Speak up for children or Give voice to children?

Theoretical Frameworks

Children's rights
➢ Children are entitled to social justice

Childhood studies
➢ Ideas and expectations of children and childhood differ

Sociocultural theory
➢ Shared social experiences interacting with sensitive and responsive social partners help children to become social actors and contributors to society

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Article 3

In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration.

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Early Childhood New Zealand
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United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Article 18

Parents have joint responsibility for raising the child, and the State shall support them in this. The State shall provide appropriate assistance to parents in child raising, such as the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children.
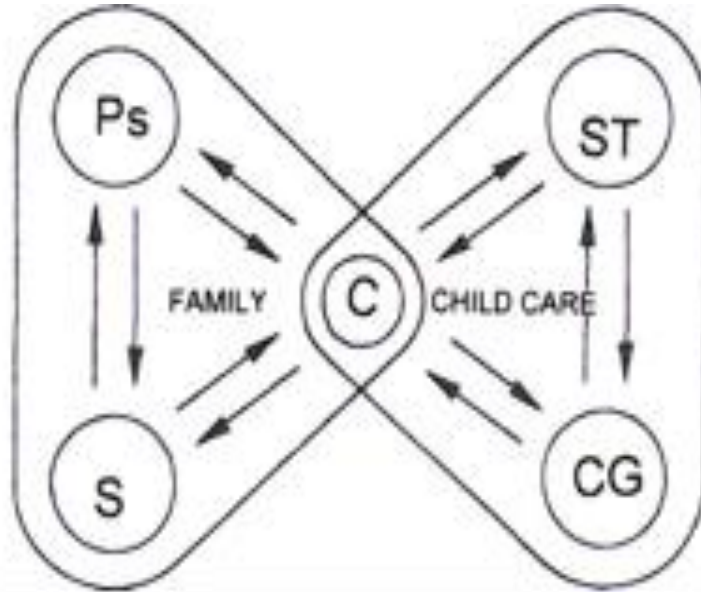
Dual Socialisation Butterfly

Family wing:
C: Child
Ps: Parent(s)
S: Sibling(s)

Childcare wing:
C: Child
ST: Staff
CG: Child Group

Sommer, D. (2012). *A childhood psychology. Young children in changing times. Reflections on a paradigm shift.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave-MacMillan.

Negotiated Childhoods

➢ The needs of the children are considered the needs of the family

➢ Children have rights and are consulted on matters affecting them

➢ Children are granted autonomy and independence while being protected and cared for

➢ Children are both "seen" and "heard"

(Sommer, 2012)

https://pixabay.com/illustrations/family-father-mother-child-girl-2057301/

Te Wheke

Rangimarie Rose Pere (1997)

➢ Head of octopus and its tentacles symbolise the interconnected aspects, to depict key components for children's learning and development.

➢ Octo project - Denmark

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Article 12

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

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FROM **VISION** TO **ACTION**

Article 12

By viewing children as participants and citizens

   … progress can be made in orientating research, policies, and practices [teaching] away from a view of children as dependants whose lives are determined for them, toward the view that children are active social and moral agents who can influence the shape of their childhoods. The future direction is clear – the challenge now is to make children's participation and voices a daily reality (Taylor & Smith, 2000).

Advocacy through their lens and in their best interests

- ➢ Speaking up for children and giving voice to children means both "seeing" and "hearing" them by looking through their lens from a child perspective to deliver ECE provision in their best interests
- ➢ Quality practice is working with children from their perspective and in their best interests

United Nations
Right to Education Framework

➢ Acceptability
➢ Accessibility
➢ Availability
➢ Adaptability

https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

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Acceptability

- ➢ Finding the "right" ECS
- ➢ Culturally appropriate ECE
- ➢ An educator speaks same language as the child
- ➢ Determined by trust in the educators
- ➢ Family and culture respected by the ECS
- ➢ Context-based (fits with aims of the community)

Accessibility

➢ Access for children with disabilities

➢ Car parks for drop offs & pick ups

➢ ECS is located within1 km walking distance for parents without transport

➢ Access to information (administration confusion)

➢ ECE broker linking families to ECS

➢ Biggest barriers to participation are cost and non-responsive ECS

Availability

➤ Long wait lists with limited spaces and hours available

➤ Child's age and location affect availability & family preferences

➤ Availability of trained educators and specialists

➤ Cost remains an important influence for families

➤ Funding affects flexibility of ECS (part-time, hours, days)

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Adaptability

- ➢ Adapt to meet the needs of the child rather than child adapting to meet the needs of the ECS
- ➢ Responsive ECS (e.g., under-2s requiring part-time provision & spaces on specific days (Mon, Wed, Fri)
- ➢ Employ educators that 'fit' with the ECS & families attending the ECS

The Child's Perspective

…seeing, understanding and empathizing with a child's needs, motives, intentions, and actions, that is, the ability to interpret from a child's perspective, to seek to understand and empathize with the child's world and the way it is perceived from the child's point of view (Sommer, Pramling Samuelsson, & Hundeide, 2010).

