

Refugee children and families' positioning within resettlement and early childhood education policies in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Source: Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online

Format: Article

Publication Date: 2 Sep 2021

AVAILABILITY

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Excerpted from abstract

This paper uses a framing derived from refugee and child rights conventions to analyse the positioning of young refugee children and their families in Aotearoa New Zealand's resettlement policies, early childhood curriculum and early childhood education (ECE) funding policies. It also analyses data from interviews with participants from ECE settings who are working with refugee children and families, to discuss how policy is experienced in ECE practice, and makes recommendations about future policy directions. Main findings are that the Refugee Resettlement Strategy has critically important goals for refugee resettlement, but outcomes are narrowly defined and future-focused. While the ECE curriculum, Te Whariki, offers a strong basis for refugee families and children to come to belong and participate in Aotearoa New Zealand, and to have their own culture upheld, the rights of the young refugee child have no visibility within resettlement and ECE funding policies. We argue that a rights-based framework, focused on the young refugee child within their wider family, offers a productive lens through which to analyse refugee resettlement and ECE policies.

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