

CHILDHOOD REMIXED JOURNAL 2012

LAUNCH ISSUE

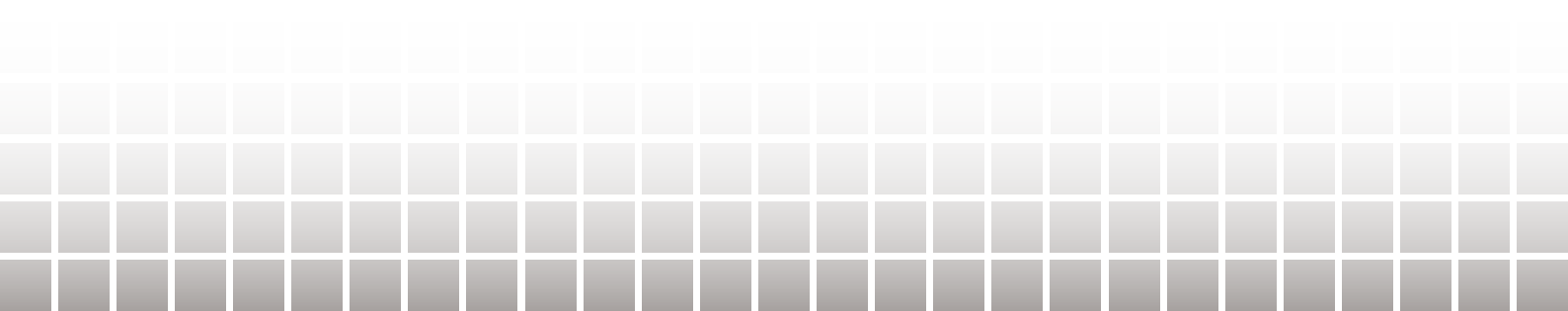
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Welcome

I am very pleased to welcome you to Childhood Remixed—the first online interdisciplinary journal emerging from University Campus Suffolk (UCS). This exciting and innovative production seeks to investigate and explore all aspects of childhood and bring together people from different areas, backgrounds and interests to share ideas and explore various aspects of childhood.

Whilst children make up one third of all humanity, up until quite recently they have not featured centrally in academic study and we know surprisingly little about them. The aim of Childhood Remixed is to capture emerging debates about childhood and engage intellectually with topics relating to children.

The contributors to the first edition of Childhood Remixed span across three of the five schools within UCS. The examinations of childhood utilise a range of media. There are five written articles, one image based submission and one voice recording of an undergraduate presentation. The first article is an image based contribution from Russell Walker (Arts





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Ho Ho Ho!



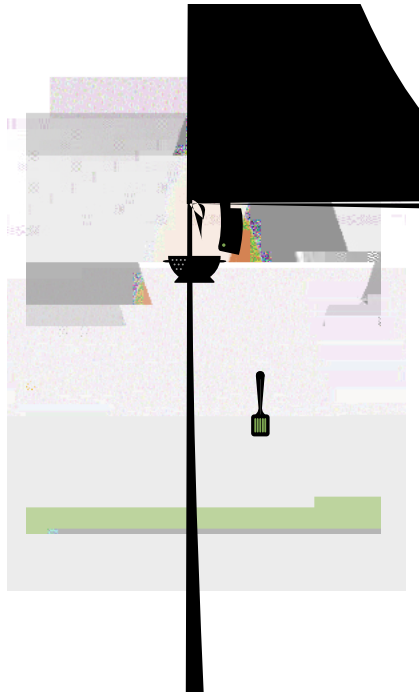
Every year it's the same problem, and every year there needs to be a new solution. The problem isn't what presents I should buy, it's what on earth am I going to draw for my Christmas Card?

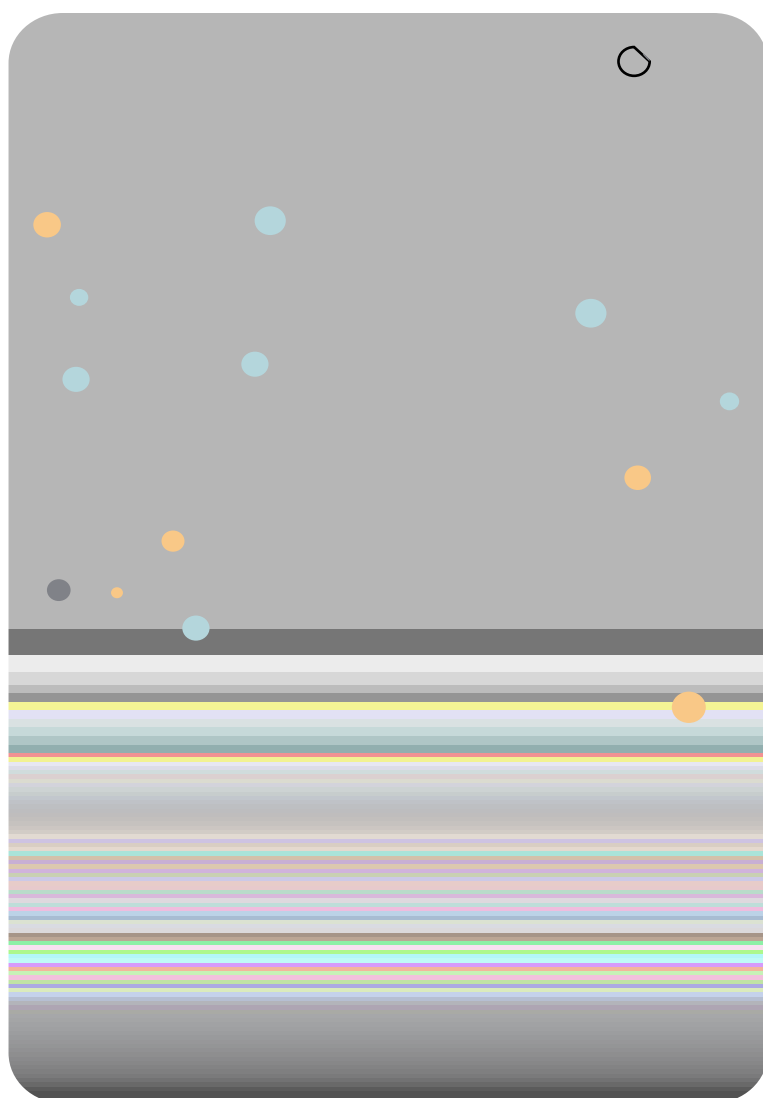
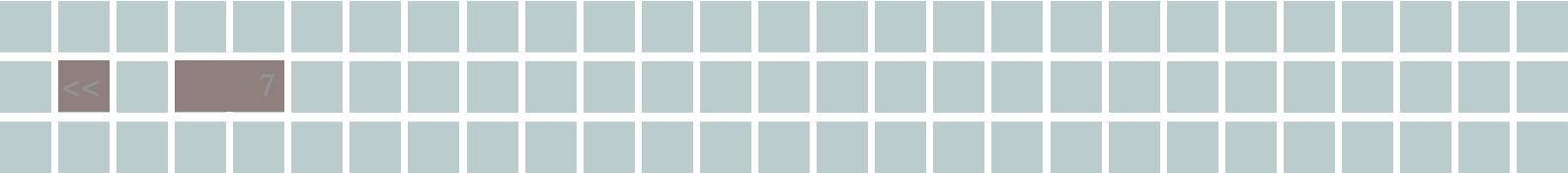
For as long as I can remember I've been producing my own Christmas card, in fact the earliest drawing that I still have from my childhood is a picture of King Herod sword ghting. In the background I've included a Christmas tree in order to make sure that the picture is indisputably about Christmas. That was in 1965.

