

## Article details

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## **Feminist New Materialist Approaches to Childhood Studies**

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## **Feminist New Materialist Approaches to Childhood Studies**

### ❖ **Introduction**

There is a growing body of feminist scholarship that has taken up “new” materialisms to research childhoods. Feminist “new” materialisms, as the name suggests, are marked by a renewed attention to matter. In previous feminist research, such as those informed by feminist post-structuralist and sociocultural approaches, matter was assigned an inert, passive, and determinate

role; a substrate on which language and discourse acted upon. In contrast, new materialist ontology views matter as lively, active, and indeterminate, and inseparable from the discursive as expressed in the concatenated term “materialdiscursive.” This is to by no means put feminist post-structuralisms in opposition to new materialist thought, or to assume a radical break from past feminist interventions; instead, feminist new materialisms hold onto the advances made by feminist post-structuralisms while simultaneously expanding its focus beyond just language and discourse. While the “new” in new materialisms is an attempt to distinguish itself from older forms of materialisms such as Marxist-inflected materialism and “scientific” materialism, the claims to “newness” have been a matter of contention. As pointed out by Indigenous and Black scholars like Eve Tuck, Zoe Todd, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, Uri McMillan, and Tiffany Lethabo King, Black/Indigenous philosophies and cosmologies in diverse locations have held similar views for centuries and millennia, where nonhuman agencies, transient materialities and human-nonhuman relations marked by reciprocity have shaped Black/Indigenous lifeworlds. The feminist inflection of “new” materialisms invite such productive frictions, to ensure West’s hegemony is disrupted while simultaneously enacting care in how Indigenous/Black thought is brought in conversation with new materialisms. In line with other critical approaches in childhood studies, feminist new materialisms disrupt Western humanist and developmentalist approaches, troubling linear, individualized, and deterministic notions of childhood. Childhood is viewed as a leaky, messy and indeterminate terrain, always already more-than the bounded “child.” This is not to undermine the advances made in childhood studies to enhance children’s agencies via multimodal listening, rather such agencies are viewed as inseparable from the nonhuman world. Donna Haraway’s concept of “naturecultures” and “diffraction,” Karen Barad’s agential realist concepts such as “intra-action” and “phenomena,” Stacy Alaimo’s notion

of “transcorporeality” and “material memoirs,” and Jane Bennet’s “thing power” all enable disrupting human exceptionalism produced through forced cuts and boundaries imposed by Western epistemological traditions. Foregrounding the entanglements of matter, discourse, affect, temporalities, place, and space offers critical and affirmative possibilities in the field of childhood studies.

### ❖ **Childhood Research and Methodology**

Feminist new materialisms have shaped the methodological approaches adopted in researching childhoods. As is the case with all feminist research approaches, [Diaz-Diaz and Semenec 2020](#) highlights how feminist “new” materialisms as a research method and practice is concerned with what concepts “do” and how they can be put to work to make a difference. Similar to other approaches that unsettle enlightenment humanism, [Osgood 2020](#) and [Osgood 2023](#) argue that feminist new materialisms displace the childhood researcher as the arbiter of knowledge, instead foregrounding entangled authorship, where knowledges and worlds are produced in intra-action with nonhumans, other humans, and the more-than-human world. This means moving away from binaries of objectivity and subjectivity—i.e., instead of viewing the childhood researcher as *in* the world extracting “data,” the researcher is envisaged as *of* the world that is iteratively being produced. Moreover, a feminist materialist approach opens avenues for experimentation in childhood research through creative, artistic, embodied, and transformative practices and methods, as demonstrated in [Cahill, et al. 2016](#); [Osgood and Pacini-Ketchabaw 2017](#); [Holmes, et al. 2018](#); and [Warren 2022](#). Further, although the humanist “human child” is decentered, this does not imply children are erased from the research process. On the contrary, the notion of “child” and “child agency” is stretched and expanded to disrupt the divisive distinction drawn between human societies and natural environments. In fact, opportunities are presented to enact

research with children that offer insight into complex more-than-human relations that produce childhood realities (Hohti 2016, Somerville and Powell 2019), and common worlds inherited (Hodgins 2020).

Cahill, Helen, Julia Coffey, and Kylie Smith. “Exploring Embodied Methodologies for Transformative Practice in Early Childhood and Youth.” *Journal of Pedagogy* 7.1 (2016): 79–92.

Using a feminist new materialist framework, the paper examines the work of Australian educators exploring the use of embodied creative drama-based methodologies to support children in articulating and negotiating the effect social norms have in their everyday world.

Diaz-Diaz, Claudia, and Paulina Semenec, eds. *Posthumanist and New Materialist Methodologies: Research after the Child*. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2020. [ISBN: 9789811527074]

The edited collection is produced through interviews with nineteen key and emerging early childhood scholars who discuss methodological and ontological issues related to research with children.

Feminist Thought in Childhood Research. Edited by Jayne Osgood and Veronica Pacini Ketchabaw. London: Bloomsbury, 2017–. [class:bookSeries]

The series includes feminist scholarship that explores the use of creative, experimental new materialist methodologies to address various aspects of childhoods.

Hodgins, Denise, ed. *Feminist Research for 21st-Century Childhoods*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020. [ISBN: 9781350183360]

The book is a collection of stories from field research with educators, children, and student-educators. Each story presents a method in the form of a verb that the authors have put to work in their efforts to unsettle the interpretative power of Euro-Western developmentalist and anthropocentric knowledges.

Hohti, Riikka. “Children Writing Ethnography: Children’s Perspectives and Nomadic Thinking in Researching School Classrooms.” *Ethnography and Education* 11.1 (2016): 74–90.

The article presents ideas of children writing ethnography as a participatory ethnographic approach that focuses on lived moments that highlight children’s becoming with all the other elements (human and nonhuman) that coexist in such moments. This is achieved by attuning to the particularity of moments of children writing “what is happening in the classroom.”

Holmes, Rachel, Liz Jones, and Jayne Osgood. “Mundane Habits, Ordinary Affects, and Methodological Creations.” In *Research Handbook on Childhoodnature: Assemblages of Childhood and Nature Research*. Edited by Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, Karen Malone, Elisabeth Barratt Hacking, 259–275. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International, 2018. [ISBN: 9783319672854]

By dislodging objects from habitual assumptions, the authors, through experimental methods, draw on two early-years projects as generative examples for what else gets produced when matter, materiality, and affect are foregrounded

Osgood, Jayne. “Becoming a Mutated Modest Witness in Early Childhood Research.” In *Ethics and Research with Young Children: New Perspectives*. Edited by Christopher M. Schulte, 113–128. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. [ISBN: 9781350076433]

Following Haraway, the author argues for a “successor science,” through the figure of a “mutated modest witness,” that reworks the idea of researcher objectivity by recognizing their situated, entangled, and implicated place in the early childhood classroom.

Osgood, Jayne. *Postdevelopmental Approaches to Childhood Research Observation*. London: Bloomsbury, 2023. [ISBN: 9781350369733]

With contributions from scholars from Canada, Norway, the UK, and the US, the book considers new postdevelopmental ways of enacting childhood research observation, and thereby challenging traditional developmentalist approaches to observation that dominate research into children and childhoods.

