Researching in an inclusive way when participants are very young children
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No Kaitaia ahau

Ke Waihi tuku kainga

Ko Maungataniwha nga pae maunga
Ko Victoria te awa
Tokowha aku tamariki
Toku tekau mā toru aku mokopuna

Ko Bruce Morpeth tuku papa
Ko Evelyn Davies tuku mama
Children’s perspectives – why?
Four Principles (Greenfield 2017)

1. The child is competent and has the capacity to form his or her own views and the belief that children have ideas, feelings and opinions worth listening to (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999)

2. Children as permission granters: ethical research practice require finding developmentally appropriate ways to obtain informed consent from young children (Hughes & Helling, 1991)

3. Inclusive Ethical Relationships: establishing and maintaining positive professional relationships with everyone in the research setting is crucial

4. Appropriate methodology and multi-methods: throughout the data-collection phase, the research procedures should not be too tightly constrained and alternative and expressive forms of knowing taken more seriously (Pascal & Betram, 2012).
THE OUTDOOR PLAYGROUND THROUGH CHILDREN’S EYES

Research Report by:
Cheryl Greenfield
Photographs by: Austin, Bernadette, Jayde,
Nicholas and Tyla
2003

Figure 3. Photo taken by the researcher during session 4
Lessons learnt from initial pilot study

• Children can be permission granters
• Value of handing over the camera
• Importance of children’s first names being used in relation to their photos
• Need to use a wider range of research tools that engage children
• Need to observe using traditional methods as well
Discuss your views on gaining a child’s consent.

What are the benefits and potential disadvantages?
Multiple Roles

Sufficiently detached but needing to build trusting relationships with children, teachers and parents

Observer as ‘participant’ (Bryman, 2004)
  – to be available to the children and become ‘part of the furniture’, so to speak

Active membership (Merriam, 2006)
  – Taking on an increasingly active role in centre while maintaining distance

A ‘reactive participant’ (Corsaro & Miller, 1992) – entering the child’s space and wait for their permission to join them or agreement to join you

Inclusive behaviour at all times
Inclusion

Wei-bin’s photo of me interacting with non-participant children
RELATIONSHIPS

PRE

DURING

POST

PRIVILEGE /RESPONSIBILITY
Bringing forth children’s voices is indefensible if those voices merely serve to silence some, marginalise others, or reinforce unjust ways of becoming (MacNaughton, 2003, p.42).

• Explicit UNROC – informed approach – it is not for the child to prove his or her capacity to do so but for researcher to presume the child has the capacity to form his or her own views (UN, 2009, para. 20)
Research Questions

• What are children’s perspectives of their experiences in the outdoor setting of their early childhood centre?
  – What are children’s views on the role of the teacher outside?

• What are teachers’, parents’ and the centre owner’s perspectives on outdoor experiences for children and its provision at the centre?
Research Methods/tools used

Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2005)

– an holistic approach to gathering data and analysing data and listening to children

• multi-method
• participatory
• adaptable
• focused on children’s lived experiences
• embedded into practice
• The Mosaic Approach relies on children being given the time and opportunity to express themselves in different ways.

• This acknowledges the ‘Hundred Languages’ (Edwards, Gandini & Foreman, 1988) that children may use to explore their experiences.

• This includes giving the child the space to take the lead, or role reversal, in the research.

• As Langstead (1994 cited in Clark & Moss, 2005, p. 83) describes it is about re-establishing children as “experts in their own lives”.

• The Mosaic Approach comprised originally of two stages.
  • Stage one is the gathering of the data, and the second stage the piecing together of the information for discussion, interpretation and reflection with participants.
  • A third stage was added in Clark and Moss (2005) where findings were used for decision making and action.

• So this approach informs all stages of the research process, including the analysis.
Research Tools used with children

• Observation – planned and spontaneous, photographic and written
• Conversations
• Cameras/Photo novella
• Photo elicitation
• Collaborative Drawing
• Touring
• Book making
Photography – Photo Novella

(1) as ‘aides memoires’ in the course of fieldwork
(2) as sources of data in their own right
(3) as prompts for discussion by research participants

(Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993; Kervin et al., 2006)

However, in hindsight, the strategy Hart (1979) used of asking the children to order their photos from most favourite to least, may well have been a more effective strategy to promote discussion.
Alexia’s photo of the mouse

Hamish’s photos of the birds
Photographing friends and researcher taking photos

Joshua K’s photos

Wei-bin’s photo

Jack’s photo

Taran’s photo
Handing over my own digital camera

Sam’s photo

Alexia’s photo
Photo Elicitation

- A method of interviewing which worked much more effectively than expected, as found by Clark and Moss (2005), Warming (2005) and Wiltz and Klein (2001).

