Introduction

Welcome

This book emerged from conversations with colleagues from across the world and is intended to contribute to our understanding of pedagogical leadership in early childhood education (ECE). In this book, colleagues from academic, policy and practice organisations discuss pedagogical leadership, how it is defined and delivered in a range of international contexts. This chapter highlights gaps and weaknesses in the existing literature on pedagogical leadership and explains how the contributors to this book respond to these and in doing so, how they advance the field.

The words we use

Words matter and we want to be explicit about the words and phrases we are using throughout this book. We recognise that terminology in this field is contested and complex and that each term has its own rich history and associations. However, we are also aware that constant shifts in language can make it difficult to follow the thread of a book, particularly when there are many contributors from across the world. We have therefore opted for consistency with regards to the following phrases.

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Throughout the book we refer to our sector as early childhood education (ECE). When we use this term we are referring to a broad range of services including: day nurseries/long daycare, childminders/home educators, family day care, playgroups,

play centres, pre-school kindergartens and nurseries within schools. We are aware that others will use alternative terms to refer to these services, such as 'childcare', 'early years', 'early learning and care' or 'early childhood education and care (ECEC)'. While we understand why these alternatives are in use, particularly the latter, we use the term 'ECE' for its simplicity and on the basic understanding that education includes care and so the two terms need not be separated. Since we believe that effective education (at all ages and stages, though perhaps particularly so for the youngest children) will depend on interpersonal care, we are happy to use the term ECE.

ECE professionals

When referring to individuals working in ECE, we generally use the term 'ECE professional'. We are conscious that adults working in ECE are sometimes described as 'practitioners', 'educators', 'pedagogues' and 'teachers' but for consistency we have chosen the term 'ECE professional'. We truly believe that working with our youngest children is a valuable profession and those who enter it are worthy of being recognised as professionals no matter where they are on their training and qualification journey.

Pedagogical Leadership in ECE

Pedagogical leadership comprises the leadership knowledge, skills and behaviours that advance pedagogical thought and practice in the context of ECE. Pedagogy can be thought about as the values and practices through which learning and teaching operates. Even when pedagogy is not made explicit, it frames the day-to-day work of ECE: it is the 'silent partner' (Stephen, 2010) of ECE professionals and what they do. When we make pedagogy explicit, we are in a position to shape it – as a statement

and as an enactment - according to our values and vision of ECE. Pedagogical leadership is the work of making pedagogy explicit and of extending pedagogical thought and practice, both within oneself and with others. In the literature, pedagogical leadership has traditionally been detached from positional leadership. That is, pedagogical leadership practices are not embedded in formal hierarchies; it is not only the manager of a setting, for example, who can be a pedagogical leader (McDowall Clark, 2012; O'Sullivan, 2015).

Pedagogical leadership matters because its advancement improves outcomes for children. A working paper prepared by Anne Douglass (2019) for OECD offers a review of studies that demonstrate a convincing link between the development of pedagogical leadership and measures of process quality in ECE. The paper presents pedagogical leadership as a bundle of practices relating to:

- Relationship building

- Professional development among teams

- Support for collaborative working environments

- Community, family and cross-sector partnerships

Looking across five studies focused on the impact of these practices (Sebastien et al., 2016; Arbour et al., 2016, Whalen et al., 2016, Cheung et al., 2018 and Dennis & O'Connor, 2013), Douglass concludes that the development of pedagogical leadership leads to 'greater knowledge and skills to develop staff leadership, a positive workplace climate, and an organisational culture of learning and improvement' (p. 21). These factors then facilitate improvements in children's learning, as measured by children's outcomes (e.g. in communication abilities at a particular age) and by measures of process quality (e.g. the CLASS tool, which focuses on the quality of teacher-learner interactions).

Such studies suggest that pedagogical leadership matters a great deal and is a key lever for improving ECE. There are however various gaps in our understanding of pedagogical leadership and how it can be developed in diverse contexts around the world. The following section highlights the principles, lines of inquiry and themes that run through the book.

Principles, lines of inquiry and themes in the book

The book is founded on a common understanding among the contributors that there have been too few personal and public conversations about pedagogical leadership in ECE. We are committed to generating new ideas and reflections on pedagogical leadership and to do this through conversations about research and experiences. Pedagogical leadership needs a bigger and deeper discussion. Given its importance, there is too little research and dialogue about all types of leadership in ECE and this includes pedagogical leadership. The book is first and foremost a contribution to the task of addressing the importance of pedagogical leadership and increasing our conversations on this important topic.