I always think of making a picture much like the making of a hit record. It should be catchy but it shouldn't be so predictable that it's uninteresting. It should have a smart idea but not so 'smart' that only a rocket scientist could decode it.

So, what to do this year? Well, if I don't include some of the usual subjects in the picture such as snow, stars or perhaps Santa himself then its not going be Christmas. I learnt that when I was aged 6. The answer lies in how many of these elements I include and what will I do with them in the drawing?

So what about Colour? It's dif cult to avoid using certain colours in a Christmas Card. In fact, it could be argued that if you didn't include red, green or white then you've got no chance of making sure that those who receive your card would know that it had anything to do with the festive season at all!





Allison Boggis School of Applied Social Sciences

Allison Boggis is a Senior Lecturer at the University Campus Suffolk and a Course Leader for the Foundation Degree in Children's Care, Learning and Development. As a mother of a disabled son and having worked with disabled young children and their families in her role as project manager for Scope, Allison has a personal and professional interest in researching with disabled children and young people. She admits to enjoying the 'messiness' and unpredictability of researching with disabled children and is particularly intrigued about the ways in which they are (under) represented in academic literature.

Unconventional voices: Listening to disabled children and young people

Abstract

The emphasis on children's rights has led to prioritising their active participation (Veale, 2005) but despite suggestions that increasing numbers of children are being encouraged to participate in research, growth in this area has been slower in respect to disabled children and young people (Council for Disabled Children, 2003, Sinclair and Franklin, 2000). Whilst there are examples of disabled children's active engagement in research studies (for example Lewis, 2001; Marchant and Crisp, 2001; Shakespeare 2000), traditionally, their roles have been that of passive recipients and objects of enquiry. Indeed, the majority of research relating to disabled children and young people still relies on data collected from parents, carers and professionals (Stalker and Connors, 2003) or has focussed on children who were most verbally articulate (Begley, 2000; Fabretti et al, 1997).

With the commitment to reviewing and challenging notions of what are appropriate and reliable ways of knowing and understanding the world, this paper presents findings about the contexts that shape disabled children and young people's voices. The discussions are based on a broader ethnographic study with children whose voices do not meet recognized and constituted forms. In order to illustrate some of the epistemological implications of this, the paper is underpinned by an empirical study that forms the basis for the authors PhD research.

Introduction

Since the introduction of the United Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) there has been a heightened awareness of the importance of children's participation and an increasing interest in listening to their voices. This popular discourse regards the child's voice as worthy of being listened to and studied in its own right (James and Prout, 1997). The introduction of legislation and international conventions designed to assert and protect the interests and rights of children (Children Act, 1989; Children (Scotland) Act, 1995; Children (Northern Ireland) Order, 1995); imply that they should be encouraged to contribute to decisions that affect them. These changes in children's positions signify that they can no longer be regarded simply as products of biological determinism or as the passive output of child-rearing practices (James et al 1998). As a result, there is now more recognition of their social agency and active participation and the nature of their involvement in research within human and social sciences is changing.

However, complex debates relating to disabled children's competencies, age and maturity, and the credibility of their input have affected assessing whether their voices can be taken seriously. Assumptions of their lack of cognitive, emotional and experiential competence to make decisions in their own best interests have denied their agency (Parton and Wattam, 1999) and excluded their voices. Indeed, as Mazzei (2009) asserts, in our rush to capture voices, we tend to seek those that can be easily heard, confirmed and clarified. Not only do we seek voices that are tame and friendly but we also seek those that are easily translated. In other words, we seek 'normative' voices—those that can be shared for whoever must and can understand them (Derrida, 2001). This paper argues that it is no longer acceptable to exclude voices simply because they are considered incompetent or pose challenges to traditional research methods. Ignoring unconventional voices and only listening to those considered as normative fails to 'work the limits of voice' (Jackson, 2003) and this results in a partial understanding of childhood. Listening to disabled children and young people therefore, not only affords a more nuanced understanding of childhood, it adds moral imperative from a social justice and rights perspective.

Whilst 'listening to children's voices' is a good starting point for the social study of disabled childhoods, it is a complex and challenging task for the notion of voice is multi-dimensional. In addition, the art of listening to unconventional voices demands an attentiveness and openness that has hitherto been absent from ordinary enquiry. Therefore, in order that children and young people with little or no speech are fully included in research, this paper calls for researchers to critically reflect on the processes of production of voice. By doing so, the concept of voice will become more visible than it currently is. Listening to all voices and insisting on difference as well as equality should be the ultimate goals of participation.



The research

This paper draws on in-depth qualitative research with disabled children and young people who use mediated communication in the form of high-tech Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems (AACs). The study was carried out over a period of 18 months as part of the author's PhD research. The intention of the study was not to produce information that could be generalised, nor to seek typicality or representativeness, but to gather unique, individual and 'rich' descriptions of disabled children's lives. Therefore, creativity and reflexivity was employed when designing approaches for consultation and, to this end, 'bespoke' methods were adopted. In addition, a range of data collection tools were used to gather data including familiarisation visits, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. This multi-method approach enabled the provision of important findings relating to disabled children's everyday experiences of using high-tech communication aids.

