IS ECEC PART OF THE SOLUTION OR IS IT PART OF THE PROBLEM?

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1. From equality of outcomes to equality of opportunities
2. Inequality of access
3. The tensions between early learning and care
4. Embracing complexity
1. FROM EQUALITY OF OUTCOMES TO EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY
The idea of giving people equal opportunity early in life, whatever their socioeconomic background, is embraced across the political spectrum – as a matter of fairness for the left and as a matter of personal effort for the right. [...] Thus, shifting the debate from inequality of income or earnings to inequality of opportunity, and to the policies needed to tackle that inequality, might facilitate a political and policy consensus. When the focus of the debate is on inequality of income or any other outcome, the views about how much to redistribute – if any at all – and through which mechanisms would vary from left to right across the political spectrum. However, when the focus shifts to the equalization of opportunity, political consensus about the need to reduce inequity is easier to achieve, and the direction this principle gives to policy is clearer (Paes de Barros, Ferreira, Molinas Vega, & Saavedra Chanduvi, 2009, p. xvii; 27).
Early childhood programmes increase education attainment and productivity, resulting in higher earnings and social mobility. No matter what internationally agreed goal you take, it is the poorest and marginalized groups that are deprived of education, health care and other basic human entitlements required to live in dignity. Early childhood care and education is a starting point for levelling the playing field. It is the greatest of equalizers

(Irina Bockova, UNESCO 2010)
Is this renewed attention something to wish for?

It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money, in determining whether their potential is realised in adult life (Field, 2010).
LE VISITEUR

DU PAUVRE,

Le Pèlerin,

Numéro de l'année 1

bien connu de tous, par l'échange du mois,
un peu plus, par l'oeuvre locale,
qui est à rassurer le plus possible ou le moins,
voir, l'oeuvre de vos mains qui sont sauvées.
Return on investments

Should we leave the discussion on the meaning of (early childhood) education to economists?
2. INEQUALITY IN ACCESS
Why?
A report for the “child guarantee” initiative of EC. Based on expert reports in 28 MS.
Policy
Markets
“Choice”
Funding demand or funding offer
Policy
Markets
“Choice”
Funding demand or funding offer

Provision
Split systems
Care // education
Labour policies
3. EARLY LEARNING AND CARE
Schoolification
Is a problem in split systems
But not only there

Pre-vention
Pre-school
Pre-academic skills
Cfr IELS

What image of the child?
What image of the adult?
What image of society?
The particular case of Flanders
The particular case of Flanders
The particular case of Flanders.
The particular case of Flanders

If school is the problem, why would more school be the solution?
And what about Finland?

How can we solve a problem that we do not understand?

We try to convince parents of what they are convinced of
Focus groups with parents & professionals

But will you love my child?

Professionals: my mother-like identity
You have to turn your heart into a stone

The pressure of the next teacher

Care as a hindrance
Care as “leaking bodies”
The particular case of Flanders
Focus groups with parents & professionals

The Cartesian split between mind and body

The idea that care and learning are two different concepts

And that there is a hierarchy

Assistant teacher = the Cinderella of ECEC
A lack of reciprocity
False perceptions
(Hide and see)

An analysis of 13 curricula reveals:

Parent participation is defined without parent participation
Okay, we lack care...
But what about the learning (of language)?

Observations of 4 classes
2 children ‘at risk’ per class
2,5-3 y
During one year
With 2 cameras
A selection of 100 hours (x2) of video
Quantitative and qualitative analysis
Time registrations

A lot of waiting (20-30%)
Waiting = silence
Verbal interactions

Very limited
Almost only Adult to Child
Hardly any peer interactions
Verbal interactions with the focus children

Very limited
Almost only Adult to Child
Hardly any peer interactions
Quality of the verbal interactions

Richness of the language offer
Opportunities for language production
Feedback
Quality of the verbal interactions

T: Where does this piece belong?
T: Yes, put it in
T: Ho, easy
T: And the sheep, take the sheep
T: No that is not right, Ramiz, that does not fit
T: Try here. Look.
T: Easy
T: Yes, easy
T: Yes, well done, Ramiz. And the doggie?
T: Yes, super. Well done.
T: Well done, Ramiz.
T: Yes, bravo! Wow, now you must try alone. Now alone. Like this.
T: Come on Ramiz, try.
T: Turn, Ramiz

R: Cat

T: Is it ok Ramiz?
T: Try, Ramiz.
Why?

- Instructional language
- Disciplining the body
- Focus on learning is counterproductive for learning
- More qualitative verbal interactions during care moments

- Larger classrooms = lower quality of verbal interactions
Is ECEC part of the solution
Or is it part of the problem

Interuptions by monolingual children
Inequality in language opportunities
Subtractive language policies
No recognition of home languages
No recognition of multilingualism
The narrow focus on learning creates unequal opportunities.
4th seminar on Childhood, Well-being and Parenting.
Rennes, 26-27 June 2019

4.
EMBRACING COMPLEXITY
How education is presented

A
The child
Passive
Blank
Homogeneous
Stages

B
The adult
Productive
Autonomous
Homogeneous
Fulfilled
What education is about

Diversities, cultures, gender, social contexts, parents’ opinions, policies, transitions between home and school, systemic conditions
Let us embrace complexities
Learning = caring
Outcomes are negotiated
(beware of equal opportunities and embrace equal opportunities)
Negotiations entail disagreement
Disagreement is the basis of democracy
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