The Child's Questions

Strands of *Te Whāriki*	Learning and development questions	The "child's questions"
Belonging	Do you appreciate and understand my interests and abilities and those of my family?	Do you know me?
Wellbeing	Do you meet my daily needs with care and sensitive consideration?	Can I trust you?
Exploration	Do you engage my mind, offer challenges, and extend my world?	Do you let me fly?
Communication	Do you invite me to communicate and respond to my own particular efforts?	Do you hear me?
Contribution	Do you encourage and facilitate my endeavours to be part of the wider group?	Is this place fair for us?

(Podmore, May, & Carr, 2001).

Sociocultural Theory

➢ Theory focuses on children as individuals within a wider social context, in which development occurs through sociocultural activity
➢ Children's understanding of their world is rooted in the specific historical and cultural activities of the community in which they interact
➢ Children are viewed as "active co-constructors" of their own knowledge and understanding
➢ Children come to know about their world through their activities, in communication with others
➢ The process of social mediation, through the responses or reactions from other people in the environment, helps the child to internalise environmental experiences

Working with Children:
Dialogic Approach (White, 2016)

- ➢ Shifts thinking about age-based pedagogies in the ECE curriculum
- ➢ Dialogue is learning, not merely a means to learning
- ➢ Respectful of the pace and style of (forms) of communication children bring to their learning
- ➢ An infinite space of possible meanings and a place where curriculum is dialogue
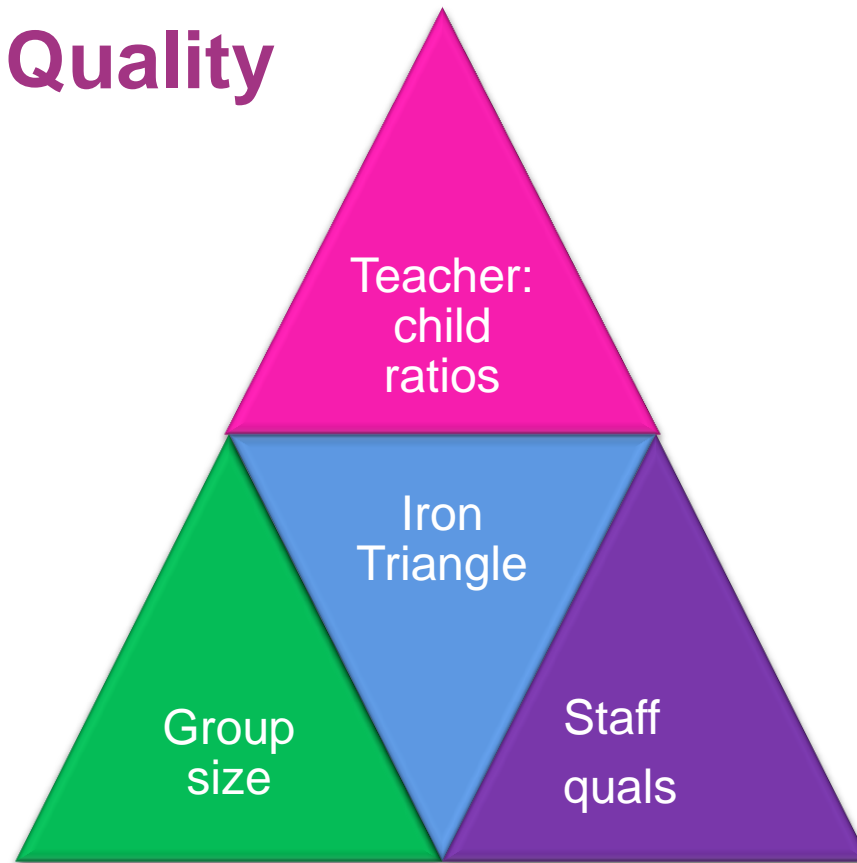- ➢ Contingent on responsiveness to other

Hands Up for Quality

Appropriately qualified staff lift the quality of the service provision through:
- ➢ The quality of their relationships and interactions with children
- ➢ The appropriateness and intentionality of the experiences they provide for children
- ➢ The behaviour they practise with their colleagues and model to children
- ➢ Their interactions and partnerships with parents (ECA, 2009).

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FROM VISION TO ACTION

Iron Triangle of Quality

From Vision to Action: Quality Practice

Children do not care how much you know until they know how much you care

Ahakoa he iti, he pounamu
All be it small, it is a treasure