



Quality in Early Childhood Services: An International Perspective

Helen Penn

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This book examines how quality and good practice in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is interpreted and implemented in a variety of settings and circumstances.

Drawing on her experience of research and policy making in a wide variety of countries, the author considers the variety of rationales that inform services for early childhood education and care. Services are organized, financed and delivered in many different ways across the world. The policies that have been adopted by governments, and the resources which are made available for implementing them, have shaped practice.

On the one hand there are complex ideas about what children should be learning and how they should be learning. These ideas about curriculum and the training of teachers and carers may differ radically between countries. On the other hand policies have been prompted by the need to reconcile family and work obligations and to provide childcare to support working mothers, irrespective of educational concerns. The notions of economic competition and parental choice have led to the growth of private for-profit childcare services which promote a particular view of quality and achievement. Above all, growing inequality within countries, and between rich and poor countries, have undermined attempts to provide good quality services. In an unfair world, the impact of any services is likely to be distorted.

The book charts the many different approaches to understanding and measuring quality and gives an exceptionally well-informed overview.

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