Unlike other research methodologies beginning with and proceeding

the entitlement to voice opinions in decisions that affect them. It was clear from the early stages of the study that all of the young participants could communicate and take an active part in research conversations. Those who had little or no speech had unique ways of making their voices heard and so it was perplexing to discover that their views were not included in the processes of assessment and the provision of the AACs's. The majority of young participants were not asked if they wanted one nor were they given a choice of voice prosthetics. As one participant concluded; *'we are just given them...'* Excluding unconventional voices in decisions that affect them in this manner legitimises the 'situational tendencies' (Archer 1995:167) of incompetence that is usually associated with disabled children and young people. It also suggests that agency is closely related to articulation. Voices that are more amenable to active participation and constructive agency tend to be privileged because they are more suited to participatory environments. Unconventional voices require more careful listening and social circumstances need to be rearranged to accommodate their needs.

Including unconventional voices therefore requires researchers to move away from a universal definition of agency and place more emphasis on analysing the interactions of privilege and disadvantage that inform agency. This calls for a critical recognition of difference within equality whereby specific procedures are put in place to ensure that all voices can contribute to the debate. Adopting this model of agency not only respects and values a multitude of voices; it also includes different perspectives allowing for a more nuanced understanding of childhood.

Processes that inhibit disabled children's voices

The following scenario offers an example of how children and young people with little or no speech experience daily 'irresistible' external forces of domination (Stones 2005:111) that inhibit their voices. One young participant 'Lizzie' had just about given up using her AACs because it was physically exhausting to use and the time it took to compose a response meant that she could not keep in sync with situational conversations. She had begun to display signs of irritability when she was encouraged to use it. The following extract from an observation describes how Lizzie behaved as the teaching assistant tried to fix the AACs to the lap tray of her wheelchair: *'Lizzie protested loudly, wriggled and tried to push the teaching assistant's arm away. This attracted much attention and a second teaching assistant joined her. The two teaching assistants tried to figure out why she was so distressed and spoke together loudly above the screaming. After some discussion, they decided that the episode was just a case of 'Lizzie going off on one again because she didn't want to use her AACs'. The AACs was taken off the lap tray but Lizzie continued to cry and shout, signing 'toilet'. Her chair was reclined and she quietened momentarily. She signed 'toilet' again and whilst it was acknowledged it was dismissed because unscheduled toilet breaks were not usually permitted. After much*

deliberation, the teacher granted permission and Lizzie stopped crying and shouting as she was taken down the corridor to the toilet. Later, when I saw Lizzie and asked her how she was feeling, I got no response; she did not lift her head to look at me or acknowledge that I had asked her a question. The teaching assistant replied on her behalf; *'she's fine, aren't you love? You made all that fuss 'cos of a little tummy ache. Just started her period, that's all'.* Later, as I transcribed my observations, I reflected on Lizzie's reliance on others for personal, intimate care. She had little or no voice and so she used other means of communication—body language, vocalisation and signing. When her body language did not get the required response, she vocalised and signed to communicate. Even then, it took some time for the conveyed message to be understood and acted upon. Clearly, Lizzie had learned to rationalize her action based on previous attempts in order to make her voice heard.

Theories of agency in the context of voice are considered important to the above discussion not only in terms of their complex interactions in relation to the capacities of individuals, but also in terms of the interaction between individuals and societies in which they live. Whilst the work of Giddens (1984) can be usefully applied to childhood studies in that the analysis of childhood can account for the ways in which children shape and are shaped by social forces, it can be criticised for neglecting the non-rational, self-defeating aspects of agency, especially for individuals like Lizzie who experience what Ferguson (2003) describes as severe constraints on choice and action. The above scenario demonstrates how agency is constrained because inarticulation is often equated to non-rationality and incompetence. This legitimises dependence on, and constraint by, adults. Whilst Lizzie's choices were purposeful and she reflexively used her knowledge to monitor her conduct in rejecting the AACs and opting for an alternative way in which to get her message across, the powers of domination were irresistible. As a result, she began to use her voice less frequently and then only in relation to pain or frustration. However, not having a voice is not the same as having nothing to say. Indeed, during our research conversations, Lizzie demonstrated she had much to say and clearly had adequate means to do so. The above scenario, however, positions her very differently; far from being recognised as a competent agent, she was disabled by attitudes and governance. Despite the UNCRC (1989) actively encouraging listening to children's voices and respecting their experiences, Lizzie's voice was ignored. This led to feelings of disconnection and she struggled to see herself as worthwhile. Eventually she chose to keep silent in the fear that, in speaking, her voice would not be heard.



Conclusion

Whilst not disputing that the recognition of disabled children and young people's agency entitles them to greater participatory rights, it can be concluded that the problem is that rights are rooted in a mis-guided perception of the developmental needs of children. Indeed, this paper has presented empirical research that suggests that children's rights are susceptible to being defined and moderated by political and cultural consideration. The discussions have highlighted some of the contexts and processes that influence and shape both the participatory rights and the voices of disabled children and young people. The paper has suggested that conventional emphasis of agency relates to articulation, and suggests that the continued marginalisation of inarticulate children and young people's voices on the grounds of vulnerability and incompetence allows for the (mis) interpretation of disabled childhoods. Rendering unconventional voices as part of the overall soundscape of voice not only demands an attentiveness and openness to hearing voices that are unusual and unspoken, but also on suspending disbelief of incompetence. This paper calls for researchers and practitioners to adjust their thinking, to move away from accepting only scripted words as valid and listen more carefully to silently spoken voices, facial expression, utterances and body language to make meaning. It also calls for equal opportunities for voice and embraces a moral obligation to listen and seek mutual understanding.

This paper is an open and honest reflection of some of the key themes arising from my PhD study with disabled children and young people. Ethical consideration regarding informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were considered in depth throughout the research and all participants were fully aware of their rights of withdrawal. Ethical guidelines from the BSA, NPSCC, NCB and the University of Essex were used to support this study. Ethical approval was gained before primary data was obtained. The author has an Enhanced CRB. The real names of participants have been substituted in the paper by pseudonyms, but any mistakes and errors noted within the paper, are of course, my own.



