

## **Abstract**

How do early childhood education leaders navigate ethical dilemmas within the context of marketised provision in England?

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Early childhood education (ECE) settings can be understood as public forums (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2013) where adults and children engage together in the implementation of national policy. We reflect on ethical dilemmas for leaders in early childhood education arising from the implementation of national policy. Dilemmas can be problematic in the sense that they are unresolved or routine-like as they pervade practice (Denzin, 1989). Inspired by Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2016) framework of multiple ethical paradigms, we analyse complex dilemmas arising for leaders in ECE as they implement national policy in the micro-system with children, families and the community. We position leaders in these contexts as principally concerned with the positive exploration of ethical dilemmas. Our analysis gives visibility to the ways in which leaders may draw on theory and experience in the ECE setting to navigate ethical dilemmas within a marketised system. Knowledge of ethics and practice may be partial and incomplete; however, fragments are pieced together as ethical praxis.

Key words: early childhood education, policy, praxis, everyday practice, vignettes, ethical dilemmas

## **Introduction**

Early childhood education (ECE) settings can be understood as public forums where adults and children engage together in projects of social, cultural, political and economic significance (Dahlberg et al., 2013). We suggest that such a project may include the coming together of children and adults 'to promote an informed, participatory and critical local democracy' (Dahlberg et al., 2013, p.82.) in the implementation of national policy. ECE policy may be considered as 'top down' with a preference for central above local actors in policy development (Cerna, 2013). Viewed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory policy developed by state governments in the exo-system governs both services and relationships experienced by children and their families in the micro system. Policy is, therefore, developed at some distance from the social context and environment of the child. ECE policy should have positive intent and 'be about supporting practitioners, children and families to flourish' (Kingdon & Gourd,

2014, p.1). Policy implementation in the micro system is not restricted to the literal reading of the written text; it is also the practice that emerges through the interpretation of text.

Our study aims to examine the ways in which leaders of ECE navigate ethical dilemmas in their practice arising from the implementation of national policy within a mixed economy and market of early education providers in England. This present study emanates from an earlier empirical study (Robson, 2018) examining how leaders of pedagogy in ECE in England implemented the statutory requirement to promote Fundamental British Values (FBV) as part of the governments' counter-terrorism strategy in England (Great Britain, HM Government, 2015). We report on findings specifically in relation to the ways in which leaders of ECE navigate ethical dilemmas in practice.

This study is guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

How do leaders in ECE address ethical dilemmas arising from the implementation of government policy in England?

- What dilemmas emerge for leaders of ECE as they implement national policy in the context of marketised provision?
- How does existing knowledge support an understanding of leadership in ECE practice in this context?
- How might leadership of ECE be re-imagined in the context of marketised provision?

#### *Policy context*

This study, conducted in the English context, is situated within a system of a mixed economy of state, private-for-profit and private-not-for profit ECE providers, where parents choose provision on behalf of their children (Lloyd, 2012). There has been an evolution in government policy for ECE in England since 1997 (Fitzgerald & Kay, 2016) leading to a complex range of universal and conditional entitlements to free early education in England for children aged 2-5 (Great Britain, Department for Education, 2017a). In England policymaking for early education and childcare is split across two separate government departments (Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions) with the result of multiple policies and policy tools (Lloyd, 2015). Despite this conceptual and linguistic division in policy (Moss, 2014), the practice of early childhood education and childcare may be integrated at the point of delivery. The government intervenes in this market through regulatory mechanisms, including financial controls, quality controls and the collection of data (Penn, 2012). ECE policy designs lead to structures that promote accountability and measurability through regulation in this context (Osgood, 2010). A relevant example in England is the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (Great Britain, Department for Education, 2017b); this policy sets out statutory requirements across all aspects of ECE practice and providers are inspected by the state for their compliance with it. Within this text the government

specifically reinforces the statutory duty of ECE providers to comply with the counter-terrorism strategy. However, there is a lack of clarity in policy as to how FBV relate to both the ‘areas for learning and development’ (*ibid*, p. 7) and ‘early learning goals’ (*ibid*, p.10) which frame the curriculum and pedagogy in ECE. A layering of counter-terrorism policy over this statutory framework for ECE creates complexity for ECE leaders as they navigate the implementation of policy in practice.

