



Webinar

Young Children's Participative Rights in Schools: Messages from Research in Wales

7 November 2024
2:00 – 3.30 PM (UK time)

Overview

This webinar engages with the ongoing challenge of transitioning law and policy on children's rights into practice. The webinar presents research findings from a project on young children's participative rights in schools in Wales. Key themes in this work are of universal interest, notably the gap between policy intention and implementation and specifically, in education, the challenge of integrating rights-based approaches in a field already populated by various and sometimes competing assumptions, debates and practices.

Objectives

1. To share learning from research into how young children's participative rights are reflected in education law and policy
2. To share insights from research with educators on what may give better effect to children's participative rights
2. To reflect on the gap between policy rhetoric on children's participation and effective implementation of children's participative rights in schools
3. To invite further knowledge exchange and engagement on these issues amongst CREAN members and networks.

Target Audience: educators and educators of educators; researchers; children's rights organisations

Background

In Wales, a national law mandates:

- a. human rights as a theme to be embedded in education from ages 3 - 16;
- b. a values-based curriculum in which children are seen as active agents in their own learning;
- c. four core purposes of curriculum including development of 'ethical, informed citizens ... of the world'; and
- d. education leaders to ensure all staff know and understand the requirements of the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child and on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

But what happens in classrooms? What difference are this law and associated policies making in practice? How are children's participative rights understood by educators and given effect? How does initial and continuous professional training for educators prepare them for the task? And what pedagogies are best suited to it?

These questions are addressed by '[Children's Participation in Schools](#)' a research project funded by the United Kingdom's Economic and Social Research Council via its Education Research Programme. In this webinar the research team will share some of their key findings and reflections as they move into the final phase of the project.

The webinar is hosted by CREAN together with the [Observatory on Human Rights and Social Justice](#) (formerly known as the Observatory on Human Rights of Children) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Swansea University. The Observatory deploys a collaborative, coordinated approach to using research, engagement and innovation to support practical implementation of the human rights of children. Its work led also to the establishment of the [Children's Legal Centre Wales](#), which provides legal information and support for children and those who care for or work with them in Wales. The Children's Legal Centre's work includes development of resources on the law, including but not limited to, human rights, for delivery in Welsh schools, and policy advocacy on a range of human rights issues including access to education. Two members of the Observatory, Professor Jane Williams and Dr Jacky Tyrie, are also members of the Children's Participation in Schools research team.

The Observatory is grateful for the support of CREAN in developing and delivering this webinar.

Webinar format, Speakers and Programme

The webinar will take place wholly online. It will be moderated by Professor Jane Williams (Swansea University) who will invite members of the research team to share and reflect on what they have learned. Webinar participants other than these speakers are invited to engage in discussion via Q & A functions. The speakers will be keen to engage in knowledge exchange and discussion with any CREAN members both during and after the event.

- **Register for the Webinar through this [link](#).**

Brief information about the Speakers

Professor Jane Williams (webinar moderator) is from the Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law at Swansea University. She specialises in public law and human rights. She is a co-founder of the Observatory on Human Rights of Children and the Children's Legal Centre Wales.

Dr Sarah Chicken, University of the West of England (Project Leader, Children's Participation in Schools) is a Senior Lecturer in Childhood and Education with areas of expertise in curriculum models that recognise the voice of young children in their learning, and inclusive pedagogical practices. Sarah's areas of interest include children's rights, the voice of the child and critical pedagogies.

Dr Jacky Tyrie, Swansea University is a senior lecturer in Early Childhood Studies and programme director on the MA Education. Her research interests are around young children's rights from a policy and practice perspective. She is a national leader on young children's rights and runs the Children's Rights in Early Years Network (CREYN).

Dr Jane Waters-Davies, University of Wales, Trinity Saint David is an Associate Professor in Early Education and the Applied Research Lead for Education at UWTSU. Jane's research interests include early years education and pedagogy, adult child interaction, play and learning outdoors and young children's voice and participation in education.

Dr Alison Murphy, University of Wales, Trinity Saint David Alison is a lecturer in the Athrofa: Institute of Education at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Alison's research interests are focused on children's perceptions of national identity and what it means to be Welsh. She is also interested in inclusion and children's rights and participatory research methods.

Dr Jennie Clement, Cardiff Metropolitan University is a senior lecturer in Teacher Education and Professional Learning. Jennie's research interests consider the spaces created for young children's learning within school contexts. She is also an aspiring Froebelian, interested in how Froebel's principles can support curriculum design within the early years.

