



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 over the last few months.

'The Research and Practice Nexus'

This year's conference will focus on 'Research and Practice' within Early Years, Health, Education, Care and Social Work. It may cover some of the issues that we are seeing currently in practice including the impact of Government policy, curriculum developments, the Covid-19 pandemic and international perspectives, as well as topics that may support students' studies and continuing professional development.



We would like to invite a range of presentations from various sectors and professionals, as well as presentations from our alumni. This is a great Continuing Professional Development opportunity for individuals to share their research experiences through a friendly and supportive platform. For professionals wishing to participate, you'll have access to free, recorded resources for your own professional development.

Deadline for expressions of interest is **20th December 2021**.

The **Face-to-face conference** will be held on Saturday 12th February .

Poster presentations need to be submitted by 13th January to Samantha Sutton-Tsang (s.sutton-tsang@worc.ac.uk) for the print room to receive them. Guidance on poster presentations can be found [here](#). A pdf version of your document will need to be submitted.

Recorded presentations need to be submitted by 20th January 2022 to Samantha Sutton-Tsang (s.sutton-tsang@worc.ac.uk).

Staff Focus – Samantha Sutton-Tsang

Sam graduated from the University of Worcester after first studying the BA (hons) Early Childhood Studies before progressing to complete the PGCE. During her undergraduate studies she worked in a holiday clubs and a range of early years settings as part of her practice experience before securing a position as a nursery practitioner at a nursery in Worcester-shire.



Working as a primary school teacher, Sam taught in Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and had curriculum responsibility in Art and Design. After a few years of primary teaching, Sam moved into lecturing at a Further Education College, delivering Levels 1 to 4 Early Years and Health and Social Care qualifications before setting up the Foundation Degree in Early Years in partnership with the University of Worcester, all whilst studying for her Masters in Education part time.

Sam joined the University of Worcester in 2015 and has lectured on the BA (hons) Early Childhood Studies, Foundation Degree in Collaborative Working with Children and Families, MA Early Childhood pathway and BA (hons) Integrated Working with Children and Families. She has also been the Programme Leader for EYITT and is now currently Course Leader for the [Foundation Degree in Early Years \(flexible and distributed learning\)](#) and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) lead for the Department for Children and Families. As TEL lead, Sam is responsible for our social media presence so if you have any good news/ notifications to share online, please get in touch: s.sutton-tsang@worc.ac.uk.

Sam has researched with colleagues and most recently published for TACTYC focussing on Maintained Nursery Schools. She has also co-written chapters on Safeguarding and Professional Development in the DCF edited book by Musgrave, J., Savin-Baden, M. and Stobbs, N. (2017) *Studying for your early years degree*.

Currently, Sam is working on a chapter based on the TACTYC research focussing on the SEND data and another on workplace relationships.

Latest Publications

Solvason, C., Webb, R. and Sutton-Tsang, S. (2020) Evidencing the effects of maintained nursery schools' roles in Early Years sector improvements. Available at: <https://tactyc.org.uk/research/> <https://imx07wlgmj301rre1jepv8h0-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/MNS-Research-Report.pdf>

Solvason, Webb and Sutton-Tsang (2020) What is left...?: The Implications of Losing Maintained Nursery Schools for Vulnerable Children and Families in England, *Children and Society*, Available at: <https://authorservices.wiley.com/api/pdf/fullArticle/16752045>

Solvason, Webb and Sutton-Tsang (2019) What role do maintained nursery schools play in Early Years sector improvements? Available at: <https://imx07wlgmj301rre1jepv8h0-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/TACTYC-Occasional-Paper-13.pdf>

DCF Research Focus: Amanda Sheehy

Amanda has been a teacher since 2006. She has taught in primary schools in the UK (every year group from reception to year 6) as well as teaching English in a German Kindergarten and to adults. She currently works as an associate lecturer at the University of Worcester, supporting students in their independent research projects, as well as teaching in a primary school. It is through this teaching experience that Amanda developed a particular interest in the ways that gender influenced children's behaviours and choices.