Any study has to navigate the diversity of terminology applied in policy, practice and in the academy to describe systems that have component elements concerned with the education and care of young children. Lloyd (2012) notes the diversity of terminology and meanings deployed by international, supranational and national bodies in the field. Here we adopt the term Early Childhood Education (ECE) as a pragmatic strategy.

### *Ethical dilemmas – a conceptual framework*

Dilemmas can be understood as problematic in the sense that they are unresolved or routine-like as they pervade practice (Denzin, 1989) and they have no pre-determined solutions (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Leaders in ECE encounter dilemmas as they navigate the implementation of national policy within the micro system with the child, family and community. We suggest that dilemmas in this context can be understood as ethical dilemmas that may require leaders in ECE to consider a range of issues including, for example, inequality for children. Shapiro’s and Stefkovich’s (2016) research in an American context provides a potential framework for analysis of how ECE leaders engage with moral dilemmas. Although their study focuses on educational leaders who are administrators, we suggest that their findings may support an understanding of the ways in which leaders in ECE engage in praxis. Shapiro and Stefkovich (*ibid.*) propose that moral dilemmas can be viewed through multiple and linked paradigms such as the ethics of justice, critique, care and profession. Here we give a brief consideration to each paradigm within the context of ECE leadership. The ethic of justice prompts ECE leaders to consider whether a formal policy or law provides a resolution to an issue in their practice. The ethic of critique encourages ECE leaders to move beyond the implementation of policies but, instead, to consider issues of power and oppression inherent in policy. This position enables leaders to consider alternative possibilities that may empower children and families. The ethic of care supports ECE leaders in showing concern for others including for example, children, practitioners and families. It requires ECE leaders to examine the consequences of their decisions. Shapiro and Stefkovich understand the ethic of the profession as an evolving personal code, rather than any external code of conduct of ethics set by an external body. An ethic of the profession is informed by engagement with the ethics of justice, critique and care but also reflections on life histories and practice. This is consistent with post-modern ethics theory, for example, Dahlberg & Moss (2005) argue that people show ‘moral competence’ that is neither technical nor rational and there is a ‘personalisation of ethics’

(p.72) unconstrained by a universal codes of ethics. In this study we apply multiple ethical paradigms to show ways in which ECE leaders address ethical dilemmas.

## **Conceptualising leadership in ECE – learning from the literature**

ECE settings should be at the forefront of the development of theory and leadership practice (Aubrey et al. 2013) so that emergent knowledge relevant to the context is captured. Here we are concerned with leadership (for example, establishing shared values and taking responsibility for all stakeholders) rather than management (for example, the process of deployment of resources) (Whalley, 2011). We reviewed studies concerned with ECE leadership conducted in the United Kingdom and the broader international context. Themes emerging from our review are discussed in greater detail below to provide a context for how leadership is approached in this study.

### *Leadership as a complex and socially situated activity*

Leadership within ECE is a complex task (Mistry & Sood, 2012) and may include leadership of people, practice and pedagogy. Practitioners have to meet multiple demands and deal with complex tasks that involve children, other practitioners and parents (Miller, 2008). Although Siraj-Blatchford & Manni (2007) suggest that a principal role of leadership in ECE is learning; this can be interpreted as learning about the self as leader, learning within practice and learning within the community of children and their families. Leadership within ECE is conceptualised as problematic; this may arise from the tension between advocating for the interests of children and families and navigating an environment of marketization of the ECE sector and corporatisation of ECE provision (Woodrow & Busch, 2008). Research shows how ECE practitioners display a tacit leadership knowledge that may not be verbalised (e.g. Aubrey et al., 2013). Professional leadership knowledge and learning may be ‘serendipitous, incidental and hidden from view’ and ‘is a personal craft knowledge that is local and situated’ (Aubrey et al. 2013, p. 41). Leadership practice is contingent on the circumstances of ECE settings. An earlier study, in the Finnish context, positions ECE leadership as a situated activity and a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by relations in the setting, local community and wider social cultural context (Hujala & Puroila, 1998).

