

# **Educating for diversity and values education through children's literature**

## **Abstract:**

This paper examines a key challenge facing higher education providers: that of preparing undergraduate teachers and childcare workers to work within increasingly diverse classrooms and care centres. The author examines this through a pilot study of 5 Perth Day Care Centres. In this paper the author focuses in on the children's books used within the 5 centres and how well, or otherwise, the themes, characters and illustrations support the fourth Principle of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) which charges educators with the goal of providing a curriculum that respects and celebrates the diversity within and between families, cultures and communities. Principle 4: Respect for Diversity, specifically states: "Educators honour the histories, cultures, languages and traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families" (2009, p. 13). The author makes a case for curriculum developers and higher education trainers of early childhood carers and educators to understand the value of using children's literature as a resource to support this principle of the EYLF. The author also examines research that relates to challenges of poor and biased text selection, as well as the impact of teacher attitudes on text selection and use. She makes links between these and the texts currently in use within these 5 centres and whether or not the children's literature in use supports this principle. The paper concludes with a challenge to curriculum designers and higher education providers to consider these challenges in order to ensure that early childhood educators receive appropriate training and curriculum guidance to best support Principle 4 of the EYLF.