

Report: European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Sustainability in Early Childhood Education Special Interest Group (SIG) 2025-2026

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1. The aim of the EECERA Sustainability in Early Childhood Education SIG

The aim of the EECERASIG group is to develop a space for networking and to encourage cross-national research and perspectives in the field of early childhood education for sustainability. The research agenda focuses on ways of understanding how young children are recognized as, and learn to be, active citizens for sustainability. A key aspect of consolidating this research field is to broaden the theoretical and methodological perspectives shared and incorporate multiple international socio-cultural lenses. Sustainability refers here to the interlinked social, economic, natural or environmental, and political dimensions defined by UNESCO (2010), and these must underpin all decision-making for equitable global futures. Aligned international policies with import for early childhood education and education for sustainability are *The UN Global Action Programme (GAP)* and the *2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* (UNESCO, 2017). These policies are integrated with the dimensions of sustainability and offer a global action plan for developing a sustainable world. The SDGs, in particular, are far reaching and highlight that global sustainability is not to be achieved by an environmental or human poverty focus alone. The GAP and SDGs are integral to a globally transformative agenda, and the SIG collaborative research and publication initiatives strongly support this agenda. The aims of the SIG are to:

- create a space for collaborative research about sustainability in early childhood education,
- develop synergies between participants from a wide range of professional and scientific contexts,
- provide an academic and rigorous forum at European and international levels to develop and disseminate high quality research on sustainability in early childhood education.

2. Activities in the past year, 2025-2026

- The SIG now has 103 members, nine of EECERA (marked green), and 94 associated members.
- Ongoing communication with EECERA about membership, the EECERA conference, and publications.

- The SIG-group Facebook page is ongoing and active, with regular postings about events, research, and publications (148 members).
- ***Educating the young child series: Envisioning sustainable futures with young children: International case studies in ECEfS*** edited by Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér and Sue Elliott was published in late 2025.
- ***An EECERA book: Promoting Transformative Practices for Sustainability in Early Childhood Education and Care Cultivating Critical, Participatory and Emancipatory Approaches*** edited by Fabio Dovigo and Sule Alici was published in 2026.
- **2025 TND Springer International Book Forum**: This forum was conducted as online. During this forum, authors presented chapters in a recently published text: *Ärlemalm-Hagsér, E. & Elliott, S. (Eds.) (2025). International perspectives on ECEfS: Envisioning sustainable futures with young children. Springer.*
- **An Online research forum**: Organized on the 11th of June 2026, this forum will feature Dr. Farhana Borg presenting the results from a nationwide study in Sweden from the project HOPES (Holistic Outcomes of Preschool Education in Sweden, 2019-2025), which was funded by the Swedish Research Council.
- **EECERA 2026 Conference**: A symposium titled *Education for Sustainability in Early Childhood: Children's Agency, Curriculum Reform and Teacher Education* has been accepted as an EECERA SIG Symposia (eeceraconference.org).

3. Future activities for the coming year, 2027

- Continuing to progress the publications noted above and develop other collaborative research projects and bids; and,
- The book proposal for the ECEfS Handbook for Bloomsbury, edited by Eva Ärlemalm-Hagsér, Sue Elliott, and Victoria Carr, has been accepted with the aim of publishing in early 2027.
- A special issue of the European Early Childhood Education Research Journal (EECERJ) on the theme "Sustainability in Early Childhood Education for a Changing World" is planned for planned publication in spring 2028.
- A special issue on "Leadership in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability" in the journal *Childhood in the Anthropocene (CiA)* is planned for 2026.

4. Networks established with other institutions and organisations:

Each member of the SIG has a network within their own country and area of work. The collaboration within the SIG between members means that the SIG is informally associated with a wide variety of local, regional, national, and international networks and organisations. For example, the Transnational Dialogues in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability Research Network (TND) held its online TND 10 meeting on November 17, 2025, which hosted the Springer International Book Forum. This provided an opportunity for participants to hear from authors about their chapters in the recently published text: *Ärlemalm-Hagsér, E., & Elliott, S. (Eds.). (2025). International Perspectives on ECEfS: Envisioning Sustainable Futures with Young Children.*

Following the cancellation of the WEEC due to international issues, a face-to-face TND 11 meeting will not be held in 2026. Instead, TND 11 will be conducted as three online forum events in late 2026 and early 2027. Significant synergies across the SIG and TND need to continue to be explored.

5. How do SIG's activities fit with aims and ethos of EECERA

The activities in the SIG encourage and support cross-national collaborations with multi-disciplinary research and critically reflective approaches to early childhood education and early childhood education for sustainability. The collaboration between the researchers in the SIG group also aligns with outdoor education/nature play and applications to policy and practice as related to global sustainability.

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