More recent studies of the ECE workforce have applied a post-modern lens and re- conceptualised ECE practice as drawing on multiple forms of knowledge (Campbell-Barr, 2014 and 2018). We suggest that understanding ECE knowledge as arising from ECE practitioners’ experience and their application of theory is of significance to this study, where we position leadership as situated in practice. In a critical discussion on ECE professionalism Campbell-Barr (2018) applies the sociology of professional knowledge. She argues that the ECE knowledge base is constructed via a social process that draws on a history of theoretical knowledge, while incorporating knowledge arising from practice. We suggest that this perspective may

illuminate an understanding of the ways in which leaders constitute knowledge from theory and experience (Campbell-Barr, 2018) in order to relate to the ethical dilemmas that emerge in their practice.

### *Leadership as an ethical practice*

Empirical research examining professionalism within ECE practice in England (e.g. Osgood, 2010) offers insight into how practitioners construct an ethic of care within their practice in a national policy context where there are hegemonic concepts of professionalism. We argue that the learning emerging from these studies is relevant, given our understanding of ECE leadership as an everyday practice. Sevenhuijsen (1998) situates the ethic of care as a social practice that demands reflection on the best course of action in specific circumstances and the best way to interpret moral problems.' (p.59). In this way leaders in ECE can deploy an ethic of care to maintain ethical relationships both within and outside the setting. Sites of ECE can become 'loci of ethical practice' (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005, p.650) where understandings of practice are informed by the approach of the 'ethics of an encounter' (p.650) with the other. Such a position would mean that leaders of ECE have respect and responsibility for the other whether that is children, fellow practitioners, parents or members of the wider community. Osgood (2010) reconstructs professionalism in ECE arguing that ECE practitioners construct an emotional professionalism that is 'professionalism from within' (p.130) shaped by life histories as well as gendered and classed subjectivities. She argues that government ECE policy discourses in England do not enable alternative internal constructions of professionalism to emerge in practice as they privilege a neo-liberal and technical approach where practitioners are judged against external criteria. We suggest that external criteria that seek to determine ECE leadership and professionalism may be considered a universal code of ethics. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) state that universal codes lead to binary judgements of what is right or wrong and that they do 'not require an active ethical practice'(p.68). We propose that where leadership is a situated activity in ECE practice there is the challenge for practitioners of re-personalising ethics and making ethical choices (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005).

Our review of recent studies suggests that leadership of ECE is a situated activity and an ethical practice. In ECE leadership practitioners draw on theory and the knowledge emerging from practice; in this way leadership is praxis.

## **Methodology**

Our methodological discussion is in two parts; firstly we set out the research design for the initial empirical study from which this present study emanates. Secondly, we discuss the approach for the present study, where the authors conducted further and deeper analysis of the data collected in the first study.

### *Research design for initial empirical study*

The initial small scale study explored the diverse pedagogical approaches ECE leaders adopted when promoting FBV within a small sample of ECE providers in England and as such was positioned within an interpretivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). ECE practitioners' pedagogy, the phenomenon under study, was inseparable from the ECE provision and policy context so case study was a relevant approach (Yin, 2003). Six settings within an ethnically diverse city in England were invited to participate in the study; all operate within an ECE market providing ECE for children aged 2 to 5. A convenience approach best describes the sampling strategy (Leedy & Omrod, 2012) as the research settings were known to the researcher through professional networks. However, prior knowledge of the setting creates the potential for researcher bias and pre-conceptions. In each ECE provision three practitioners were invited to participate in the research, they were all responsible for the leadership of pedagogy. This was a purposive approach to sampling (Robson & McCartan, 2016) as participants' knowledge of leadership and practice in ECE was of high relevance to the focus of the study. A paramount consideration in both the initial and subsequent study was to maintain ethical relationships between the participants and the researcher as well as the respectful representation of participants in research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Following approval from the University's research ethics committee informed consents was sought from the managers (who were also the gatekeepers to the research settings) and ECE practitioners. Pseudonyms were adopted for both ECE practitioners and settings in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. ECE practitioners' accounts of their leadership in practice were collected by semi-structured interviews. The aim was for the interviews to be 'negotiated accomplishments of both reviewers and respondents' (Fontana and Frey, 2003), with open questions to support dialogue. Interviews were recorded with the consent of participants and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. The outcome was data rich in participants' accounts of leadership in ECE. This data was subsequently analysed with the informed consent of participants.

