

# Research Update



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.

## Conference Call for Papers

### ‘Healing the hurt, restoring the hope’

This year’s conference will focus on ‘Healing and Hope’ within Early Years, Health, Education, Care and Social Work. It may focus on experiences in relation to repairing, rebuilding, recovery, and adaptation in response to various adversities faced by children, their families and those who work with and for them. Issues considered may include the impact of Government change, policy, curriculum developments, the cost-of-living crisis, the continued effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, global issues such as war and the challenge of climate change, as well as other 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.

The conference will be delivered in a blended format, with presentations being made available online and face to face.

In the **lead up to the face-to-face conference**, a series of recorded presentations from professionals will be shared via our Microsoft Teams Channel. Recorded presentations can be in the format of video records, voice over and PowerPoint presentations, podcasts etc. For further guidance on this, please contact Olivia.

If you’re interested in presenting your research and practice, either through a recorded presentation or in person on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February, please contact Simone Acton ([s.acton@worc.ac.uk](mailto:s.acton@worc.ac.uk)) with your name, job role/ field and a 200 word (approx.) overview of your presentation.

**Deadline** for expressions of interest is 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

The **Face-to-face conference** will be held on Saturday 11th February 2023.

**Poster presentations** need to be submitted by 2nd January to Olivia Storey ([o.storey@worc.ac.uk](mailto:o.storey@worc.ac.uk)) for the print room to receive and process it. 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 2023 to Olivia Storey.



## The Carbon Literacy Project

Everyone is familiar with the fact that our climate is changing as a result of human activity. As the planet heats up, we will encounter more frequent extreme weather which will impact on us all but most acutely on the poorest people around the world and including the UK. At last year's world conference on climate change (COP26), governments agreed to take action to limit global warming to 1.5C. As well as governments taking action to limit global warming, many organisations, communities and individuals are learning about how they can take action. Working together empowers us to feel we can make a difference and strengthens our bonds and shared values.

Carbon emissions drive climate change and learning about how we can reduce our carbon footprints helps us understand the consequences of our actions and how we can make positive changes. The University of Worcester in collaboration with Sanctuary Group and Worcester Students' Union, has made carbon literacy training available to staff, students and customers across both organisations. For more information, follow the link to the UW sustainability magazine: <https://susthingsout.com/>.

The Department for Children and Families team has undertaken the training and a group of us has committed to implementing what we have learned to our work. As well as taking individual actions to embed awareness of living more sustainably in our teaching offer, we have decided to include this as a focus in our forthcoming conference '**Healing the Hurt, restoring the hope**'.

## Team Publications and Presentations

Cliffe, J. and Solvason, C. (2022) What is it that we still don't get? – Relational pedagogy and why relationships and connections matter in early childhood. Power and Education. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F17577438221124296>

Hodgkins, A. (2022), Chapter 3: Parent and Carer Voice: Listening to, Understanding, and Acting on Parental and Carer Perceptions and Opinions, In: Sewell, A. (2022), Diverse Voices in Educational Practice: A workbook for promoting pupil, parent and professional voice, Speechmark, Routledge.

Hodgkins, A. (2022). Appreciating and practicing empathy. In Solvason, C. and Webb, R. (eds) Exploring and Celebrating the Early Childhood Practitioner: An Interrogation of Pedagogy, Professionalism and Practice. Abingdon: Routledge. Pp.41-52.

Richards. H and Malomo, M. (eds) Developing your professional identity. St Albans: Critical Publishing

Solvason, C. and Webb, R. (eds) (2023) Exploring and Celebrating the Early Childhood Practitioner: An Interrogation of Pedagogy, Professionalism and Practice. Abingdon: Routledge.

Solvason, C. and Cliffe, J. (2023) Creating Authentic Relationships with Parents of Young Children. Abingdon: Routledge.

Solvason, C. and Winwood, J. (2022) Exploring drivers and barriers: working in multi-professional teams to support children and families, School and Community Journal, School Community Journal, 2022, Vol. 32 (1), pp.105-126. No. 1 Available at <http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.asp>

Stephenson, M. Solvason, C. France, T. and Sheenan, P. (2022) Developing Effective Professional Learning Communities for Senior Leaders. In On Leadership: An Interdisciplinary Approach, Eds D.J. Fowler and M.B Raehll. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.

Sutton-Tsang, S. (2022). Valuing Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability. In Solvason, C. and Webb, R. (eds) Exploring and Celebrating the Early Childhood Practitioner: An Interrogation of Pedagogy, Professionalism and Practice. Abingdon: Routledge. Pp.53-62.

S. Sutton-Tsang, S. (2022) 'Developing workplace relationships', in Richards. H and Malomo, M. (eds) Developing your professional identity. St Albans: Critical Publishing,

### Staff Focus: Dr Carla Solvason

Carla has actually been at the university of Worcester on and off for twenty years, as she carried out her PhD here (a case study of a high school...so nothing to do with what she teaches now )- but she has been teaching here since 2008. Prior to that she was a primary school teacher, researcher, and advisor for a children's communication skills charity.

