethical approval and participant consent were obtained.

Results/findings: The findings show that teachers attempted to implement gender-responsive care and educational practices by responding to children's individual characteristics, abilities, and needs. While teachers generally did not intentionally discriminate, gender biases persisted in their pedagogical practices. Three prominent patterns were identified: arranging learning spaces and materials according to gender expectations; using language and assessing abilities differently for boys and girls; and organising care and educational activities based on gendered notions of strength, obedience, dexterity, and independence.

Conclusion: This study contributes to identifying how traditional gender norms are maintained at the micro level in the classroom. Based on these findings, the paper suggests that policies and teacher training activities on gender equality should be translated into practical guidelines. These may include selecting non-stereotypical teaching materials, organising open play spaces, using gender-neutral language in feedback, and developing teachers' self-reflection abilities to recognise implicit biases in everyday pedagogical situations.

Implications for children and families: The research helps families recognise that teachers' everyday practices can shape children's self-confidence, thereby enabling families to collaborate with schools to create an equal and barrier-free environment for their children.

Implications for practitioners: The research helps practitioners identify "blind spots" in their daily teaching habits and provides reflective tools to adjust language use and classroom organisation, thereby enhancing professionalism and supporting high-quality teaching practice in early childhood education.

Keywords: early childhood education, gender-responsive pedagogy, implicit bias, gender stereotypes, preschool teachers, qualitative research, Vietnam

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality

CVC2026-704

When inclusion becomes meaningful: Family voices in early childhood education

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Background: Inclusive early childhood education supports children's participation, belonging, and well-being. However, families' everyday experiences show that meaningful inclusion depends on more than access. It is strengthened through relationships, communication, consistency, and genuine partnership among families, educators, and support professionals.

Aim: This study aimed to explore how families experience inclusion within early childhood education services for children with diverse needs, with a focus on what supports meaningful participation, belonging, collaboration, and consistency in everyday practice.

Method/approach: This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews with six mothers of children aged 3–5 years who had experience with inclusive early childhood education services. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Ethics approval was granted by Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU Ref No: 2025/278).

Results/findings: Three themes were identified: child development and learning, relationships and collaboration, and inclusion and support. Families valued educators who recognised children's strengths, communicated openly, worked collaboratively, and embedded agreed strategies consistently across routines, educators, rooms, and transitions.

Conclusion: The study shows that families are knowledgeable partners in strengthening inclusive early childhood education. Meaningful inclusion is created through reliable relationships, shared planning, consistent practice, and everyday supports that honour children's strengths and promote participation, belonging, and well-being.

Implications for children and families: Your voice matters. Your knowledge of your child can help educators create stronger, more consistent supports so your child feels welcomed, understood, and included.

Implications for practitioners: You can strengthen inclusion by listening to families, recognising each child's strengths, communicating clearly, and using agreed supports consistently across everyday routines and transitions.

Keywords: family voices, inclusive early childhood education, children's inclusion, children with diverse needs, meaningful inclusion

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-705

Supporting multilingual learners in Icelandic preschools: Interaction of educators' beliefs, practices, and institutional conditions

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Background: The proportion of multilingual children in Icelandic preschools has increased steadily. Although preschool educators play a central role in supporting the language development of multilingual children, research suggests that many multilingual children do not acquire Icelandic effectively and that educators frequently feel unprepared/uncertain about how best to support their language development.

Aim: The present study addressed this lack of evidence by examining preschool educators' beliefs, reported language support practices, and perceived institutional and professional support when working with multilingual children in Icelandic preschools.

Method/approach: A quantitative cross-sectional online survey was completed by 425 preschool teachers and classroom support staff across Iceland (6–7% of the population). Participants answered questions about the barriers they had encountered in supporting multilingual children related to educators' beliefs about multilingualism, the language support practices they report using, and the institutional and professional support available within the preschool system. Ethical review was not required. Research was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Results/findings: Educators generally held positive, resource-oriented beliefs about multilingualism, but also uncertainty regarding multilingual language development, and support for children's home languages was often positioned primarily as the responsibility of the families. Reported practices were largely oriented towards only supporting Icelandic. Institutional barriers were also identified, including limited access to multilingual materials, shortages of staff with relevant linguistic competence, workload pressures, and restricted access to specialised support services.

Conclusion: Barriers to implementing practices that support multilingual children are not attributable to a single factor but arise from the interaction among educators' beliefs, everyday teaching practices, and the institutional conditions shaping what is feasible in preschool settings.

Implications for children and families: You will learn about practices that preschools and teachers can use to support the language development of multilingual children.

Implications for practitioners: You will learn about practices that you can use to support the language development of multilingual children.

Keywords: multilingual, preschool, pedagogy

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-706

Culturally responsive methods of assessing and diagnosing speech sound disorder in Lithuanian-Icelandic multilingual children: A converging evidence approach

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Thora Másdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland
Daiva Kairienė, Vtyautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Background: The number of multilingual children in Iceland has been steadily increasing, placing greater demands on speech-language pathologists to provide reliable clinical diagnoses using appropriate assessment tools and methods. Lithuanian speakers are now the third-largest immigrant group in Iceland.

Aim: This study implemented culturally responsive methods to distinguish between Lithuanian-Icelandic children with speech sound disorder (SSD) and those with speech differences related to multilingualism who do not have SSD and can reach age-appropriate abilities without intervention.

Method/approach: The speech production of 22 Lithuanian-speaking adults living in Iceland and 22 Lithuanian-Icelandic speaking children were analysed. Concerns about speech and intelligibility in both languages were also collected from children's parents and teachers. Traditional practices were followed and then a corrected analysis was performed, which did not consider mismatches due to crosslinguistic influences to be errors. A converging evidence approach was then used to make diagnostic decisions. Study approval was from Vísindasiðanefnd and Siðanefnd háskólanna um vísindarannsóknir.

Results/findings: Using traditional analysis methods, seven children meeting the criteria for SSD compared to four children when using a culturally responsive approach

Conclusion: The results of this study provide initial guidelines for clinicians on which processes and speech features used by Lithuanian-Icelandic speaking children may result from typical crosslinguistic influences rather than SSD. The use of culturally responsive methods impacted diagnostic decision-making. These findings have important clinical implications for speech-language pathologists and other professionals working with both Lithuanian-Icelandic speaking children and multilingual children in general.

Implications for children and families: You will learn about how cross-linguistic processes influence speech development in multilingual children and why different assessment methods are necessary.

Implications for practitioners: You will learn about procedures to reduce the cultural bias embedded in traditional assessment methods when assessing multilingual children.

Funding: Menntarannsóknasjóður [219261-051].

Keywords: multilingual, speech production, speech sound disorder, intelligibility, Icelandic, Lithuanian, speech-language pathology

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-707

Including children's voices in a neurodiversity-affirming theatre program

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Background: Social connection is important, yet traditional social skills programs are criticised for encouraging autistic young people to mask their natural ways of interacting. This has led to growing interest in neurodiversity affirming approaches that support connection and self-expression. Theatre programs may offer one such approach, though evidence remains limited. A community theatre program centres on a supportive troupe environment where ideas are welcomed, mistakes are celebrated, and participants collaboratively create and perform original theatre focused on enjoyment and connection.

Aim: This study examined autistic young people's goals and experiences within a community theatre program compared to those of their parents.

Method/approach: Thirteen autistic young people and their parents completed questionnaires before and after program participation. Both groups rated the importance of a range of potential goals (e.g., having fun, building confidence, feeling comfortable talking with others) and provided ratings of young people's performance related to these goals. Ethics approval was granted by La Trobe University.

Results/findings: Parents generally placed greater importance on goals related to confidence, self-esteem, making friends, and interpersonal skills, whereas young people prioritised enjoyment, self-expression, and social comfort. Agreement between priorities was low. Despite these differences, both groups reported improvements in young people's comfort initiating conversations with unfamiliar people following participation.

Conclusion: The findings underscore the importance of centring autistic young people's voices in the design and evaluation of community programs and suggest that neurodiversity affirming theatre may support well-being and social participation in authentic and meaningful ways.

Implications for children and families: You and your child may experience greater benefits when your child's interests, goals, and feedback are listened to. Programs that centre young people's voices are more likely to feel enjoyable, meaningful, and supportive of well-being.

Implications for practitioners: You should actively consider autistic young people's goals and feedback when designing and evaluating programs, as centring their voices promotes autonomy, well-being, and authentic participation.

Keywords: neurodiversity-affirming practice, disability inclusion, autistic children and young people, community theatre, inclusive community programs

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-708
Conceptual development in preschool-aged children

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Background: Concepts aid us in understanding the world around us, make acquiring new vocabulary and knowledge easier, and help us in organising our mental lexicons. How children organise concepts changes as they develop, from relying on perception to more abstract categorisation, such as connections based on thematic or taxonomic relations. This deeper level of word knowledge has received less attention than other aspects of vocabulary.

Aim: To examine whether a continuum of conceptual knowledge development existed in the responses of 4-year-old children to a vocabulary depth task.

Method/approach: Twenty-five 4-year-old children completed a task where they were asked to describe what was similar/dissimilar between two pictures. Data were collected at three time points, spaced six months apart. A framework was developed to systematically and qualitatively code children's responses and to identify response patterns (progress, regression, stable, unstable). Children's global language skills were assessed using a standardised assessment. Ethical approval was from Visindasiðanefnd.

Results/findings: There was an increase in both thematic and taxonomic responses over time, indicating a change towards more advanced response types. Thematic responses increased from 5% to 14% and taxonomic responses increased from 1% to 21%. The largest proportion of responses remained stable (51%), consisting mainly of less advanced response types, but 32% of children showed progression. Progression was correlated with higher standardised language scores.

Conclusion: Understanding how conceptual knowledge develops is important for more accurately identifying when, if, and how certain children struggle and for proposing interventions that may support children's transition from using less to more advanced strategies.

Implications for children and families: You will understand why it is important to know words well, not just to know many words and how words are stored and organised in your brain.

Implications for practitioners: You will be able to understand theories of category knowledge development and how this develops as children's vocabulary grows.

Funding: Menntarannsóknasjóður [219261-051].

Keywords: children, preschool, language, vocabulary, concepts

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 14: Life Below Water
- SDG 15: Life on Land

CVC2026-709 – WITHDRAWN

Language difference or language disorder? Developing culturally responsive scoring guidelines for a test of Icelandic

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Background: Speech-language pathologists assessing multilingual children face the challenge of interpreting whether a child's poor performance on a standardised language test is the result of a language difference related to the child being multilingual or a true developmental language disorder (DLD). One solution is to consider children's responses in accordance with grammatical features used by adults belonging to the same language community.