#### *Research design for the current study*

The current study is a small scale qualitative study where we examine the experiences of leaders in ECE as they implement government policy. By revisiting the interview data from the first study we sought to reveal understandings of the ways ECE leaders applied theory in their practice to address ethical dilemmas. Our analysis was a two stage process discussed in further detail below. We constructed vignettes of leadership practice for each participant based on their account in the interview. This was followed by analysis of the vignettes through the literature reviewed in this study.

ECE practitioners, through their participation in research, reveal knowledge of leadership and this places responsibilities on researchers to engage with the perspectives of participants. Although we aspire to position participants as equal partners in this study (Aubrey et al., 2000) the reality is that power relations operate at all stages in the research process including in the analysis of data. Vignettes are focused descriptions of significant moments for participants in their leadership of ECE (Miles, Huberman & Saldana,

2014). Constructed from research data collected from participants, vignettes are ‘concrete illustrations’ (Schostak, 2002, p.167) and have the potential to provide fresh insights into the complexity of leadership in ECE. In contrast to Schostak (2002), we do not suggest that vignettes are typical or representative; we position vignettes as narratives of experiences in leadership that can become a focus for critical reflection and learning. Conscious of researcher bias and power relationships, we engaged participants in the process of analysis and writing the vignettes through the strategy of member checking (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). Below we provide an example of one vignette of a leader in the implementation of government policy in England. Our justification for including one vignette is that research conducted through the lens of post-modernism gives emphasis to ‘local, contextual studies’ (Merril & West, 2009, p. 192). Our aim is to achieve an understanding of the leadership practice in this specific vignette; this is consistent with our understanding of leadership as a situated practice. Transparency in research involves ‘showing the workings’ (Holiday, 2016) and revealing the process for analysing data is central to our epistemological stance. We position ourselves within a post-modern paradigm where there is ‘respect for the plurality of perspectives, rather than a single truth from a privileged perspective’ (Merrill & West, 2009, p.192). Throughout we challenge ourselves as researchers to engage with the participants’ experience of leadership as it is revealed through the vignette; recognising the power relationships between the researcher and participants voice in writing the vignette.

### **Vignette of an ECE leaders’ navigation of ethical dilemmas**

*The Arcade Day Nursery provides ECE to children aged 2 to 5 years. Situated on the edge of a large English city in a small parade of shops the nursery is within a community where families new to the United Kingdom live and adjacent to a large social housing development. An independent business operating on a single site owned, led and managed by Farah who is simultaneously entrepreneur, business manager and leader of pedagogy. Farah established the nursery in this locality as the local authority had identified that there were insufficient ECE places for 2 year olds from low income backgrounds in the local ECE market. Expansion of the free early education to 2 year old children in this context was a distinct government policy. Farah reflected that this was a welcome opportunity, but also an ethical choice as it gave her enterprise a moral purpose. However, she recognised that providing the free early education for targeted 2 year olds whose family met the eligibility criteria was insufficient to develop a sustainable business. Therefore choosing this locality for her enterprise was not without risk. Farah considered how she positioned the nursery within the local ECE market and the opportunities that arose to develop the business. The nursery is pro-active in recruiting children and families from a wide range of language and cultural backgrounds who live within the immediate locality but may only stay for a short period of time due to short term jobs and housing. Farah argues that the moral purpose of the nursery is reflected in its inclusivity. Opening from 7am to 6pm each day the nursery provides ECE to children aged from 2 to 5 years. Farah describes the challenge of implementing government policy that provides for free ECE to children of different ages*

