

## **EDITORIAL**

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The third edition of the *International Journal of Transitions in Childhood* offers a broad view of transitions for children of different ages and stages and illustrates the diversity and complexity of these transitions. Of interest is the strong focus on young people moving from childhood into adolescence and adulthood. Within this diversity, key messages emerging from the papers show the importance of empowering young people through building relationships, and understanding and respecting their identity as they move from the familiar to the less familiar.

From New Zealand, the first paper by Sally Peters, Margaret Carr, Carol Hartley, Pat Rogers and Jemma Smith focuses on how relationships can be strengthened and children empowered as they make the transition from preschool into primary school. The use of portfolios as transition artefacts is explained, and illustrated through the use of vignettes. As well as 'fostering belonging and empowerment', the authors describe how portfolios can be used: to understand children's prior learning - what they already know and can do; to illustrate children's self-image as learners; and for supporting literacy development. Finally the authors raise issues associated with teachers' attitudes toward the use of these artefacts.

Malcolm Hill and Fiona Wager highlight issues for children as they move from middle childhood into adolescence and their growing sense of 'becoming'. Their paper brings together findings from two studies conducted in Scotland in which the perspectives of young people were sought about how they managed their lives outside home and school. Insight is provided around changes in different domains of the children's lives including: parental regulations and rules and how these are accepted, negotiated or otherwise; broadening social realms and entry to public spaces; and institutionally determined age-related opportunities and barriers. In conclusion the authors highlight issues around inequalities associated with living in poor urban neighbourhoods that have the power to limit children's growing agency and access to opportunities outside home and school.

The theme of empowerment and understanding the identity of young people as they make the transition from school to further education underpins the paper by Christine Baker and Hilary Fabian from Wales. A case study approach was used to identify factors that supported or created difficulties during this transfer and transition, for a group of disaffected learners. Findings highlighted the role of students' identity, dispositions, control and agency, as well as external and institutional factors. The authors caution that there is a 'surface structure of illusions' which can counter organisational factors and impinge on the transition process in further education.

A further paper from Wales (Andrew Moreman and Hilary Fabian) considers the transitional practices within a military college for a group of 16 males from 17 years of age and again reflects key themes in this edition. While policies and practices appear to be in place to support the transition process, results of a questionnaire survey and focus group interview suggest improvements to the student experience could occur through a stronger focus on relationships including friendships among students and involvement of families, the introduction of a peer mentor scheme, and the allocation of a Transition Coordinator.

The Practitioner paper is another contribution from Scotland. In bringing together the key themes of this edition it describes a *multi-agency consultation project with young people with*

*support needs at the transition between children's and adult's services.* The team from the Highland Children's Forum describe how the voice of young people with a wide range of support needs was sought as they made the transition from children's services to adult support services including from school to post school services, and the use of the Mosaic Approach as a consultation tool. The report identifies and summarises what was helpful or not and what could help in relation to the young peoples transition to adult services and their ability to influence personal outcomes, their role in meetings, access to information, getting the right support, and health services. Again, the importance of empowering young people during transitions is strongly evident in this paper.

Through a variety of projects that have enabled the voice of young people to be heard, the diversity of transitions across the very broad interpretation of 'childhood' has been highlighted. The importance of 'enhancing learning across borders'- so aptly phrased in the New Zealand paper – has been highlighted regardless of the phase of childhood, and the critical role of communication among and between stakeholders has emerged.