During our conversations with the contributors we have been introduced to new ideas and new perspectives on pedagogical leadership. Conversations – more than formal academic discussions – have the power to change our mindset about the world and shift our practices and this book is shaped around those conversations. We have tried to ensure that the chapters are in conversation with each other (e.g. by highlighting points of connection between the chapters) but also by including two conversations as chapters. The book opens on a conversation with Julian Grenier and later includes a conversation with Nichole Leigh Mosty, both of whom bring their own interpretations

of pedagogical leadership alive within their own contexts, experience and understanding.

We have divided (imperfectly) the book into two halves. While Part A is more concerned with interpretations of pedagogical leadership, Part B observes more closely the practices of pedagogical leadership and its development. However, throughout the book, there is a recognition that pedagogical leadership is not a singular construct (Male & Palaiologou, 2015; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011) but is both contextually layered and multi-faceted. All of the chapters in this book address the relevance of context and explore the impact of the particular context on the translation and demonstration of pedagogical leadership. The chapters examine different levels of context. Halttunen et al., Palaiologou et al., and Mikailova and Burchell examine pedagogical leadership in particular national contexts. Bonetti and Sakr look more specifically at pedagogical leadership in the national policy context of England. Cuttler explores pedagogical leadership in the Baby Room. Farini explores pedagogical leadership in the context of pedagogical planning dialogues. Finally, Nicholson explores the need for trauma-responsive pedagogical leadership.

In the book, we have used the work of London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) to better understand pedagogical leadership within the context of a specific ECE organisation. We do not present LEYF as a 'perfect' context for pedagogical leadership, but rather as a relatively large ECE organisation that makes an explicit commitment to fostering pedagogical leadership. O'Sullivan presents a vision for the role of 'pedagogical leader' in the work of LEYF, while the practices and processes within the organisation are the focus both in Chapter 11 where Cuttler and Corlett look closely at action research and Chapter 9 where Sakr considers how pedagogical leadership can be developed as part of professionals' everyday working conditions. These chapters give

an insight into the relationship between pedagogical leadership and organisational culture and how this manifests through concrete day-to-day experiences. We hope that this closer look at LEYF is relevant in its insights to many ECE organisations around the world and how they think about pedagogical leadership in the context of what they do.

There appears to be a lack of clarity in the literature regarding who is responsible for pedagogical leadership. In this book we question whether there is an assumption that pedagogical leadership fits within the idea of the distributed leadership model or a more adaptive approach. Perkins examines this further, positioning pedagogical leadership within broader theories of change management. Palaiologou et al. offer further exploration of who, within ECE organisations, has the opportunity to show pedagogical leadership and how pedagogical leadership practices are distributed among teams. Halttunen et al. consider the work of centre directors and centre deputies in three countries (Australia, Finland and Norway) in relation to pedagogical leadership. O'Sullivan explores the role of the 'pedagogical leader' as a distinct position within an organisation, while in the conversation with Leigh Mosty, we explore attempts to bring everyone in an organisation, regardless of level or position, into the work of pedagogical leadership on an everyday basis.

We are concerned that some of the literature on pedagogical leadership seems to rest on the foundation that pedagogy is something settled. Our understanding of pedagogical leadership of course depends on our understanding of pedagogy and the enactment of pedagogical leadership depends on the pedagogical approach. We cannot talk about one without the other since there is no 'pure pedagogy' from which pedagogical leadership emerges. Pedagogies are dynamic, multiple, multi-layered and complex, and so we give space in this book to understanding pedagogical

leadership in relation to a range of pedagogies. In Arnott's chapter, and also O'Sullivan's chapter, an understanding of pedagogical leadership is inextricably intertwined with a vision of what pedagogies are and how they come to exist. In this, we reject and move past equating pedagogical leadership purely with 'instructional leadership'. The term instructional leadership suggests that leaders simply need to show/teach others how to instruct better, but pedagogy is far more interesting and complex than 'instruction'. The two are not equivalent. And so we are interested in a vision of pedagogical leadership that creates space for envisioning and re-envisioning pedagogies in ECE.

Chapter overview

Part A (Chapters 1 – 7) presents thinking about pedagogical leadership from around the world. The chapters present ideas about what pedagogical leadership is and why it matters.

Chapter 1 is a conversation about pedagogical leadership with Julian Grenier. Grenier presents a vision of pedagogical leadership as the key to elevating ECE from the offer of physical care to young children (important as this is) to something that is 'intellectually alive' and has the power to transform children's life opportunities.

