Early childhood education and care services (ECEC) are increasingly subject to both global and local perspectives on ECEC, including the role and function of ECEC services and conceptions of appropriate pedagogical practice. Those who work in ECEC find themselves mediating between these global and local perspectives on how and what ECEC services ‘should’ be doing. The local is not only in regards to the national, but also the immediate local contexts in which ECEC services are located.

The global interest in ECEC is evident amongst supra-national organisations (such as the OECD and World Bank) promoting the benefits of ECEC for national level socio-economics. ECEC is presented as having two core functions: supporting parental employment and laying the foundations for children’s holistic development. The support for parental employment serves both equality drivers of removing barriers to the labour market for parents (arguably) irrespective of gender, whilst in turn providing an economic function of higher levels of employment and reduced state dependency. The equality drivers are echoed in the role of ECEC as providing the foundations for children’s holistic development, with ECEC services being identified as particularly advantageous for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, thus offering the potential to reduce attainment gaps between different socio-economic groups. The focus on child development is particularly illustrative of the influence of the global on ECEC, as ECEC services are presented within a human capital discourse of the global knowledge economy where early investment is presented as advantageous for both the individual and wider society on the grounds of future economic growth (Campbell-Barr and Leeson, 2016).

The human capital perspective is illustrative of how ECEC is the object of global discourses in education, having implications for understandings of ECEC services and those who work in them; their role, purpose and function. ECEC services are tasked with creating the next generation of the knowledge economy, whilst eradicating socio-economic inequalities; having consequence for how children and childhood is conceived and constructed. Solutions to socio-economic challenges are driven by the global, with supra-national organisations concerning themselves with advice on the quantity and quality of ECEC services, encompassing areas such as national monitoring systems, access to services, the staffing of ECEC services, child development, curriculums, engaging with families, data collection and national governance and
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finance (OECD, 2006; 2015). ECEC becomes driven by global agendas in both the identifying and solving of socio-economic problems.

Despite the global prominence of ECEC and the plethora of documents offering international comparisons and advice, there is no evidence of a McDonaldisation of ECEC (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). National histories (and within them local cultures) provide variations in the structure and understanding of ECEC services. The variation is evident when considering structural features such as curriculums and staffing requirements, but also in understanding the socio-cultural history of ECEC, how services have evolved over time and responded to social and political histories. However, it is not just the national that presents a challenge to the global, as the local will drive the provision of ECEC services in the day to day, presenting both the problems and solutions. For those who work in ECEC services they will be concerned with meeting the needs of the children and the families in their local community, operating within a community of practice. Questions then arise as to where or how the global and the local meet in the provision of ECEC services, or whether the global and local do not meet, instead contradicting each other?

We invite papers that explore global to local perspectives on ECEC. We encourage papers from a range of methodological and epistemological perspectives that look to consider how ECEC services and those who work in them respond to and mediate global perspectives of ECEC with both national requirements and local community perspectives and needs. We are interested in papers that will explore pedagogy; the challenges of quality ECEC; the professional role and identity of pedagogues, teachers and other professional roles; partnership with parents; culture in ECEC; child/student-centeredness in ECEC and inclusion in ECEC. We welcome papers based on both empirical research and theoretical debates from a range of disciplines, adopting ECEC as a broad and encompassing term in regards to the services that are represented.

Instructions for Submission:
Authors should send an abstract of no more than 400 words to Dr. Verity Campbell-Barr (verity.campbell-barr@plymouth.ac.uk) and Katarina Bogatić (krengel@ffos.hr) by the 31 May 2016.

Responses to the abstracts will be sent to authors by the 10 June 2016.

Full papers are to be submitted by the 9 January 2017. Authors should consult with the Instructions for Authors for Early Child Development and Care. All full paper submissions should be submitted through ScholarOne. Authors should indicate clearly in both the covering letter and on the paper that it is for consideration in the special issue of Early Child Development and Care on ‘Global to Local Perspectives’.

All papers will be subject to peer review. Final papers are to be submitted in time for 1 May 2017 publication.
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References

