

Policy and Pedagogy with Under-three Year Olds:
Cross-disciplinary Insights and Innovations 3

Gloria Quiñones
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Affective Early Childhood Pedagogy for Infant-Toddlers

 Springer

Policy and Pedagogy with Under-three Year Olds: Cross-disciplinary Insights and Innovations

Volume 3

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The last two decades have witnessed an explosion of research that links traditional child development knowledge on optimal development of very young children to insights from a range of other disciplines, including neurological science, early childhood pedagogy, health studies and critical psychology. At the same time growing numbers of children in the Western world are spending significant periods of their earliest years beyond the traditional domain of the home, creating a new reality of shared education and care that draws across disciplines in expounding a pedagogical encounter with the very young. This series aims to bring together the range of contemporary theoretical, methodological, disciplinary and creative approaches to understanding this new reality for very young children in group-based infant and toddler settings. It will generate texts that incorporate comprehensive state of the art reviews of research to inform policy and pedagogy as well as promote and provoke innovative directions across disciplines. By bringing different disciplines to bear on the educational experience of the very young, this series will showcase new methodologies and theoretical approaches to understanding the very early years of life, pose theoretical challenges as well as opportunities, and assert the importance of multiple and dynamic perspectives.


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ISSN 2509-6680 ISSN 2509-6699 (electronic)
Policy and Pedagogy with Under-three Year Olds: Cross-disciplinary Insights and
Innovations
ISBN 978-3-030-73526-5 ISBN 978-3-030-73527-2 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-73527-2>

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

How do you find words to describe, understand, and create research-based pedagogy for very small children, who are embodied and prelinguistic, and whose worlds are full of moods, emotions, and affective tones of interaction?

In their passionate and eminently important book, *Affective Early Childhood Pedagogy for Infant-Toddlers*, Gloria Quiñones, Liang Li, and Avis Ridgway make a case for three under-researched and undertheorized phenomena of early childhood education: infant-toddlers, affective worlds, and pedagogy. Taking a cultural historical wholeness approach, the authors demonstrate and analyze infant-toddlers' and their educators' affective relations in a broad range of activity settings. This book exposes the complex and dynamic environments in which infant-toddlers and their educators build relationships, and invites the reader to think and re-think what infant-toddler pedagogy encompasses. As a professor of early childhood education, who shares the authors' interest in exploring emotional worlds and pedagogy, I warmly welcome this significant contribution.

It is no exaggeration to say that infant-toddlers have been the invisible children in early childhood education research. Their experiences and worlds have been studied far less than the lives of older children. One major reason for the marginalization of research and discussion of infant-toddlers may be the difficulty of reaching and conceptualizing the worlds of young children. These worlds are loaded with a variety of moods, emotions, and affects. Interestingly, the early childhood research community has given little attention to how affective worlds are constructed, enacted, and negotiated in naturalistic social interactions, and how pedagogical practices contribute to and can build on affective dimensions of interaction. Infant-toddlers are also often overlooked in early childhood pedagogical practices and policies.

In the daily flow of activities in institutional day care, many things go almost unnoticed: a passing feeling, relating and responding affectively, or something caught at a glance, an act of responsiveness and closeness, are all part of the everyday routines, and as such easily occur without any special attention and exploration. This book makes an exception to that rule. Accurately and with a gentle touch, it records in words and pictures infant-toddlers' perspectives, experiences,

perceptions, and understandings of their institutional life-worlds. With screenshots taken from video observation, and through rich interpretations, the authors vividly illustrate the interactions and relations between infant-toddlers and their educators, demonstrating the multiple ways in which the educators generate affective pedagogical practices. In doing so, the book offers vibrant methodological (visual narratives) and theoretical material for researchers and for practitioners alike.

The focus is on the child as subject, not object, in their own world. Infant-toddlers' perspective is always expressed in the children's own images, bodily expression, words, and images capturing what is meaningful for them. In doing so, the book recognizes the absolute value of a small children, and their educators' unique ways of building affective relations, closeness, and caring, which underlies the very constitution of interpersonal relationships, indeed humanity. For infant-toddlers, affective relations are a fundamental social structure through which they interact with their environment and build experiences of connection with other people. In setting up a collaborative forum, the authors forge relationships between practitioners and academics to enhance and cultivate scholarly dialogue; this better aligns the research and practice communities. Creating research-based pedagogy for and professionalizing this still underdeveloped area is extremely important, as it advances our scientific understanding of infant-toddlers.

This book should be of interest to researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers.