Aim: To analyse adult-informed response patterns of Icelandic-Polish speaking children, the largest group of multilingual children in Icelandic preschools.

Method/approach: Responses to three expressive morphosyntactic subtests of a standardised test of children's Icelandic skills were analysed (Naming, Grammar, Meaning and Inferences) from 19 Polish-speaking adults who had learned Icelandic as an additional language and 28 children aged 4–5 years who spoke Icelandic and Polish. A coding system was developed and applied to the analysis of the entire dataset: (a) Polish-influenced morphosyntactic structure, (b) Polish-influenced lexical variation, and (c) use of functional description. Ethics approval was obtained from Vísindasiðanefnd and Siðanefnd háskólanna um vísindarannsóknir.

Results/findings: All three themes of crosslinguistic influences were observed in both adult and child responses. Polish-influenced morphosyntactic structure was the most frequent observation, except in the Naming subtest, where functional description was more prevalent.

Conclusion: Children's standardised scores most often fell below the typical range, even in the range of scores indicative of DLD, and responses were found to be highly influenced by Polish. This suggests that poor performance may indicate cross-linguistic language differences rather than DLD for many children.

Implications for children and families: Children and families will learn about how knowing one language can influence other languages that you speak.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners will learn why the use of standardised assessments is biased when used with multilingual children and may lead to incorrect diagnosis of language disorders, and how this can be overcome.

Funding: Menntarannsóknasjóður [219261-051].

Keywords: multilingual, language, morphosyntax, Icelandic, Polish, speech-language pathology, developmental language disorder

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-710
Icelandic speech-language pathologists' practices with multilingual and linguistically diverse children and adults

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Background: Immigration to Iceland has increased with the number of multilingual clients seen by speech-language pathologists (SLPs) growing alongside this. Little is known about the proportion of multilingual children on SLPs' caseloads and SLPs' knowledge, skills, and practices when serving multilingual clients and their families.

Aim: This study sheds light on how practising SLPs in Iceland work with multilingual children and adults.

Method/approach: An online survey was distributed to all active members of the Icelandic Association for Speech and Language Therapists. The survey included items on attitudes towards multilingualism, the composition of their caseloads, assessment and intervention practices with multilingual clients, and barriers and facilitators to practice with multilingual clients. Ethics approval was obtained from Siðanefnd háskólanna um vísindarannsóknir.

Results/findings: Responses from 39 SLPs (39% of all SLPs) were analysed; 97% reported having worked with multilingual clients and 31 (79.5%) reported having worked with children and youth. Nearly half reported that they had/could, assess a client's skills in a language other than Icelandic, with fewer reporting that they could/would provide intervention that targets skills in a language other than Icelandic. All SLPs were multilingual; however, there was a mismatch between the languages used by the SLPs and those used by their clients.

Conclusion: SLPs indicated a range of barriers to working effectively with multilingual clients related to both resources and knowledge, as well as solutions that they had implemented in their own work. This work provides a strong direction for research into clinical solutions to enhance SLPs' ability to support multilingual clients and their families in the Icelandic context.

Implications for children and families: You will learn how SLPs in Iceland work with multilingual clients and their families.

Implications for practitioners: You will learn about the context of being an SLP in Iceland, how SLPs in Iceland work with multilingual clients and their families, and how to support the implementation of evidence-based practices in clinical settings.

Funding: University of Iceland postdoctoral grant to KC.

Keywords: multilingual, clinical practice, service delivery, children, Iceland, speech-language pathology

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-711
Lookup: Beyond the screen, the future of childhood

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Background: This project investigates how digital technology affects the cognitive, social, and emotional development of preschool children aged 3–5 years. It was conducted by students at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) as part of the final capstone subject of the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation. It sought a hypothetical contribution to the Australian Government's Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, and the eSafety Commissioner by exploring how increased screen exposure shapes early childhood development.

Aim: To examine the impact of screen exposure on preschoolers' development and identify strategies that help parents encourage healthier technology habits in early childhood.

Method/approach: The project blends both transdisciplinary and traditional research methods, including interviews, questionnaires, literature reviews, and co-design testing. In primary research, 18 interviews were conducted with relevant industry experts and 63 parents were surveyed through an online questionnaire about their children's technology usage. Questionnaire results informed a data analysis investigating correlations among technology exposure, parental attitudes, and contextual influences, and demographic, family, and parental factors. All participants provided informed consent, with ethical clearance certified by the UTS Transdisciplinary School.

Results/findings: The results showed that excessive and unregulated digital exposure may negatively affect preschoolers' cognitive and social development, with a noticeable decline in skill development and emotional regulation, as observed by experts. Technology was found to be better regulated in formal educational spaces than the home, with an overwhelming lack of parental awareness and knowledge of the national screen time guidelines and strategies for managing digital use.

Conclusion: More accessible educational material is essential in supporting healthy technology habits in early childhood. This is imperative as informed parental decision-making correlates with healthier preschooler screen use.

Implications for children and families: You will benefit from clearer guidance and increased awareness about healthy screen time habits, supporting better cognitive, emotional, and social development during formative years.

Implications for practitioners: You can play an important role in reinforcing healthy screen time practices and informing parental choices through accessible educational resources and practical strategy.

Keywords: innovation, technology, digital media, early childhood, preschool, preschoolers, families, policy, early childhood education, early childhood centre, transdisciplinary

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-712
Does this intervention work? Fidelity measurement in a preschool-based vocabulary intervention

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Background: Fidelity refers to whether an intervention is delivered as intended. Without understanding fidelity, we can't know whether an intervention truly works. This requires careful measurement of how an intervention is delivered, which is challenging when studies are conducted in real-world settings.

Aim: This presentation will explain the concept of intervention fidelity, why it is important, and how it is measured. A study will be presented as an example of how fidelity can be measured. Here, the intervention is a teacher-led, shared-reading vocabulary intervention for preschool-aged children in Iceland. The relationship between implementation fidelity and children's outcomes will be discussed.

Method/approach: Five preschools participated in the intervention (62 children, 11 teachers). Dose was measured by session attendance, session length, and exposure to target words during sessions. Adherence was the number of required elements delivered in each session. Quality was how well teachers' actions aligned with the intent of the intervention. Responsiveness was children's engagement. Children's language was assessed with a general language test and intervention-specific vocabulary probes before and after the intervention. Ethical approval was obtained from Visindasiðanefnd.

Results/findings: On average children attended 80.2% of the lessons, received 342 minutes of intervention, and were exposed to target words 778 times (dose). Teachers' self-reported adherence was 91.3%, but only 56.5% when measured from recordings. The mean quality and responsiveness were both 3.9 out of 5. All aspects of fidelity were highly correlated. Responsiveness was most closely linked to children's language outcomes.

Conclusion: The findings highlight the complexity of measuring and interpreting fidelity in interventions conducted in real-world settings and high variations in children's individual experiences of fidelity.

Implications for children and families: This paper explains why it is important to monitor how interventions are implemented in preschools and how this can help ensure that preschool interventions are evidence-based.

Implications for practitioners: This paper explains the construct of fidelity and how it relates to understanding research evidence and effectively transferring it to classroom practice.

Funding: Menntarannsóknasjóður [219261-051].
Keywords: multilingual, preschool, pedagogy, language, fidelity

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 14: Life Below Water
- SDG 15: Life on Land

CVC2026-713

From invisible question marks to unconditional belonging: Family narratives of inclusive education

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Background: Inclusive education is recognised as a human right, yet many children who experience disability and their families continue to encounter exclusion, low expectations, and conditional belonging in education settings. Although policy commitments to inclusion have strengthened, everyday practices may still be shaped by ableist assumptions about competence, communication, and participation.

Aim: This presentation examines whether things are "getting better" in inclusive education by exploring how families of children with disabilities make sense of presuming competence, invisible question marks, and experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

Method/approach: Institutional ethical approval and consent were obtained. Using an interpretivist phenomenological approach, the study drew on interpretative phenomenological analysis of in-depth interviews with 12 Australian families. Families had children with disabilities, including intellectual disability, enrolled in 'mainstream' early childhood or primary education settings. Interviews explored inclusion, exclusion, competence, family-educator partnerships, and barriers to belonging. Data were analysed case by case before patterns were identified across families.

Results/findings: Families described powerful moments when educators presumed competence by giving children time to communicate, offering choices, building on interests, adapting participation, and treating belonging as unquestioned. These practices supported dignity, agency, peer connection, and authentic inclusion. Families also described persistent invisible question marks in the form of subtle doubts about whether their children could participate, communicate, learn or belong. These doubts appeared through overprotection, low expectations, limited opportunities, and negative assumptions about children.

Conclusion: The study found that progress in inclusive education is uneven. Presuming competence can transform children's and families' experiences, but structural ableism and conditional inclusion continue to undermine belonging. The experience of invisible question marks continued to shape practice, even in settings described as inclusive.

Implications for children and families: Children and families benefit when competence and belonging are presumed from the outset, and when children are supported to participate, communicate, and contribute in ways that work for them.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners can strengthen inclusion by challenging ableist assumptions, working with families, offering flexible supports, and treating every child's competence and belonging as unconditional.

Funding: Funding for this study was provided by Macquarie University.
Keywords: inclusion, inclusive education, family perspectives, presuming competence, invisible question marks, children's belonging

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-714

Improving interpreted-mediated interactions in early intervention: Insights from professionals supporting families of children with hearing loss

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Mark Guiberson, University of Wyoming, United States

Background: For parents who speak a language different from that of their early childhood intervention (ECI) professional, an interpreter is a crucial team member. However, ECI professionals and interpreters often experience challenges in collaborating, which can have a detrimental impact on the quality of services.

Aim: This study collected the perspectives of spoken language interpreters and ECI professionals providing services to the families of children with hearing loss about the knowledge needed prior to collaborating in an ECI appointment.

Method/approach: An online survey was completed by 69 ECI professionals and 23 spoken language interpreters in Australia. Participants answered questions about the knowledge that interpreters and health/education professionals should have prior to appointments for families of young children with hearing loss as well as their most positive and negative experiences in interpreter-mediated experiences. Approval was gained from the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Results/findings: Participants' responses indicated that it was important for interpreters to know key terminology in the languages being used, the purpose of the appointment, the language situation of the family, and be aware of appropriate communication with this population

Conclusion: ECI professionals were expected to have knowledge and skills about interpreting (the briefing process, communication, working with interpreters), knowledge and skills about interpreters (interpreter competencies, interpreter appropriateness), and to share knowledge with interpreters (about the appointment, professional knowledge).