*whilst at the same time delivering flexible sessional and full day care across the week in response to the diverse employment patterns of parents. Farah frames this as an ethical dilemma as she strives not to impose a pattern of delivery that privileges cost effectiveness for the nursery. Instead Farah works with parents to negotiate the patchwork of the early education entitlement (free at the point of delivery) and how this dovetails with the hours of childcare that parents pay for. As Farah reflects on the first two years of her enterprise she acknowledges that as a leader there are tensions in establishing the nursery's identity as a new provider of ECE in a competitive local market whilst at the same time engaging with the diversity of families in the immediate community. She constantly reflects on the relations between her enterprise and the families. Farah is implementing a range of national policies that extend beyond the free early education entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year old children and now includes the requirement to promote FBV as part of the government's strategy to counter terrorism. Farah recognises the ethical issues implicit in navigating the lived experiences of children in the nursery and the statutory requirements of government for ECE. Farah focuses on the ethical dilemmas arising from imposing a specified set of 'British' values on families from diverse cultural and national backgrounds. She recognises the risk of promoting a specific version of Britishness that emphasises nationalism. She observes that many of the commercially available resources for ECE settings are inappropriate because they include Union Flags and do not reflect the diverse national heritages or the day to day experiences of children. Farah explains that the nursery's pedagogy privileges inclusive values which are explored through dialogues with children. Practitioners are proactive in developing democratic practices that enable children to contribute to the governance of the nursery. Farah shared examples where children reviewed policies and contributed to planning of the curriculum. In the entrance to the nursery Farah drew attention to a visual display which she stated had a dual focus of communicating the nursery's commitment to FBV and setting out their inclusive pedagogical approach. Farah explained the necessity of the display to provide evidence of compliance with the statutory duty to promote FBV ready for inspection but a more significant reason was to communicate to families the inclusive values that were distinctive for the Arcade Day Nursery. Farah suggested that this was a further example of how, she as leader navigated the ethical issues that emerged from the implementation of national policy.*

### **Critical reflection on the vignette**

The vignette is illuminative for researchers in that the process of writing expands our understanding of ECE leadership (Graue & Walsh, 1998). Within our post-modern paradigm we respect the plurality of perspectives on ECE leadership that may emerge in the reading of vignettes. For the reader the vignette narrates leadership as a lived experience not as an abstract concept. Our reflection explores problematic dilemmas that Farah encountered in her leadership. Shapiro and Stefkovic's (2016) framework of viewing moral dilemmas through multiple ethical paradigms not only supports an understanding of the nature of the dilemmas but also the ways in which Farah arrived at an ethical position as a leader. We suggest that

such a position accepts that the issue or dilemma may not be resolved but has been informed by a consideration of ethics. We argue that Farah relied on a tacit and situated theory of ethics to support and shape her leadership practice.

The first dilemma emerged during Farah's consideration of where to locate her nursery as a business. In this process Farah had to navigate national policy, the ECE market and the local community to arrive at a solution that was consistent with her inclusive ethos. Farah was aware that establishing a nursery in this locality was problematic. For example, she knew that the high turnover of migrant families meant that children were likely to remain briefly in the nursery and this may pose a risk to the financial sustainability of the business. She was also aware that families on low incomes, who were eligible for the 15 hours free ECE entitlement for 2 year children, would not be able to afford to purchase additional ECE provision. Farah recognised the tensions arising from the marketization of ECE and her commitment to the interests of children in the local community (Woodrow and Busch, 2008). Farah's knowledge of leadership was situated in, and constructed by, her relations in the local community and the wider social cultural context (Hujala & Purola, 1998). However, we suggest that situated leadership, as a model, provides a partial theory of Farah's leadership. In this context her leadership was also informed by an ethic of justice; where the formal policy of government in relation to funding ECE for 2 year old children supported her aim of opening a nursery with a moral purpose. Furthermore, Farah exercised an ethic of care in her concern for children and families who lived in an area where there was a shortage of ECE provision.

The second dilemma arose during the implementation of national ECE policy; Farah recognised that different ECE entitlements (dependent on children's age, parental income and parental employment status) posed challenges for parents as they sought to match early education and childcare provision with their employment patterns. Farah could not rely on an ethic of justice. Resolving an issue for parents and children through a formal policy was insufficient to address parents' needs for early education and child care provision. Farah's analysis of entitlements to free ECE for children leads her to interpret and implement the policy in ways that it can work in synergy with the diversity of families in the community. Farah positioned this as an ethical dilemma in her practice; as a leader she interpreted national ECE policy entitlements for families. She adopted a strategy of negotiating with families to gain a knowledge of their needs. Although this is a 'local and situated' leadership (Aubrey et al. 2013, p.14) Farah drew on a broad theory of ethics to support her navigation of ethical dilemmas. She applied an ethic of care by reflecting on the implications of policy for the other, whether that be children or their parents/carers. Farah's ethic of care with families formed part of her strategy for the sustainability of nursery within a competitive ECE market. Navigating the ethical dilemmas within this market required Farah to demonstrate a 'moral competence' in her leadership (Dalhberg & Moss, 2005) that was not pre-determined by a universal code of ethics. Instead, Farah's leadership was guided by an ethic of profession, a personal code of ethics, this was knowledge informed through the perspective of an encounter with the 'other'.

