

'Be realistic, demand the impossible': A memoir of work in childcare and education ^[1]

Author: Penn, Helen

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AVAILABILITY

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Features

- Professor Helen Penn is one of the most revered and well known academics in early childhood education, globally.
- Provides an international perspective, including working in developing countries, and the tensions of working across such deep divides.
- Offers a unique, wide-ranging memoir of early childhood education and care over a fifty-year period, reflecting the author's wide personal experiences
- The unique insight into policy making will be controversial and surprising to practitioners working in early childhood.

Summary

An astute exploration of the complexities of working and learning in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care, Professor Helen Penn tells of her experiences of working as a teacher, social worker, campaigner, researcher and writer, and so reflects on the perennial and complex issues which shape this expanding field.

Mapping the author's career from the mid-sixties onward, 'Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible' is a tribute to the progress that has been made in Early Childhood Education and Care over the past 70 years and is a celebration of those who have acted on their principles to articulate and remedy hidden suffering. A first-hand commentary on adult-child relations, poverty, working with families and engaging with democracy and inequality, Penn's narrative reconstructs her past and, in doing so, produces a social history that records the various shifts in policy and public attitudes which she has witnessed. The author recognizes the collective effort and teamwork involved in working within organizations, as well as the constraints and tensions such organizations can create. She comments on the wider political system and assesses the particular pattern of educational inequality and oppression which afflicts the UK.

One of the best known and most respected figures in her field, Penn provides a unique perspective on change as well as offering a framework for understanding, assessing and working within the field of Early Childhood Education and Care. Insightful and frank, witty and funny, this book will be a valuable read for students, academics, researchers and practitioners involved in this field.

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Region: Europe ^[3]

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