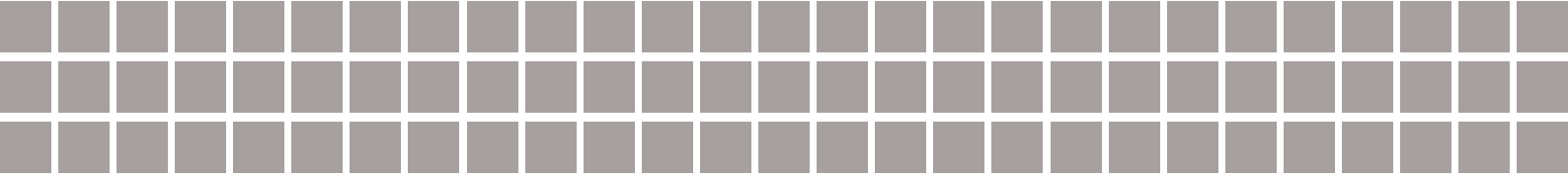


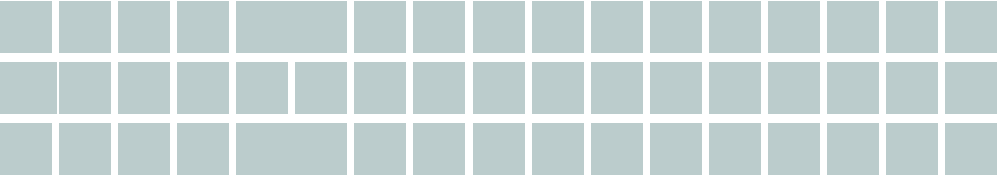
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Working in partnership

Working in partnership means not only working with the child, young person and their family but also within the multi-disciplinary team (MDT). There is a requirement within the NICE (2005) manual for improving outcomes to have weekly MDT meetings in the shared care units and the outcomes of the meeting are recorded in the patient's records and faxed, according to NHS confidential guidelines, to the principal treatment centre. Monthly video conferences are held between the two hospitals and bi monthly visits from the consultant and nurse specialist from the principal treatment centre. Thereby enabling the partnership to be maintained and developed.

Negotiating care

In negotiating care it is important that one side is not more powerful than the other. However, it is important to recognise the implications of negotiating care. Giving children and young people a voice means that they may reject the treatment that is recommended. At times this may present an ethical dilemma, for example when deciding if a child or young person has the right to reject the treatment, particularly if this is in dispute with the parents of the child or young person or the staff. Whitty-Rogers et al (2009) argue that when working with children where end-of-life decisions are to be made, it is important that they have autonomy in order to ask questions and to state their opinions so that they can fully understand their health condition.

It is clear that an important element of negotiating care is that of open and honest communication channels that are focussed on the individual needs of the child or young person and family (Corlett and Twycross, 2006). This raises the ethical issue often encountered in practice, namely truth telling (Gibson, 2011). Parents may wish to protect their child, as could be argued from the example given in the section related to consent. Gibson (2011) and experience from practice establishes that the opposite may be true, in that the young person may wish to protect the parents. It should be acknowledged that there are many facets to truth telling, Gibson (2011) highlights issues such as available time and cultural practices. However, for the professionals involved it is about being clear on whose best interests they are acting. For nurses this means being open, honest and acting with integrity (NMC, 2008).

Communication skills

A Cochrane review undertaken by Ranmal et al (2008) highlighted the need for more rigorous research into interventions that augment communication with children and young people with cancer. However, Kelsey's (2007) phenomenological study discovered the importance of communication skills on the perception of being involved in health care decisions. The children and young people discussed both verbal and non-verbal communication



Conclusion

This article has explored involving children and young people with cancer in decisions about their care. It has focused on the aspects of consent, children's rights and respect for the individual; advocacy; working in partnership; negotiating care; communication skills and support for the child or young person. Integrated into the discussion have been case studies that highlight particular aspects of the issues included. It is clear that whilst children and young people should be encouraged to be involved in decisions about their health care, it needs to be established that this was in the child/young person's best interests.

Moore and Kirk's (2010) literature review of twenty-four pieces of research on children's and young people's participation in decisions relating to health care concluded that practitioners need clear guidance on how to involve children and young people in the decision-making process. It is evident that in relation to children and young people with cancer this would be a welcome addition to the evidence-base for clinical practice.

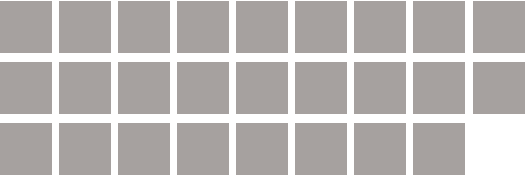
This paper reflects the key themes arising from current literature on involving children and young people with cancer in decisions about management of their condition. Ethical considerations were considered in the development of a case study approach, it was decided that no names were to be used in the article in order to ensure that confidentiality was not breached.



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Are We Visible?

by Shamshad Khan (2001)

Oppressed Coverage

Bomb blasts it was us who did it
 Famines the result of Islamic rule
 Demonstrations only of mindless masses
 Women covered it's got to be oppressive
 And whatever the news
 You restate your views with such ease
 Always nishing with a call to prayer
 Any excuse to show us on our knees

Introduction

September 11th 2001 is a date which marks a major event in world history—a day which most people will recognise in its commonly abbreviated form of '9/11' and when a new page was written in the story of the struggle between 'Jihad and McWorld' (Barber 2003). The significant and powerful media discourse which has surrounded Islam since 9/11 has created increasingly problematic relationships between those of differing ethnicity and religion in the UK (Poole 2000). The core of this conundrum raises debates as to how a young Muslim boy growing up in contemporary Britain might develop a national identity, and also questions to which country his affinities might lie. Whilst national identity is historically and culturally tied to patriarchy and territorial divisions which shape, unite and divide us (Anderson 1991), it is also an emotive and fascinating subject. It was this that inspired the decision to study it in depth as a final year dissertation topic, the findings of which inform this article.

As identity is at the heart of some of the most pressing issues of the early 21st century, the notion of what it means to be 'British' is one which features regularly in the press (Carrington 1995). The Dissertation study argued that media discourses not only construct notions of 'difference' and 'other' but also contribute to debates about whether 'multiculturalism' is a lived reality or rhetorical ideology expounded by politicians (BBC News [online] 2005). The author highlighted that Muslim children like Ahmed, regularly face what is known as the 'monolithic bloc' infers that they are 'all the same'. She concludes that it is reasonable to suggest that this underpins their lack of affinity with their 'homeland' and contributes to feelings of resentment and exclusion (Bonnell et al [online] 2010).

