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Speechless: Young Children's Experiences of Exclusion from Early Childhood Education in Aotearoa New Zealand

Interpreting Children's Voices Through Parents' Relational Accounts

Information sheet for Parents

Hello, my name is Kate Morley and I am currently completing my Masters of Educational and Developmental Psychology at Massey University. I'm conducting a research project looking at children's experience of preschool exclusion as a part of my study. My supervisor for the research is Dr Karen Harris k.harris3@massey.ac.nz

Project Description and Invitation

I am interested in understanding the experiences and perspectives of children who have been excluded from their preschool (asked not to return) and the influence of this experience on their lives, in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC).

New Zealand ratified the UNCRC in 1993, which has a number of articles that explains the rights of children. I am particularly interested in Article 12, regarding the importance of children's voice in matters affecting the child, as well as complementary rights in Articles 2, 3 and 28, which collectively reinforce children's rights to equitable, non-discriminatory participation in education that cares for, protects and supports children's talents, and well-being. Despite these commitments, children continue to experience exclusion from their preschool settings. Additionally, within New Zealand contexts, children's experience of preschool exclusion and voice rights within research remains an understudied phenomenon.

I believe the inclusion of children's voice regarding what preschool exclusion means to them, via the accounts of their attached and attuned parent/caregiver, can contribute towards shining a light on this under studied, yet critically important issue and raise a more compassionate, and empathetic awareness of children's rights and wellbeing needs.

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Invitation to participate

This is an invitation for you – the parent or caregiver of a child who has experienced preschool exclusion (asked to leave and not return) within the last two years, to participate in the project. I'm interested in hearing your account of your child's voice and behaviour, influenced by their experiences of exclusion. I will be interviewing nine other parents and each parent will be interviewed separately.

If you agree to contribute, you will have the opportunity to participate in **one interview** 20-45 minutes, either online or at a place and time convenient to you, in June 2026. The total time for participating in the study could be up to an hour, allowing time for you to ask any additional questions, to sign consent and to settle in. There are a few criteria for taking part, including your child was under the age of five when they were excluded from preschool, the exclusion event happened within the last two years (for recall purposes), and that you feel comfortable discussing the impact of preschool exclusion on your child, from your child's perspective (e.g. through voice, behaviour, play).

The interview will be recorded on a password protected device so that I can listen several times to ensure I understand and capture your accounts correctly. I will also transcribe the interview. The interview data and transcript will be stored in a password computer to protect participant privacy. All information will be treated confidentially, and available only to myself and my supervisor. Should you want to see your transcript, I will email you a copy. The recording and transcript will be deleted at the end of my study. All personally identifying information will be removed.

On completion of the thesis, there may be opportunities for me to publish the study as a way of contributing to New Zealand literature.

Your rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

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- decline to answer any particular question; and ask for the recorder to be turned off or paused at any time during the interview.
- withdraw from the study within two weeks following the interview;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that the child's and parent's name will not be used;
- be emailed a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- to bring a support person to the interview if you choose

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Will I be identifiable?** No, you will be given a pseudonym and identifying information, such as your name and your child's name will not be used.
- **Can I withdraw from the research?** You are under no obligation to accept this invitation, even if you agree to take part. You can withdraw any time up to two weeks after the interview.
- **What type of data is being collected?** The data will be your account of what your child felt about their exclusionary experience and how they communicated this to you. For example, this could be directly or indirectly through their voice, play, social interactions, moods, and behaviour etc. These expressions are treated as forms of voice regarding how they feel about their experience.
- **What will participation involve?** I will be using semi-structured interviews to gather information, meaning I will ask you questions to help prompt you in talking about your child, and let you describe it yourself.
- **When and where will the interview be conducted?** The interview will take place in June at a quiet location arranged to suit you. Preferably face-to-face interviews, however Skype/Zoom are available, and required for any participants living outside of Auckland.
- **What are the benefits of taking part?** Participation in this research is voluntary. This is a way of contributing to the current understanding of children's experiences of exclusion. While the research will have no impact on what has happened in the past, I hope the wisdom of lived experience and underrepresented views may shed light on the unseen impact of ECE exclusion, and the learnings may help others in the future.

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- **Are there any risks in taking part?** While I don't anticipate any risks with participating in this research – rather, I hope you will find the interview a validating experience. However, there always is potential for participation in research to raise uncomfortable feelings.

If you feel concerned after participating, there are various agencies that can provide you support, including:

Need to Talk?	1737 any time to connect with a trained counsellor
Care Matters:	https://carematters.org.nz/
Family Works:	https://www.familyworkscentral.org.nz/
What's Up:	https://whatsup.co.nz/
Strengthening Families:	https://www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz/

Thank you so much for considering participating in this research. If you do wish to be interviewed or if you have questions, please let me know by contacting me on the email address below:

Project Contacts

Researcher: Kate Morley

Mobile: 0212804412

Email: Kate.Morley.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Supervisor: Karen Harris

Email: k.harris3@massey.ac.nz

If you have questions about the project, please contact either myself or my supervisor, we are more than happy to offer further information.

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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application OM3 23/03 Educational and Developmental Psychology Applied Research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

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