

Rough and Tumble Play in Early Years

Authors : Tia Claridge

Abstract : The aim of this study was to explore whether there are gender differences in how early childhood educators view and facilitate rough and tumble play in England. A qualitative approach was used to carry out semi-structured interviews with female and male early years educators. The key rationale for this study was to examine the significant lack of males working in early years education and the consequent impact this has on pedagogical practice. The findings illustrated that there are some gender differences in educators' perspectives of rough and tumble play. These include how educators use their own childhood experience to inform their professional practice as well as identifying a need for tailored training to upskill and develop confidence in early years staff with regard to this type of play. The most surprising finding was the influence that urban and rural settings had on educators' perceptions on weapon play, regardless of gender. Awareness of educator positionality was significant throughout the study for male participants, whereas females rarely commented their own gender. These findings indicate that further research is needed to understand the complex narratives underpinning gender and rough and tumble play.

Keywords : rough and tumble play, educators, gender, early years, pedagogy

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