The final Dissertation study highlighted how, at school, Ahmed would be taught citizenship with the intention of promoting racial equality and democracy. However, the author uses evidence to suggest that such an homogenising approach has serious shortcomings. Indeed, she argues that whilst Ahmed himself may adopt a hybrid identity to emphasise certain aspects of his life (Moinian 2009), this is considered inadequate for the

majority of Muslims face a dominant western hegemony that surrounds Islam in Britain (Werbner 2000). She not only questions whether the so-called lack of affinity with 'homeland' contributes to feelings of resentment and exclusion (Bonnell et al [online] 2010) but also whether it can be counteracted with citizenship education even when incorporated with contentious debate and critical thinking.

An outline of the study

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which was ratified by the British government in 1991, has resulted in an increasing demand to hear the child's voice and encourage participation in research. This is one of a set of rights when working with young children (Alderson 1995) that should not only underpin research with children but all matters which affect children's lives (Morrow and Richards 1996). Understanding this, and acknowledging that a literature based study can be seen to be limited by not actually 'hearing the child's voice' (Alderson 1995), it was possible for the author to focus on a hypothetical Muslim child by utilising a 'case study' approach, a method that Yin (1994) believes is suitable when studying complex social phenomena. In addition, the author concluded that not only did a literature based study have the advantage of being basically ethnographic, but by studying discourse and literature children are not viewed as 'othered' (Lahman 2008), but fully embedded in society (Qvortrup et al 2009). In this way, she felt that 'Ahmed' would be given a voice which may otherwise remain unheard.

The methodological approach underpinning the Dissertation study as a whole developed from a view of childhood as a social construction and as a central element of social structure (Qvortrup et al 2009). This view of children as social agents underpins the 'new sociology of childhood' advocated by James et al (1998) which sees the construction of childhood in relation to adulthood, not opposed to each other (Alanen and Mayall 2002). From a social constructionist perspective, where sociology and psychology are integrated (Burr 2003) to emerge as critical social psychology (Wetherell 1996), the author felt that this perspective effectively challenged the 'taken for granted' ways in which the world is understood via 'conventional' wisdom (Burr 2003) and advocates that language, or discourse, is the defining feature of social life (Tufin 2005). The author concluded that together with the philosophy of social construction, critical social psychology works with the fluidity of life, suitably reflecting the power structures and organisational inequalities evident in language, ideologies, meanings and culture which develop from discourse (Hepburn 2008).

Like Hall (1997), the author regarded discourse as powerful and, in agreement with Billig (1995) believed that it seeps into consciousness in surreptitious ways to influence attitudes and construct identity. Inspired by the work of Foucault (2002), the author sought to identify 'discourses' that positioned Ahmed within cultural and historical functions of institutions.

Indeed, according to Foucault (2002), identity is actually produced out of discursive power practices and power relations. He also viewed discourses, or language, as the key building blocks through which both political and personal dynamics operate (Hepburn 2008).

‘Passing the school dinner table test...’

The Dissertation study indicated ways in which media discourse surrounding the 9/11 attacks included graphic reports of the ‘war on terror’, the subsequent invasion of Iraq and the 2005 London bombings and argued that the culmination of which has been destructive, powerful and divisive. The author suggested that such discourse has resulted in widespread fear of Muslims and, as a result, a reactive culture has developed and contributed to the rise of right wing organisations such as the English Defence League (Eatwell and Goodwin 2009). This, she pointed out, was emphasised when Baroness Warsi of the Conservative party stated that the term ‘Islamophobia’ had passed the ‘dinner table test’ (Kirkup 2011a) which indicated that nationalism may be increasing as people retreated to place, race and religion as a means of self-defence.

The author argued that discursive analysis of articles published in the Daily Telegraph, the Guardian and the BBC news served to demonstrate how media coverage of significant events such as 9/11 and the London bombings of July 2005 vilified Muslims in British Society today; issues that were exemplified by David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, when he declared the failure of multiculturalism (Kirkup 2011b). Indeed, the study analysed the news reports using both Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1981) and Social Cognitive Development Theory (Aboud 1988). However, the author deduced that neither theories were entirely adequate for a full in-depth study of contemporary national identity.

Discussions within the Dissertation study suggested that perceived breakdown in British society was a problem which hit the height of the political agenda after a spate of racially motivated issues which culminated in raised racial tensions following the 9/11 attacks. They highlighted that the anger of blame was pointed towards the young, and, as a result, institutions such as schools worked to reproduce an idealised view of childhood in order to be ‘good citizens’ in contemporary society (Lee 2001), school was the chosen arena for change. Citizenship education was formally rolled out in September 2002 in order to introduce children to democracy (Giddens 2006) and to challenge racism and the controversy surrounding multiculturalism (Smithers 2002). An in-depth evaluation of the delivery of citizenship education was made within the Dissertation study with particular reference to social issues which worsened after the London bombings on 7th July 2005. Indeed, an assessment of its success made with reference to reports by Parekh (2000), the Department for Education (2007), Breslin et al [online] (2006) and the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (Keating et al [online] 2010), all of which explore notions of ‘Britishness’ and citizenship.

The study also considered more recent approaches to identity and prejudice and focussed on Ahmed and the constraints of the British social structure. However, it acknowledged that multiple identities proliferate in an ever-evolving globalised world (Ackroyd and Pilkington 1999) and are influenced by many social elements including family, school, the media and social environments (Ding and Littleton 2005). Indeed, an assessment was made of more recent research by Barrett (2000, 2004), Davies and Harre (1990) and Moinian (2009) to incorporate the fluid, non-static nature of multiple identities.

Ahmed's national identity—people, politics and power

Initially, the Dissertation study critically evaluated how children develop a concept of nation and how this may be influenced by the discourse of political leaders which is delivered via the media of newspapers and television news. The evaluation was underpinned by Social Identity Theory, or S.I.T., (Tajfel 1978) and Social Cognitive Development Theory (Aboud 1988). In recognition of the many regional and cultural variations in the way this process works according to the specific socio-cultural context a child experiences (Barrett 2000), the study focussed on a hypothetical child named Ahmed, a twelve year old Muslim boy growing up in the London Borough of Newham. It was felt that a qualitative case study of this type would give voice to a particular child of ethnic minority status in Britain today, avoiding the homogenisation that is often created when diversity is ignored and children are grouped as a mass collective (Connelly 1998).

