

Emotional labour and the democratic ECEC

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Technocratic accountability, which is impacting on ECEC practices in England, is based on the government favours evidence-based knowledge to work with children. The aim is to highlight that there are more relational, connected and embodied ways to understand what it really means 'democratic ECEC' and to work with young children. The presentation draws on contemporary debates around ECEC in England. Building on the work of emotional labour of Colley (2006), Elfer (2012) Mikuska & Fairchild, (2020) and the work of Campbell-Barr (2015) and Moss (2019) on professionalism of the ECEC workforce it is argued that there are other ways to conceptualise the interplay between professionalism, emotional labour and emotions when working with children. The project was built on the theorisations of Massumi (2015) and Stewart (2007) affect theory. It is argued that affect theory offers different ways to consider how objects, spaces, material and discursive entities and bodies impact ECEC workers emotions and emotional labour. Employing qualitative data from two projects that followed the interpretivist paradigm, data was collected involving 24 semi structured interviews and 6 non-participatory observations. The projects gained ethical clearance from the institution in which the authors were employed at. Main findings show tensions in ECEC work linked to professionalism, mothering and emotionality in which affective dimensions can reveal an 'other-than-human' dimension to wider contemporary and historical debates about the democratic ECEC. Attention to, argument for, and drive for a more professionalised workforce and the development of degree level qualifications can be achieved through research. emotional labour,

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