Implications for children and families: You will learn about why it is important for ECI professionals and spoken language interpreters to have good collaborative relationships.

Implications for practitioners: You will learn about different perspectives on factors that contribute to better-quality interactions between ECI professionals and spoken language interpreters to support families of children with hearing loss.

Keywords: multilingual, early intervention, early childhood professionals, allied health, hearing loss, deafness, interpreters, collaborative practice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-715

Facilitating children's participation in early childhood education

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Background: The top-down learning model remains prevalent in Indonesia, often resulting in passive learners who hesitate to express opinions. Children's participation, however, is a crucial principle in early childhood education, as it fosters active involvement, critical thinking, and innovation. In project-based learning, teachers serve as facilitators who encourage children's voices. Rumah Citta School has implemented participatory facilitation methods that empower children to become confident, collaborative learners.

Aim: This study aims to describe teacher facilitation in fostering early childhood participation using Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation. Hart's model outlines eight levels of children's involvement in decision-making, from manipulation to child-initiated, shared decisions with adults. It provides a framework for assessing the quality of children's participation in educational settings. This study identifies the level of participation reflected in the learning process at Sekolah Rumah Citta and examines the extent to which children are involved in planning, implementing, and reflecting on learning activities.

Method/approach: This study employed a qualitative approach during a one month co-curricular project-based learning program at Sekolah Rumah Citta. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, field notes, and documentation, and analysed descriptively. Participants were 62 children aged 4–7 years and 11 educators from an inclusive early childhood school. The study was conducted with school approval, written parental consent, children's verbal assent, and permission to use photographs and videos before data collection.

Results/findings: The findings showed that teachers supported children's participation through open-ended questions, activity choices, guided discussions, and appreciation of children's ideas. These strategies encouraged children to express opinions, collaborate, solve problems, and participate in decision-making. Based on Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation, children's participation ranged from consulted and informed to adult-initiated shared decision-making with children.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that educator facilitation at Sekolah Rumah Citta aligns with levels 6 (Adult-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Children) and 7 (Child-Initiated and Directed) of Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation. Adults initiate projects while children share decision-making, plan, implement, and lead activities, with adults providing support only when needed. This facilitation model enables children to express ideas, make choices, and participate actively in the learning process.

Implications for children and families: Children become more confident and actively engaged when they are given opportunities to express ideas, collaborate, and participate in decision-making through enjoyable learning activities.

Implications for practitioners: As practitioners, teachers can strengthen children's participation through child-centred facilitation while also creating an enjoyable culture of discussion that makes the classroom learning process more conducive, active, and engaging.

Keywords: children's participation, child-centred facilitation, children's voice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-716

A visual play assessment framework: A systematic approach to tracking children's development through play

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Background: Play is a central activity in child development, and increasing attention has been given to play assessment and visual play mapping in recent research. However, there remains a gap in the effective integration of these two parts.

Aim: This study aims to develop a play mapping system that addresses several limitations in current play assessment practices, including limited child participation, overly general evaluations lacking clarity and depth, insufficient use of modern visual technologies, and an overemphasis on outcomes rather than on play processes.

Method/approach: This study was conducted in a public kindergarten in southeastern China; 375 children aged 3–6 and 35 teachers participated. An action research approach guided the study through four cyclical steps: identifying practical problems, planning and implementing actions, reflecting on practice, and refining practice. The study lasted for one year. Data were collected through observations and case studies. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after they had fully understood the consent forms and voluntarily signed them. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time.

Results/findings: A play mapping system is ultimately established for play assessment. It consists of three types of mapping: Focus Mapping, Comprehensive Mapping, and Tracking Mapping. Focus Mapping assesses children's development in a specific ability or experience based on a single play activity. Comprehensive Mapping evaluates children's discoveries in exploring processes throughout one day of play. Tracking Mapping assesses children's developmental progress over one month of play.

Conclusion: The play mapping system can effectively improve current play assessment practices. Implementing this system involves four steps: teachers observing play, children sharing play experiences and conflicts, teachers listening and recording, and teachers analysing and assessing.
Implications for children and families: You can use this system to gain clearer insights into children's play experiences and developmental changes.
Implications for practitioners: You can improve the continuity, depth, and responsiveness of play-based assessment and teaching practices with the system
Keywords: play assessment, play mapping, young children, early childhood, action research
This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-717
A bioecological analysis of children draw playing

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Sarah Stenson, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Sarah Verdon, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Children freely expressing their views through innovative research supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 13. Children's perceptions of play were captured through the Children Draw Playing project by the Children's Voice Centre at Charles Sturt University, Australia.

Aim: Using Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development and the Person–Process–Context–Time (PPCT) model, the project explored how children represent themselves engaged in play through drawings.

Method/approach: One-hundred-and-eighty-four children (3–8 yrs) from global contexts submitted a drawing in the Children Draw Playing Global Online Gallery. Content analysis revealed how children's play experiences reflected developmental processes through personal characteristics, social interactions, environmental contexts, and cultural influences. An interdisciplinary research team coded children's drawings across four domains of PPCT. This guided researchers to interpret the drawings as indicators of how children's development relates to play and its surrounding social and environmental conditions. The research received ethics approval from CSU HREC (approval number H23498).

Results/findings: Children's drawings, analysed across the four PPCT domains, revealed characteristics expressed through play, including emotions such as happiness; the people and relationships involved in play experiences; the contexts in which play occurred, such as the use of playground equipment; and time-based perspectives evident in play, including engagement in traditional games.

Conclusion: Children's drawings highlight play as enjoyable, relational, and contextualised.

Implications for children and families: Understanding the impact and importance of play on children's development can help you embed play as a health-promoting activity within everyday family life.

Implications for practitioners: Children's play is contextual, relational, and personal. Developing an understanding of children's holistic development through their play can help you more effectively nurture and support their learning and development through play-based experiences.

Funding: This research was supported by Charles Sturt University's Children's Voices Centre

Keywords: bioecology, children's voices, child development, play, PPCT model

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-718

Hearing Young Voices: Methodological approaches to studying intercountry adoptees (Ages 0–12) in Ireland

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Background: The incorporation of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption into Irish law via the Adoption Act 2010 significantly altered the demographic and geographic profile of sending countries. Despite these structural shifts, empirical research evaluating the post-2010 landscape remains severely limited; previous research exploring Irish international adoption outcomes dates back prior to these statutory modifications (Greene, 2007).
Commissioned and funded by the Adoption Authority of Ireland, this interdisciplinary and inter-institutional study addresses this critical gap. The investigation explored the lived experiences and views of children and young people aged 0–12 years who were adopted into Ireland under the updated legislative framework.
Method/approach: Using Articles 12 and 13 of the Convention on the Rights of a Child as a guiding framework, creative methods were used to elicit the views of children and young people aged between 0-12 years of age. These encompassed a myriad of forms of expression which were adapted to the needs of the individual children concerned. For example, a modified version of photovoice (for example the use of personal artefacts) was used for some children. Other forms of expression, such as art and play proved more beneficial for some children based on their individual needs and choice of engagement. An observation tool was used to gain insights from children aged 0-2 years. The research team successfully applied to two research ethics committees to undertake this study.
Results/findings: Since the final report is currently being finalized for publication, this presentation offers a preliminary analysis of the data. Initial findings indicate that the lived experiences of these children and young people are largely positive and largely supported by their adoptive parents. Additionally, the study demonstrates the methodological viability and efficacy of the Mosaic approach for meaningfully engaging intercountry adopted children across a diverse developmental age span while offering critical reflections on the research process.
Conclusion: This study is the first of its kind in Ireland examining the support needs of children (aged 0–12 years) and demonstrates that children adopted internationally since 2010 (Hague Convention ratification) and their families have significant support needs, before, during, and after intercountry adoption.
Implications for children and families: The qualitative aspect of this study will provide rich insights into children's experiences of the intercountry adoption process in light of existing literature. Recommendations concerning the needs of families who have adopted children from abroad will be made based on best practices from elsewhere.
Implications for practitioners: The support needs of children and families before, during, and after the intercountry adoption process in Ireland are highlighted and discussed. Recommendations are made concerning how these supports can be strengthened within the Irish context.
Funding: The Adoption Authority of Ireland commissioned and funded this study.
Keywords: voices of children 0–12, interdisciplinary, intercountry adoption, lived experiences, Ireland, creative methodologies

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-719

Exploring the demographic and contextual determinants of student dropouts in the School Division Office of Batangas City: Inputs for program development

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Background: Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates the State to protect and promote every citizen's right to quality education. Yet, the DepEd's Learner Information System shows rising dropout rates in Batangas City: elementary increased from 0.33% to 1.48%, while junior and senior high combined rose from 2.10% to 2.69% between school years 2023–2024 and 2024–2025. These figures highlight the urgent need for stronger interventions, responsive policies, and sustained community-school partnerships to ensure learner retention and educational completion.
Aim: To examine the factors contributing to student dropout in the Schools Division of Batangas City.
Method/approach: This study used a mixed-methods design to examine demographic and contextual determinants of student dropouts in Batangas City. A total of 109 school heads were selected through purposive sampling, with quantitative data from LIS, surveys, and DepEd records analysed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data from FGDs and interviews examined through thematic analysis. Ethical approval was secured, and all participants provided informed consent or assent to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality.
Results/findings: The Schools Division of Batangas City shows a persistent gender gap in dropout rates, with male learners and Grades 8 and 9 being more vulnerable. Causes vary by age: family instability in elementary, disengagement in junior and senior high, and financial pressures in later years. The study recommends stronger early identification and family-focused interventions through the full implementation of Project SAGIP (Student Assistance and Guidance Intervention Program), including guidance and mental health services, to integrate academic, socio-emotional, health, and extracurricular strategies to ensure sustainable learner retention.
Conclusion: Student dropout in Batangas City is shaped by family problems in elementary, disengagement in junior and senior high, and financial pressures in adolescence. Despite school interventions, many causes remain beyond institutional control, requiring stronger collaboration among schools, families, and communities. To address this, Project SAGIP (Student Assistance and Guidance Intervention Program) was developed as a holistic framework integrating academic, socio-emotional, health, and community strategies to support learners across K to 12.
Implications for children and families: You can help children and families by uncovering the interconnected causes of dropout and transforming them into actionable solutions.
Implications for practitioners: You can identify at-risk learners early and provide timely academic and socio-emotional support while strengthening early warning systems, family involvement, and guidance services.