After extensive analysis of news coverage of the terrorist attacks on New York on 11th September 2001 (9/11) as reported in the Telegraph, the Guardian and by BBC News [Online], the author discovered that recurring themes began to emerge from the data. Descriptions in the media such as 'the Muslim world' or 'Islamic Terrorists' (La Guardia et al [online] 2001) highlighted that some groups who believe in Islam created a divisive, derogatory anti-Muslim message. Another theme highlighted America as 'the only superpower' and a democratic world leader, positioning its dominance in global affairs economically and politically (Harden [online] 2001). The supposed impregnability of America was shaken by the attacks, giving concerns that the events had adjusted the 'New World Order' (La Guardia et al [online] 2001).

The 9/11 attacks were immediately interpreted as an assault on democratic values and Blair, the Prime Minister of Britain, endorsed this by saying that the battle was between 'the free and democratic world and terrorism'. He confirmed Britain's alliance with Bush by vowing to stand 'shoulder to shoulder with America to fight the new evil in our world' (Jones 2001) and other politicians across the world deemed the attacks a 'message of war' (Delves Broughton et al [online] 2001). In Britain, Hague of the Conservatives likened the attacks to 'an act of war against civilisation'; thereby positioning the West as good and civilised, fighting the evil 'other'.

This view was emphasised when Bush quoted 'you are either with us or against us' (Jones 2001)' as it created an 'us versus them' situation, evocative of Said's (2004) term 'the West versus the rest'. The author suggested that when Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1978) were applied to Ahmed and his family at this stage, a dilemma quickly became apparent. Indeed, whilst Ahmed and his siblings were (hypothetically) British born Muslims, would their allegiance lie with Islam or the U.S.A. and the West? She concluded that this exposed a weakness in the theory, arguing that many people are culturally diverse and therefore may belong to several social groups relating to nationality, religion, language, ethnicity and other customs (Barth 1969).

The Dissertation illustrated that suspicion for the 9/11 attacks was



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The double hermeneutic of the 'sexualisation of childhood' debate

Abstract

The proliferation of debates surrounding the sexualisation of childhood in the late 20th and early 21st century has led to the commission of a range of investigations (Abstract 0 -1.364)Tj 0 -1.364 TD (in the l6png w6t1ch,sumrunculhe S commis

Introduction

The new sociology of childhood (James and Prout 1990) signalled a turning point for the study of children and young people within the social sciences. An emphasis on the role of culture, structure and agency in the everyday lives of children replaced the previous focus on universality, passivity and developmental progress through pre-assigned stages to adulthood. An important part of this development was the role of the double hermeneutic of the social sciences in the study of childhood “to proclaim a new paradigm of childhood sociology is also to engage in and respond to the process of reconstructing childhood” (James and Prout 1990:9). Second order concepts, devised to mediate the frames of meaning of social worlds, can become first order concepts appropriated by social life itself (Giddens 1984). That is to say, that research and theories within the social sciences are likely to have practical consequences. Academics and policy-makers do not operate within a distinct and separate bubble and debates surrounding children and childhood have the power to profoundly impact upon social worlds.

This paper intends to explore the role of the double hermeneutic in the sexualisation of childhood debate manifest in three international reports: the Australia Institute’s (AI) (2006) Corporate Paedophilia, American Psychological Association’s (APA) (2010) Report of the Task Force on the Sexualisation of Girls and Bailey’s (2011) Report of an Independent Review of the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood commissioned by the Department of Education for England and Wales. It would be impossible to provide a thorough discussion of all the pertinent issues within these reports. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to draw attention to areas inadequately considered and in need of further critical discussion. These include firstly, broad definitions of ‘sexualised’ media content or commercial goods which appear to render consumption and embodiment as implicitly ‘sexualised’. Secondly, the limited attention paid to the role of agency in the lives of children and young people and, finally unproblematised constructions of gender and sexuality. Included originally was also Buckingham et al’s (2010) Report to the Scottish Equal Opportunities Committee regarding sexualised goods aimed at children. However, on analysis of this report, it was evident that this was an encompassing and child-centred approach to the debate and the critiques levelled here at the other reports do not apply. Readers are recommended to consult this report for a full discussion of the proliferation of ‘sexualised’ commodities and their role in the lives of children.

issues lives of children.

2010) yet framing the sexual as risky, rife with cautions and prohibitions. Sexuality in contemporary cultures occupies a similar position to childhood itself, presumed to be natural yet requiring constant vigilance. It is argued that modern societies are characterised by risk anxiety (Giddens 1990; Beck 1992) and this is never more present than in conversations which consider the relationship between childhood and sexuality. Sexual knowledge is considered an important boundary marker between the worlds of adults and children (Jackson 1982) but the location of this boundary is a source of debate—often manifest in discussions of sex education (Pilcher 2005). Sexuality is frequently conceptualised as inimical to childhood itself – the two domains as mutually exclusive. As such, discussions surrounding the sexualisation of childhood are indicative of a more general social fear regarding the loss or erosion of childhood itself (Postman 1994); emotionally charged with high degrees of moral concern.

This paper adopts an alternative position, locating children as neither inherently sexual nor asexual; sexuality as neither intrinsically good nor bad for children's wellbeing. Instead it considers individuals 'sexuality' as possessing a corporeal materiality that is simultaneously culturally constructed; accessed, understood and modified through discourse. Emphasising appreciation of biology, structure, culture and agency and attempting to move past moral absolutes.

The development of the New Sociology of Childhood (James and Prout 1990) enabled the posing of new questions in childhood studies and the employment of social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann 1967) facilitates an emphasis on the historical and cultural specificity of children's everyday experiences; a statement which could equally be applied to sexuality. Elias (1994:148) demonstrates the differences in the treatment of sexuality and children across history, "In the civilising process, sexuality...is increasingly enclosed in a particular enclave...and with children, such things are...not referred to at all". However, a reliance solely on social constructionism can result in a form of determinism which in its extreme manifestations ignores the materiality of the social world and the corporeality of the self.

