

## 29<sup>th</sup> EECERA CONFERENCE

### Call for Papers

**The call for papers for our 29th Conference hosted between 20th and 23rd August 2019, in Thessaloniki is now open.**

<https://www.eecera2019.org/about/strands>

#### CONFERENCE THEME

#### ***Early Years: Making it Count***

At EECERA 2017 in Bologna, the thousand assembled Early Years researchers were challenged by the keynote speakers to become advocates for the field, to take part in the debate and to be less passive in the face of external, often uninformed pressures. This year's Conference theme takes up that challenge particularly around the issue of measurement and accountability. 'What counts' and 'Who is making it count and why?' And there is another subtext in the rubric which suggests we, early years researchers, should be raising the profile and visibility of early childhood studies to make it count in the corridors of power. To be such advocates we need to be articulate, knowledgeable and assertive and our Conference this year provides a forum to develop those skills. If we believe in 'high quality' programmes and services, then there must be accountability and evaluation but what form should 'quality assessment', 'quality control', 'quality assurance', 'quality improvement' and similar concepts and terms take? What qualitative and quantitative measures do we need? What are the significant 'impacts' and 'outcomes'? Can these be universalised into metrics or curricula to provide global comparative data? Who and what counts for children's development in the complex inter-relationship between health and well being, parenting and high quality services? And how far can the measurement of child outcomes be a proxy for system accountability? It is this broad and topical theme which we hope to explore in Thessaloniki.

**Key Questions** There are at least three ways of 'accounting' by which we might consider early years 'counts' and we will adopt these as our Conference sub-themes:

1. How useful are descriptive accounts, observations and multi-perspective narratives in illuminating our understanding, for example, in giving a grounded, participatory, democratic vision? Participants who tell it as they experience it? What is the role and utility of qualitative paradigms in capturing cases, phenomena and events? Does Early Years need to develop new methodologies more sensitive to the human sciences and the human condition? How do these accounts illuminate and how can they be improved?
2. Can we account for Early Years in the sense of giving reasoned explanations of outcomes? Can Piaget's developmental psychology be dialogued with Vygotsky's social and cultural analysis of development? Can we justify success or failure by describing the predictive variables in the environment or genetics? How do we capture the reasons and justifications and know they are credible? Are outcomes vindicated, or otherwise, by interactions located in the 'why', 'what', 'who', 'when', 'where' and 'how'? How is impact or results 'accounted for' or explained?
3. And finally, how do we account for Early Years services and programmes in a mathematical or numerical sense, and what is the contribution of quantitative approaches? What metrics are appropriate for judging children's progress? What algorithms help? What about the utility of impact data and the need for accountability? Does it all add up? Can Early Years metrics be universalised? What are its cost/benefits for policy makers and how is it measured? What is the Early Years' research community learning from 'hard numerical data' and the quantitative tradition?

**Please note: all proposals must be submitted by 23:59 (GMT) Wednesday 13th February 2019**