

Abstract:

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Changing practices towards high quality ECEC through participatory continuous professional development.

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How can high quality ECEC be accomplished through participatory continuous professional development (CPD), facilitated through learning communities and shared reflection between participants.

Existing research highlights the need to strengthen collaboration between all actors in ECEC to improve quality: managers, qualified professionals, assistants and family daycare practitioners, where CPD has the potential to support these processes (Urban, 2014) and encourage inclusive learning processes. Whilst there is no consensus on the best kind of collaborative CPD, evidence suggests that CPD, involving actors from different positions in ECEC in a supportive environment is effective. The conceptual framework builds on theories of learning communities within and across ECEC systems. Communities of practice (COP) and Communities of Innovation (COI) underpin the conceptual framework (Jensen & Iannone, 2018). The study builds on the pragmatic paradigm. Data stems from four Danish studies, gathered through surveys, desk research and case studies. In terms of ethical considerations: The anonymity of informants was respected, with researchers following a strict ethical protocol.

Main findings or discussion: By questioning existing practices in the collaboration of different actors in ECEC, we found that crucial aspects for development include supporting shared critical reflection, learning communities and focusing on an inclusive approach to education. **Implication:** Incorporating this approach to learning communities expands CPD to include all employees in a participant-driven innovation process.

Practice or Policy: The authors discuss this innovative approach to CPD from a sustainability perspective relevant for policy and practice. This outlines the continuous development of professional practices through a participatory approach, considering its economic viability and potential to support children's development.

Five key words

ECEC, CPD, sustainability, dialogic, democratic pedagogy,