Somerville, Margaret, and Sarah Powell. “Researching with Children of the Anthropocene: A New Paradigm?” In *Educational Research in the Age of Anthropocene*. Edited by Vicente Reyes, Jennifer Charteris, Adele Nye, and Sofia Mavropoulou, 14-35. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2019. [ISBN: 9781522553175]

Enacting the methodology of deep hanging out the authors demonstrate ways to do research with children in the age of the Anthropocene that foregrounds doings, movement, and (non)sense making of children.

Warren, Alison. “Crafting a New Materialist Care Story: Using Wet Wool Felting to Explore Mattering and Caring in Early Childhood Settings.” *Matter* 3.2 (2022): 113–136.

By engaging with wet wool felting, the author presents a new materialist methodological account that complicates the notion of care as networks of reciprocal, intra-active, more-than-human relations.

## ❖ Gendered Childhoods

Investigating gendered childhoods has been fundamental to feminist childhood research. Decades of feminist research by feminist post-structuralists, postmodernists, and queer theorists have helped in shifting debates, policies, and practices around gender in childhoods. [Osgood and Robinson 2019](#) highlights how feminist new materialisms are not a radical break from past feminist endeavors; rather, they emerge dis/continuously expanding the focus beyond the discursive to include material agencies in the conceptualizations of gendered childhoods. The attention to material agency, as explored by [Mohandas 2023](#), problematizes views that position matter as a gender-neutral backdrop, thereby making it possible to attend to the ongoing workings of matter along with space, affect, and time in the (re)production of gender in children's play, as evidenced in [Lyttleton-Smith 2019](#). In line with feminist praxis, feminist new materialist research has focused on mundane everyday childhood objects such as dolls and cars (in [Hodgins 2020](#)), chairs (in [Mohandas 2022](#)), blocks (in [Osgood and Mohandas 2020](#)), and animal figurines (in [Osgood and Mohandas 2021](#)), among others, as an eruption of gendered material-discursive stories that materialize in complex, multiple, and contradictory ways. As conveyed in [Renold and Mellor 2013](#), a materialist engagement enables avoiding the seducing dualisms of "masculine" and "feminine," "passive" and "active," "subjective" and "objective," attuning to gendered power relations that continue to shape childhoods in late capitalism, explicated in the works such as [Delfin 2021](#), [McGregor 2020](#), and [Mohandas 2022](#), while simultaneously demonstrating the gendered possibilities made available through creative and generative experimentations ([Renold and Mellor 2013](#)).

Delfin, Annabelle Black. “The Discursive and the Material in Early Childhood Play: Co-constitution of Gender in Open and Subversive Spaces.” *Gender and Education* 33.5 (2021): 594–609.

The author considers how objects such as baby dolls and aprons intra-act with child bodies materially, and discursively constitute gendered identities. The author notes how the heterosexual matrix was both (re)inscribed and resisted in play, but highlights how materiality and space had a pivotal role in how these events unfolded.

Hodgins, Denise. *Gender and Care with Young Children: A Feminist Material Approach to Early Childhood Education*. London: Routledge, 2020. [ISBN: 9780367670818]

The author puts feminist new materialisms to work by thinking primarily with Haraway’s diffractive practice. Play objects such as dolls and cars are explored through a more-than-human relational framework to complicate understandings about gender and care in early childhoods.

Lyttleton-Smith, Jennifer. “Objects of Conflict: (Re) configuring early Childhood Experiences of Gender in the Preschool Classroom.” *Gender and Education* 31.6 (2019): 655–672.

Drawing from Karen Barad’s agential realism, the author considers how space and matter intra-actively participate in the production of gender.

McGregor, Kristidel. “Material Flows: Patriarchal Structures and the Menstruating Teacher.” *Gender and Education* 32.3 (2020): 382–394.

The article refutes the claims that frame schools as too feminine, thus putting young boys at risk. By drawing from Barad’s ideas of intra-action and posthuman performativity, and



Alaimo's "material memoir," the author considers the experiences of menstruating teachers, and how patriarchal logics are built into the material designs and realities of schools.

Mohandas, Sid. "Beyond Male Recruitment: Decolonising Gender Diversification Efforts in the Early Years by Attending to Pastpresent Material-Discursive-Affective Entanglements." *Gender and Education* 34.1 (2022): 17–32.

Through an auto/ethnographic account, the author thinks with feminist new materialisms and post/decolonial studies to make visible the material-discursive-affective processes that privilege cis white heteropatriarchy in early childhood settings, which are otherwise obscured by grand narratives such as the male recruitment drive and "boys in crisis."

Mohandas, Sid. "Montessori Education and Gender: Recasting Gender in Montessori Contexts." In *Bloomsbury Handbook of Montessori Education*. Edited by Angela Murray, Eva-Maria Tebano Almquist, Maria McKenna and Mira Debs, 469-477. London: Bloomsbury, 2023. [ISBN: 9781350275607]

The author disputes the gender-neutral status of Montessori pedagogy by inviting readers to attune to relationality, highlighting the different possibilities opened up through feminist post-structuralist and new materialist approaches.

Osgood, Jayne, and Sid Mohandas. "Reconfiguring the 'Male Montessorian': The Mattering of Gender through Pink Towering Practices." *Early Years* 40.1 (2020): 67–81.

By employing Haraway's SF method, the authors engage in a diffractive analysis of Montessori pink towers, to unearth the complex gendered politics embedded in the materialities of the pink *Fagus sylvatica* blocks. From the matterings of pink matter, to stories

of globalization, capitalism, and local labor, to hauntological accounts, the paper argues for gender to be understood as more than exclusively an anthropocentric affair.

Osgood, Jayne, and Sid Mohandas. “Figuring Gender in Early Childhood with Animal Figurines: Pursuing Tentacular Stories about Global Childhoods in the Anthropocene.” In *The SAGE Handbook of Global Childhoods*. Edited by Nicola Yelland, Lacey Peters, Nicola Fairchild, Marek Tesar, and Michelle S. Perez, 205–218. London: SAGE, 2021. [ISBN: 9781529717815]

The chapter takes up animal figurines for a feminist new materialist inquiry into how global childhoods manifest in tentacular ways. By attending to material-discursive manifestations, the authors draw on situated knowledges and partial perspectives to guide their investigations into how gender is non-innocently figured in an early childhood classroom.

Osgood, Jayne, and Kerry H. Robinson, ed. *Feminists Researching Gendered Childhoods: Generative Entanglements*. London: Bloomsbury, 2019. [ISBN: 9781474285780]

The edited volume brings seven international feminist scholars in conversation to consider the generative entanglements and tensions between feminist post-structuralisms and feminist “new” materialisms and the potential they hold to continue to push ideas and practices in early childhood.

Renold, E. J., and David Mellor. “Deleuze and Guattari in the Nursery: Towards an Ethnographic Multi-sensory Mapping of Gendered Bodies and Becomings.” In *Deleuze and Research Methodologies*. Edited by Rebecca Coleman and Jessica Ringrose, 23-41. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013. [ISBN: 9780748644117]

The authors attune to ordinary everyday affects that circulate across and through bodies, where the “subject” is always produced in relation to other bodies and things. Using a multisensory mapping of objects-sounds-bodies enables grasping the complex gendered relationalities that texture life in the nursery.

