

An ecocultural consideration of Sámi early childhood education ^[1]

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Excerpted from abstract

The Sámi is the only indigenous people in the EU. The Sámi live in the Arctic region in Finland, Norway Sweden, and Russia. Nature and natural lifestyles, respect for the nature and sustainability make an important part of the Sámi culture. Today's rapid environmental, economic, and political developments pose a threat to the continuity of traditional values. Early childhood education (ECE) has a strong supportive role in the maintenance, transmitting, and strengthening of the Sámi cultures and languages. This research describes the implementation of Sámi ECE by the narratives of Sámi early childhood educators. Special focus is on the pedagogy educators use to strengthen children's connectedness to nature, respecting nature and living in nature. The theoretical foundation is the eco-cultural theory. The Sámi Parliament has composed a core curriculum and a guide for the daily practices of the Sámi ECE. The research participants (N=23) represent various educational professions. The data comprised personal interviews. The data was analysed with qualitative content analysis. The significance of the nature appeared at many levels of ECE. The research provided grounds for early education which is culturally sustainable as it leans on the cultural tradition and the strong relationship with the nature.

Region: Europe ^[4]

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