

# VOICE: An evidence-based teacher reflection tool for participatory pedagogies in ECE

## **Research aims**

This study aims to present the process and outcome of constructing an evidence-based reflection tool for teachers in the context of a professional learning (PL) program regarding participatory practices in ECE (VOICE).

## **Relationship to previous research works**

Participatory practices have been long studied as critical in ECE (Clark & Moss, 2011; Correia, Aguiar & Amaro, 2021; Shier, 2001). However, recent studies in Greece show that this knowledge has not systematically affected ECE practice and more targeted teacher support is necessary (Alexiou, 2018; Avgitidou, 2014; Likomitrou, 2015; Velkou, 2015).

## **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Teachers' PL is closely related to their role as researchers and reflective practitioners (Avgitidou, 2019). Relating theory, research, praxis, and reflection is a prerequisite to enhance participatory pedagogies (Formosinho & Formosinho, 2012).

## **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

This is a qualitative secondary data analysis of four action research projects' findings. It focuses on the factors related to teachers' beliefs and practices hindering or enhancing participatory practices. Results formed an interpretative framework to construct a reflection tool for ECE teachers.

## **Ethical considerations**

Close attention was given to systematic reference to the original research material to conduct a rigorous analysis of their findings.

## **Main finding or discussion**

We detected four recurring themes of teachers' thinking that related to participatory pedagogies (beliefs about children, ECE aims and priorities, teacher's role and learning) and five areas of practice that were related to these beliefs (planning and design, free play, structured activities, dialogue and child assessment). A reflection tool was developed accordingly.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

Reflection tools are important to be closely related to teachers' belief systems and practice to enhance critical awareness.

### **Keywords**

Children's Participation, Voicing Children, Teachers' professional learning, Reflective tool, Critical awareness