### ❖ Sex/ualities Education, Healthy Relations, and Childhoods

Feminist new materialisms, as [Allen 2018](#) argues, queer the field of sexualities education by expanding the focus beyond the human, to consider the power of “things.” Everyday objects and materialities in schools are seen to play a constitutive role in the production of heterosexualized childhoods. For instance, [Puutio, et al. 2022](#) considers how young girls are attached to emerging sexual cultures, while [Ringrose and Rawlings 2015](#) demonstrates how heteronormative, sexist, and misogynist bullying practices are made visible when matter comes to matter in research with children. Further, by investigating children’s experiences in playgrounds, [Huuki and Renold 2016](#) argue heterosexualized forces in childhoods must be understood beyond the binary subject positions; instead, the workings of objects, place, space, and histories must be considered in order to grapple with the complexities of consent formation. Further, by troubling the binaries between online and offline worlds, [Marston 2022](#) offers insight into digital sexualities, and possibilities of using creative, visual, and art-based approaches with students in fabricating digitally networked bodies. Similar use of speculative fabulation is seen in [Pasley 2022](#), where, by tracing the marks of colonial histories in the ongoing materialization of trans students, they reimagine sexuality education in ways that will enact justice for trans students.

Allen, Louisa, ed. *Sexuality Education and New Materialism: Queer Things*. New York:

Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. [ISBN: 9781349952991]

The book considers how feminist new materialisms can expand the focus of queer theory beyond the confines of “human subjects” to consider “things.” Sexuality is thus viewed as intra-active entanglements of photographs, meanings, practices, material artifacts, humans, and things of all kinds, including the “thing power” of the cameras in the research process.

Huuki, Tuija, and E. J. Renold. “Crush: Mapping Historical, Material and Affective Force Relations in Young Children’s Hetero-Sexual Playground Play.” *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 37.5 (2016): 754–769.

The paper offers a glimpse into a short video of three boys repeatedly piling up on and demanding a kiss from their girl classmates. Three crush assemblages are created to move away from binary subject positions to consider the more-than-human dynamics of consent, where objects, place, space, affect, and histories are inseparable.

Marston, Kate. “Fabricating Future Bodies: Making Digital Sexualities Research Matter.” *Qualitative Research Journal* 22.1 (2022): 67–80.

The paper enacts feminist new materialist and posthuman concepts in a workshop called Fabricating Future Bodies, where creative, visual, and art-based approaches were employed to enable students to speculate and fabricate what mattered to them about digitally networked bodies.

Pasley, And. “Trans Im/Possibilities.” In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Sexuality Education*. Edited by Louisa Allen and Mary Lou Rasmussen, 1-11. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.

The entry problematizes sexuality education in Aotearoa New Zealand, and ways it delimits the possibilities of trans student subjectivities. By tracing the marks of colonial pasts in the

ongoing materialization of trans worlds, the author employs an agential realist approach to reconfigure trans im/possibilities. The chapter concludes with a speculative account to reimagine sexuality education in ways that will enact justice for trans students.

**Puutio, Eveliina, Tuija Huuki, and Suvi Pihkala.** “Mundane Matters: Mapping the Becomings of Heterosexual Girlhood in the Emerging Sexual Cultures of Elementary School Children.” *Sexualities* (Online First, 21 November 2022):1–15.

The article explores the important role matter plays in emerging sexual cultures in elementary school children based on an ethnographic case study of a seven-year-old girl. By using feminist new materialist theories, the authors explore how everyday objects work as co-constitutive forces in attaching young girls to teen cultures, emphasizing femininity and distancing them from childhood and masculinity.

**Ringrose, Jessica, and Victoria Rawlings.** “Posthuman Performativity, Gender and ‘School Bullying’: Exploring the Material-Discursive Intra-actions of Skirts, Hair, Sluts, and Poofs.” *Confero* 3.2 (2015): 80–119.

By employing Barad’s notion of posthuman performativity, the authors demonstrate how attending to materialities, such as hair and skirts, make school bullying practices visible that would elude purely discursive research frameworks.

### ❖ **Anti-colonial, Decolonial, and Anti-racist Orientations**

Scholarly work that puts feminist new materialisms in productive conversation with anti-colonial, decolonial, and anti-racist frameworks, makes important contributions to the field of childhood studies. A feminist materialist engagement enables attuning to the materialities of racialized bodies and other material forces as performativities, rather than as inert, static, and

deterministic, explored by [Pacini-Ketchabaw, et al. 2011](#) and [Nxumalo 2012](#). Fundamental to this orientation, as articulated by [Nxumalo 2020a](#) and [Huuki and Maija 2019](#), is the contestation of the very category of “human,” reconceptualizing “human” as produced through the intra-action of matter, affect/emotions, memories, place, history, time, and discourse. The special focus on place and land, as seen in [Nxumalo 2016](#), [Rowan 2017](#), [Nxumalo 2020b](#) and [Guttorm 2021](#), has been key in foregrounding ways that colonialism has shaped and continues to shape contemporary childhoods. Further, the works [Ritchie 2016](#) and [Skerrett 2023](#) unsettle the Western, individualist, rationalist, and extractivist logic that dominates childhood practice and relations to place and land, in favor of diverse Indigenous, Black geographies and decolonial feminist stories and approaches that pay attention to relations with the nonhuman and more-than-human world toward practices of reciprocity ([Nxumalo 2020b](#)).

[Guttorm, Hannah](#). “[Becoming Earth: Rethinking and \(Re-\)Connecting with the Earth, Sámi Lands and Relations](#).” In *Bridging Cultural Concepts of Nature: Indigenous People and Protected Spaces of Nature*. Edited by R. H Andersson, B. Cothran and S Kekki, 229–258. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2021. [ISBN: 9789523690592]

The author locates their research in Sámi contexts, and dives into some Sámi concepts around land(s) and “nature.” This is followed by autoethnographic encounters of stories—my-stories, our stories, stories from the people the author has talked with—in revitalizing journeys in Sámi land.

[Huuki, Tuija, and Maija Lanas](#). “[Sámi Child-Adult/Past-Present Entanglements in a Painful Lecture at University](#).” In *Social, Material and Political Constructs of Arctic Childhoods: An*

*Everyday Life Perspective*. Edited by Pauliina Rautio and Elina Stenvall, 135-148.

Singapore: Springer, 2019. [ISBN: 9789811331602]

The authors' research uses post-individualist, non-anthropocentric theories of subjectivity to emphasize how their experiences are beyond subject/object and past/present divides. Drawing on affect theory and agential realism, the chapter attends to discomforts emerging through the entanglement of adult-presents and Sámi childhood memories, where history, time, place, and material objects work together as constitutive forces.

Nxumalo, Fikile. "Unsettling Representational Practices: Inhabiting Relational Becomings in Early Childhood Education." *Child & Youth Services* 33.3-4 (2012): 281-302.

The author draws attention to how representational practices enacted by dominant multicultural pedagogical approaches work to produce static representations of difference and diversity, and potentially reproduce inequalities. Instead, attention is paid to material-discursive assemblages and relational becomings in everyday encounters to open possibilities for socially just childhood pedagogies.

Nxumalo, Fikile. "Towards 'Refiguring Presences' as an Anti-colonial Orientation to Research in Early Childhood Studies." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 29.5 (2016): 640-654.

Using material feminisms, the author puts to work the notion of refiguring presences to attend to everyday encounters with colonialism, re-storying contested places, attuning to more-than-human relations, and dis/entangling researcher subjectivities.

Nxumalo, Fikile. "Place-Based Disruptions of Humanism, Coloniality and Anti-Blackness in Early Childhood Education." *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning* 8.1 (2020a): 34-49.