It gives us hope that the early childhood research community is starting to recognize that we can no longer ignore the role of infant-toddlers and their affects in ECE. Hopefully, interest in infant-toddlers and affective pedagogies will continue to grow. We are only just beginning to understand all the educational and research uses and consequences of affective pedagogies in early childhood settings.

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Acknowledgements

We dedicate this book to infant-toddler educators whose affective and specialized professionalism helps to form the foundation of educational systems everywhere.

Our particular appreciation is given to Springer's Astrid Noordemeer and Nick Melchior who invited a proposal to write our infant-toddler research into book form.

Co-authors Gloria Quinones, Liang Li and Avis Ridgway acknowledge from previous experiences of co-research and co-authorship their formation of a dynamic creative team process. We appreciate the shared good will, knowledge and collaboration extended to each another throughout preparation of this book led by Gloria.

We extend our grateful thanks to our families for unconditional support.

Revisions of the manuscript took place during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period, which made us more reflective about affective pedagogies and the relationships between educators and infant-toddlers, when times of social and physical distancing were required.

We acknowledge the support of Monash University for time and space for writing. Gloria and Liang received support from the Advancing Women's Research Success Grant, Monash University. Thank you to Cynthia Lopez Valenzuela for reliable and sensitive field research assistance and Dr Victoria Minson for some data transcription.

We reserve a special thank you to the participating infant-toddlers, educators and centre directors who were generous with their time, trust and ideas. Their valuable perspectives found in this book inspired the theorization of affective pedagogies.

We are most appreciative of the provocations and constructive comments from reviewers and editors, Professor Jayne White and Professor Carmen Dalli, which helped strengthen and streamline this book. We greatly appreciate the foreword written by Professor Lasse Lipponen.

Contents

1	Introduction to Affective Pedagogies	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.1.1	Why Pedagogy?	2
1.2	Cultural–Historical Theory	5
1.2.1	Affect and Social Situation of Development: Advancing the Concept of Affective Pedagogies.	5
1.3	Wholeness Approach	7
1.3.1	Societal Perspective	8
1.3.2	Institutional Perspective: Long Day Care Settings	9
1.3.3	Activity Settings: Beyond Routines.	9
1.3.4	Personal Perspectives.	10
1.4	Visual Methodology.	12
1.4.1	Project 1: Studying Babies and Toddlers: Cultural Worlds and Transitory Relationships.	13
1.4.2	Project 2: Educators of Infant and Toddlers: Developing a Culture of Critical Reflection	13
1.4.3	Visual Methods	14
1.4.4	Affective Pedagogies: <i>Activity settings</i>	16
1.5	Conclusion	17
	References.	18
2	Affective Relationships in Flow of Time and Space	23
2.1	Introduction	23
2.1.1	Mealtimes as a Specialized Pedagogical Space	23
2.1.2	Mealtimes as a Social Space for Fostering Relationships	24
2.1.3	Mealtimes a Social Space to Communicate.	25
2.2	Mealtimes as an <i>Activity Setting</i>	25
2.2.1	Affective Relationships	26
2.2.2	Affective Dialogue.	27
2.3	Analysis of Affective Moments During Mealtimes	28

2.4	Case Example: <i>Activity Setting</i> of Mealtimes	28
2.4.1	Affective Moment: Setting the Time and Space for Affective Relations	29
2.4.2	Affective Moments: Emergence of Silent Dialogues to Meet Demands	33
2.4.3	Affective Moment: Development of Affective Encouragement	35
2.5	Conclusion	40
	References	41
3	Pedagogical Awareness of Being Responsive	43
3.1	Introduction	43
3.1.1	Pedagogical Awareness of Responsivity	44
3.2	Responsive Communication	45
3.2.1	Communicative Responsivity Over Time	46
3.2.2	Responsive Awareness: Wholeness Perspectives	46
3.3	Analysis of Pedagogical Awareness	47
3.3.1	Case Example: Nappy Change	47
3.3.2	Inside Bathroom Nappy Change and Toilet Time	51
3.4	Institutional Responsivity: Collaborative Pedagogical Awareness with Co-Educator Peta	55
3.5	Conclusion	57
	References	58
4	Pedagogical Knowledge of Transitory Moments	61
4.1	Introduction	61
4.1.1	Transitions and Transitory Moments	62
4.2	Cultural-Historical Approach for the Study of Infant-Toddlers’ Play and Learning in Transitory Moments	62
4.2.1	Transitory Moments	64
4.3	Analysis of Affective Pedagogy During Transitory Moments	65
4.4	Case Example: Sandbox Play	66
4.4.1	Transitory Moment: Pedagogical Demands of Turn-Taking	66
4.4.2	Transitory Moment: Infants Developing Motives in Sandbox Play	68
4.4.3	Transitory Moment: Sand Play Exploration	70
4.5	Conclusion	73
	References	74
5	Affective Positioning in Infant-Toddlers’ Play	77
5.1	Introduction	77
5.2	Cultural–Historical Concept of Play	78
5.2.1	The Role of Educators in Children’s Play	79
5.2.2	Double Subjectivity in Children’s Play	79
5.3	Case Example: Bathing a Doll	81