Associated Reading

Team Publications

Chicken, S., & Tyrie, J. (2023). Can you hear me? Problematizing the enactment of UNCRC Article 12 in Welsh early years classrooms, exploring the challenges of 'children's voice'. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 31(2), 301-325. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-31010001>. Available from <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/10382814>

Chicken, S., Tur Porres, G., Mannay, D., Parnell, J., & Tyrie, J. (online). Questioning 'voice' and silence: Exploring creative and participatory approaches to researching with children through a Reggio Emilian lens. *Qualitative Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941241234299>. Available from <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/11751320>

Chicken, S., Tyrie, J., Waters-Davies, J., Murphy, A., Clement, J., Williams, J., Roberts, L., DeRossi, P., & Lewis, J. (2024). *Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers case study*. Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers. Available from <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/12884327>

Murphy, A., Roberts, L., Williams, J., Cridland, J., Chicken, S., Waters-Davies, J., & Tyrie, J. (online). Participative rights in Welsh primary schools: Unpicking the policy rhetoric. *Policy Futures in Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14782103241257281>. Available from <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/11982376>

Roberts, L., Chicken, S., Tyrie, J., Murphy, A., Waters-Davies, J., Clement, J., Williams, J., DeRossi, P., & Lewis, J. (2024). *Researching participative rights in younger children's education: Policy, practice and children's experiences*. Available from <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/12884274>

Tyrie, J., Chicken, S., Knight, C., Manney, D., Tur Porres, G., Waites, T., Waters-Davies, J., & Westall, A. (2023). COVID-19, *Education and learning: Amplifying young children's voices*. <https://hwb.gov.wales>: Welsh Government. Available from <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/10380884>

Waters-Davies, J., Murphy, A., Chicken, S., Tyrie, J., & Clement, J. (2024). Constructing child participation in early years classrooms: An exploration from Wales. *Children & Society*, 38(5), 1824-1841. <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12848>. Available from <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/11730394>

Waters-Davies, J., Tyrie, J., Chicken, S., Knight, C., & Grout, E. (online). Belonging, community and capability: Listening to the voices of young children to realise process quality in early childhood curriculum enactment in Wales. *Education 3-13*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2023.2276854>. Available from <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/11445433>

Other Publications

Arnott., L. & K. Wall (Eds.). (2022). *The theory and practice of voice in early childhood: An international exploration*. Routledge.

Avgitidou, S., Pnevmatikos, D., & Likomitrou, S. (2013). Preservice Teachers' beliefs about childhood: Challenges for a participatory early childhood education? *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 34(4), 390-404. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2013.845633>

Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 21(96), 624-649. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325>

Butler, I., & Drakeford, M. (2013). Children's rights as a policy framework in Wales. In J. Williams (Ed.), *The rights of children in Wales*. University of Wales Press.

Carey-Jenkins, D. (2018). Teachers learning to recognise the voice of a child. In C. Patterson & L. Kocher (Eds.), *Pedagogies for children's perspectives. Thinking about pedagogy in early childhood education*. Routledge.

- Cassidy, C., Wall, K., Robinson, C., Arnott, L., Beaton, M., & Hall, E. (2022). Bridging the theory and practice of eliciting the voices of young children: Findings from the look Who's talking project. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, **30**(1), 32–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2022.2026431>
- Chicken, S., & Tyrie, J. (2023). Can you hear me? Problematizing the enactment of UNCRC article 12 in Welsh early years classrooms, exploring the challenges of children's voice. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, **31**(2), 301–325. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-31010001>
- Hungerland (Eds.), *Reconceptualising agency* (pp. 89–101). London.
- Konstantoni, K. (2013). Children's rights-based approaches: The challenges of listening to taboo/discriminatory issues and moving beyond children's participation. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, **21**(4), 362–374. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2013.867169>
- Lansdown, G. and Ruggiero, R. (2023) *Measuring Impact of the Child Participation Assessment Tool: Outcome indicators and guidance for data collection* Council of Europe <https://rm.coe.int/cpat-outcome-indicators-final-version/1680abaa7d>
- Lewis, A., Sarwar, S., Tyrie, J., Waters, J., & Williams, J. (2017). Exploring the extent of enactment of young children's rights in the education system in Wales. *Wales Journal of Education*, **19**(2), 27–50.
- Lyle, S. (2014). Embracing the UNCRC in Wales (UK): Policy, pedagogy and prejudices. *Educational Studies*, **40**(2), 215–232.
- Mascadri, J., Lunn, J., Johansson, E., Scholes, M., Walker, L., & Berthelsen, D. (2021). Children's perspectives on why and when teachers listen to their ideas: Exploring opportunities for participation in the early years of school. *International Journal of Educational Research*, **107**(1), 101747. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101747>
- Moss, P., Clark, A., & Kj rholt, A. T. (2005). Introduction. In A. Clark, A. T. Kj rholt, & P. Moss (Eds.), *Beyond listening. Children's perspectives on early childhood services* (pp. 1–16). The Policy Press.
- Murray, J. (2019). Hearing young children's voices. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, **27**(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2018.1563352>
- Papadopoulou, M., & Sidorenko, E. (2021). Whose 'voice' is it anyway? The paradoxes of the participatory narrative. *British Educational Research Journal*, **48**(2), 354–370.
- Robinson, C., & Taylor, C. (2007). Theorizing student voice: Values and perspectives. *Improving Schools*, **10**(1), 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480207073702>
- Wall, K., Cassidy, C., & Arnott, L. (2019). Look who's talking: Eliciting the voice of children. *Teaching Scotland*, **78**, 45–47. ISSN 1469-3054.