

EDITORIAL – THE PLURALITY OF CHILD STUDIES

EDITORIAL – A PLURALIDADE DOS ESTUDOS DA CRIANÇA

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This special issue is the outcome of the 2nd International Conference on Child Studies, held at the University of Santiago de Compostela in November 2024. The event was organised by the LITER21 Research Group of the University of Santiago de Compostela and the Research Centre on Child Studies (CIEC) at the University of Minho, in collaboration with the Centre for Children and Childhood Studies at the University of Suffolk (UK), the Child Studies Department of Thematic Studies at Linköping University (Sweden), and the Institute of Science Education (ICE-USC) of the University of Santiago de Compostela.

The conference brought together academics from nearly thirty universities, with over eighty presentations spanning arts and childhood cultures, digital media, literature, music, children's rights and agency, early years pedagogy, migration, ecology, professional development, well-being, parenting, special needs, and intersectional approaches.

This thematic breadth reflects the multidisciplinary and pluralistic nature of child studies research, and underscores the importance of recognising children as social agents within complex cultural contexts.

This special issue presents selected papers from the conference, facilitating access to a portion of the research and diverse perspectives shared at the event.

The following articles are included: "Empty Chairs: Media, Movement, and Liberation: How Palestinian Children Educate and Resist?" (on Palestinian children's use of digital media amid conflict); "After a While, it Became a Normal Thing": Swedish Children's Experiences ... during the COVID-19 Pandemic" (on the

experiences of Swedish children with intellectual or neurodevelopmental difficulties); Other contributions comprise a Brazilian case study on teacher–deaf student interaction, analysis of short stories’ role in literacy in a bilingual Angolan context, and research on fostering children’s authorship and autonomy through creative and aesthetics practices. In addition to the works presented at the Conference, we have chosen to include, due to their thematic appropriateness and relevance, two further research contributions, namely “Examining the Influence of Law 4538/2018 on Foster Care and Child Mental Health Outcomes Within the Greek Child Protection Framework” and “Stories of Stories: Thinking Normalcy Through the Narratives of Hospital Clowns’ Encounters with Children.”

Together, these studies exemplify the rich, multifaceted approaches that characterise contemporary child studies, placing children at the centre and recognising their social, cultural, and psychological complexity. This diversity advances understanding and enables more responsive policies and practices for children’s varied lives.

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