The paper highlights the necessity of engaging with place-based approaches, by putting feminist new materialisms in conversation with Black feminisms and Indigenous feminisms. It unsettles anthropocentric, colonial, and anti-Black inheritances of early childhood education and care, while simultaneously disrupting the universalization of the category “human.”

Nxumalo, Fikile. “[Situating Indigenous and Black Childhoods in the Anthropocene.](#)” In *Research Handbook on Childhoodnature: Assemblages of Childhood and Nature Research*. Edited by Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, Karen Malone, and Elisabeth Barratt Hacking, 1-22. Springer, 2020b. [ISBN: 9783319672861]

The author considers Indigenous feminist practices of presencing and relating, and Black feminist traditions of testifying-witnessing as decolonial and anti-racist orientations in childhood research and practice. The chapter unsettles the unlocated category of “human” of Western humanisms and universalisms, by situating the “human” as an index of multiple historical and ongoing contestations, and further elucidating the asymmetric vulnerabilities and responsibilities in the Anthropocene.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, Veronica, Fikile Nxumalo, and Mary Carol Rowan. “[Nomadic Research Practices in Early Childhood: Interrupting Racisms and Colonialisms.](#)” *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology* 1.1 (2011): 19–33.

The paper considers how racialization can be understood in more complex ways, when attention is paid to materiality and affect as well as the systemic and discursive formations of race.



Ritchie, Jenny. “Qualities for Early Childhood Care and Education in an Age of Increasing Superdiversity and Decreasing Biodiversity.” *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 17.1 (2016): 78–91.

The author argues that notions of “quality” captured in neoliberal discourses perpetuate Western, individualistic, normative, and exploitative attitudes and practices that are contributing to the climate crisis currently imperiling our planet. By drawing on posthuman and Indigenous theories, readers are invited to engage with alternative conceptualizations that foster dispositional qualities of holistic sensorial engagement with(in) the world.

Rowan, Mary Caroline. “Rethinking Relationships with Curriculum by Engaging with Foxes and Sharing Stories in Early Childhood Spaces.” *Global Studies of Childhood* 7.2 (2017): 131–147.

Childhood practices are reconceptualized and the hegemony of the Global North is disrupted by employing Nunangat pedagogies informed by relationships with land, water, and ice. Through a rhizomatic exercise, encounters with fox are analyzed to recognize the vitality of local Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Skerrett, Mere. “A Critical Analysis of Māori Cosmologies and the Tyranny of Epistemic Western Centrim.” *Gender and Education* 35.2 (2023): 156–170.

Drawing on Māori ancestral travels, the author utilizes the concept of “wayfinding” as a methodology and method to recenter mātauranga Māori, or Māori knowledge. The author highlights the masculinist, individualist, and extractivist colonial project of the West that harms Indigenous people and lands, while simultaneously restoring and recentering Māori ways of being, knowing, doing, and relating.

## ❖ Neurodiverse and Dis/abled Childhoods

Disability studies have drawn from feminist new materialist conceptualizations—such as in [Frigerio, et al. 2018](#) and [Shannon 2022](#)—to move away from pathologizing and racist-ableist models of traditional humanist frameworks where neurodivergent and disabled children are defined either in terms of deficit or excess. According to [Reddington and Price 2018](#), a materialist orientation offers possibilities to disrupt normative expectations and prioritize disabled children’s embodied, relational, and emergent connections to schools. This is explored by [Dower 2022](#) in relation to children with selective mutism, where pathological narratives linked to verbal expressions were undone by holding space for movement and sensory attunements. Moreover, a feminist new materialist approach does not resolve in deterministic orientations, but rather, as [Shannon 2021](#) argues, delving into the realms of autism, entails holding onto the friction produced between different orientations toward enablement.

[Dower, Ruth Churchill](#). “[Too Much Kin in the Game? The Intimate Reciprocities Available in Not Speaking.](#)” *Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry* 14.1 (2022): 139–151.

The author explores the possibilities that emerge when expectations for verbal expressions are removed for children with selective mutism, and space is made for movement and sensory attunements. By thinking-with Haraway, Barad, and de la Bellacasa, the paper considers how pathological narratives can be undone through movement-kinship.

[Frigerio, Alessandra, Angelo Benozzo, Rachel Holmes, and Katherine Runswick-Cole](#). “[The Doing and Undoing of the “Autistic Child”: Cutting Together and Apart Interview-Based Empirical Materials.](#)” *Qualitative Inquiry* 24.6 (2018): 390–402.

Puts Baradian concepts such as intra-action, agential cuts, and cutting-together-apart to work to complicate the production of the “autistic child” and unsettle the binaries that frame some children as “abnormal” and “undesirable.”

Reddington, Sara, and Deborah Price. “Pedagogy of New Materialism: Advancing the Educational Inclusion Agenda for Children and Youth with Disabilities.” *International Journal of Special Education* 33.2 (2018): 465–481.

The paper highlights the inadequacy of dominant special education models in Canada and Australia and proposes new materialisms as a form of pedagogy that can prioritize disabled children’s embodied, relational, and emergent connections to school.

Shannon, David Ben. “A/autisms: A “Queer Labor of the Incommensurate”: Holding onto the Friction between Different Orientations towards Autism in an Early Childhood Research-Creation Project.” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* (Online, 23 November 2021): 1–19.

Drawing on queer inhumanisms and Barad’s diffraction, the paper proposes and employs “A/autisms” as an organizing concept to three vignettes from the classroom, as a way to grapple with the tensions that arise from the complex intersections of Autistic identity, autistic disability, and the contingency of the diagnosis “autism” in educational research.

Shannon, David Ben. “Perversity, Precarity, and Anxiety: Tracing a ‘More Precise Typology’ of the Affect of Neuroqueer Failure in an In-School Research-Creation Project.” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* (Online, 27 September 2022): 1–15.

The paper considers complex racist-ableist politics of failure by examining two samples from research in an early childhood classroom. The first sample involves the vocal improvisation by a Black child, where failure is mobilized through the racist-ableist politics of neurotypicality, under-representation in special education, and refusal. The second sample considers the failure through the “critical use” of electrodermal activity. Through the conceptualization of an “affect of failure,” the paper discusses the perverse possibilities and perilous precarities of (neuro)queer failure.

### ❖ **Childhoods in the Anthropocene and Capitalocene**

Environmental and sustainability education in childhood studies, as identified by [Pollitt, et al. 2021](#), have predominantly subscribed to an anthropocentric logic that relies on the separation of human and “nature.” Scholarship drawing on “new” materialisms have troubled such binaries by emphasizing the entanglements of nature and culture, and of human and nonhuman. Moreover, a materialist orientation unsettles dominant narratives that conflate “childhood” and “nature” as innocent and pure, to be protected, preserved, and rescued. These are complicated by how Black childhoods are refused the privilege of innocence in environmental education, as noted in [Nxumalo and ross 2019](#), further complicated by the extractivist logic embedded in Western child developmental theories that impose particular relations to child-environment conceptions, as explored in [Nxumalo and Villanueva 2019](#). Upending such colonialist, capitalist, white supremacist, and anthropocentric logic, [Malone and Tran 2022](#) highlight the fresh possibilities potentiated by putting Indigenous cosmologies in conversation with new materialist philosophy that foregrounds relations of reciprocity toward multispecies justice. These include reimagining and reconfiguring human-nonhuman relations in places, spaces, and materialities that are traditionally excluded from configurations of “nature,” such as urban sites and the constitutive

roles of children, animals, and plants, as examined in [Duhn, et al. 2020]. Further, [Penfold and Odegard 2021], through the authors' work with plastic, and [Osgood 2022], researching childhoods in a global pandemic, attend to the complex and contradictory stories that work across nature/culture divides. Moreover, through speculative accounts, [Ashton 2022] and [Nxumalo and Ross 2019] grapple with the intersections of childhood theories, colonialism, indigeneity, anti-Blackness, and climate to offer re-imaginings for living otherwise in racial capitalist ruins.

