

# Documenting 'emotional capital practices' in infant and toddler pedagogy: Enabling participation rights, protection rights, and agency

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# Acknowledgement of Country: Storying



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# Core principles of participation

- “The essence of participation is exercising voice and choice and developing the human, organisational and management capacity to solve problems as they arise in order to sustain improvement” (Saxena, 2011, p.31)
- “... manifestation of individual agency with social context” (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010, p.357)

- Agency
- Empowerment
- The ability to voice one's views
- Choice
- Involvement
- Decision-making



## The potential to 'Other' infants

- The idea of 'Other' separates one (or a group) as different, based on distinguishing characteristics, to the more powerful and popularly represented group
- Focusing on the commonalities of infants as participants (to some degree), while considering their inherent and unique differences, in both research and practice contexts (Salamon, 2015)
- Understanding the ways infants DO participate can support a more holistic view of infants' rights



# Infants' emotional capital practices

- Infants actively draw on emotional capital through purposeful expression of negative and positive affect
- Infants' capacity as agents of sophisticated and emotionally charged negotiations
- Degrees of participation of infants in line with recognising their unique developmental capabilities

		Educator and infant encounter one another amid practice architectures that enable and constrain their interaction:	
The educator's practices are interactionally secured in		The infant's practices are interactionally secured in	
<b>The educator's sayings</b> e.g. what happened, give cuddle, you can play, touches top head, puts hands on, what's wrong, pig and duck noises, smiling, laughing, that's a funny face		<b>Cultural-discursive arrangements</b> found in or brought to a site e.g. language, ideas	
		<b>Sophie's sayings</b> e.g. crinkled eyes/nose/downturned mouth, soft whiney vocalisation measured cry type sounds, partly whining partly crying out, brief intense vocalisations, loud less intense vocalisations, smiling, gesture and vocalisation, crinkled eyes/nose/upturned mouth, purposeful exaggerated squeal and smile	
An EDUCATOR entering the interactions of practice	<b>The educator's doings</b> e.g. engages with resources, moves children, touches top of head, puts hands on, watches	<b>Material-economic arrangements</b> found in or brought to a site e.g. objects, spatial arrangements	<b>Sophie's doings</b> e.g. crawls towards, watches, reaches, looks at educator, looks at researcher, opens mouth wide, kicks legs, holds bowl, taps bowl, crawls away
	<b>The educator's relatings</b> e.g. touches, brings child close, changes mind about cuddles, gives space, uses sympathetic voice, smiles back, laughs gently	<b>Social-political arrangements</b> brought to a site e.g. relationships between people	<b>Sophie's relatings</b> e.g. reaches out, bows head, crawls to, looks down in response to educators attention, makes 'unhappy' sounds and looks up at educator, makes exaggerated smile at child, educator and researcher.

(Salamon, Sumsion, & Harrison, 2017)



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# Infants' emotional capital practices

- Grounded in infants' understanding at very early ages about
  - Contingency
  - Emotional expression
  - Imitation
  - Intentions
  - Attention



# Infants' emotional capital practices: Snippets in research



**Figure 2.** Sophie's eyes constrict as she softly calls to the educator, then makes brief cry-like sounds with her eyes and nose screwed up and a downturned mouth.

(Salamon, Sumsion, & Harrison, 2017)



**Figure 3.** Sophie screws up her face in an exaggerated smile towards the child and then looks at me with eyes crinkled.

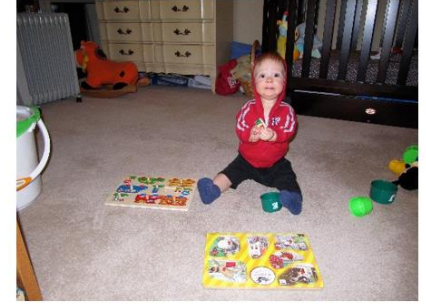


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# The project aims to

- Document infants' emotional capital practices in an early childhood education centre in regional NSW



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# The project aims to

- Engage educators in deep and critical reflective practice about the infants' emotional capital practices, and the ways educators responded