In Chapter 2, Lorna Arnott explores the nature of pedagogy and how our understanding of pedagogy shapes our conceptualisation of pedagogical leadership. Using ideas from sociocultural theorists including Bernstein, Rogoff and Corsaro, she examines pedagogical leadership which is framed within a dynamic, contextual and co-constructed pedagogy.

Chapter 3 explores the role of 'pedagogical leader' in the London Early Years Foundation (LEYF). June O'Sullivan considers how the role fits within the organisation's pedagogical approach and then examines the systems and processes that are used in LEYF to foster pedagogical leadership. In this, she highlights the importance of coaching, pedagogical conversations and action research for the advancement of pedagogical leadership in practice.

In Chapter 4, Julie Nicholson argues that pedagogical leadership must adapt depending on the changing social circumstances of the children and families served by ECE services. She highlights the increasing need for trauma-responsiveness approaches in ECE and presents an emerging vision of trauma-responsive pedagogical leadership, illustrated through conversations with centre leaders in California, US.

Chapter 5 is an exploration of pedagogical leadership with babies. Mandy Cuttler addresses the urgent need for more understanding on this topic. The majority of literature on pedagogical leadership is designed around the work of professionals with children aged 2 and over. This chapter therefore considers why pedagogical leadership with babies matters and what it looks like.

In Chapter 6, Helen Perkins examines how emerging theories of pedagogical leadership can benefit from change management concepts within the business sector. She uses case studies from her undergraduate ECE students to examine the strengths and weaknesses of applying change management theories to the task of advancing pedagogical leadership in ECE settings.

Chapter 7 is a comparison of approaches and practices of pedagogical leadership in England, Greece and Sweden. Ioanna Palaiologou and international colleagues

explore interpretations of pedagogical leadership among ECE setting leaders in the three national contexts. They highlight how the particular expectations of pedagogical leadership outlined (or not) in national ECE policy impacts on professionals' understanding of what pedagogical leadership is and how it can be fostered.

Part B (Chapters 8 – 14) takes a practical look at the work of pedagogical leadership and who does the work of pedagogical leadership, how it is enacted in practice and the ways in which it can be developed 'on the ground'.

Chapter 8 presents a study of pedagogical leadership among directors and deputies in ECE settings in Australia, Finland and Norway. Leena Halttunen and international colleagues examine how pedagogical leadership relates to the roles of the centre director and their deputy. They consider how pedagogical leadership practices are divided between this duo and how national context influences who understands pedagogical leadership to be part of their role.

In Chapter 9, Sakr considers how pedagogical leadership can be developed as part of professionals' everyday working conditions as a result of the processes and practices within organisations. It presents the case study of LEYF, where the development of pedagogical leadership is embedded in the organisation's systems and processes. It considers how LEYF fosters pedagogical leadership and examines the applicability of this approach in other settings, particularly those that are smaller in size.

Chapter 10 is a conversation with Nichole Leigh Mosty, former director of Ösp playschool in Reykjavik, Iceland, now Icelandic politician with a focus on cultural integration. Leigh Mosty describes her experiences of pedagogical leadership in various settings and the overarching values and principles that have guided her in developing pedagogical leadership at all levels. In essence, her vision of pedagogical

leadership is one of constant communication and collaboration. She concludes 'if you're going to build a house where everyone develops and learns, you can't have hoarders'.

In Chapter 11, Mandy Cuttler and Nick Corlett explore how they foster pedagogical leadership through the application of action research. Cuttler is the Pedagogy Manager for LEYF, and Corlett is a LEYF Senior Nursery Manager as well as the lead for Green Leyf, the organisation's sustainability initiative. In this chapter, they share their thoughts about how action research can strengthen pedagogical leadership.

Chapter 12 examines pedagogical leadership practices as enacted by community based ECE leaders in rural Azerbaijan. Ulviyya Mikailova and Gwen Burchell discuss how pedagogical leadership is interpreted and enacted by these centre leaders. It presents pedagogical leadership as a modus operandi that emerges through everyday practices and through centre leaders having to figure things out as they go.

In Chapter 13, Federico Farini takes a close look at the interactions that unfold during pedagogical planning meetings in a Reggio Emilia settings in Italy. He unpicks how pedagogical leadership is used to manage conflicts emerging during the meetings. Even though settings may state that they are founded on democratic participation, we need to pay close attention to the micro-interactions in pedagogical planning to see whether the pedagogical leadership upholds these principles.

In Chapter 14, Sara Bonetti and Mona Sakr explore how a national policy context can shape the concept and delivery of pedagogical leadership. They use Kingdon's policy streams approach to consider whether there is a 'policy window' for pedagogical leadership opening up in England, and if so, what would be needed to promote pedagogical leadership.

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