



Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project (ECEWP)

ISSUE 2 – AUGUST 2019

Introduction

Welcome to the second newsletter from the Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project. Our research uses a holistic approach to examine the psychological and physiological aspects of early childhood educators' well-being within the context of work environment. Our newsletter will keep you informed about our latest news and findings.

Stakeholder roundtable event

On 4 April, over 40 participants from the early childhood sector – including policy makers, representatives from large and small early childhood organisations, unions, professional development organisations, educators and academics – came together at Macquarie University in Sydney to focus on early childhood educators' well-being.

We presented preliminary findings from ECEWP, and John Mason, General Manager, Policy and Strategic Programs, ACECQA, also provided advice on how to develop "policy ready" research.



Discussing early childhood educators' well-being

The main focus of the day was to seek input from stakeholders about their priorities for ongoing research into early childhood educators' well-being. A World Café approach was facilitated by Leanne Gibbs that generated deep engagement and discussion – all captured by a graphic recorder and resulting in a [stunningly visual "map" which summarised the event.](#)



John Mason (ACECQA) and Helen Logan (ECEWP) talk about policy-ready research

The ECEWP team will use the rich data from the day to develop future research that is meaningful and which addresses the real concerns related to the well-being of those caring for and educating our youngest children, and the organisations that employ them.

As an initial overview, discussions during the day have been consolidated into five key areas that reflect stakeholders' priorities for future research into educators' well-being.



Educator well-being in Denmark

In May, ECEWP researcher Tamara Cumming visited Denmark and London as part of her Charles Sturt University Research Fellowship. The main focus of the trip was to investigate ways Danish educators use a concept called the 3Ps – private, personal, professional – in their practice. In Denmark, over half of all educators are degree trained in a discipline called “social pedagogy”, and the balance may have other qualifications or be unqualified. The 3Ps is an integral part of social pedagogy education, and describes ways of being with children that integrate parts of the “private” self (including emotions, values, life experience, etc.) with those of the “professional” self (including formal knowledge and ethics) to make a “personal” approach. Tamara’s interviews with pre-service

and practising pedagogues and lecturers revealed many complexities to producing this personal approach, and that this process requires constant reflexivity and negotiation.



It was an interesting time to be in Denmark, as concerns about over-crowding in centres and inadequate educator:child ratios had been highlighted in prime-time documentaries about children

and educators' negative experiences. While some of the footage was deeply troubling, the upside was that parents were joining educators to advocate – and demonstrate – for policy change. Tamara came away more conscious of and grateful for the positive impacts for children and families that our NQS and EYLF have had in Australia’s ECE sector.

Presenting our research

ECEWP researchers have taken many opportunities this year to present our research on educators' well-being – locally, nationally and internationally.



Sandie Wong (front, 2nd left) presenting at the University of California, Berkley, pictured here with researchers from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment – including Prof Marcy Whitebrook (front left), Dr Michael R. Duke (back, 2nd left) and Dr Caitlin McLean (to the right of Sandie)

Organisations and well-being

Nine large early childhood organisations have been involved in this phase of the research. When combined, these organisations have responsibility for over 22,000 educators and 125,000 children, Australia-wide. At least one senior manager from each organisation participated in an individual in-depth interview conducted by an ECEWP researcher. Sample questions included: *How do you understand educator well-being? Educator well-being is becoming increasingly important – why is it important? And why is it important for your organisation? What approaches does your organisation take to support educator well-being? And what factors do you think influence educator well-being?*

Each interview was recorded and transcribed; the data was then read multiple times and analysed using NVivo software and a series of analytical coding steps. To date, preliminary findings indicate the importance of educators' well-being is critical to the successful operation of ECEC organisations. Findings from this phase of the study are still forthcoming; however, this data provides valuable knowledge that is less easily obtained from documents and the broader early childhood literature.

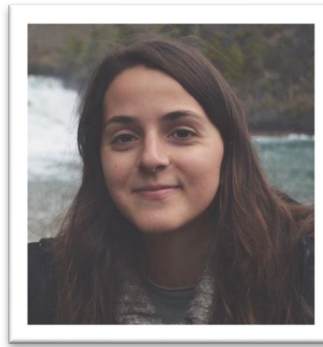
Meet our research team

In our last issue we introduced ECEWP co-investigators Associate Professor Sandie Wong, Dr Tamara Cumming and Dr Helen Logan. We would now like to introduce you to a few other members of our team.

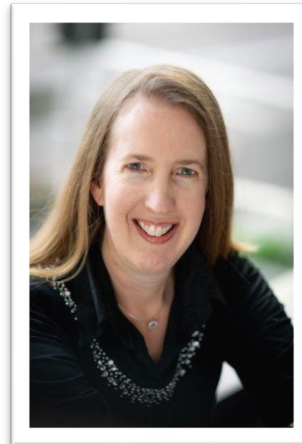


Salima Yeung is a PhD candidate at Charles Sturt University. Her research explores the relationship between early childhood educators' well-being and the quality of educator–infant interest. Prior to enrolling in the PhD program, Salima held positions as an

early childhood teacher in early education centres and worked with children aged from birth to five years.



Research assistant **Natalie Gorgioski** is based at Macquarie University. She has experience working in several research projects revolving around public health and well-being. She is assisting our project by conducting physiological assessments with early childhood educators.



Project Officer **Kim Woodland** (CSU) assists the ECEWP team with coordination, communication and reporting. Her background is in research assistance and communication including in the field of early childhood education.

The Early Education Show podcasts

Episode 90: [Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project](#)

Episode 99: [Educator Well-being Project Stakeholder Roundtable](#)

Episode 106: [Are We Too Child-Centred?](#)



Sandie, Helen and Tamara recording a podcast interview with The Early Education Show

More information

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