5.3.1	Inviting Toddlers to Enter the Imaginary Situation	81
5.3.2	Modelling How to Bath the Doll	83
5.3.3	Guiding Children to Bathe the Doll	85
5.4	Educators’ Invitational Play Actions and Affective Positioning . . .	89
5.5	Conclusion	90
	References	92
6	Closeness as an Affective Pedagogy	95
6.1	Introduction	95
6.1.1	Relational Pedagogies	96
6.1.2	Affective Pedagogies of <i>Closeness</i> in Infant-Toddler Education	97
6.2	Affect in Approaching Pedagogy	99
6.3	Analysis of <i>Closeness</i>	100
6.3.1	Case Example: <i>How Close Is Too Close?</i>	101
6.3.2	Affective <i>Closeness</i> in Feeding	105
6.4	Collaborative Forum: Expansive Dialogue	107
6.5	Conclusion	109
	References	110
7	Educator’s Generation of Affective Pedagogical Practices	113
7.1	Introduction	113
7.1.1	Going Beyond Critical Reflection	114
7.2	Subjectivity	115
7.2.1	Subjectivity from a Cultural-Historical Perspective	115
7.2.2	Relational Expertise, Common Knowledge and Relational Agency	117
7.3	Generative Paths for Configuration of Expert Practices	118
7.4	Aligning Paths of Configuration	118
7.4.1	Educator’s Growing Awareness of Effective and Affective Pedagogical Practices	119
7.4.2	Generating Effective and Affective Expertise	121
7.4.3	Expansive Paths of Configuration: New Common Knowledge	122
7.5	Affective Configurations: An Effective and Affective Educator . . .	125
7.6	Conclusion	127
	References	128
8	Affective Pedagogies for Infant-Toddlers’ Education and Care	131
8.1	Introduction	131
8.2	Emotions and Imagination	133
8.3	Educators’ Creative Futures	134
8.3.1	Educators’ Imagined Affective Pedagogies	135
8.3.2	Educators’ Awareness of Uncertainty	137
8.3.3	Educators’ Awareness of Stress	139
8.4	Educators’ Affect and Social Situation of Development	140

8.5 Expanding Educators' Affective Pedagogies..... 141

8.6 Conclusion..... 142

References..... 143

Glossary 145

Chapter 1

Introduction to Affective Pedagogies



Abstract The aim of this chapter is to introduce cultural–historical theory used throughout this book for theoretical and empirical conceptualization of affective pedagogies. What do we mean by affective pedagogies? In relation to our research, it became apparent that affective pedagogies are integral to the work of infant-toddler educators. We therefore make explicit and accessible, the eloquence and benevolence of affective pedagogies by using Hedegaard’s (Cultural-historical approaches to studying learning and development: perspectives in cultural-historical research, Singapore, Springer, pp 23–41: 2019) wholeness approach to the study of children birth-to-three (infant-toddlers) and educators’ pedagogical practices. We discuss two research projects undertaken in three different long day care settings in Victoria, Australia, revealing diverse visual narratives of affective pedagogies and their specialized nature. Our vision for this book is to conceptualize vibrant affective pedagogies and generate new knowledge of infant-toddler education and care.

1.1 Introduction

As those at the heart of the interpersonal lives of infants and toddlers in groups, infant/toddler teachers are well-positioned to become informers of new theories on early care and education and their voices should be heard in the creation of new understandings about the field (Recchia & Fincham, 2019, p. 21).

Recchia and Fincham (2019), who undertook infant-toddler research in the United States, suggest that when theorising infant-toddler education and care, we need to not only hear, but also acknowledge, the voices of educators. Therefore in this book, we provide empirical examples of educators’ everyday experiences in long day care (LDC) centres, needed to conceptualize affective pedagogies.