**Ashton, Emily.** *Anthropocene Childhoods: Speculative Fiction, Racialization, and Climate Crisis*. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. [ISBN: 9781350262386]

The open access book brings together childhood studies, literacy studies, and environmental studies to raise important questions about the theorizations of childhoods, the ontology of childhood, racializations, and parenting and care, and their intersection with colonialism, indigeneity, and climate. Speculative imaginaries of child-climate futures help reimagine alternative ways of being and relating that generate more livable worlds.

**Duhn, Iris, Karen Malone, and Marek Tesar.** *Urban Nature and Childhoods*. London: Routledge, 2020. [ISBN: 9780367334123]

The edited collection examines why urban environments are key sites for reimagining and reconfiguring human-nonhuman relations, offering important insights into the entangled status of children, animals, and plants, and different modes of being human that are offered in times of planetary crisis.

**Malone, Karen, and Chi Tran.** “Diffracting Child-Virus Multispecies Bodies: A Rethinking of Sustainability Education with East-West Philosophies.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 55.11 (2022): 1296–1310.

The authors diffractively engage new materialisms and Buddhist philosophy to rethink sustainability education. By considering child-virus relations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors grapple with ways to think beyond anthropocentric logic and human exceptionalism by foregrounding multispecies justice.

Nxumalo, Fikile, and kihana miraya ross. “Envisioning Black Space in Environmental Education for Young Children.” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 22.4 (2019): 502–524.

The paper examines the deficit conceptions that continue to circulate in environmental education in relation to Black childhoods, produced through the interplay of racialized notions of childhood innocence, anti-Black schooling, and ongoing settler colonialism. The authors use Black speculative fiction as a creative and generative mode for reimagining fugitive education spaces for Black children.

Nxumalo, Fikile, and Marleen Villanueva. “Decolonial Water Stories: Affective Pedagogies with Young Children.” *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education* 7.1 (2019): 40–56.

The article unsettles extractivist relations to the more-than-human world and dominant narratives that situate children’s place in current conditions of environment vulnerabilities. By putting Indigenous feminisms and feminist “new” materialist scholarship in conversation, the authors draw from an affective encounter with a creek in Texas to rethink child-water relations—away from developmentist conceptions, and toward reciprocity.

Osgood, Jayne. “From Multispecies Tangles and Anthropocene Muddles: What Can Lichen Teach Us about Precarity and Indeterminacy in Early Childhood?” In *Children and the*

*Power of Stories*. Edited by Carmen Blyth and Teresa K. Aslanian, 51–67. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2022. [ISBN: 9789811692864]

The author pursues storytelling in the Anthropocene that emerged from walking-with during a global pandemic. Stories of lichen, a dead pigeon, and a deadly virus emerge from a particular geopolitical moment when early childhood workers as “frontline workers” are disproportionately affected. The chapter demonstrates that embracing a transcorporeal sensibility enables more ethically response-able ways for earthly survival and multispecies flourishing in capitalist ruins.

Penfold, Louisa, and Nina Odegard. “Making Kin with Plastic through Aesthetic Experimentation.” *Journal of Childhood Studies* 46.2 (2021): 51–65.

By activating a feminist new materialist ontology, the paper seeks to position plastic as an active participant in the production of knowledge. Drawing on Haraway’s notion of “making kin,” the authors consider how plastic works both as a destructive and creative force, offering a novel framework for learning with plastic in early childhood.

Pollitt, Jo, Mindy Blaise, and Tonya Rooney. “Weather Bodies: Experimenting with Dance Improvisation in Environmental Education in the Early Years.” *Environmental Education Research* 27.8 (2021): 1141–1151.

The research disrupts ways the weather is often taught to young children that rely on separations between “nature” and “humans.” Through the use of dance improvisations, the authors instead enact an embodied and relational understanding of weather that destabilizes human-nonhuman binaries, and instead the notion of weathered bodies is proposed.

## ❖ Childhood Theories, Philosophies, and Practices

Research shaped by feminist new materialist perspectives has offered important ways to reconceptualize childhood theory, philosophy, and practice. According to [Taguchi 2009](#), such a reorientation relates to unsettling dichotomies between theory and practice, matter and discourse, and body and mind that have dominated childhood education. The attention to materialities (human and nonhuman) as active, constitutive forces in the production of child worlds fundamentally challenges the hierarchical notions that position theory as informing practice, or vice versa. The disruptions to such hierarchies are illustrated in [Duhn 2012](#), which considers the entanglements of place and pedagogy, where place-based pedagogy is viewed as an assemblage of forces that make place and constitute pedagogies. Moreover, as demonstrated by [Osgood and Mohandas 2022](#), a material engagement that considers the entanglements of histories and the workings of time makes explicit how colonial capitalism has shaped and continues to shape dominant Western childhood theories, philosophies, and ongoing practices, where individualist, human-centric, and developmentalist features contribute to product-driven and progress-driven models in neoliberal education. Away from such deterministic goals, [de Castro and Hennessy 2020](#) illustrates how a materialist ontology generates space for pedagogies of indeterminacy toward bewildering education. Simultaneously, [Bone 2019](#) exemplifies the possibilities potentiated for diffractive, creative, and experimentative reconfigurations of pedagogical figures and approaches.

[Bone, Jane](#). “[Maria Montessori as Domestic Goddess: Iconic Early Childhood Educator and Material Girl](#).” *Gender and Education* 31.6 (2019): 673–687.



Feminist new materialist theory is employed to interrogate what being domestic means in a feminized educational space. Through a diffractive approach, notions of domesticity, Montessori's "practical life" exercises, her marginalized status in early childhood education, and contemporary narratives around domesticity are read through each other to reposition Maria Montessori as a "domestic goddess."

de Castro, Adrienne Bacelar, and Sarah Hennessy. "Pedagogies of Indeterminacy." *Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario* 4.1 (2020): 45–54.

Drawing on pedagogical inquiries using charcoal and cardboard from an early childhood center in Canada, the product-driven model of neoliberal education, which is shaped by prioritization of skills, novelty, and time, is challenged by embracing a pedagogy of indeterminacy.

Duhn, Iris. "Places for Pedagogies, Pedagogies for Places." *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education* 13.2 (2012): 99–107.

The paper argues that conceptualizing place as an assemblage offers ways to move away from subject/object divisions that continue to structure pedagogy. In contrast to research that dominates place-based pedagogy that relies on divisions between local and global, the author views place as an assemblage and considers the forces and forms that make place and shape pedagogies.

Osgood, Jayne, and Sid Mohandas. "Grappling with the Miseducation of Montessori: A Feminist Posthuman Re-reading of 'Child' in Early Childhood Contexts." *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Journal* 23.3 (2022): 302–316.

The paper grapples with the contradictions of Montessori theory and practice. The feminist and justice-oriented roots of Montessori are first foregrounded as a justification for ongoing

feminist engagement. By reconfiguring the practice of observation, and exposing the colonial capitalist and civilizing forces at work in Montessori, the authors propose a practice that moves away from humanizing and toward bewildering.