Carla takes a lead on research in the department, overseeing students' research dissertations as well as supporting her colleagues. Carla has carried out a range of research projects since being here, including:

- Research into how a LA and university mentor partnership could support our students
- Research into the support received by colleagues in FE for their own research
- A three-year longitudinal study with a primary school in Taunton to support young children's language development
- A study investigating the impact of collaborative leadership (head teacher) clusters in Stoke
- Research for TACTYC exploring the impact of Maintained Nursery Schools in the Midlands and the South
- An investigation of the drivers and barriers in multi-professional working
- Research into education settings creating positive relationships with parents.



Carla sees relationships as key to her area of study, with most of her publications reflecting this, focusing either on ethical research partnerships or respectful (and caring) relationships between educators and parents. Two of the publications that she is most proud of include: *Finding the Right Words to be Honest* that she co-authored with Samuel Proctor, who works in a specialist school and *Creating Authentic Relationships with Parents* which she co-authored with Jo Cliffe (also featured in this edition). Both of her co-authors studied their Masters Degrees with Carla, and both texts are very much focused upon just how challenging it can be as a parent, and educators being aware of that.

Currently Carla is researching into the role of the Wellbeing Lead in schools and the Health and Wellbeing of educators. She has just recently started a longitudinal research project with her colleagues Niki, Ali and Stuart, into children with SEN's experiences of support at key transition points in their lives.

### Staff Focus: Johanna Cliffe



My name is Johanna Cliffe, I am a Senior Academic Professional and Course Lead for an undergraduate programme run by The Learning Institute, which is a partner organisation of the University of Worcester. Recently I had the great pleasure of working with my wonderful writing partner Carla Solvason on an exciting new book: *Creating Authentic Relationships with Parents of Young Children: A Practical Guide for Educators*.

My person value system considers relationships and building positive connections with others as among one of the most important roles we have as practitioners and educators. This is supported in policy and legislation with a push to work in partnership with children, parents/carers and families at every opportunity. Yet, in practice we are not often supported in just *how* we should achieve all of this. Knowing something *should* happen is not the same at all as knowing *how* to make it happen and how to make it happen *well*.

Carla and I felt that while there were books and articles that considered the more theoretical aspects of partnership working, there was a gap in the support available to educators for a good quality practical guide. Something that can be used to develop skills individually and where possible that of the teams we work with.

It is within this vein that we would like to announce the publication of our book. A book written by two parents who often did not 'fit the mould' in ways you might expect, who also *happen* to be educators. It is a frank and honest exploration of problems and challenges that we faced as parents, that we have faced as educators, and that we have seen the families we work with face. However, it is also a celebration of parent partnership and why it is so vital to everything that we do and hope to do with the children and families we serve.

It is our sincere hope that this book will challenge you and your settings to really consider how you might work in true collaboration with the families in your community, and how you might reconsider assumptions and perceptions that creep into daily practice.

We invite you to join our journey through partnership, with transparency and often light relief, but always with a keen eye on research and literature, but more than that, with a strong focus on the children and families at the heart of what we do.

Carla and I hope you enjoy our book as much as we enjoyed writing it, and that you find something within its pages that resonates and speaks to you, that has purpose and meaning for you and that you can take forward to enhance your relationships and connections in a practical way.

## CREATING AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

A Practical Guide for Educators



A Speechmark Book

CARLA SOLVASON and JOHANNA CLIFFE



September 2022: 5.83 x 8.27: 154pp

Hb: 978-1-032-04268-8 | £120.00

Pb: 978-1-032-04262-6 | £19.99

eBook: 978-1-003-19120-9

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Chapter 1 Always Listen  
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Conclusion

**20% Discount with this flyer!**

## Creating Authentic Relationships with Parents of Young Children

A Practical Guide for Educators

**Carla Solvason and Johanna Cliffe**

Dealing with parents can be scary and intimidating, but it can also be hugely rewarding. What do you need to know? Which barriers are you likely to face? Most importantly, how can you nurture a positive and authentic relationship with parents where you genuinely work together for the best interests of the child?

This practical book takes a frank approach to recognising the turbulent world of parenting and considers the pragmatic and kind ways that educational settings can support parents' struggles.

With a focus on celebrating the value of truly listening, this book will be essential reading for early years educators, childminders, primary teachers, TAs and SENCOs.

**20% Discount Available - enter the code FLE22 at checkout\***

Hb: 978-1-032-04268-8 | £96.00

Pb: 978-1-032-04262-6 | £15.99

\* Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or discount and only applies to books purchased directly via our website.

For more details, or to request a copy for review, please contact: Tom Eden, Marketing, Education, [tom.eden@tandf.co.uk](mailto:tom.eden@tandf.co.uk)



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## 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](#)