Keywords: dropout, contributing factors, Project SAGIP

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-720

Cultivating digital empathy: Children's voices on identity, ethics, and coexistence in a hybrid digital world

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Background: The growing influence of digital environments is reshaping how children and adolescents interact, learn, and build relationships. At the same time, rising narratives of hate and exclusion, and polarisation highlight a gap in how children are supported to navigate these spaces ethically. This work responds to the need for approaches that strengthen empathy, critical consciousness, and responsible digital engagement.

Aim: This study explored the adaptation of Arigatou International's flagship program, Learning to Live Together, for digital environments. Grounded in children's rights, ethics education, and intercultural and interfaith learning, the initiative aimed to strengthen empathy, ethical decision-making, and responsible digital engagement among children through a transformative pedagogy that positions them as protagonists of their own learning process, active agents of change, and equipped to make ethical decisions in their interactions with others.

Method/approach: A first implementation phase involved co-creating and testing activities through online workshops with 11 adolescents (15–17) from Latin America and the Caribbean. A mixed-methods approach combined surveys, session feedback, facilitator observations, and thematic analysis using inductive coding to assess learning, engagement, and perceived impact. Consent and safeguarding procedures were completed for all participants.

Results/findings: Participants experience the digital world as a space where online and offline life are interconnected and actions have real consequences. They highlighted how the absence of non-verbal cues contributes to misunderstanding and dehumanisation, while also recognising both the opportunities and risks of digital interconnectivity. Many described hiding aspects of their identity due to fear of judgment.

Conclusion: These results underscore the need for a "hybrid pedagogy" that treats digital and offline life as a single social reality grounded in empathy, ethics, and participation. The findings also emphasise the importance of strengthening digital emotional intelligence and co-creating digital citizenship approaches with children to ensure they reflect their lived experiences online.

Implications for children and families: You can move from passive protection to active ethical agency by recognising the impact of your online actions, practising empathy, and helping create safer and more compassionate digital spaces.

Implications for practitioners: You should treat digital and offline interactions as part of the same social reality, and co-create approaches with children that strengthen empathy, ethical reflection, and responsible participation in increasingly AI-driven digital spaces.

Funding: Supported through the operational funding of Arigatou International Geneva, no specific external funding was received for this study.

Keywords: ethics education, meaningful child participation, digital citizenship, transformative pedagogy

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

CVC2026-721

Strengthening digital readiness in the Schools Division Office of Batangas City: An international computer and information literacy anchored study of digital learner competence in grades 6 and 10

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Background: Digital competence is increasingly required for learning, work, and participation in society. This study provides a local diagnostic baseline of student digital competencies to guide division improvement planning.

Aim: This study aims to establish an evidence-based baseline of Grade 6 and Grade 10 student digital competence using International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) aligned domains.

Method/approach: This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative student survey responses with qualitative teacher focus group discussions to validate and contextualise patterns. A total of 400 students participated, 200 from regular ICT classes and 200 from the Special Science Class Program selected through purposive sampling. Digital competence was assessed using International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) strands and aspects. Ethical approval was secured, and all participants provided informed consent or assent to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality.

Results/findings: The findings show strong foundations in Digital Citizenship and Information Literacy, but persistent gaps in Digital Creation/Computational Thinking and Technical Operations (independent troubleshooting). These gaps appear early (Grade 6) and remain significant at Grade 10, raising readiness concerns for advanced ICT learning in Senior High School.

Conclusion: Learners in the Schools Division Office of Batangas City show strong ICT foundations in digital citizenship, information literacy, and academic use of technology, reflecting effective integration. However, confidence in digital creation and computational thinking, such as coding, multimedia production, and problem-solving, remains lower, even with improvements from Grade 6 to Grade 10. These areas require further strengthening to achieve balanced digital literacy.

Implications for children and families: You must adapt by embedding 21st-century skills into learning. To thrive in this digital age, you need to train learners not only to absorb information but to analyse data, evaluate digital sources, and solve real-world problems using technology.

Implications for practitioners: You can empower students to become critical thinkers, effective communicators, and responsible digital citizens who can navigate complex global challenges with confidence.

Keywords: digital readiness, ICT skills, Schools Division Office of Batangas City

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-722

Seeds of leadership: A qualitative study on school leaders' experiences in curriculum implementation and management practices in the Schools Division of Batangas City

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Background: With nearly 25,000 schools in the Philippines lacking appointed principals, the burden on acting school heads has intensified, amplifying both operational and instructional challenges and underscoring the need for deeper empirical inquiry into their experiences.

Aim: This qualitative study examined the challenges, strategies, and emerging opportunities in curriculum delivery and school operations management within the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Batangas City in the Philippines.

Method/approach: The study involved 93 public school heads selected through convenience sampling. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were gathered through open-ended survey responses and analysed thematically to identify patterns across instructional and operational domains. Ethical approval was secured, and all participants provided informed consent or assent to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality.

Results/findings: Curriculum delivery in the SDO Batangas City is hindered by teacher readiness gaps, misaligned assessments, time loss, resource shortages, and diverse learner needs, while school operations face administrative overload, facility decline, and limited manpower. School heads respond through supervision, capacity building, collaborative planning, differentiated instruction, resource optimisation, and stronger communication. Opportunities for innovation include data-driven instruction, technology integration, teacher development, digital governance, workflow automation, and distributed leadership.

Conclusion: The study concludes that improving curriculum delivery and school operations in the Schools Division of Batangas City requires coherent systems of instructional leadership, operational efficiency, and stakeholder collaboration.

Implications for children and families: School management is not an easy task. It requires vision, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous improvement. In the Philippines, where there is a shortage of school leaders, you need to strengthen systems and practices that respond to the demands of the 21st century.

Implications for practitioners: Effective school management goes beyond administration, requiring strategic planning, capacity building, and data-driven decisions to prepare students to be digitally competent, globally aware, and future-ready citizens.

Keywords: curriculum delivery, school operations management, Schools Division of Batangas City

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-723 – WITHDRAWN

Voices of children from migrant and refugee backgrounds: How mindfulness-based art interventions can support their psychosocial well-being

Sara Javadian, University of Melbourne, Australia

Background: Global displacement has reached its highest recorded level, and children from migrant and refugee backgrounds, whether first or second generation, face varying social, emotional, and psychological challenges when adapting to a new environment. Despite evidence on the benefits of mindfulness-based art interventions (MBAI) for general child populations, limited research has explored their relevance for children from migrant and refugee backgrounds. More importantly, the voices of this young population are often underrepresented in intervention design.

Aim: To explore the anticipated impact and design considerations of MBAI with and for children from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Method/approach: This study used a participatory approach to shift from top-down assumptions. Ethics approval was received from the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Department of Education. Parent/guardian consent and child assent were obtained. Fourteen children aged 8–12, primarily from Afghan backgrounds living in Australia, took part in focus groups, including mindfulness-based art activities. Also, interviews were conducted with three migrant and refugee parents. An Afghan community researcher was employed to ensure cultural competency. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Results/findings: A program logic was developed by triangulating three data sources: existing evidence on MBAI outcomes for children, the identified challenges experienced by children from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and the anticipated outcomes of MBAI for this young population. The program logic highlights how MBAI may support children's well-being by enhancing self-awareness, self-expression, self-regulation, and relational and social capacities. The study also identified practical design considerations, including creative mindfulness activities, group-based support, and trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices.

Conclusion: Overall, by highlighting the underrepresented voices of children and parents from migrant and refugee backgrounds, this study provides a contextualised model for understanding how MBAI may support children's psychosocial well-being. The findings suggest that MBAI has the potential to support well-being when it is creative, active, interactive, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and informed by children's preferences and lived experiences.

Implications for children and families: Mindfulness and art-based activities may support you to develop self-awareness, express your feelings, regulate your emotions, build confidence, and feel more connected to others.

Implications for practitioners: This study provides you with practical considerations for adapting mindfulness-based practices to the needs of children from migrant and refugee backgrounds, based on their voices and lived experiences.

Keywords: children, migrant and refugee backgrounds, mindfulness-based art intervention (MBAI), psychosocial well-being

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-724
Children's conceptual learning through culturally responsive pedagogy in the early years: A literature review

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Background: Australia is a vibrant and multicultural country, and the Australian Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 (EYLF) emphasises excellence and equity, shaping children's learning experiences in terms of belonging, being, and becoming in many ways. Cultural-historical theory holds that child development is a 'complex dialectical process' and that qualitative change depends on the child's internal and external factors, which are shaped by social practice and everyday culture. In the early years, children learn through play, and the cultural-historical theory argues that culturally appropriate play promotes cognitive development and intelligence.

Aim: The EYLF suggests that educators can create a culturally responsive pedagogy to secure safe spaces for children's learning and to celebrate the benefits of diversity. However, there is limited research exploring how educators can enact culturally responsive pedagogy to enhance children's conceptual learning through play.

Method/approach: To address this gap, this paper examines existing literature on children's conceptual learning, using a systematic search strategy, to illustrate an important way children feel a sense of belonging through culturally responsive pedagogy. The synthesis of the literature provides insight into children's conceptual learning, belonging, being, and becoming in terms of cultural ways of learning through play.

Results/findings: The review indicates a significant gap between everyday practices in early childhood settings and the intentions outlined in national curricula and policy frameworks. In practice, there are very few approaches that intentionally support the development of children's conceptual learning through culturally responsive pedagogy in early years education. Recognising that culturally responsive pedagogy through play is valid and essential, and that it should be embedded in curriculum, pedagogy, and everyday practice to develop children's cultural consciousness and holistic learning.

Conclusion: Developing children's conceptual learning depends on consciousness, which requires generalising knowledge, which is only possible through social interaction, enabling understanding of the social situation. It is understood that educators can intentionally incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy into play-based learning (e.g., storybooks, children's project-based activities, or celebrations of multicultural activities) to foster awareness of developing relevant everyday concepts.

Implications for children, families and practitioners: You must be respectful of the diversity of family and community life in Australia, a vibrant, multicultural country and diverse society, bringing these diverse experiences, home languages, perspectives, expectations, and cultural ways of knowing, being, and doing into their learning.

Keywords: children's conceptual learning, cultural-historical theory, play, culturally responsive pedagogy

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-725
The feasibility of the P.E.A.C.E. pack anti-bullying program in Western Mongolian schools

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Background: Bullying is a serious public health issue in Mongolia, linked to harmful physical, social, and academic outcomes. Yet, data on its prevalence and nature in Western Mongolian schools remains scarce. This study addresses the gap using the P.E.A.C.E. Pack survey, a validated tool applied internationally for cross-cultural reliability. Adapted and pilot-tested for Mongolian students, the survey examines bullying prevalence, forms, and locations, alongside student help-seeking and teacher responses, ensuring cultural and age appropriateness.