**Taguchi, Hillevi Lenz.** *Going beyond the Theory/Practice Divide in Early Childhood*

*Education: Introducing an Intra-Active Pedagogy.* London: Routledge, 2009. [ISBN:

9780415464444]

By shifting attention to the force of material objects and artifacts in childhoods, the author problematizes and unsettles the binaries between theory/practice, discourse/matter, and mind/body that inform and shape dominant approaches to early childhood education. This is achieved by viewing everyday play objects such as clay, pen, paper, and construction materials as performative agents, produced through material-discursive entanglements.

### ❖ **Childhood, Play, and Everyday Encounters**

Childhoods and children's play are often framed in terms of "innocence," viewing them as separate and removed from matters relating to the adult world. A material feminist perspective views children's play and everyday childhood encounters in terms of naturecultural practices (Rautio 2013), as already embedded in worlds that queer binaries and the normative vision of producing autonomous individual learners (Taylor and Blaise 2014). Further, they interrupt notions that equate children's play as innocent, and enable an attunement to the darker sides of play and childhoods. Osgood and Andersen 2019, for instance, grapples with how real-world tragedies affect children's life through news media encounters, while Proctor and Hackett 2017, through the analysis of dark emotions and materiality in children's play, accounts for the workings of anthropocentric and colonialist metanarratives. As Osgood 2015 argues, by viewing

becomings of children within an assemblage of things enables attuning to how relations are negotiated, resisted, indulged, and transgressed in play.

Osgood, Jayne. “Reimagining gender and play.” In *The Excellence of Play*. Edited by Janet Moyles, 49-60. 4th ed. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2015. [ISBN: 9780335264186]

Through observations of young children at play, the author considers the multiple gendered becomings of children in their play set within an assemblage of things, emotions, sensory incidents, humans, and un/intentional events. By approaching children’s play in this manner, Osgood offers ways to attune to how they negotiate, resist, celebrate, and transgress gendered ways of becoming in early childhood contexts.

Osgood, Jayne, and Camilla Eline Andersen. “A Feminist New Materialist Experiment: Exploring What Else Gets Produced through Encounters with Children’s News Media.” *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 20.4 (2019): 363–380.

The authors grapple with how real-world issues such as the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy and the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School affect children’s lives, and what else gets produced through encounters with children’s global news media.

Proctor, Lisa, and Abigail Hackett. “Playing with Place in Early Childhood: An Analysis of Dark Emotion and Materiality in Children’s Play.” *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 18.2 (2017): 213–226.

The study brings together cultural studies of emotions and theories that foreground the agency of place and objects to gain insights into children’s play. By analyzing examples from two ethnographic studies, the authors consider the evocations of fear through the entanglement of

materialities of place and bodies, which set in motion categorizing forces linked to anthropocentric and colonialist metanarratives (animal/human and victim/aggressor). The authors argue that attuning to emotions and materiality enable connecting the micro and the macro.

Rautio, Pauliina. "Children Who Carry Stones in Their Pockets: On Autotelic Material Practices in Everyday Life." *Children's Geographies* 11.4 (2013): 394–408.

The author explores everyday childhood materialities by viewing children's autotelic practices, such as carrying stones in the pocket, as naturecultural practices

Taylor, Affrica, and Mindy Blaise. "Queer Worlding Childhood." *Discourse* 35.3 (2014): 377–392.

The paper sets out to queer the normative anthropocentric vision of the child ever only becoming the autonomous individual learner. By tracing some child-dog events across three sites, the authors narrate ways of queer worlding childhood, where children-become-dogs and dogs-become-children.

### ❖ Childhood Literacies

Traditionally, literacies are understood in terms of reading, writing, and related activities, which automatically deem very young children and some disabled children as incapable of engaging with literacy practices, while framing others as lagging behind in literacy development. [Hackett](#)

[2021](#) explores how a materialist ontology invites a shift in focus from the exclusive domain of "human" to the "more-than-human" and "more-than-words" components of literacy practices.

This includes attuning to sounds in [Gallagher, et al. 2018](#); gestures and movements between humans, nonhuman things, and places, such as fabric remnants, in [Thiel 2015](#); sticks in forests in

[Harwood and Collier 2017]; and wasteland in [Nxumalo and Rubin 2018]—among others. Moreover, by thinking-with Sylvia Wynter, [Truman 2019] highlights the colonialist roots of humanist literacy practices, while [Thiel and Jones 2017], through a place-based analysis, makes visible the material-discursive production of “raced” and “classed” literacies. These concerns are further taken up in [Hackett, et al. 2020] to draw attention to the importance of mobilizing more-than-human research without eliding race, multilingualism, class, and inequalities. As demonstrated in [Dernikos 2018] and [Truman 2019], an attunement to affect and refusal is proposed as effective in disrupting humanist literacies, toward healing justice. Moreover, foregrounding the ecological crisis produced by unfettered capitalism, [Hackett 2022] justifies the urgency in moving away from literacy practices that subscribe to the capitalist logic of progress, and toward alternative literacy practices that underscore human entanglements and interdependencies with the more-than-human world.

Dernikos, Bessie P. “\*‘It’s Like You Don’t Want to Read It Again’: Exploring Affects, Trauma and ‘Willful’

Literacies[<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1468798418756187>]\*.” *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* (Online First, 8 March 2018).

The author considers literacies as “willful objects” that transmit “sticky” intensities and inflict trauma by reinforcing a narrow view of race, gender, and/or sexuality. A pedagogy of exposure is proposed as a kind of healing, where such traumas are not only exposed but recovered by embracing affective and risky relationships with past and presents histories of violence.

Gallagher, Michael, Abigail Hackett, Lisa Procter, and Fiona Scott. “Vibrations in Place: Sound and Language in Early Childhood Literacy Practices.” *Educational Studies* 54.4 (2018): 465–482.

Through data from a sound walk by a parent and a child, the authors suggest that through a wide range of sound-making and literacy practices, which consider the movement of sound across and between children, animals, objects, buildings, and landscapes, we can move beyond human and symbol-centered literacies.

Hackett, Abigail. *More-Than-Human Literacies in Early Childhood*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. [ISBN: 9781350144729]

The book argues that children’s literacies are always more-than-human and more-than-words, involving sounds, gestures, and movement between humans, nonhuman things, and places. By attuning to such more-than-human literacies, a case is made for decentering children.

Hackett, Abigail. “Unruly Edges: Toddler Literacies of the Capitalocene.” *Global Studies of Childhood* 12.3 (2022): 263–276.

By troubling notions of time-as-progress and human exceptionalism, the paper problematizes the emphasis placed on the “next generation” to be skilled enough, progressive enough, and masterful enough to find solutions for the ongoing planetary challenges produced by capitalism. The author suggests that alternative imaginaries of literacies are needed that highlight human entanglements and interdependencies with the more-than-human world, and further proposes ways of thriving in the Capitalocene.

Hackett, Abigail, Maggie MacLure, and Kate Pahl, eds. *Special Issue: Literacy and Language as Material Practices: Re-thinking Social Inequality in Young Children's Literacies*. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 20.1 (2020). [class:journalArticle]

The special issue seeks to consider what happens to literacy as a category when affect and body are taken as a starting point, and when more-than-human relations are foregrounded. A key emphasis in this issue is to provoke ways to keep the political edge of new materialist and posthuman scholarship.