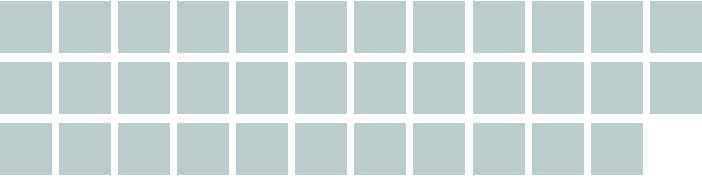
In order to move beyond risks of social or cultural reductionism, where any acknowledgement of the 'realness' of individuals physical experiences disappears behind a veil of discourse, this paper situates the study of childhood and sexuality in a similar manner to the way in which James and Hockey (2007) frame their exploration of health and the body—utilising Shilling's (2005) Critical Realism. This framework employs social constructionism alongside Structuration Theory (Giddens 1979) and Phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 1974). In the context of this debate, the media and consumer culture will have an impact on the everyday lives of children but these experiences are accessed and understood through shifting historical and cultural discourses and embedded in the corporeal experiences of individuals. Contexts which appear fixed are never stable

(Derrida 1988) but the performances are no less real for individuals.

De ning sexualisation

The reports in question have very different approaches to de ning 'sexualisation'. The Bailey Review (2011:8) argues that this debate is not served well by developing "complicated and contested, de nitions of commercistion havping 186 /T1_0 1 Tf 11 0 0 11 13.6167 rve v8y 728.d sexualisation

are presented as scientific fact (Simpson 2011:295) instead of being subject to explicit, critical reflexivity (Hawkesworth 2006). Such sensationalist statements could in themselves be damaging and abhorrence of child sexual abuse should not blind us to investigating sexual non-abusive activities in children's lives. As in the Bill Henson case, the question should be asked "were those who wished to classify Henson's photography as child pornography in fact...rendering those particular images of the child even more sexually desirable to the very people they feared?" (Simpson 2011:299). Inadequate consideration of the context of clothing, nakedness and images of children in consumer culture results in a struggle of signification (Cover 2003) where the rituals that constrain both gazer



standards of beauty (Lloyd 1996) and sex. Indeed, Buckingham et al (2010) argue that children are not wholly free to make their own choices but equally “they are not in any sense simply the dupes of marketers” (2010:4). As explored in the previous section concepts of appropriation and agency are imperative to understanding how children interact with and utilise commodities and media images. “Young people present themselves as media literate and able to make their own decisions about sex” (Attwood 2009: xx). These decisions may be mediated by structural forces and dominant cultural scripts but if we assume girls are unanimously vulnerable and passive and take the same broad brush and unquestioning approach to gender and sexuality, evidenced in these reports, then we too are guilty of not supporting the diversification of images of gender, sexuality and what it means to be a child in the 21st century.

Conclusion

The intention here has not been to present a discussion of feminist critiques of sexualised media (Bordo 1993; Gill 2008) or to extensively analyse the literature on young masculinities, sexuality in consumer cultures or children’s voices in the research process. Instead it has intended to draw attention to the role of the double hermeneutic in the sexualisation of childhood debate by highlighting that both unquestioned assumptions and lacunas in the reports analysed, have the potential to inherently impact the social worlds under discussion. The commissioning of these reports has provided a valuable space for debates surrounding sexuality in contemporary media and consumer cultures and has drawn attention to an important issue in the lives of children in contemporary cultures. However, this paper highlights a broad brush approach among the reports to the complex issue of child sexuality. The discussions lack historical context, are imbued with value judgements that have not been subject to critical reflexivity and are framed in morally absolutist terms.

The reports fall far short of recognising children as social actors (Prout 2000) and fail to place value on children’s voices in a debate which should place them at the centre of enquiry. Even where children’s views are considered they remain gendered. To put this bluntly, to ignore boys in academic work is to ignore boys in real life. It sends a message that boys are unaffected by these issues and that boy’s views are unimportant within these conversations, neither of which are true and both of which run the risk of silencing their voices. The conceptualisation of girls as inherently vulnerable within a dominant culture will not serve to help reinforce women’s power (Wolf 1994) or rights and, despite the emphasis on young girls within these reports, certainly does not demonstrate the value of their voices either.

If academics, policy makers, practitioners and educators continue to focus all their attention on girls, construct children and young people as fundamentally passive and assume all media and commodities related to

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Sarah Richards



Introduction

Motivation for this theoretical paper is drawn from an interaction which took place sometime ago between me and my daughter. With her permission, I outline the exchange here which sets the context for the discussion to follow. When asked about her day in school she explained that someone in her class had moved his name from the green light to the amber light (A punishment involving the use of traffic lights where children must move their names towards the red light at each transgression). She suggested that she felt sad for him as he had wanted to sit with his friend but had not been allowed to and when he had got upset, he had been told to move his name. She expressed a desire to comfort him and this was followed by asking me why children who were being told off could not be comforted by their friends. I asked if he was a particular friend of hers and she said no he was just one of the children in her class. My honest but inadequate response to her was that I did not know, but I was reminded of Wall's (2010:10) claim of childhood being a test for morality. The discussion here is not analysis of this interaction rather of my interest in the issues evoked by it.

Children's right to participate enshrined in UNCRC, is embedded within the institutions such as school where childhood is situated. In these locations children are encouraged and at times compelled to acquire the skills associated with participation, paradoxically one of these being autonomy. I argue that the extent to which autonomy and rationality are embedded within these rights, has created a hegemonic ethical discourse to the detriment of children. The tension between the moral and empathetic actions of children and established ethical codes of behaviour is a neglected topic. Yet it is also one where opportunity to shift ethical understanding exists. In this paper I outline the evident misfit of these two positions and explore children's capacity for moral interdependency within school as a social structure which fosters the acquisition of adultist autonomy, rationality and individualism.

The relationship between ethics and morality first needs to be outlined. To do this I use Frank's (2004:19) exploration of the inextricable connection of the two terms, where ethics refers to a codified set of principles and the term moral is used to describe the situated and contingent response between people where the nature of that response 'declares our moral self' in the sense that 'how we act will declare who we are'. This moral connection between self and other is the crux of my debate here and I use Bakhtin's (1984:287) argument to situate the following ethical discussion where individual existence is established not through holding an 'internal sovereignty' but is to be found in the boundary between self and other as a result of dialogue.