Aim: To evaluate the prevalence and nature of bullying among students (Grade 6-12) to determine the feasibility of implementing the Australian P.E.A.C.E. Pack anti bullying program within the Mongolian education context. The program is a multi level, school-based intervention framework designed to reduce bullying and violence by fostering positive peer relationships, providing coping strategies. It was selected due to its inclusion of student voice, teacher-delivered framework, cross-cultural adaptability, and cost-effectiveness.

Method/approach: This mixed method study utilised the P.E.A.C.E. Pack survey with 7,250 students across 44 selected schools in Western Mongolia. Ethical clearance was obtained through site and parental consent across all target areas. Quantitative statistical analysis identified the prevalence and distribution of peer victimization, while thematic analysis of open-ended survey questions uncovered the socio-cultural drivers.

Results/findings: Data from the 2026 school year indicates that 26.92% of students experienced bullying. Frequent incidents were most prevalent in the classroom (10.79%), followed closely by the schoolyard (9.04%). Verbal bullying was the predominant form (68.23%). Regarding help-seeking behaviors, students prioritised telling teachers (41.8%) and parents (29.1%). To strengthen prevention, participants advocated for school-level improvements in teacher-student communication, capacity building, and targeted bullying education.

Conclusion: Study findings highlight the prevalence of bullying in schools and suggest that the P.E.A.C.E. Pack program is highly appropriate for Mongolian schools when implemented as a teacher-led, classroom-based intervention. Enhancing teacher led education and intervention within the school setting is a critical factor for long-term success.

Implications for children and families: These findings imply a critical need to train school staff and parents to actively recognize distress signals, thereby creating a responsive support network where students feel safe reporting incidents.

Implications for practitioners: The P.E.A.C.E. Pack anti-bullying program could be effective in the Mongolian school context to mitigate bullying.

Keywords: anti-bullying, regional communities, well-being

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-726

The impact of climate change on the development of children in Greece: A narrative review of communication, education, play, and place experiences

Evangelia Kyritsi, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

Background: The Mediterranean region is among the areas most acutely affected by climate change. Yet, despite concerns raised by organisations such as UNICEF and UNESCO, its developmental consequences for children in this area remain underexplored.

Aim: Grounded in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), this presentation draws on interdisciplinary evidence (linguistics, educational research, developmental psychology, environmental science) to examine how climate change may shape childhood experiences in Greece. The focus is on four areas: communication, education, play, and place experiences.

Method/approach: A narrative review was conducted for scientific articles published during the last decade (2016–2026). The databases that were used were Scopus, PubMed, and ERIC. Articles published in English and addressing either international contexts or Greece were included. Search terms included climate change, Greece, child, language, communication, education, play, space. These keywords were used in various combinations (e.g., climate change, climate change and child language, climate change and Greece and child language).

Results/findings: The results showed that most studies approach climate change from the perspective of environmental sciences and health sciences. The impact of climate change on child development has been explored in a limited number of international studies. Interestingly, no published studies were identified that examined climate change in Greece in relation to child language or communication, child play or place experiences. Further, studies that investigated climate change and education in Greece focused on environmental education rather than broader developmental outcomes.

Conclusion: The absence of Greek research in these areas should not be interpreted as an indication of limited significance. Rather, evidence from international research, combined with existing knowledge about the impact of climate change on children's lives, suggests that children in Greece may face compounding developmental vulnerabilities: those arising directly from climate change and those resulting from the absence of social policies designed to mitigate its effects and strengthen child resilience. This possibility warrants future investigation.

Implications for children and families: This narrative review suggests that children's opinion, their lived experiences, and hopes for the future need to be voiced. They are essential to effective policies.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners have a key responsibility to help children and their families recognise that their voices matter. They need to equip themselves with the knowledge needed to support empowerment and advocacy.

Keywords: climate change, Greece, child, communication, education, play, place

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG 13: Climate Action

CVC2026-727

Capturing children's voices to inform child-centred outcomes in paediatric hearing care

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Background: Outcome measurement in paediatric hearing care is typically defined by adults, relying heavily on parent/clinician reports. These approaches may overlook what deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children themselves consider important. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms children's right to express their views in matters affecting them.

Aim: To explore DHH children's perspectives on what hearing health services should measure to understand their progress.

Method/approach: Through a qualitative participatory study design, we hosted child-friendly focus groups with DHH children aged 6–12 years. Activities adapted from the Voice of the Child Toolkit supported communication through drawing, writing, and discussion. Two focus groups have been conducted and analysed using inductive thematic analysis, with four more workshops anticipated. The Royal Children's Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee approved the study.

Results/findings: Preliminary findings from six children suggest they viewed their progress through everyday experiences of belonging, communication access, and participation. Children described pride in school, friendships, and activities as central markers of progress. They highlighted the importance of early self-advocacy, identified gaps in system-level support and evaluated healthcare experiences through whether they felt listened to, understood, and respected.

Conclusion: Young DHH children articulated priorities related to inclusion, communication access, and hearing health care. Embedding children's perspectives in research/service evaluation strengthens child-centred hearing care and supports children's rights to be heard in decisions affecting them.

Implications for children and families: Your experiences and ideas matter. When you share what helps you feel included, understood, and confident, services can better support what matters most in your everyday lives.

Implications for practitioners: You can strengthen child-centred hearing care by directly engaging children in conversations about their experiences and priorities, and by using participatory approaches that support children to express their views.

Funding: The Australian National Child Hearing Health Outcomes Registry is funded by the NHMRC (GNT2015735).
Keywords: deaf, hard of hearing, outcomes, children's voices, participatory research

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-728

Voices unheard: Early childhood classroom through a critical lens

Sukanya Singh, Amity University, India
Vishal Kumar, Adamas University, India

Background: Although the typical image of an early childhood classroom is one where creativity, discovery, and development thrive, beneath the surface lies a world of structures. In most cases, they prevent children and educators from expressing their true selves in their own classroom. The act of listening to and considering young people's views demonstrates respect for their needs, interests, and life experiences, which helps determine the importance of something within a specific subject matter or circumstance.

Aim: Using a child-centred, critical pedagogy perspective (by Paulo Freire), this research acknowledges children as competent learners who have evolved over time and therefore deserve to be heard in educational settings. The study examined the various ways children express their perspectives in early childhood classrooms. A particular focus was placed on "multiple voices" that are expressed when children speak about family, peers, places, games, and other cultural aspects of their lives.

Method/approach: A qualitative methodology was used for this study; specifically, it included classroom observation, casual conversation, a storytelling activity, free-play interaction, and reflections from teachers' classroom notebooks across different early childhood education centres (also known as Anganwadi Kendras) in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. The sample of 45 children was randomly selected through purposive sampling, aged 3–6 years, from three Anganwadi Kendras; 15 participants from each centre. The required permissions to conduct the research were obtained from the authority and the parents or legal guardians of all participating children.

Results/findings: The results showed that children typically express themselves using symbolic language (e.g., drawing), silence, movement, imagination, or emotional expression. In addition, these forms of expression were frequently ignored in the structured learning environment. These findings emphasise the need for teachers to develop a dialogical and responsive classroom environment that encourages children to feel safe, respected, and valued, while providing opportunities for them to express their experiences freely.

Conclusion: By adopting a critical, child-centred lens, this study highlights the necessity of dismantling rigid classroom structures to truly hear and value children's diverse forms of expression. This study underscores that children understand simple practices and experiential learning effectively and enhance relationships with their teachers when they listen to their language and enhance their overall participation, creativity, and democratic learning behaviours.

Implications for children and families: By adopting a critical, child-centred lens, this study highlights the necessity of dismantling rigid classroom structures to truly hear and value children's diverse forms of expression. This study underscores that children understand simple practices and experiential learning effectively and enhance relationships with their teachers when they listen to their language and enhance their overall participation, creativity, and democratic learning behaviours.

Implications for practitioners: It prompts educators to engage in reflective, inclusive practices, urging them to look beyond literal speech to interpret multidimensional child expressions, thereby transforming traditional classrooms into democratic learning spaces.

Keywords: early childhood classroom, critical pedagogy, expression, multiple voices

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-729

Children's voices in communication: Linking subjective experiences, drawings, and neural measures

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Nicole Bazzocchi, University of Toronto, Canada
Karla Washington, University of Toronto, Canada

Background: Children's voices and communication experiences are increasingly recognised as central to meaningful paediatric research, particularly for children with communication difficulties. However, little is known about whether children's subjective experiences of communication are reflected in neurobiological measures.

Aim: Guided by the procedural circuit deficit hypothesis (PDH; Ullman et al., 2020), which focuses on procedural memory regions implicated in language and motor learning, this study examined whether children's self-reported communication experiences, measured by the Speech Participation and Activity Assessment of Children (SPAA-C), and drawing-based expressions, are associated with neuroimaging outcomes. It also assessed whether these experiential measures differ between children with developmental language disorder (DLD) and typically developing (TD) peers.

Method/approach: Ethical approval was obtained from the university. Nine children (4–5 years old, 4 DLD, 5 TD) completed the SPAA-C and produced drawings reflecting their experiences of communication. SPAA-C responses were analysed for the presence of emotional experiences. Drawings were coded for the presence of themes identified in previous literature. Diffusion MRI was used to derive fractional anisotropy (FA) values from these regions. Bayesian models were used to estimate associations between experiential measures and FA, as well as group differences between TD and DLD children.

Results/findings: Bayesian analyses indicated strong positive associations between SPAA-C scores and FA in the left inferior frontal gyrus. Other regions also demonstrated consistent positive trends, suggesting a broadly aligned pattern across the procedural network. Group comparisons showed strong evidence that TD children expressed more positive communication-related themes in their drawings than children with DLD. Differences in SPAA-C scores between groups also showed a trend favouring TD children but were accompanied by substantial uncertainty.
Conclusion: These findings provide preliminary evidence linking children's subjective communication experiences with neural microstructure in PDH-relevant regions. The results highlight the potential value of integrating child-reported and drawing-based measures into neurodevelopmental research and clinical assessment.
Implications for children and families: What you say, feel, and draw can help us better understand how your brain supports talking and connecting with others, and guide us in creating more supportive, meaningful experiences for you and your family.
Implications for practitioners: Self-report and drawings can provide valuable insights into how children engage, helping you tailor interventions that support both communication skills and positive participation in everyday interactions.
Funding: This work was supported by NIH R01DC019337 (PI: Dr Karla N Washington).
Keywords: preschoolers, developmental language disorder, communication experiences, drawings, neuroimaging

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

CVC2026-730

Towards consistent standards for assessing the severity of speech disorders in children: An analysis of diagnostic practices of Polish speech therapists

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Background: Speech disorders are among the most frequently diagnosed developmental difficulties in preschool and early school-age children. Despite growing interest in assessing their severity, the literature still lacks uniform criteria for qualifying children for speech therapy. Differences between diagnostic approaches can lead to inequalities in access to therapeutic support.

