



How does policy construct early childhoods in contexts of precariousness?

Never Stand Still

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

Social Policy Research Centre

ECA 2016

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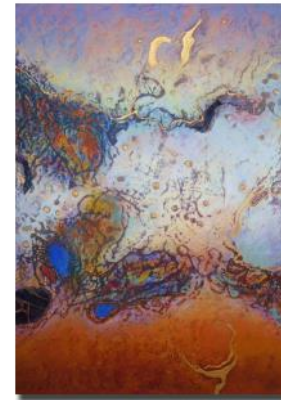


Workshop aims

- To open a conversation about the framing of service provision for families in **precarious circumstances** and what that means for policy advocacy and further research



RESEARCHING PARENT ENGAGEMENT: a qualitative field study



Christine Woodrow
Margaret Somerville
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What is the problem?

Statistically speaking

Children living below the poverty line in Australia comprise

- 18.9% Australian children
- 32 % in NT
- Comparatively low take up rates by low income families (SCRGSP, 2014; Baxter & Hand, 2013) but considerable benefits of high quality ECEC for children from disadvantaged contexts (OECD, 2011; Gambarara, Stewart & Waldfogel, 2014)
- A paucity of literature on the perspectives of low income families (Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds, & Alldred, 2004; Vincent et al, 2008, Baxter & Hand, 2013)
- Middle class claims directly inserted into policy debates, while 'perceived needs' of low income families often mediated by 'expert' analyses (Brennan, 1998)

Who are these 'others' speaking for families in high poverty contexts?

Research on families experiencing economic adversity is

- always conducted by the 'other',
- backgrounded by media and policy discourse (Struggle Street 2 is in production as we speak).

The 'other' Jen





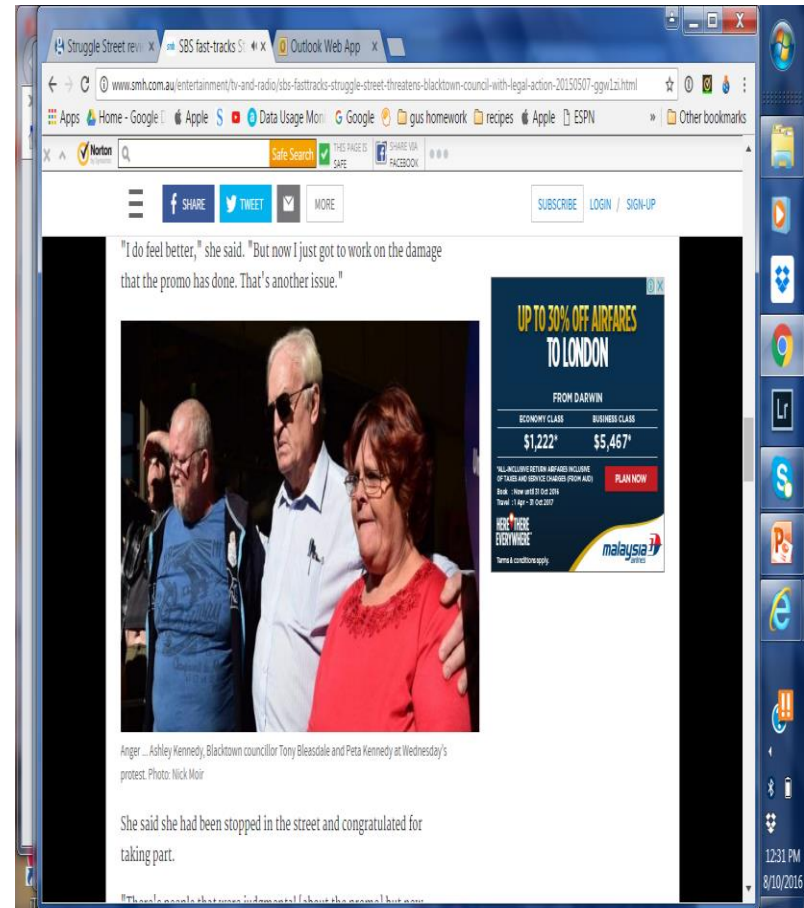




Nebulous welcomes



Media representations: -Struggle Street



Politics of language: ECA conference titles

Innovation

Multidisciplinary

Diverse

Inclusion evidence-
based **collaboration**

partnerships with
families

Engaging or connecting

With **Community**

Displaced children and
families

Sustainability in action

Reconciliation

Parents as first teachers

What language do we use to talk economic inequality?

Precariousness

Dictionary: A state of being uncertain or unstable

Guy Standing

Precarious employment

Precarious housing

Precarious situation

High Poverty Context

Focus and language of ECEC and of child protection

- Children or families ?
- Parents or families ?



The minor key



Britzman, D. P. (1997). Difference in a minor key: Some modulations of history, memory, and community. *Off White: Readings on race, power, and society*, 29-39.

Belonging:

Marginal, unintentional, accidental, incidental



Politics of language (Giselle Wilson, 2016)

- Inclusion
- Embedding
- Incorporation

Embedding work with children and families in precarious contexts

Politics of “inclusion”

Politics of entitlement to

- Redistribution
- Recognition
- Representation

(Nancy Fraser)



Recognition in ECEC practice

- Are service systems set up to recognise and respond to the complex conditions of families who experience persistent economic adversity and multi-dimensional challenges?
- How do parents recognise their practices and priorities in ECEC everyday setting?
- Are their funds of knowledge about schooling and survival recognised?

Critical Policy Analysis

How effectively do the NQF, EYLF and 'universal' preschool provision capture best practice and support the needs of families in precarious circumstances?

How do these policies interact with policies platforms like

- Keep Them Safe
- Jobs for families

Minor key

Good Face

Interactions
with families?



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