The third dilemma arose from Farah's consideration of the relevance of FBV to families of diverse national and ethnic backgrounds. Farah recognised that an emphasis on Britishness, whilst a statutory requirement, potentially undermined the inclusive ethos of the setting. Specifically, Farah suggested that a focus on Britishness may also lead to parents of diverse backgrounds choosing alternative provisions within the local ECE market. Here Farah applied an ethic of care in that she viewed the policy of promoting FBV from the perspective of families. As a leader she adopted a position of concern for others. Farah's ambition for the nursery was that pedagogy embraced values beyond the four statutory FBV of the rule of law, democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. In the nursery children were encouraged to shape and experience values. Here Farah applied an ethic of critique where she considered alternative strategies so that FBV were not imposed on children through the pedagogical practice. By adopting a critical orientation as a leader Farah questioned the exclusive focus on Britishness; this involved a consideration of issues of power and the ways in which the state intervenes in children's lives. However, she acknowledged that evidencing compliance with the statutory requirement to promote FBV was an important consideration. A negative inspection outcome may influence the position of the nursery in the local ECE market. Farah was aware that her nursery would be judged against external criteria used to regulate the ECE sector, however this did not constrain her leadership. Farah adopted 'an active ethical practice' within her leadership (Dalhberg & Moss, 2005, p.68); this was not limited or reliant upon the universal codes of ethics imposed by inspection frameworks or the statutory guidance to promote FBV.

Farah's leadership is situated within the day to day relations in the nursery; through this social process she constructs a knowledge base that underpins her leadership formed from both theoretical and experiential perspectives (Campbell-Barr, 2018). Even though this knowledge base is partial and incomplete Farah draws on a theoretical knowledge of ethics; she integrates this with her knowledge of practice and the community of children and families. Theory is not named but it is practised by Farah; the theoretical and experiential knowledge emerging from her engagement in the nursery are inseparable. Farah's knowledge of leadership is tacit (Aubrey et al., 2013) as is her knowledge of ethics; it is implicit in her leadership practice. Farah viewed ethical dilemmas through the ethic of profession; knowledge of this ethic was tacit; yet it was informed by engagement with the ethical paradigms of justice, critique and care. This knowledge base of ethics evolving from theory and experience can be understood as praxis.

## Conclusion

Our reflection on this vignette leads us to question how practitioners can be supported in the further development of their leadership practice in the context of ECE marketised provision. We argue that practitioners need to re-imagine ECE leadership as an ethical practice and that such a position has the

potential to support them in navigating ethical dilemmas that occur on a daily basis. As a leader Farah traverses a number of complex and parallel paths, for example, marketing the nursery to parents of diverse cultural backgrounds within the local ECE provider market, promoting an inclusive ethos and evidencing compliance with statutory policy requirements. Whilst leadership in ECE can be understood as a situated and socially constructed practice, we suggest that such a model may only partially support leaders in addressing ethical dilemmas emerging from the interaction of the ECE market, national policy and families. Farah applied a tacit theory of ethics; she developed an ethic of profession which was an evolving personal code informed by a consideration of the ethics of justice, care and critique (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016). Knowledge emerging from experience in practice and theory is pieced together by Farah as praxis and this shapes realisable actions. We suggest that ECE leaders could be supported by explicitly reflecting on dilemmas through the paradigms of the ethic of care, justice and critique. This would serve a dual function of facilitating a deeper understanding of the dilemma as well as enabling a consideration of both potential actions and the implications arising from actions for the other. This strategy has the potential to further knowledge of ECE leadership as an ethical praxis situated and constructed within sites of ECE practice in marketised contexts. Specifically, we suggest that ECE leaders may become more aware of how they theorise and practice ethics; this would potentially support both an active ethical practice (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005) and an ethical praxis.

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