

Research Update



Welcome to our latest newsletter sharing some of the research that the Department for Children and Families at the University of Worcester have been involved in.

DCF Conference February 2023

'Healing the hurt, restoring the hope'

This year's conference was a huge success with 4 brilliant key note speakers on the day!

- Elena Lengthorn, delivered a powerful message concerning the climate and ecological emergency in education.
- [Nicola Watson](#) delivered another engaging and motivating presentation focussing on how we might foster a connection with nature, for and with children.
- [Erica Strudley-Brown](#) explored the value and impact of narrative research, focusing on the experience of a family from Ukraine and trauma-informed practice.
- Finally, Denisse Levermore shared her presentation about the critical issue of children and young people's mental health (during the pandemic and beyond)

The conference featured some of the research and poster presentations from the FdA Early Years (0-8 year) flexible and distributed learning students.

This year's conference also featured pre-recorded presentations from

- [Tom Weaver](#)'s Experiences of home schooling during Covid lockdowns: sharing our research and dissertation exemplars
- [Nicola Watson](#)'s Our need to connect with nature
- [Angela Hodgkins](#)' Listening and responding to diverse voices in educational practice to restore hope.

These recordings are available through the [Teams channel](#) (code to join: **mzt8la8**)

This year's conference organiser, [Olivia Storey](#) shares her reflections and feedback from the conference in our latest blog: <https://childrenandfamilies.on.worc.ac.uk/>



The Carbon Literacy Project



The DCF team combined the Carbon [Literacy](#) Project accreditation with the DCF conference this February, including a vegan menu option at lunch time, Swap shop and 2nd hand book shop.

Attendees of the conference made pledges and 'hope' butterflies and these have been displayed at St John's campus.



For further information on what you can do to support sustainability go to:

<https://susthingsout.com/>

Creating hope in dystopia: *Utopia as Method* as social pedagogy in early childhood studies.



[Stuart Gallagher](#) and [Nicola Stobbs](#)' article for the International Journal of Social Pedagogy outlines how they adapted the use of *Utopia as Method* in a module on an early childhood degree.

By following its distinct modes, students are guided to position themselves not as passive observants of a childhood that is socially constructed around them, but as social and political actors engaged with making human beings human. Among other issues the article evaluates the intersection between social pedagogy, utopia and the future of early childhood. Based on explorations undertaken for this article, we argue that the imaginative reconstruction of childhood through higher education is at ease with the values and purpose of social pedagogy. We reflect that, while the method employed as part of a module was useful in terms of personal development and future-oriented practice, the need to include children's voices is yet to be developed.

You can access the full article here: <https://uclpress.scienceopen.com/hosted-document?doi=10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2023.v12.x.005>

Team Publications and Presentations

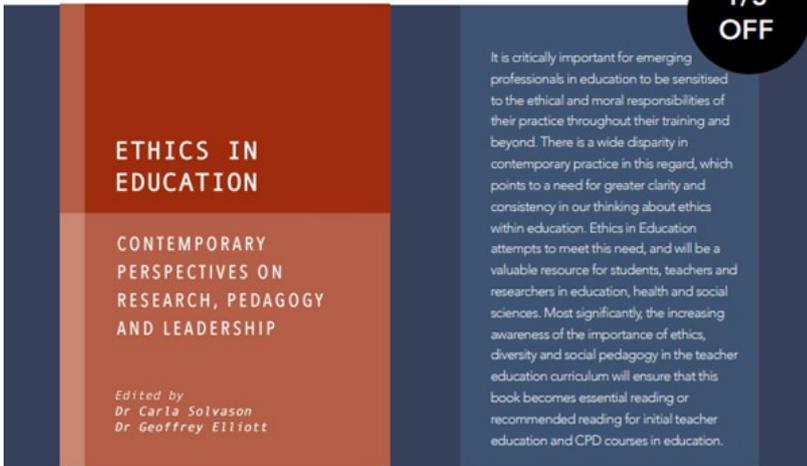
Gallagher, S. & N. Stobbs(2023) 'Creating hope in dystopia: Utopia as Method as social pedagogy in early childhood studies', International Journal of Social Pedagogy, 12: 1 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.ijsp.2023.v12.x.005>

Hodgkins, A. and Boddey, J. (2023) Supporting parents with empathy and compassion, *International journal of birth and parent education*, 10 (2), pp. 29-33

Solvason, C. and Cliffe, J. (2023) Creating Authentic Relationships with Parents of Young Children. Abingdon: Routledge.

Stephenson, M. Solvason, C. France, T. and Sheenan, P. (2022) Developing Effective Professional Learning Communities for Senior Leaders. In *On Leadership: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Eds D.J. Fowler and M.B Raehl. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.

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It is critically important for emerging professionals in education to be sensitised to the ethical and moral responsibilities of their practice throughout their training and beyond. There is a wide disparity in contemporary practice in this regard, which points to a need for greater clarity and consistency in our thinking about ethics within education. Ethics in Education attempts to meet this need, and will be a valuable resource for students, teachers and researchers in education, health and social sciences. Most significantly, the increasing awareness of the importance of ethics, diversity and social pedagogy in the teacher education curriculum will ensure that this book becomes essential reading or recommended reading for initial teacher education and CPD courses in education.

[Dr Carla Solvason](#) introduces a new book co-edited with Dr Geoffrey Elliott from the School of Education.

This book brings together many years of thought, and research, concerning the topic of Ethics in Education. It poses the question of 'is ethics still relevant to our current, technocratic approach to education?' and concludes with a resounding 'yes'!

The editors have gathered together an exciting and dynamic group of contributors across many fields of English education, and asked them to help rethink the role of ethics in education in the 21st century. The types of questions that are addressed include: Do we have a shared view of ethical practice? What are the values that underpin ethical practice? What are our ethical responsibilities as pedagogues?

Dr Carla Solvason is Senior Lecturer in Education and Dr Geoffrey Elliott is Professor of Post-Compulsory Education, at the University of Worcester, UK

"This collection of works could not be more timely. Whilst technocratic approaches to areas such as education, politics and social and health care dominate current discourse and policy enactment, this work acts as a critical reminder that at the heart of all public life, human interaction requires significant care. This book critiques perfunctory approaches to ethical considerations and opens up current discussions regarding the need for a purposefully caring approach to research, teaching and learning. A highly engaging and beautifully crafted collection that needs to become foundational material for all involved in education whether as teachers, researchers or indeed, policy makers."

- Gary Husband, Chair of the Association for Research in Post-Compulsory Education, UK

Many thanks to all of the colleagues, from UW and elsewhere, that contributed to this book, I am incredibly proud of the results of our collective efforts.

If you've a gap on your bookshelves where the role of ethics in education is concerned, I sincerely hope that you will consider filling it with this.

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What studying opportunities do we have for you this year?

The Department For Children and Families offers a range of courses from undergraduate to postgraduate. Click on the links for further information.

Undergraduate

[EARLY YEARS \(0-8\) FOUNDATION DEGREE - FLEXIBLE DISTRIBUTED LEARNING PATHWAY](#)

[EARLY YEARS \(0-8\) FOUNDATION DEGREE](#)

[EARLY CHILDHOOD IN SOCIETY \(GRADUATE PRACTITIONER\) BA \(HONS\)](#)

[INTEGRATED WORKING WITH CHILDREN & FAMILIES BA \(HONS\) TOP-UP DEGREE](#)

Postgraduate

[MA EARLY CHILDHOOD PATHWAY](#)

[LEADING CULTURE CHANGE IN SAFEGUARDING PGCERT](#)