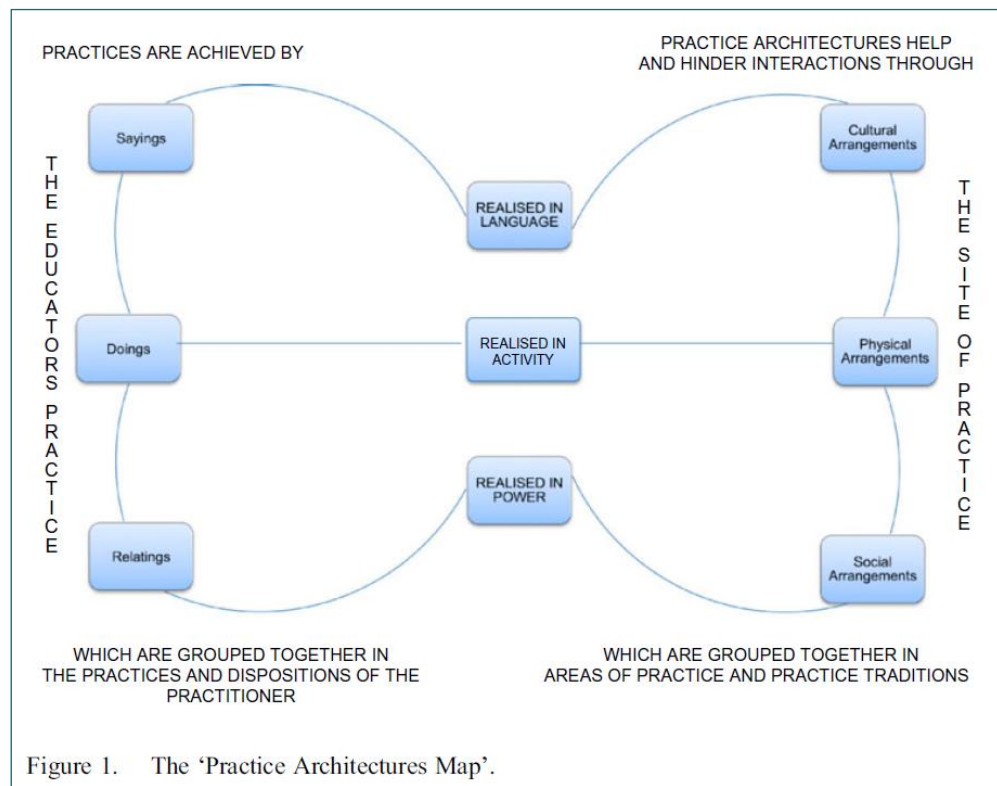


Figure 1. The 'Practice Architectures Map'.

(Salamon & Harrison, 2015)



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# The project aims to

- Share and disseminate the findings of the research with the centre community, the local community of a regional town in NSW, and wider communities of ECE pedagogy and practice

Present at *Family research night* at research site, sharing research project with families of participating children and centre staff

Present at *Community research night* at the research site, sharing research project with local ECE centre staff, directors and managers

Revisit and final edits

- Professional development workshop package
- ECA Research in Practice series



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# Developing practical resources |

Helping children, educators, caregivers, and other professionals working with infants, better understand their emotional capital practices

- Agency
- Empowerment
- The ability to voice one's views
- Choice
- Involvement
- Decision-making



# Build the capacity of adults to honour infants' protection and participation rights

Provision rights – to services and amenities

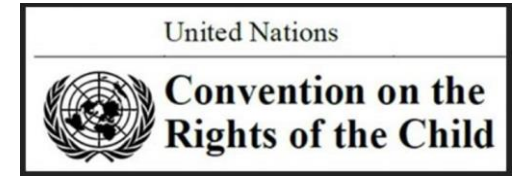
- The basic rights to *provision* of maintenance and housing, health and education

Participation rights – having an active voice

- Rights of *participation* and self determination

Protection rights – keeping safe from harm

- The rights to *protection* from abuse, exploitation and harm of all kinds



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## Implications of (mis)understanding infants' early communicative bids

*It is hypothesised the ways infants engage in emotional capital practices elicits particular trajectories of learning*



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# Thank you!

**Implicit theories and naïve beliefs:  
Using the theory of practice  
architectures to deconstruct  
the practices of early childhood  
educators**

**Andi Salamon, Jennifer Sumsion, Frances Press  
and Linda Harrison**  
Charles Sturt University, Australia

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*(Re)conceptualising children's rights in infant-toddler early childhood care and education: Transnational conversations*. Australia: Springer.

**Infants draw on 'emotional capital'  
in early childhood education  
contexts: A new paradigm**

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**Chapter 5  
Infants' Practices: Shaping (and Shaped by)  
the Arrangements of Early Childhood  
Education**

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**Ethical symmetry in participatory research with infants**

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*(Received 3 September 2014; accepted 7 October 2014)*

**Praxis in early childhood research with infants and educators**

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**Early childhood educators' conceptions of infants' capabilities: the  
nexus between beliefs and practice**

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