

Special Interest Group
'Professionalism in Early Childhood Education and Care'
Annual Report (2025)

Report to EECERA Board of Trustees, December 2025, P-SIG-Conveners

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Aim of the SIG

To create a safe collegial space for shared thinking and collaboration. Within this space, those interested can engage in constructive dialogue and debate issues relating to professionalism and professionalisation in early childhood education and care, in-person at the annual EECERA conference and online throughout the year, as necessary. The SIG promotes, encourages and facilitates interested parties to collaborate on research projects and publications.

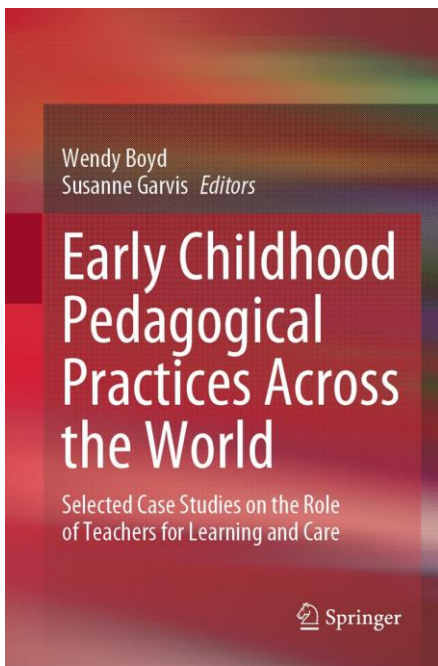
SIG Activities 2024-2025

Between 2020 and 2023, the activities of the P-SIG on "Professionalism in Early Childhood Education and Care" had been significantly affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead of meeting in person, delegates had used this period to reflect on the global situation and maintained connections through online formats. Therefore, in 2024, the P-SIG had focused on post-COVID workforce initiatives and their implications for degree-qualified educators, as well as on broader questions concerning professionalism and professionalisation in early childhood education and care: *Where is the profession positioned in the post-COVID era?* The discussions highlighted challenges such as the pressure to increase workforce supply, tendencies toward de-professionalization, fast-track qualification routes, and increasing neoliberal governance mechanisms. At the same time, delegates emphasized the need for holistic system-level change, stronger professional identities, peer mentoring, and professional bodies capable of advocating for the sector. Emerging perspectives within the P-SIG stressed the importance of multiprofessional role clarification, constructive narratives, educators' voices, and the creation of reflective "third spaces" for discussing professionalism from diverse international perspectives. These debates and reflections strongly informed the work undertaken in 2025. Building on these previous discussions and developments, the delegates in 2025 identified and further pursued several key aspects, with a particular focus on professional ethics in ECEC (e.g., defining the professional ethics of care, debating the nuances of ethics of care and professional conduct and responsibilities, existence of codes of professional ethics within and across countries).

One important outcome of the collaborative exchange within the P-SIG was a book publication on early childhood pedagogical practices across the world, edited by Wendy Boyd and Susanne Garvis. The publication brought together pedagogical practices from different countries in order to highlight the important work of early childhood educators in diverse cultural and contextual settings. Across the international contributions from P-SIG members, themes such as routines, transitions, intentional teaching, learning environments, and care practices are explored, providing both a shared understanding of professional practice and insights into contextual differences across countries. The publication also contributed to strengthening international dialogue on professionalism and pedagogy within early childhood education and care.

Book publication on early childhood pedagogical practices across the world in a collective of practices (Wendy Boyd and Susanne Garvis, Eds)



The motivation for this book was to collect pedagogical practices from around the world to showcase the important work of early childhood teachers. Each country in this book shares unique features of their pedagogical work to show how they support young children's learning and development, and work with families and communities. This intention also allows the documentation of innovative and exemplary practices to build a repertoire of pedagogy and understand cultural and contextual differences. Across the countries, this book explores routines, transitions, intentional teaching, shaping the environment, and other important aspects of learning and care. This book also provides opportunities for the development of commonality of practice, and to explore variations that exist around supporting young children's learning and development.

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-96-2747-9?page=2#toc>

Future Activities

1. Delegates are currently working on the analysis of country-specific professional codes and ethical frameworks
2. Based on this comparative analysis, the group intends to derive implications for the development of an overarching framework or shared code (e.g., an EECERA Code with wider application internationally)
3. First findings from the analysis of country-specific professional codes and ethical frameworks will be presented at the 2026 conference and will subsequently serve as the basis for preparing a joint P-SIG publication.
4. In addition, delegates are currently in exchange regarding the development of a collaborative research proposal on this topic.

Networks established with other institutions and organisations

Throughout 2025 the P-SIG convenors have initiated and consolidated relationships with Professional Educators and Managers Ireland (PEMI), Together and Committed to Young Children (TACYC, UK) and Early Childhood Educators British Columbia (ECEBC). Members of the organisations participate in the P-SIG and their objectives align with the purpose of the group.

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

The activities of the P-SIG align closely with the aims and ethos of EECERA by promoting international collaboration, critical reflection, ethical research, and the advancement of professionalism within early childhood education and care. In particular, the P-SIG's work

reflects EECERA's commitment to inclusive, respectful, and socially responsible research practices, as outlined in the EECERA ethical code.

Through international dialogue, collaborative publications, symposia, and ongoing exchanges among delegates, the P-SIG contributes to the development of high-quality scholarship and supports diverse perspectives on early childhood professionalism. The group's focus on professional identity, educators' voices, ethics of care, and culturally responsive approaches resonates strongly with EECERA's emphasis on participation, inclusion, distributed power, and respect for the rights and well-being of children, families, educators, and researchers.

Furthermore, the current comparative work on country-specific professional and ethical codes directly supports EECERA's aim of strengthening ethical awareness and reflective research practices across international contexts. By encouraging cross-national learning, collaborative knowledge production, and critical engagement with contemporary challenges in the field, the P-SIG contributes to EECERA's broader mission of advancing ethical, innovative, and socially relevant early childhood research and practice.