

**Call for Special Issue in Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood**

**Title of Special Issue:**

**Leadership As Praxis in Public and Private Settings within Marketised Early Childhood Systems**

**Guest Editors:**

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This special issue contributes to emerging global literature on early childhood leadership theory and practice by utilising a broadly-defined framework of leadership as praxis –“reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1986, p.36), requiring leaders to make thoughtful yet practical judgment about how to act within particular situations (Carr & Kemmis, 1998; Male & Palaologou, 2015). “Leaders” are defined as early educators who have to take on a lead role in both supporting a group of other educators as well as being held accountable for the quality of experience offered to children and families (e.g., pedagogies, curriculum, home-school partnerships). Depending on the terminology used in different locales, early childhood leaders could be called principals, centre directors, centre supervisors, or some other term. This issue aims to build on existing literature by contextualising leaders’ daily work within larger eco-systems such as the kinds of neoliberal childcare markets found in English speaking countries like the United Kingdom and in the Asia Pacific region, for instance in Singapore (Lloyd, 2012; Lim, 2017).

We, therefore, support the idea that leadership should be context-dependent rather than model-dependent (Male & Palaologou, 2015); and recognise that (many) leaders want their centres to provide quality experiences for children but they are negotiating daily challenges and constraints that may exist within particular centre-based early childhood settings that are shaped by specific kinds of eco-systems (e.g., a neoliberal market system) whether they lead in public or private, for-profit or non-profit operations. In some instances, leaders may find themselves having to delicately balance the need to earn a profit and the mandate to fulfil quality indicators set out in national curriculum frameworks and/or accountability and quality improvement systems. In other instances, leaders may need to overcome barriers to serve children whose families face multiple stressors such as poverty, unemployment, racial discrimination, partnership conflicts, domestic violence, and chronic illness.

How do leaders in different settings lead and advocate? What does their advocacy look like? And how do they continue to learn to lead? Related questions that could be addressed by this special issue include: How do leaders define and negotiate ethical dilemmas? How do they manage the various tasks, personalities, and structures within their workplaces and with the larger organisations they may be part of? What “models” of leadership are enacted in particular settings and what shortcomings are there? What strategies and support systems benefit leaders in various kinds of eco-systems? What

implications are there for leadership development and learning in countries with private and public early childhood service providers?

The guest editors invite experienced academics, practitioners and early career researchers from around the world to contribute a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives and empirical studies of early childhood leadership focused on providing quality experiences for children and families. We would like this issue to challenge the global early childhood community to re-think “leadership” as it exists in different kinds of early childhood care and education settings, so that together, we may re-conceptualise what it means to be early childhood supervisors, principals, lead teachers etc., and continue to generate ways to improve the professional lives of early childhood professionals that serve children and families around the world.

### Submissions

We invite contributions to the special issue from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives.

Contributions need not take the form of only discursive academic articles – we are interested in submissions in alternative genres, including literary artefacts, collaborative pieces and multimedia texts. All submissions will be subject to peer review.

Please refer to the time schedule below and email your Abstract to [sirenelimmy@suss.edu.sg](mailto:sirenelimmy@suss.edu.sg)

### Time schedule:

1st November 2017: Deadline for abstract (300 words)

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018: Decision notification from editors and invitation to contribute full paper

15<sup>th</sup> April 2018: Deadline for article submissions (4000-6000 words)

31st July 2018: Feedback to the authors (from reviewers and editors)

1<sup>st</sup> October 2018: Final revised papers returned ready for submission

March 2019: Publication

### References

Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. Lewes: Falmer.

Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum Press.

Lim, S. (2017). Marketisation and corporatisation of early childhood care and education in Singapore. In M. Li, J.L. Fox, & S. Grieshaber, (Eds.), *Contemporary Issues and Challenge in Early Childhood Education in the Asia-Pacific Context*. Singapore: Springer Nature.

Lloyd, E. (2012). The marketisation of early years education and child care in England. In L. Miller and Hevey, D. (Eds.). *Policy issues in the early years* (pp. 107–122). London, UK: Sage.

Male, T. &Palaiologou, I. (2015). Pedagogical leadership in the 21st century: Evidence from the field.*Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 43(2), 214-231.