Amanda is currently studying for a PhD, with Carla Solvason and Mandy Duncan as her supervisors. Her research focusses on using reflection as a tool to developing teachers' understanding of their own pedagogical practices with the purpose of promoting gender equality in primary schools. Taking a social constructionist approach to her research, Amanda has gathered qualitative data through one-to-one teacher interviews, in which the participants explored their own gender constructions and reflected on how this may have influenced their pedagogy. They considered: the implicit messages they may be conveying to their pupils, how they could improve their practice, their use of language, the learning environment, resources and curriculum content. The findings suggest that inviting teachers to reflect on their practice in this way could be a powerful tool in promoting gender equality in educational settings. Amanda is planning to submit her thesis in Spring 2021.

Team Publications and Presentations

Gallagher, S. and N. Stobbs (2021) 'Utopia as method with early childhood undergraduates: personal political potential and practitioner power', Paper presentation at the online conference, *Social Pedagogy and Social Education: Here and Now – Creating Hope in Dystopia*, International Online Conference 22-24 June 2021, Thempra and SPA (Social Pedagogy Association Asociación de Pedagogía Social).

Gallagher, S. and M. Burton (2021) 'Prepare to poop the party: the new normal looks very like the old normal – only worse – and why this matters to educators', Workshop provided at the online conference, *Blended Learning: Maintaining teaching excellence through a year of challenge and change*, University of Worcester Learning and Teaching Conference.

Solvason, C., & Watson, N. (2021). Insights into Positive Approaches to Parent Partnership Working in UK Nursery Schools. *Journal of Social Psychology Research*, 1(1), 18-30. Retrieved from <https://ojs.wiserpub.com/index.php/JSPR/article/view/987> Available as open access for all to read.

Solvason, C., Elliott, G. & Cunliffe, H. (2021) Preparing university students for the moral responsibility of early years education, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02607476.2021.1989982> Available as open access for all to read.

Research during the COVID-19 pandemic

A study was carried out by CACHE (now NCFE) to raise an awareness of the critical work carried out by those working in education and childcare during the Covid-19 pandemic. This video outlines a series of reflections from across the sector, including Angela Hodgkins and Janet Harvell from DCF. Angela's research examined the emotional impact of the pandemic on early years practitioners and Janet's research celebrates the resilience of staff and children during this time.

Please take a look: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6znWThLwz9g>

Reflections on Lockdown by Stuart Gallagher and Maddie Burton

Lockdown learning led educators to experience inevitable anxiety and understandable apprehension. The conference was held on the cusp of exiting lockdown learning and educators were understandably excited to celebrate examples of calm, creative continuity in educational provision. The bold imagination and brave innovation of technology-enhanced learning was centre stage.

Maddie and I were invited to lead a workshop to evaluate learning in a post-lockdown landscape. Imagination and innovation were put aside so we could focus on inequality. Gross educational and health inequalities had been laid bare in lockdown. These were the latest in a long line of crises, which included racism, financial collapse, ecological and climate emergencies, war and humanitarian disasters.

Post-lockdown learning had to get a grip on the new normal's inequalities without forgetting the old normal's injustices. So we had to poop the party.

A variety of views and voices brought the workshop to life. We discussed curricula for surviving constant crisis and recognised the reality of trauma within students' learning journeys. We acknowledged the human disconnection of online pedagogy and students' demands for online recordings rather than personal reflections to monitor our delivery and development.

Almost six months have passed since the workshop was held. The Government promised educational recovery. Inequalities remain but rarely do they feature in the headlines. We want our recovery back. Till then, we'll continue to poop the party.

Gallagher, S. and M. Burton (2021) 'Prepare to poop the party: the new normal looks very like the old normal – only worse – and why this matters to educators', Workshop provided at the online conference, *Blended Learning: Maintaining teaching excellence through a year of challenge and change*, University of Worcester Learning and Teaching Conference.

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](#)

Contact Admissionsb@worc.ac.uk for further information about applying.

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