

Proposal ID: 3647

## **What keeps Australian early childhood teachers working in long day care? (SELF-ORGANISED SYMPOSIUM)**

MS. SHARON MCKINLAY Goodstart Early Learning, 43 Metroplex Avenue, , Murarrie, Australia

### **Theme**

How can evidence-based research inform governments & non-governmental organisations to advocate for quality early childhood services that promote social justice, solidarity and economic progress?

### **Strand**

Professionalism & teachers' role, National & International research in ECEC

### **Non-Presenting Authors**

SUSAN IRVINE, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, s.irvine@qut.edu.au

ANN FARRELL, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, a.farrell@qut.edu.au

### **Research aims**

Australian and international government policies aim to increase the supply of early childhood teachers in early childhood education and care (ECEC) to ensure the greatest impact on children's learning and transition to school. Amongst reforms in Australia is the requirement for university degree qualified early childhood teachers to be employed to provide a preschool education program for children in the year prior to school entry. Realisation of this policy goal is hampered by teacher shortages and the challenge of attracting and retaining teachers in ECEC. This presentation will share findings from a recent study investigating what keeps Australian early childhood teachers working in long day care.

### **Relationship to previous research works**

This research links to a larger national research project funded by the Australian Research Council to identify strategies to grow and sustain a professional early years workforce.

### **Theoretical and conceptual framework**

The study applied a social constructivist theoretical framework informed by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

Case study methodology was used to draw on the perspectives of five early childhood teachers who have chosen to work in long day care. One-to-one semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis of the interview data was undertaken. The purpose was to enhance understanding of critical factors that support or hinder teacher retention.

### **Ethical Considerations**

De-identified data would be shared with the participants' ECEC organisation.

### **Main finding or discussion**

The study identifies a range of individual and contextual factors that enabled and/or challenged these teachers' experience of working in long day care.

### **Implications, practice or policy**

The presentation will offer practical insights and support discussion on strategies to support recruitment and retention efforts in ECEC.

**Keywords:** Case study, ECEC workforce, Early Childhood Teacher, Long day care, Social constructivism

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