Aim: To present the current state of knowledge regarding the criteria for assessing the severity of speech disorders in children and the factors considered when deciding on eligibility for speech therapy. An additional goal is to identify research gaps that justify conducting research on the diagnostic practice of Polish speech therapists.

Method/approach: A literature review was conducted, including publications on the assessment of speech disorder severity in children and eligibility for speech therapy. Empirical studies, reviews, and recommendations regarding speech therapy diagnosis were analysed, with particular emphasis on the criteria for assessing the severity of disorders, the functional impact of communication difficulties, and a biopsychosocial approach.

Results/findings: The available literature indicates a lack of uniform criteria for assessing the severity of speech disorders and eligibility for speech therapy. In practice, a variety of indicators are used, including the number and type of articulation errors, the child's age, speech intelligibility, and the impact of difficulties on social and educational functioning. However, few studies describe the actual diagnostic practice of speech-language pathologists, and data from Poland are very limited.

Conclusion: The literature review indicates the need to develop more consistent, evidence-based criteria for assessing the severity of speech disorders and qualifying for therapy. This identified research gap formed the basis for a current survey of Polish speech-language pathologists; the survey aims to determine the criteria used in clinical practice in Poland and the extent to which a biopsychosocial approach is considered. The results of this study will enable comparison of Polish diagnostic practice with findings from the international literature.

Implications for children and families: This will ensure equal access to speech therapy for every child, regardless of the school or facility they attend. With more consistent assessment criteria, children with similar difficulties will have a greater chance of receiving similar therapeutic support.

Implications for practitioners: The research will identify criteria for assessing the severity of speech impairments and help standardise the process of qualifying children with similar difficulties for speech therapy. This is crucial in educational settings, where organisational constraints require prioritising access to therapy.

Funding: The project was submitted under the ID-UB call no. 201 "Study@Research", application number 201/34/UAM/0059. ID-UB (Initiative of Excellence – Research University) Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan.

Keywords: assessment of the severity of speech impediments, Polish speech therapy practice, kindergarden, school

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-731

Right to information and participation in children's digital journalism: A comparative study between Portugal and Brazil

Ana Cátia Ferreira, Fernando Pessoa University, Portugal
Juliana Doretto, Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas, Brazil

Background: Approximately 28 million Portuguese-speaking children aged 5–14 live in Portugal and Brazil. Their rights to information and participation are enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and General Comment No. 25 on children's rights in the digital environment.

Aim: The Luso-Brazilian scope of this study enables a comparison of whether both countries fulfil children's rights to information and participation through digital journalism for children.

Method/approach: The sample comprised seven children's journalism outlets and formats, analysed over a six-month period: in Portugal, one public service television program and one print publication; and in Brazil, one public service podcast, one radio program, and three print publications. From each outlet, 10 units of analysis were selected, resulting in a total sample of 70 units, which included only journalistic genres with a news focus (news stories, interviews, feature reports, and explanatory journalism). Entertainment content was excluded from the analysis.

Results/findings: Portugal has fewer journalistic outlets specifically designed for children than Brazil. However, it provides stronger public service provision through a television news program broadcast three times a week and subsequently made available on a digital platform. In contrast, Brazil does not provide a consistent public service offering, as the podcast is produced irregularly. Private initiatives are more prominent in Brazil, particularly through print publications, although access to their online content is often restricted.

Conclusion: Overall, children's journalism in both countries is disseminated through different platforms. Both Portugal and Brazil support children's rights to information and participation through children's journalism, although access remains limited.

Implications for children and families: When you have access to reliable news that is appropriate for your age, you can better understand what is happening in the world and become a more informed participant in your community.

Implications for practitioners: You may create collaborative initiatives between media organisations in Portugal and Brazil, building on the shared linguistic and cultural ties that connect children in both countries.

Funding: CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) – Brazil.

Keywords: children's journalism, participation, rights, Portugal, Brazil

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-732

“The mighty six”: Drawing on children’s participation rights to (re)imagine physical education and physical activity experiences with autistic students

Stella Gkegka, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom
Pum Dunbar, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Background: According to Article 12 of the UNCRC, every child has the right to express their views and to have these views given due weight in matters affecting them.

Aim: Adopting a rights-based approach, this research invited autistic students to share and shape their physical education (PE) and physical activity (PA) experiences. The aim was to design, with the students, a five-week PA program that could be implemented within the PE curriculum or as a lunchtime club.

Method/approach: This study employed observations, walking interviews, LEGO®, and sticky notes, for autistic children to share their PE experiences and favourite ways of being physically active, and decide the activities they wished to engage in. Participants were 24 autistic students aged 7–13 years, from specialist provisions within two Scottish mainstream primary schools. Following written consent from parents/carers, a study information booklet provided picture-based information to students to support assent. However, assent was not approached as a one-off agreement but as an ongoing process.

Results/findings: The findings suggest that the flexible, multimodal methodological approach facilitated students’ involvement in decisions that shaped their PE and PA experiences. In designing PA programs responsive to their interests, strengths, and needs, the students challenged normative understandings of PE, shared their sensory experiences of movement, and highlighted the importance of friendships as a source of motivation.

Conclusion: This study shows how children, as experts in their own lives, can illuminate a kaleidoscope of opportunities to make PE participation and PA engagement enjoyable, sparking reflection on how children’s participation rights can be translated into everyday educational practice for creating meaningful and inclusive school experiences for all students.

Implications for children and families: You can be physically active in ways that feel right for you, reflecting your interests, strengths, and needs.

Implications for practitioners: You can foster autistic students’ participation in physical education and physical activity by creating meaningful opportunities for them to share their interests, strengths, and needs, and shape their learning

Funding: This work was supported by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (ES/P000681/1).

Keywords: Article 12 UNCRC, autistic students’ voices, Lundy’s model, co-design, physical education, physical activity

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-733

Changing how children speak: Effects of syntactic intervention on spontaneous language in autism spectrum disorder

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Alexandrina Martins, University of Lisbon, Portugal
Marisa Lousada, RISE.Health; University of Aveiro, Portugal

Background: Children with language disorders associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) frequently show difficulties in syntactic production. However, intervention studies examining changes across multiple dimensions of syntax using language sample analyses (LSA) remain scarce, especially in early development.

Aim: This study examined the effects of an explicit syntactic intervention program (PROsyntax) on spontaneous language in preschool-age children with ASD, using a multidimensional LSA framework capturing productivity, diversity, complexity, grammatical accuracy, and complementary clinically relevant linguistic markers.

Method/approach: Thirty-two monolingual European Portuguese-speaking preschoolers with ASD participated in a controlled non-randomised study with a waiting-list control group (CG; n=16). The experimental group (EG; n=16) received 24 individual one-hour PROsyntax sessions, twice weekly, delivered by a speech and language therapist. Narrative samples were analysed using LSA measures (e.g., MLU, PGU, SDI). Linear mixed-effects models tested Time x Group interactions, controlling for age, sex, and socioeconomic status. Ethical approval, parental consent, and institutional authorisation were obtained.

Results/findings: Compared with the CG over the same interval, the EG showed significantly greater gains in MLU ($\beta=1.52$, $p<0.001$), PGU ($\beta=0.64$, $p<0.001$), SDI ($\beta=0.07$, $p<0.001$), and level of production of subordination ($\beta=0.08$, $p<0.001$), alongside reductions in omission, agreement, and structural errors. Changes in simple clause use were not significant ($\beta=0.12$, $p=0.144$). When the CG later received the intervention, comparable gains were observed across all measures.

Conclusion: These findings demonstrate that explicit syntactic intervention leads to robust and replicable improvements in spontaneous language in children with ASD. Gains reflect expansion of syntactic repertoire and increased grammatical accuracy, supporting the generalisation of intervention effects to everyday communication and highlighting their clinical relevance. Together, these findings also support the clinical utility of multidimensional LSA frameworks for capturing meaningful changes in naturalistic language use following intervention.

Implications for children and families: With targeted support from a speech and language therapist, your child can improve how they construct sentences in everyday communication, making their ideas clearer and more flexible.

Implications for practitioners: You can use structured, explicit syntactic intervention and language sample analysis, supported by validated tools, to target and monitor meaningful changes in spontaneous language in children with autism spectrum disorder and to promote evidence-based practice.

Funding: This work was supported by national funds through FCT—Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., within CINTESIS, R&D Unit (UIDB/4255/2020 and UIDP/4255/2020) and within the scope of the project RISE (LA/P/0053/2020), CLUL (UIDB/00214/2020), and a PhD grant (2022.12007.BD).

Keywords: autism spectrum disorder, syntactic intervention, spontaneous language production, language sample analysis

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-734

The right to musical knowledge: Curricular policies and music education in local Brazilian public schools

Valter Junior, Universidade Federal de São Paulo – UNIFESP, Brazil

Background: Despite laws mandating music in Brazilian basic education, children's access to specialised musical knowledge is frequently compromised by curriculum policies and workforce structures. This study contextualises how local policies reinterpret the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC), mediating the epistemological value of music and impacting children's rights to musical knowledge in government schools.

Aim: This study investigates the conceptions, contradictions, and tensions permeating music education in the São Paulo City Curriculum, analysing its relationship with the national normative prescription (BNCC). It unveils how recontextualising national guidelines locally alters musical knowledge for early primary education, determining whether these documents ensure access to specialised knowledge or restrict music to behavioural norms.

Method/approach: Using Critical Curriculum Theory, a qualitative document analysis was conducted on the BNCC (2018) and the São Paulo City Curriculum (2019). Data were analysed via content analysis, applying Basil Bernstein's pedagogic discourse theory and Michael Young's "powerful knowledge" concept. As a documentary study of public policies, no human participants were involved, so no ethical clearance was required.

Results/findings: The local curriculum advances by proposing 28 specific musical objectives, resisting national utilitarian reduction. However, its discursive structure systematically subordinates specialised musical concepts (instructional discourse) to behavioural and socialisation norms (regulative discourse). Furthermore, a significant workforce barrier exists: the local system relies on generalist arts teachers, not music specialists, to deliver these complex goals.