As a whole, this book aims to build scholarly research of infant-toddler pedagogy. We unpack the affective relationships formed with infant-toddlers that are deeply embedded in the pedagogy. In particular, we examine infant-toddler educators’ perspectives to help awaken and inform new theorizations of affective pedagogies.

Throughout the book, we offer visual narratives, to expand interpretations and invite readers to think and re-think what infant-toddler pedagogy encompasses. As Elwick et al. (2014a) suggest we remain respectful and embrace the uncertainty of interpreting infant-toddler experiences. We use a cultural-historical approach to the concept of ‘perspectives’ for focusing on the relational encounters between educators, researchers and children.

Dalli and White (2017) suggest the unique experiences of infant-toddlers deeply affect educator’s pedagogical work. Multiple perspectives and voices are needed (White & Redder, 2019) for understanding infant-toddlers, and their specialized learning. For this book, we draw on cultural–historical theory and the idea of everyday *activity settings*, to unravel the distinctive affective and reciprocal relationships that exist between infant-toddlers and educators and by so doing, we advance greater understanding of infant-toddler educator’s specialized pedagogies.

1.1.1 Why Pedagogy?

To provide a richer understanding of the specialized nature of infant-toddler pedagogies that may inform policy, Dalli and White (2017) ask the question ‘why pedagogy?’ (p. 5). To position our research, we explore this important question by close examination of reciprocal relationships within everyday pedagogical practices.

Through means of visual and written text, this book presents case examples of infant-toddler pedagogy in Australia’s multicultural society. The conceptualization of affective pedagogies aims to support Australian early childhood education and care policy agendas, in relation to educators’ current social and physical working conditions. Policy informs practice and seeks to improve quality by offering educators alternative ideas (Dalli & White, 2017). Providing time and space to generate pedagogical ideas around practice is part of an important reflective process for educators (Quiñones, Li, & Ridgway, 2018a, b). Discursive, provocative and collaborative explorations are integral to the theorization of affective pedagogies. The following section provides a review of international research on infant-toddler pedagogical practices that complement affective pedagogies.

1.1.1.1 Infant-Toddler Pedagogical Practices

Global perceptions of infant-toddler educators suggests they are framed as “babysitters” (Beck, 2013, p. 20). Similarly, in Australia, infant-toddler educators are positioned as having a lack of status because of the age of the children they educate, which denies full recognition of their professional role (Davis, Torr, & Degotardi, 2015). Their professional practice remains poorly recognized, suggesting that greater attention be given to the complexity of infant-toddler educator’s professional work (Cumming & Sumsion, 2014; Davis & Duhn, 2019). Giving greater

attention can lead to further understanding the pedagogical practices and intentions of infant-toddler educators and what specifically matters to them.

The following table (see Table 1.1) shows international research on infant-toddler pedagogy complementary to our particular theorization of affective pedagogies. While some research is based on theoretical understandings and interviews with educators, in this book we contribute by offering empirical examples of affective pedagogies intentionally developed through reciprocal relationships.

These researchers advocate for recognition of loving relationships (Recchia, et al., 2018), professional love (Page, 2014, 2017) and care and love (Bussey & Hill, 2017; Dalli, 2006, 2013; Rouse and Hadley, 2018; Rutanen & Hännikäinen, 2017)