The contemporary meaning and significance of autonomy (and its relationship with rationality) in ethical discourse is also a key element in this discussion. I suggest that children are consigned to the margins of ethical debates as a result of the dominance of claims for autonomy and children's

perpetuates the denial of children as having the capacity to maintain complex social and moral relationships until an age more proximate to adulthood is reached (see for example Kohlberg 1981). The reduction of the diversity of children to a universal, temporal, developmental journey inhibits our ability to see children like adults, as having the capacity to be moral and therefore ethical beings (as well as immoral and unethical). However such inadequacies in children are not 'natural or innate' but must be considered as being socially produced (Cockburn 1998:109). My argument here is that such qualities should not be assumed to be the result of progressive development (or indeed a failure of such an emphatic developmental focus when such qualities are absent) but already present in children who are constructed by but also construct their social worlds (Wall 2010). The evidence for this is found in the everyday social actions of children. Bakhtin's boundary between self and other with our existence being within communication provides a useful lens through which to identify children's empathy and moral actions.

Voices between the boundaries

Part of current ethical discourse involves the right to protection from harm. Despite this being a dominant concern of the care which surrounds children, much more is written about the necessities of protecting than about the child assuming a protective role. Yet empirical examples of children as the protectors of others, acting as moral and empathetic beings, as complex and developed as adults are not difficult to find. Cheney (2011) provides narratives of children protecting their parents from painful discussions about their HIV status. Wall (2010) speaks movingly about a terminally ill child misbehaving to frustrate his parents as an attempt to reduce their pain at his death. These examples demonstrate the connection felt by one child for an 'other'. Such engagement requires empathy not independence and autonomy. The prevailing discourse on morality in childhood is that children are the passive recipients. However it is how such terms are understood that excludes children from being moral agents. If ethical understanding shifted towards an ethic of care where the emphasis is on nurturance, reciprocity and connection, then children's ethical and moral actions would become far more explicit. A justice model which can operate in the classroom reduces the capacity for empathy and increases the tension between alternative attributes looked for in children. The social positioning of children allows adults to seek obedience and compliance to rules from them, I argue that this autocratic approach to the child-adult relationship impedes the very qualities that we seek to embed (Lockyer 2007:29). Morality is constructed in the moment by moment action, in those boundaries between self and other, rather than an abstract concept ascribed to human interaction. Such moments as these are uncomfortable ones where what we do declares who we are (Frank 2004). It is in the social structures where children are situated that they learn alternative ethical and

moral concepts to those that they already hold.

Constraints upon the ethical reasoning of children determined by the social structure and their social position are evident in their interactions. If an absolutist approach to the control of behaviour in the classroom dominates, we run the risk that it will overshadow the ethical relativism practiced by children. The current emphasis on autonomy in ethical codes of behaviour induces a tension between the need to connect and the pursuit of individual freedom. However, what the empirical interactions offered by Cheney (2011) and Wall (2010) reveal are intricate connections between all those involved as well as the complexity of the social context which children successfully navigate. Rather than valuing and protecting independence, we need to reframe ethical discourse to better reflect such connection through a greater emphasis on interdependence (see for example Oakley 2005).

Dependence and vulnerability as human attributes

Qualities which are commonly attributed children are vulnerability and dependence. Such characteristics however need to be evaluated and their application to children not necessarily refuted but extended more inclusively. This task is a necessary one if rational individual autonomy is to be developed into more inclusive ethical principles where the moral and ethical actions of children can be more relevant. Despite extensive evidence that children demonstrate both social and economic interdependence historically and currently, they continue to be perceived as passive, vulnerable and the dependent appendages of adults. However greater recognition of interdependence between adult and child is becoming evident (see for example Ennew 1994, Invernizzi 2008). In part this has been revealed through liberal political administrations with extensive market economies which have necessitated the economic labour of both (where appropriate) adults in households. Such economic labour has changed familial organisation and highlighted the actions of children in supporting parental economic activities (Ennew 2007). Wall (2010) extends this concept of interdependency by arguing that children are at times vulnerable and dependent but that adults on occasion are too. His argument, that we are all both dependent and independent is not to be confused with the developmental, temporal, linear model but one indicative of a more fluid approach. What then emerges is a plurality of experience between self and others which is inclusive and based upon all our interdependencies. This would effectively shift ethical codes from the individual to the plural 'others' and recognise ethical rights to extend beyond notions of individual justice towards ethics of care and empathy.

Experiencing empathy

An exploration of the relationship between autonomy and empathy is relevant here. An appropriate argument for this is provided by Slote (2007:59) who suggests that children practice their skills in autonomy by



example, offered through empathetic parenting. Parents, who allow for the individualities of children, demonstrate respect for their opinions and aspirations, ultimately, facilitate a nurturing environment for the acquisition of autonomous thinking. The application of Bakhtin's (1984) concept of the 'being' developed through communication between connected but other individuals is also evident here. This theory becomes an important one to consider in relation to the acquisition of a characteristic so valued in advanced liberal states currently and I question the extent to which the acquisition of empathy (as a route to it) is facilitated in the classroom specifically but in the wider social context generally. An inclusion of children's moral activities in a more plural ethical discourse, where the relations between self and other are nurtured may just result in more autonomous adults.

Conclusion

Children hold the potential to shift and develop our ethical understandings. Children's and adult's capacity to care should be the starting point for ethical principles not the place where it becomes diminished by an emphasis on autonomous selfhood. Connected empathy is an ethical position that children already demonstrate and arguably can be used as an effective route towards the autonomous citizen. Unifying morality and ethics within an ethic of care makes for a more complete ethical position where children and adults are centred not excluded or seen as ethical citizens in the making. Wall (2010:10) suggests that 'Childhood is morality's most profound test'. I argue that children demonstrate ethical relations as equally complex as those practiced by adults in the social worlds that we construct and are constructed by. Childhood then is society's most enduring opportunity to move towards an ethic of care.





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The role of free-play in supporting children's personal, social and emotional development

Abstract

The role of free-play in supporting children's personal social & emotional development considers the low value given to children's free-play in today's society. It highlights the challenges faced by playwork settings in order to meet the learning & development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) whilst maintaining the focus on the freely-chosen, personally directed play required by the Playwork Principles. Current research into children's well-being and the implications of failing to support the development of Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) are reviewed within the presentation.

This submission is in the form of an audio file and can be downloaded from Childhood Remixed online at UCS.