Conclusion: Structural and discursive dilutions reduce school music to classroom management or festive entertainment. Relegating structured musical language to generic activities taught by non-specialists fundamentally denies government school children their educational rights. True inclusion and social justice require that all children have access to specialised concepts empowering them to critically transform their cultural realities.

Implications for children and families: You deserve specialised music teachers; understanding the curriculum empowers you to demand this right.

Implications for practitioners: You must advocate for specialised teaching to ensure students have access to transformative musical knowledge.

Keywords: music education, curricular policies, children's rights, musical knowledge

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-735

Play “makes the world happy”: Children’s voices about play in the world

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Kate Friere, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Van H. Tran, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Katrina Gersbach, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Laura Hoffman, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Janine Krecko, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Joanne Grimmond, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Sharynne McLeod, Children’s Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Brendon Hyndman, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Play is recognised across the globe as important to children’s well-being and development. In the early years, play is understood as a valuable learning tool with which children develop skills that support their engagement in the world throughout their lives. Children’s perspectives about play are important, yet their voices are often underrepresented in research. Drawing offers one way to support children to express their lived experience without relying on language, reducing barriers related to age, ability, and linguistic or cultural background.

Aim: To explore children’s understandings of why play is good for the world and to examine if/how children represent relationships and connections through their drawings of play.

Method/approach: During the 2024 Early Childhood Voices Conference, children were invited to create a drawing or artwork of play. A total of 83 drawings were received from children aged between 1 and 12 years, representing 10 different countries. Parental consent and children’s assent were gained; the artworks were digitally submitted to the Children Draw Playing Global Online Gallery (https://earlychildhoodresearch.csu.domains/early-childhood-voices-conference-2024/children-draw-playing/).This research was approved by the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Results/findings: A conventional content analysis was conducted on children’s text-based responses to the question “Why is play good for the world?”; 80.7% (n=67) of children answered the question. A small number of children (n=11) listed more than one factor about why play was good for the world. For example, one child said, “Because you can learn great things and you can try new things and it’s really fun.” Six themes regarding aspects of play that children thought were good for the world were identified.
Conclusion: This research contributes to a deeper understanding of children’s lived experience of play, why it is an important part of their everyday lives, and what play can offer the world.
Implications for children and families: When children play, they build strong relationships and meaningful connections through the time they spend together and the experiences they share. Play is valuable, and it deserves time and space.
Implications for practitioners: Practitioner recognition of the importance of play is one factor that can support the creation of meaningful play experiences that promote social connection, inclusion, and well-being.
Funding: This research was supported by Charles Sturt University’s Children’s Voices Centre
Keywords: play, children’s voices, early childhood, relationships
This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-736
Play environments for blind and low vision children: Findings from a scoping review

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Dagmar Reinhardt, University of Sydney, Australia

Background: Play is a fundamental right of every child and a critical driver of physical, cognitive, and social development. Yet children who are blind or have low vision (BLV) consistently encounter barriers to meaningful play participation, rooted in environments designed without them in mind.

Aim: This scoping review maps the existing evidence on the play environments and experiences of BLV children, identifying what is known about the features of play settings that support or hinder their participation.

Method/approach: Following PRISMA reporting guidelines, a systematic search was conducted across six databases (Scopus, PubMed, EMBASE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, ProQuest) in three iterative rounds. The search combined a fixed population string (blind/low vision terminology) with progressively expanded setting strings covering physical play environments, multisensory and active play, and social, cognitive, and exploratory play dimensions. Studies of any design addressing play, play behaviour, or play environments in BLV children aged 0–18 were included.

Results/findings: Across the studies retrieved, several themes emerge: (a) BLV children's play is shaped by environmental constraints and a lack of opportunity. (b) Multisensory features—tactile surfaces, auditory landmarks, clear spatial layouts, and tactile maps—enable independent exploration and participation. (c) Social play remains under-supported; adult over-mediation and inaccessible peer settings limit children's agency and peer connection. (d) Children's voices and co-design contributions remain largely absent from the literature.

Conclusion: Findings point to an urgent need for inclusive playground design guided by BLV children's lived experiences, and for participatory research that centres children as experts in their own play.

Implications for children and families: Your child deserves a playground where they can explore, make friends, and have fun independently. Better-designed play spaces, with sounds, textures, and clear layouts, can make a real difference, and your family's experiences and ideas should help shape them.

Implications for practitioners: Evidence supports prioritising multisensory environmental features, with tactile pathways, auditory cues, and structured layouts, to enable independent navigation and peer play for BLV children. Design and intervention decisions should be informed by children's and families' lived experiences.

Funding: This project is funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC Project ID: DP240100824).

Keywords: blind and low vision children, play environments, inclusive design, multisensory design, scoping review

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-737
Understanding the representation of children with disabilities in Hindi cinema

Vidya Vishwakarma, Central University of Jharkhand, India

Background: Disability on Indian cinema screens is not nuanced with mixed messages. From the occasional supercrip portrayal (Hartnett) of deaf lip-readers and blind people with near sonar ability to sense objects to discourses of dependency around the pathos of disabled life, Indian cinema seemingly encompasses the range of canonical globally prevalent disability stereotypes (Pal 109). Representation of disability in movies brings forth the perception of disability in society.

Aim: This paper qualitatively examines the depiction of children with disabilities in select Hindi movies. Moreover, the politics of using children as the protagonists of the movie is also closely examined to study the acts of agency as a child with disability. This research highlights and critiques the fixation on 'cure' as it brings forth the understanding of disability in terms of the 'medical model of disability'. Moreover, the presence of singing as a talent in the text presents the idea of 'supercrip'.

Method/approach: The study uses qualitative methods, including critical examination and close reading, critical discourse analysis, along with the theoretical framework of the theory of ableism and negative imagery, to examine the politics of representation of children with disabilities, especially through the movies Earth (1998), Taare Zameen Par (2007), and Sitaare Zameen Par (2025).

Results/findings: This research highlights and critiques the fixation on 'cure', as it brings to light an understanding of disability through the 'medical model of disability'. Moreover, the presence of singing as a talent in the text presents the idea of 'supercrip'. Major themes like representation, perception, social stigma, ableist norms, and gender dynamics will be studied.

Conclusion: This research will only focus on select Hindi movies that feature the representation of children with disabilities in the Indian context and study how the larger depiction is mostly dominated by ableist norms, leading to a stereotypical representation of children with disabilities.

Implications for children and families: This research aims to raise awareness of disability and consider it as a part of human diversity.

Implications for practitioners: This research will help practitioners understand how cinema, a problematic and ableist representation, is propagated. Thus, there is a need for better dialogue and inclusive depictions that don't stereotype children with disabilities or exclude them.

Funding: The candidate is currently availing an NFOBC Fellowship.

Keywords: ableism, children with disabilities, representation, social stigma, supercrip

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

CVC2026-738

Assent in action: Exploring ethical practice in arts-based research with young children

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Sharynne McLeod, Children's Voices Centre, Charles Sturt University, Australia
Belinda Downey, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Background: Beyond adhering to standards and institutional processes, what makes a research encounter with children 'ethical', particularly regarding assent? Research on assent processes with young children is limited and lacks consensus on appropriate practices. Existing evidence tends to focus on assent at the research design stage—prior to the encounter. Examining how assent is negotiated during the encounter, and the ethical issues this raises, can generate valuable insights for methodology and practice.

Aim: We explore the issue of children's assent through three researchers' ethical praxis in an arts-based encounter with preschool-aged children experiencing disability. The broader project examined children's experiences and understandings of health, including the people and places that support it.

Method/approach: Institutional ethical approval shaped the design and practice of this study. Participants were four four-year-old children with health or developmental impairments from a rural NSW community, all attending the same early intervention transition to school class. The encounter included a creative facilitator, three researchers, and two early interventionists (the children's teachers). Data comprised photographs, video, and a written running record, supplemented by an audio-recorded researcher reflection session.

Results/findings: Assent was initially established according to institutionally-approved ethics processes, then continually renegotiated throughout the encounter as it unfolded, both directly by researchers and with support or confirmation from teachers. The researchers questioned what assent permitted them to ask, particularly in a context where trust develops over time and participants had diverse abilities, and what the limits are to encourage continued participation if a child indicates they wish to stop.

Conclusion: Seeking assent extends beyond securing initial agreement. Reflections revealed nuanced, in-situ ethical decision-making and highlighted the complexity of ethical praxis in research with children. The absence of children's own perspectives on assent is notable; including these in future research would strengthen rigour and validity.

Implications for children and families: This research will help others interested in your experiences understand how to ask you about being part of their project. It will also help people consider how to ask you what you thought of being part of the project.
Implications for practitioners: Practitioners are encouraged to adopt a reflexive, responsive, and context-sensitive approach, embedding ethical practice in moment-to-moment interactions rather than relying solely on formal consent procedures.
Funding: This research was supported by Charles Sturt University's Children's Voices Centre
Keywords: qualitative research, research ethics, children, disability, children's assent
This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-739

Understanding the voices and learning experiences of children with autism in inclusive educational settings

Saguna Thapa, Kathmandu University, Nepal

Background: Inclusive education is not only about placing children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms but also about understanding their communication, participation, and emotional experiences. Autistic children often express themselves in different ways that may not always be recognised in schools. Drawing on practicum experiences in inclusive educational settings in Nepal, this reflective study explores how supportive and empathetic learning environments help autistic children feel included, confident, and respected.

Aim: This study explores autistic children's voices, communication, and learning, and how supportive inclusive classrooms improve participation, expression, respect, and belonging.

Method/approach: Permission to undertake the observations was granted by the practicum coordinator and the education head of this program. Parents and guardians were informed that PGDE student teachers would observe learners as part of the practicum program. All participants and research sites were de-identified to maintain confidentiality. The study focused on two case study learners (aged 7 and 20 years) and included observations of approximately 18 autistic learners (8 aged 5–12 years and 10 aged 17–30 years) during classroom activities and school programs.

Results/findings: The study found that autistic children communicated and participated in meaningful ways through behaviour, routines, facial expressions, gestures, and sensory responses. During the classroom experience, it was noticed that some autistic children expressed comfort, stress, or interest not through words but through their actions and routines. Supportive practices such as visual supports, predictable routines, patience, acceptance, and positive teacher-child relationships helped learners feel comfortable, confident, and engaged. Inclusive environments also supported emotional well-being and participation.

Conclusion: This study highlights the importance of recognising and valuing the different ways autistic children communicate and learn in inclusive classrooms. From the learning and field experience, it is understood that inclusive education is not only about access to classrooms but also about creating environments where every child feels heard, respected, and valued through compassionate, flexible, and responsive teaching practices.