Table 1.1 International research on infant-toddler pedagogy

Snapshot of pedagogical concepts	Scholars
<p>Love, care, affective and relational pedagogies</p> <p>Professional love focuses on close attachment relationships between infant-toddlers and educators. From interviews with educators’ it was found to be a significant place for embracing love and intimacy in infant-toddler pedagogy (Page, 2014, 2017). Babies viewed as competent and importance given to educator’s close emotional attachments and relationships with them (Elfer & Page, 2015).</p> <p>Love and care involves educator’s emotional support, keeping children safe, and catering to social, emotional and educational needs according to their environment (Rouse & Hadley, 2018).</p> <p>Care remains undertheorized in the everyday work of infant-toddler educators’ (Bussey & Hill, 2017; Dalli, 2006, 2013).</p> <p>Care as part of infant-toddler educators’ professional identity and practice (Dalli, 2002; Davis & Degotardi, 2015). Relationships are the key to infant and toddler pedagogy. Relationships involve respect and opportunities for exploration. Ethics of care for infant-toddlers involves getting to know children, being attentive and providing guidance. (Dalli, Rockel, Duhn, Craw, 2011).</p> <p>Care, upbringing and teaching form an important part of holistic pedagogy in Finnish early childhood education and care (Rutanen & Hännikäinen, 2017).</p> <p>Affective and relational pedagogy involves affective engagement with toddlers through the use of soft voice, touch, gesture, encouraging and mutual dialogue and intimacy developed in joint play (Ridgway, et al., 2020). Educators’ sensitivity and awareness of the whole group is important when affective relationships are created between infants and educators (Ridgway, et al., 2016).</p> <p>Relationship-based approach for working reciprocally with infants that provides increased engagement in understanding infant needs (Recchia, et al., 2015). Love, intimacy and emotional connections with infants is an important component of developing meaningful relationships (Recchia, et al., 2018). Care and reciprocity an important pedagogical aspect, especially when mentoring pre-service teachers in modelling and guiding how to care for infants (Shin, 2015).</p>	<p><i>UK</i> (Elfer & Page, 2015; Page, 2014; 2017)</p> <p><i>New Zealand</i> (Bussey & Hill, 2017; Dalli, 2006, 2013; Dalli, Rockel, Duhn, Craw, 2011)</p> <p><i>Australia</i> (Davis, Torr & Degotardi, 2015; Ridgway, Li & Quiñones, 2016b; Ridgway, Quiñones, Li, 2020; Rose & Hadley, 2018)</p> <p><i>United States</i> (Recchia, Shin & Snaider, 2018; Recchia, Yeon Lee & Shin, 2015; Shin, 2015)</p> <p><i>Finland</i> (Rutanen & Hännikäinen, 2017)</p>

(continued)

Table 1.1 (continued)

Snapshot of pedagogical concepts	Scholars
<p>Play and affective relationships Educators that aligned themselves with an emotional and playful stance are able to create joint play with toddlers. It's important for educators to jointly coordinate their emotional stance when responding to toddlers. By taking an emotional and playful stance they are able to attune with children in play and show empathic concern, which creates shared understanding in joint play (Pursi & Lipponen, 2018)</p> <p>Educators' affective engagement in play is vital for building shared knowledge in play. Affective engagement and reciprocity is created by the educator and toddlers' new knowledge and shared imaginary play can be developed (Li et al., 2016). Toddlers' affective values in play need to be acknowledged when adults enter the imaginary play (Li, et al., 2021). Affective values involve toddlers encouraging and sustaining their own intentions and motives in play (Li, et al., 2021). Supportive and affective spaces provided for toddlers who socially reference them and for exploration of affective moments of toddlers' play (Quinones, et al., 2017).</p> <p>Educators building on a sense of group togetherness is important for infant-toddler learning. Playfulness supports children's agency and the ability of educators to co-construct meaning together</p> <p>Physical proximity encourages a stronger quality of interaction and higher level of engagement between infant-toddler and educators (Singer, et al., 2014).</p>	<p><i>Finland</i> (Pursi & Lipponen,) 2018</p> <p><i>Australia</i> (Li, Quiñones& Ridgway, 2016; Li, Ridgway & Quiñones, 2021; Quiñones, Li & Ridgway, 2017)</p> <p><i>The Netherlands</i> (Singer, 2017; Singer, et al. 2014)</p>
<p>Dialogues and language to support infant-toddler learning Educators may use commanding language such as guiding children in everyday routines (e.g. hand-washing). However, this restricts infant's experiences in their further learning of complex language. (Hu et al., 2019).</p> <p>Educator's responses to infant-toddlers and to the use of actions such as demonstrating and offering, is also noted (White, 2019). Infant-toddlers respond to educators who use a combination of verbal and non-verbal language (White, et al., 2015)</p> <p>Dialogues play a significant role in supporting toddlers' learning experiences (White & Redder, 2015).</p> <p>Silence can be considered part of non-verbal communication when toddlers participate and engage together in joint activities.</p>	<p><i>Australia, New Zealand</i> (Degotardi & Gill, 2019; Hu, et al., 2019; White, 2019; White & Redder, 2015; White et al., 2015)</p> <p><i>Sweden</i> (Kultti, 2015)</p>

which becomes a significant part of the educators' everyday discourses and practices. Our contribution focuses on the vibrant and affective relationships embedded in educators' pedagogical practices and how these affective relationships support infant-toddlers initiatives and explorations in different activity settings.

In this book, we draw upon cultural-historical theory, to foreground infant-toddler educators' roles in infant-toddler's education and care. We extend current knowledge of educators' love and care, and highlight the teaching role in supporting infant-toddlers development and learning through affective pedagogies. Familiarity