Harwood, Debra, and Diane R Collier. "The Matter of the Stick: Storying/(Re)storying Children's Literacies in the Forest." *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 17.3 (2017): 336–352.

The authors draw data from their year-long venture into the forests with children and educators, to think with sticks, which open out infinite possibilities for literacy teaching and learning.

Nxumalo, Fikile, and Jessica Cira Rubin. "Encountering Waste Landscapes: More-Than-Human Place Literacies in Early Childhood Education." In *Posthumanism and Literacy Education: Knowing/Becoming/Doing Literacies*. Edited by Candace R. Kuby, Karen Spector, and Jaye Johnson Thiel, 201–213. New York: Routledge, 2018. [ISBN: 9781138094390]

Through diffractive engagements with visual and textual data from an ethnographic study, everyday encounters between children, educators, and wasteland, the authors foreground more-than-human place literacies.

Thiel, Jaye Johnson. “Vibrant Matter: The Intra-active Role of Objects in the Construction of Young Children’s Literacies.” *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice* 64 (2015): 112–131.

The article looks closely at the ways children and things such as fabric remnants work together in co-producing stories. As a result, the research demonstrates that children are more deeply and intellectually engaged when they are given access to a broader range of materials to perform and participate in literacy practices.

Thiel, Jaye Johnson, and Stephanie Jones. “The Literacies of Things: Reconfiguring the Material-Discursive Production of Race and Class in an Informal Learning Centre.” *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 17.3 (2017): 315–335.

Researching in a multilingual, working-class neighborhood, through a place-based, feminist new materialist orientation, objects are viewed as material-discursive apparatuses in the production of literacies, especially “raced” and “classed” literacies.

Truman, Sarah. “Inhuman Literacies and Affective Refusals: Thinking with Sylvia Wynter and Secondary School English.” *Curriculum Inquiry* 49.1 (2019): 110–128.

Thinking-with Sylvia Wynter and more-than-human theories, the author highlights how literacy practices are dominantly shaped by Western epistemologies that are concerned with what Wynter calls “Man.” The paper considers how affect and refusal can operate as inhuman literacies to disrupt humanism from within.

#### ❖ **Childhood Art and Music Practices**

Art and music practices in childhood are traditionally mapped against developmentalist timelines that narrowly focus on the acquisition of skills. Osgood 2019 argues that a feminist new



materialist ontology thinks beyond the hegemony of human development to consider the doings of childhood art and music. It further decenters the child as the solely intentional, knowing, and agentic subject of art/music production, and instead, as illustrated in [Trafí-Prats 2019](#) and [Kvile and Christophersen 2023](#), reimagines art and music as a more-than-human process of making with agentic materials in a heterogeneous ecology of practices. [Hill 2021](#) argues that being led by feral materials activate attunements of multiple micro-events that are sensed as aesthetic, affective, and disruptive, as modes of art, care, and education in themselves. These explorations are further expanded into the realms of digital art, in confronting developmentalist images of children, as in [McClure 2021](#), as well as in highlighting the performativities of digital technologies in complex, multidimensional, and creative directions, as illustrated in [Knight 2018](#). Further, by foregrounding the workings of space, sound, materials, and bodies, [MacRae and Arculus 2020](#) highlights the possibilities to disrupt the developmentalist and pathologizing tyranny of words, while [Arculus 2020](#) demonstrates how temporal arts that cut through subject/object binaries potentiate ways to decolonize the knowledges of young children.

[Arculus, Charlotte](#). “[Decolonizing the Knowledges of Young Children through the Temporal Arts](#).” *International Journal of Music in Early Childhood* 15.1 (2020): 61–73.

The author employs a new materialist and posthuman approach to disrupt developmentalist understandings of young children’s communication and knowledge that frame their music-making as proto-music, instead reframing temporal arts as a decolonizing strategy that cuts through subject/object binaries.

[Hill, Lucy](#). “[On Being Led \(Astray\) by \(Feral\) Materials: Posthuman Research Practice in an Outdoor ECEC Atelier](#).” In *The SAGE Handbook of Global Childhoods*. Edited by Nicola

Yelland, Lacey Peters, Nicola Fairchild, Marek Tesar, and Michelle S. Perez, 426–437.

London: SAGE, 2021. [ISBN: 9781529717815]

The chapter explores how a material-led methodology can activate attunements to a multitude of micro-events, which are sensed as aesthetic, affective, and disruptive, as modes of art, care, and education in themselves.

**Knight, Linda.** “Digital Aesthetics and Multidimensional Play in Early Childhood.” In

*Communities of Practice: Art, Play, and Aesthetics in Early Childhood*. Edited by

Christopher M. Schulte and Christine Marmé Thompson, 133–151. Cham, Switzerland:

Springer, 2018. [ISBN: 9783319706436]

The author considers how digital technologies affect and disrupt well-established conceptions of young children’s art and play in educational contexts.

**Kvile, Synnøve,** and **Catharina Christophersen.** “Recognising Intra-actions of Music and

**Pupil.”** *Music Education Research* 25.2 (2023): 205–215.

By exploring child-music intra-actions in a primary school, the authors uncover how children’s day-to-day musical engagements are viewed as noise, and hence subject to be ignored or disciplined. The authors consider the potential that can be opened up by viewing such music making through a materialist lens.

**MacRae, Christina,** and **Charlotte Arculus.** “Complicité: Resisting the Tyranny of Talk in Early

**Childhood.”** *Global Education Review* 7.2 (2020): 43–57.

The paper is based on video data from a project called SALTMusic, where space, sound, materials, and bodies were mobilized as ways of attuning to children away from the tyranny of

words and instrumentalist approaches that pathologize some children as having “language delay.”

McClure, Marissa. “SQUAD Art Studio: An Alternative Community-Based Multisite Saturday Art Lab School for Negotiating Theory and Practice in Early Childhood Art Education with Preservice Art Educators and Digital Media.” *Studies in Art Education* 62.4 (2021): 339–355.

The paper explores the institution of SQUAD art studio, a community-based multisite Saturday art lab where developmentalist images of children and digital media are confronted. The research revalues images of children and digital media by diffractively reading them through a feminist new materialist perspective. Specific approaches are suggested to support art teachers to put the richness of theory to work.

Osgood, Jayne. “‘You Can’t Separate It from Anything’: Glitter’s Doings as Materialised Figurations of Childhood (and) Art.” In *Postdevelopmental Approaches to Childhood Art*. Edited by Mona Sakr and Jayne Osgood, 111–136. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. [ISBN: 9781350042544]

The chapter investigates what art and childhood become when viewed beyond the hegemony of human development. By setting into motion Haraway’s SF method, the author pursues a diffractive inquiry into glitter, generating entangled knowledges around contemporary art, gender, capitalism, the environment, and activism.

Trafi-Prats, Laura. “Thinking Childhood Art with Care in an Ecology of Practices.” In *Postdevelopmental Approaches to Childhood Art*. Edited by Mona Sakr and Jayne Osgood, 191–209. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. [ISBN: 9781350042544]

The author projects an ontology of learning in immanence with art into an enquiry of parenting where practices of care, art, and aesthetics inform and extend each other. Away from constructivist practices where the child is placed at the center of the art process, a new materialist approach employed decenters the child, and reimagines art as a more-than-human process of making with agentic materials in a heterogeneous ecology of practices.