Implications for children and families: You deserve to be understood, respected, supported, safe, included, and confident at school, where your unique ways of communicating and learning are valued.

Implications for practitioners: You recognise autistic communication, use flexible teaching practices, and create inclusive, supportive classrooms where every child feels heard, respected, and valued.

Keywords: autism, children's voices, inclusive education, communication, participation, reflective practice

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-740

Children as meaning-makers: Home-educated children's photo-narratives of learning, belonging and participation

Jeannette Simpson, St Mary's University, United Kingdom

Background: Home education is often discussed in terms of adult concerns about provision, suitability, and oversight, yet children's own accounts remain limited in research and policy. This study responds to that gap by exploring how home-educated children understand, represent, and experience learning in their daily lives.

Aim: The study aimed to understand home-educated children's lived experiences of learning from their own perspectives, and to consider how their accounts might extend existing understandings of learning beyond school, particularly in relation to autonomy, competence, belonging, and participation.

Method/approach: Twelve home-educated children aged 5–12 from six families in South-East England created photo-journals of their learning over three weeks, followed by narrative interviews. Parent interviews provided context, but analysis centred children's accounts. Ethical approval was granted by St Mary's University Ethics Committee.

Results/findings: Children represented learning broadly, including academic work, play, creative activity, family life, community participation, clubs, educational visits, experimentation, and independent research. Learning was often described as becoming more able, confident, and prepared to participate in family, community, and future life.

Conclusion: The study shows that children's accounts can make visible forms of learning that may otherwise be hidden or undervalued. It argues that visual narrative methods can support children's voice by allowing children to define and represent learning in ways that matter to them.

Implications for children and families: Your everyday learning, interests, questions, and activities matter, and children's own views can help adults understand learning beyond school more clearly.

Implications for practitioners: You can support children's voice by using flexible, visual, and narrative methods that allow children to show what learning means in their own lives.

Keywords: children's voice, home education, visual narrative inquiry, photo-journals, children's learning

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-741 – WITHDRAWN

Children's interactions with peers vs educators during play: A multimodal study of their potential to promote language learning

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Background: Language development in early childhood education and care settings contributes to improved educational outcomes and reduced inequalities later in life. While extensive research has established that educator-child interactions foster early language learning, little is known about whether and how young children's interactions with their peers create language-learning opportunities.

Aim: This study compares the language learning opportunities that children experience in interactions with their educators and peers in an early childhood education and care setting.

Method/approach: Drawing on systemic functional linguistic theory (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) and social semiotic multimodal theory (Kress, 2010) as analytical frameworks, the study analyses how four children aged 3;4 to 3;9 use speech, gesture, and gaze in interactions with peers and educators. Naturalistic video recordings of typical activities were collected over four months, systematically transcribed, and analysed. Approval was granted by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Results/findings: The analysis reveals how children adjust their use of semiotic resources in response to their interactional partners, highlighting the unique and complementary language learning opportunities in educator-child and peer interactions.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that, alongside educators, peer interactions offer young children valuable and multimodally rich opportunities for language learning. This study contributes to the broader field of early childhood education and language development by providing a nuanced understanding of the interactional contexts that support early language learning in early childhood education and care settings.

Implications for children and families: While educators' guidance remains essential to your child's language development, the everyday conversations your child has with peers provide equally important opportunities for language learning, as children naturally adjust their speech, gestures, and gaze to suit each interactional partner.

Implications for practitioners: While your interactions with children remain central to their language development, spontaneous peer conversations offer distinct yet complementary learning opportunities — each context enriching their linguistic and multimodal repertoire differently.

Funding: PhD Funding Scholarship at Macquarie University.

Keywords: peer talk, educator/child talk, multimodality, language development, communication

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education

CVC2026-742

Looking to hear: Engagement, dialogue, and encounters unpacking children's voices in the context of play

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Background: In 2023, we were invited to contribute to the project Children's Perspectives in Early Childhood Pedagogy, Policy and Practice, led by the Early Childhood Office Research and Evaluation Team for the NSW Department of Education. The project centred on children's rights to be active participants in early childhood settings by creating meaningful opportunities to seek, hear, and consider children's perspectives.

Aim: Our contribution focused on gathering children's perspectives on physical environments and what children need from educators. As we began this work, we reflected on what "children's voice" looks like within the context of play. This prompted us to expand our understanding of voice beyond verbal communication to include children's play, shared dialogue, encounters with materials, and interactions with peers.

Method/approach: Using open-ended materials, art mediums, and collaboration, children expressed ideas in unexpected ways. These materials enabled children to symbolise, interpret, and communicate their thinking creatively. While our initial focus was on physical spaces, the project evolved to explore children's perspectives on what they need from teachers/educators. Ethics: Institutional approval was provided by the NSW DET.

Results/findings: The project revealed several key insights. Children's perspectives are also communicated through moments of "being", choice, autonomy, and their connections to place. The process reinforced the importance of reflective practice, ensuring educators remain open to perspectives that may challenge adult assumptions or agendas.

Conclusion: Since engaging in the project, we have further considered ways to advocate for children's rights and to share children's voices through the visual arts. Recently, we were selected to exhibit children's work at our local gallery. This exhibition will advocate for children as artists and citizens.

Implications for children and families: Children are competent and capable and have a right to share their voice in diverse ways. Connection and relationship are integral in meaningful engagement.

Implications for practitioners: Practitioners are invited to broaden their understanding of 'children's voice'. Children's voices show up in many ways through early childhood contexts and through play.

Keywords: children's perspectives, children's voice, early childhood pedagogy, play-based learning, child agency, reflective practice, visual arts, children's rights, encounters, engagement

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 10: Reducing Inequalities

CVC2026-743

Exploring similarities and differences between the early years learning framework (EYLF), Australia and Sri Lanka's national early childhood curriculum framework: Implications for early childhood practice

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Background: High-quality early childhood education is guided by curriculum frameworks that inform pedagogy and support children's learning and development (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2022). Preparing preservice teachers to connect theory with practice requires understanding these frameworks. The Australian Early Years Learning Framework promotes play-based learning and partnerships with families (Australian Government Department of Education, 2022), while Sri Lanka's framework emphasises holistic development, inclusion, and school readiness (National Institute of Education, 2025).

Aim: Despite the increasing international mobility of early childhood educators and expanding cross-border education partnerships, there has been limited comparative analysis of these two frameworks. Examining their similarities and differences can enhance preservice teacher preparation, strengthen culturally responsive pedagogy, and support the effective translation of curriculum theory into practice across diverse early childhood education contexts.

Method/approach: This study compares the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework of Sri Lanka to explore similarities, differences, and implications for early childhood practice. Using qualitative document analysis, the study examines child-centred learning, play-based pedagogy, assessment, and cultural inclusivity to support culturally responsive teaching in diverse early childhood contexts.

Results/findings: This research highlights the importance of understanding early childhood curriculum frameworks within their cultural contexts. Both the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Sri Lanka National Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework support holistic development and inclusive education, while reflecting different educational priorities. The study promotes cross-cultural understanding and culturally responsive teaching practices for educators, preservice teachers, and policymakers.

Conclusion: The comparative analysis highlights that both the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Sri Lanka National Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework promote holistic child development, play, inclusion, and family engagement. Despite differences in curriculum design and pedagogical emphasis, understanding both frameworks can strengthen preservice teacher preparation, support culturally responsive practice, and enhance early childhood education across diverse contexts.

Implications for children and families: This research highlights how play, culture, inclusion, and family partnerships support children's learning and well-being. It emphasises collaboration between families and early childhood education settings to promote positive learning experiences and holistic development.

Implications for practitioners: This research supports educators in adopting culturally responsive, inclusive, and child-centred practices while strengthening partnerships with families and

communities to meet the diverse learning and developmental needs of children in early childhood education settings.

Keywords: early childhood education, early years learning framework, Sri Lanka national early childhood education curriculum framework, comparative curriculum analysis, early childhood pedagogy

This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goals

CVC2026-744 – WITHDRAWN
Preparing teachers for play: A Playwork-informed approach to children's rights and inclusion

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Easton Myat, Victoria University, Australia
Judd Walsh, Victoria University, Australia
Eugenia Koh-Chua, Victoria University, Australia

Background: Play has been widely positioned as central to early childhood education; however, the literature suggests that play-based learning has prioritised planned outcomes, assessment, educator intentionality, and curriculum delivery. This literature review examined how Playwork offered a distinct theoretical and pedagogical lens for preparing preservice teachers to recognise children's agency, protect self-directed play, and promote children's rights.

Aim: The aim of this literature review was to examine the implications of Playwork for initial teacher education (ITE) programs preparing preservice teachers for early childhood practice. It considered how Playwork may support teaching philosophies that recognise children as active agents in their own play, learning, and lives. The review also explored how Playwork-informed approaches may challenge adult-centred assumptions about play-based learning by foregrounding children's self-directed play, choice, participation and rights, while complementing existing curriculum and professional expectations.

Method/approach: This presentation drew on a literature review of scholarship relating to Playwork, early childhood education, children's rights, children's agency, play-based learning, and teacher readiness. The review examined key theoretical and conceptual contributions in the literature and considered how these ideas intersected with ITE. A theory of change lens was used to organise the discussion by considering how Playwork-informed approaches could contribute to shifts in preservice teacher knowledge, philosophy, and practice.

Results/findings: As a literature review, this paper did not report empirical findings. Instead, it identified emerging themes that may complement ITE programs. The review suggested that Playwork offers a complementary lens for teacher education by challenging adult-centred assumptions about play and foregrounding children's self-directed activity, choice, participation, and agency. It also highlighted the need for further research into how Playwork-informed approaches may support preservice teachers to develop inclusive, rights-based, and relational teaching philosophies. Ethics approval has been obtained for further research (HRE26-063).
Conclusion: This literature review argued that Playwork offers a valuable contribution to ITE by supporting preservice teachers to develop more rights-based and inclusive teaching practices.
Implications for children and families: Playwork-informed approaches may support more inclusive worlds for children by recognising them as active participants in their play, learning, and relationships. Respecting self-directed play can strengthen children's agency, belonging, participation, and connection with others.
Implications for practitioners: Playwork may support preservice teachers and practitioners to question assumptions about play, intentional teaching, and readiness. It can help ITE programs prepare teachers to make decisions that support children's participation, choice, inclusion, and agency.
Keywords: playwork, teacher education, teacher readiness, children's rights, children's agency
This presentation relates to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

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