A few of the pictures used
Touring

The physical nature of walking was in line with what other researchers had found, that children like to go to the places they are talking about (Clark & Moss, 2001; 2005; Dockett & Perry, 2003).
Other researchers, such as Clark (2005) and Dockett and Perry (2003), have also found there is more to gain from listening to young children’s talk during the drawing process rather than afterwards.
Child conferencing/conversations

• Tell me about the places outside you like the best
• Tell me about the parts of the outdoors you do not like
• Why do you like to go outside?
• Tell me about your most favourite place outside.
• What would you like to see changed or added to the outdoor space?
• Tell me about what teachers do outside.
• What do you think teachers should do outside?
Children’s voices
(Greenfield, 2007)

• When asked why they like being outside:
  • Jack: “Swinging on monkey bars, jumping on the tramp. Can do jumping, carpentry and run”
  • Alexia: “I like playing with the water and the sandpit and on the monkey bars”
  • Hamish: “Like going down (the slide)”
  • Mikayla: “To play, do running, playing tigger and winnie the pooh”
  • Sam: “just cause I do...being with friends being able to run”
• ‘Playing’ was definitely synonymous with being outside
• There had to be playground “so we can play”
• Mikayla said “if...we don’t have anything to play on, and we wont see anything outside, no people, nothing”
• Jack strongly stated that the centre had a playground “because children like to play”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do teachers do outside</th>
<th>What should teachers do outside?</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Look after the kids” (Sam)</td>
<td>&quot;Um play monsters, X plays monsters with us&quot; (Sam)</td>
<td>Teachers look after us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They help you if you are crying and they save you” (Alexia)</td>
<td>Play on the monkey bars&quot;(Krissy)</td>
<td>Teachers should play with us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Watch us… and they help you if you are crying and they save you&quot; (Jack)</td>
<td>&quot;I think that they should play match number games and inside too. Play games on the seats (Jack)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When someone cries the teacher asks them what someone has done&quot; (Sam)</td>
<td>&quot;Play the monster game, and play jail (Alexia)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Researcher’s Observation Tools

- Planned observations – time sampling, running records
- Spontaneous observations – photo essays, photographs
- Audio recording
- Research journal
- Parent journals/focus groups
- Book making
1.12.05
Krissy rearranging the obstacle course with Alexia’s help
Paloma’s mum: Paloma is obsessed with the monkey bars. When we go to the park she just wants to do harder and harder monkey bars. She tries the swing ones and goes backwards on them. She doesn’t do much else... she just enjoys it. (Parent journal entry)
Wei-Bin: I like the monkey bars... go along, ddddddd
Joshua Mc – “Everybody put your raincoats on”
Disengaging: Bringing closure through bookmaking

Pukeko’s in the Garden?

October – December 2005

A photographic record of our time spent with Cheryl Greenfield sharing what we liked doing outside.
Analysis

• Inductive analysis which involved discovering patterns, themes and categories within the data and creating multiple mosaics, the findings emerged (Bryman, 2004; Patton, 2002), thereby creating a summary mosaic of preferences
Themes that emerged from children’s perspectives on being outside and my observations (taken from 4. 4).

- Outside was where they played and could be:
- Be physically active challenged, and learn new skills
- Transport and rearrange
- Play chasing games, imagine and hide away from adult gaze
- Explore and experience nature, and the natural, aesthetic and wider world

Themes that emerged from adults’ perspectives on being outside (taken from 5.3). Children have more opportunities for:

- Vigorous and more complex active movement
- Moving things around
- Playing games and exploring alone or with friend
- Experiencing nature and the natural and wider world
- Hiding
- Being healthier (psychologically and physically)
- Learning, risk taking, problem solving, using imagination and creativity

Categories of significant and unique aspects that the outdoor setting provided (merging of children’s and adult’s perspectives).

‘Elements of ’ for:

- Health and holistic development
- Playing, learning, imagining
- Vigorous active movement and developing physical skill
- Rearranging and transporting
- Exploring and experiencing nature, and the natural, aesthetic and wider world
What changes or additions to the environment did the children/parents/teachers suggest?

- All mentioned:
  - Swings
  - Climbing trees
- Teachers and children
  - Something wobbly requiring balance
- Parents and children
  - More balls
- Children also mentioned: Crawly tunnel, toilet, bubble lasers, zoom slide, more boxes
- Parents also wanted: skipping ropes and more walks
Mosaics

• Allows researcher to relook at the data from different view points
  – Individual child
  – Overall key themes from across the children
  – Specific areas of the outdoors


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• The Mosaic Approach provides an effective, flexible and authentic methodology.

• By adapting and adding to the methods used by Clark and Moss (2001; 2005), I was able to further explore other research tools that were empowering for participants and provided various ways for them to share their views.

• The use of multiple tools resulted in data which significantly increased the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research findings.
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Whāia te iti kahurangi
Ki te tūohu koe, me he maunga teitei
Pursue excellence – should you stumble, let it be to a lofty mountain