### ❖ **Childhoods and Digital Technologies**

Childhood is often conceptualized in opposition to technology through connotations to nature and “natural.” A feminist new materialist approach challenges such binaries, and demonstrates the intra-active agencies of digital technology in research with children, as in [Änggård 2015](#), detailing the author’s work with digital cameras. Moreover, [Lafton 2021](#) highlights how digital technologies can activate fresh, emergent, and unanticipated relations in children’s play and meaning-making. By including augmented reality technologies in practices of worlding with children, other humans, and nonhuman entities, [Kumpulainen 2022](#) demonstrates how more-than-human relations and response-abilities can be deepened. Additionally, digital technologies increasingly form a core part of child observation and documentation practices. [Fairchild 2020](#) and [Albin-Clark 2022](#) illustrate how a materialist ontology illustrates how digital technologies reproduce and sustain the neoliberal agenda, while simultaneously working in generative ways to rupture it. [Crisostomo and Reinertsen 2020](#) further interrogates the techno-optimistic drive of neoliberalism that shapes early childhood education, to think beyond binaries of “good” and “bad,” toward socially just pedagogies.

Albin-Clark, Jo. “What Is Mobile Documentation Doing through Social Media in Early Childhood Education in-between the Boundaries of a Teacher’s Personal and Professional Subjectivities?” *Learning, Media and Technology* 48.3 (2023): 444–459.

The article demonstrates the multiple performativities of mobile documentation through social media, in which they work to reproduce and sustain a neoliberal agenda and ongoing surveillance, while simultaneously rupturing them through affordances made for connectivity.

Ånggård, Eva. “Digital Cameras: Agents in Research with Children.” *Children’s Geographies* 13.1 (2015): 1–13.

In a research about children’s relations to outdoor spaces, the author attunes to the role cameras played in the research process. By drawing from Barad’s posthumanist performativity, the paper demonstrates the intra-active agencies of digital cameras in research with children.

Crisostomo, Anita Tvedt, and Anne B. Reinertsen. “Technology and Sustainability for/in Early Childhood Education and Care.” *Policy Futures in Education* 18.4 (2020): 545–555.

The authors embrace and critique technology and technological solutions in early childhood education and care, and steer them toward new forms of socially just pedagogies that consider the implications of digitalization in the age of the Anthropocene.

Fairchild, Nikki. “Queering the Data: The Somatechnics of English Early Childhood Education and Care Teachers.” *Somatechnics* 10.1 (2020): 52–72.

By drawing on Barad’s theorizations of intra-action, agential cuts, spacetime-matterings, and diffraction, the author researches with early childhood practitioners in a degree program to explore the influences of data recording devices on professional practice.

Kind, Sylvia. “Lively Entanglements: The Doings, Movements and Enactments of Photography.” *Global Studies of Childhood* 3.4 (2013): 427–441.

Working with cameras, the author considers what it might mean not to erase the camera’s voyeuristic gaze and inherited colonial histories of photography, but to play with and improvise with cameras as material relations, compositions, and lively entanglements.

Kumpulainen, Kristiina. “Bridging Dichotomies between Children, Nature and Technologies.”

In *Nordic Childhoods in the Digital Age*. Edited by Kristiina Kumpulainen, Anu Kajamaa, Ola Erstad, Åsa Mäkitalo, Kirsten Drotner and Sólveig Jakobsdóttir, 195–200. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. [ISBN: 9780367702526]

The author argues that binaries that have been commonplace in early childhood around “nature” and “technology” in environmental education are unhelpful in helping children navigate through the complexities of a world that is increasingly and inextricably digital. Through the use of augmented reality technology, digital technology is seen as an agentic participant with children, other humans, and nonhuman entities, in generating an improvisational space for “worlding” that allows for a grappling with the complex relations in a more-than-human world.

Lafton, T. “Becoming Clowns: How Do Digital Technologies Contribute to Young Children’s Play?” *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 22.3 (2021): 221–231.

By tracing what is activated in an event, the paper traces children’s meaning-making that is activated by the content of a tablet app. This is enacted by considering how children, digital technology, and ideas all relate to one another to produce fresh and emergent relations that are no longer determined by what is already known.

## ❖ Movement and Childhoods

According to [Land and Danis 2016](#), feminist new materialist research in relation to movement and health in childhoods has confronted the narrow focus of physical literacy practices on competence and mastery and its entanglements with neoliberal obesity discourse ([Land 2022b](#)). Further, [Land 2022a](#) highlights that the connections between physical education and childhoods are shaped by settler-colonial, Euro-Western conceptions of bodied individualism, responsibility, and regulation. [Fullagar 2019](#) argues that neoliberalism's focus on individual responsibility for health behaviors hides wider material-affective-discursive relations that produce health-related inequalities. Away from deterministic models, [Land 2022b](#) contends that a materialist engagement argues for postdevelopmental attunements, which according to [Land 2022a](#) creates space for unfamiliar pedagogical possibilities for movement with children. [Land and Todorovic 2021](#) argues that this fundamentally entails viewing movement as communicative, relational, and collective, as demonstrated by [Hackett 2016](#), where viewing children's movement through and entanglements with place are found to generate embodied and tacit ways of knowing and experiencing the world.

[Fullagar, Simone](#). "A Physical Cultural Studies Perspective on Physical (In)activity and Health Inequalities: the Biopolitics of Body Practices and Embodied Movement." *Revista Tempos e Espaços em Educação* 12.28 (2019): 63–76.

The author uncovers how neoliberal discourse that places individual responsibility for healthy behaviors hides wider relations that produce health-related inequalities. The paper proposes embodied practices that take into account material, affective, and discursive dimensions.

Hackett, Abigail. “Young Children as Wayfarers: Learning about Place by Moving through It.” *Children & Society* 30.3 (2016): 169–179.

Drawing on the concept of Wayfaring, the author argues that children’s moving through places creates embodied and tacit ways of knowing and experiencing the world.

Land, Nicole. “Rethinking Awkwardness Made in Collisions of Physical and Early Childhood Education.” *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* (Online, 16 September 2022a).

The paper highlights that affinities produced between physical education and early childhood education are shaped by developmentalist interests that understand children’s movement through settler-colonial, Euro-Western conceptions of bodied individualism, responsibility, and regulation. The author argues for creating unfamiliar pedagogical possibilities for movement with children.

Land, Nicole. “Tending, Counting and Fitting with Post-developmental Fat(s) in Early Childhood Education.” *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 23.1 (2022b): 80–95.

Disrupting Euro-Western accounts of fat(s) in early childhood education that view fat as obesity and in terms of individual responsibility, the paper articulates postdevelopmental moves of tending fat(s) by foregrounding questions around how fat(s) happen and what they do in early childhood.

Land, Nicole, and Ildikó Danis. “Movement/ing Provocations in Early Childhood Education.” *Journal of Childhood Studies* 41.3 (2016): 26–37.

The paper confronts physical literacy practices in childhood education that focus narrowly on competence and mastery that preempts a development of unhealthy adults. The authors instead



consider movement pedagogically to attend to how different movements, consequences, relations, and the politics they enact might be relevant to children's lives.

Land, Nicole, and Sanja Todorovic. "Getting to Know Movement Differently: Nurturing Communicative, Relational, and Collective Movement Pedagogies with Toddlers." *Journal of Early Childhood Research* 19.2 (2021): 239–252.

By sharing moments from ongoing pedagogical inquiry, the authors consider how they might tentatively create conditions for movement to happen outside the dominant referents of individualism and motor skill development. Engagement with three pedagogical provocations, movement is understood and experienced as communicative, relational, and collective.