Young Children on the move: migrants, immigrants and refugees

What can we learn from research and from interesting practices?

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The Transatlantic Forum on Inclusive Early Years

• A meeting place for policy-makers and researchers to discuss most relevant issues in ECEC, with a focus on children from low-income, refugee and migrant families.
• Seven meetings of two days over a period of three years, from January 2013 until January 2016
• Group of 50–70 leading researchers, practitioners, civil society representatives, civil servants and political decision-makers or advisors (total 120 policymakers and 110 leading researchers).
• Films, background papers, reports of discussions
1. Access for children from migrant, refugee and low-income families (Ghent)

- Arguments need to be made clear why investments towards refugee and migrant groups may benefit the whole society.
- High-quality ECEC services must not only be accessible, affordable and available, but also desirable, useful and meaningful to migrant and refugee families.
- Real problem is not hard-to-reach parents, but hard-to-reach services.
2. Workforce preparation and curriculum innovations (New York)

- Workforce preparation must focus on reflective competences that are necessary to work in a context of hyper-diversity.
- Ethnic matching should be avoided: all staff members should work with all children and families.
- Continuous professional development is as important as initial training.
Competences needed on the individual and team level when working with children at risk, migrant and refugee children. (Peeters, Sharmahd, 2014)

- Openness to dialogue with parents, colleagues and children on the basis of reciprocity;
- An engagement and ability to work towards social change;
- The ability to reflect critically on the own pedagogical practice and that of the team and the institution;
- The ability to create new pedagogical knowledge and practice.
Eurofound systematic review: which CPD interventions are effective? (Peeters, et al., 2015)

Intensive CPD programs

-with an active involvement of practitioners in the transformative process for the improvement of educational practices within ECEC settings

-focused on practitioners learning in practice, in dialogue with colleagues and parents

-where a coach is available during non-contact hours.

-have to be embedded in a coherent pedagogical framework or curriculum that builds upon research and addresses needs of migrant and refugee families
3. Successful parent and family engagement in the early years: reaching out to immigrant families (Lisbon)

- challenge: ‘demand-led’ services
- engage in a reciprocal relation with migrant parents, to respond to their input and to start co-constructing services and provisions that have meaning to them
- avoid a ‘labyrinth’ of services for different groups
- meaning of parent participation is very different.

- support in the education of their children: to stimulate them to read books or tell stories

form of citizenship, in which parents are invited to take important decisions in the ECEC centres
4. Evaluation in ECEC: choices and implications for diverse populations (Amsterdam)

- monitoring or evaluating has to be based on a definition of quality
- Who defines quality? Not only researchers, also migrant and refugee parents
- Ongoing process of negotiation and cooperation between researchers, professionals, parents of different background
- Standardised evaluative systems can sometimes result in more judgemental effects towards children
5. Integrated systems and effective transitions in EC

- Importance of smooth transitions – home and ECEC, childcare and school – especially for poor, refugee and migrant children (in particular second-language learners).
- Every transition represents an additional challenge.
- Alignment of different parts of education system: continuity in curriculum, didactical methods, workforce, governance.
6. Multilingualism and multiple identities/belongings in EC programs

• Importance of the home language
• Being a dual language learner may not be seen as a problem but as a strength of these children
• How to work with dual language learners must get more attention in initial training and CPD
Read more

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