

**Fabian, H. (2002) Learning Inside Out. Paper presented on the 12th European Conference on Quality in Early Childhood Education (EECERA), Cyprus**

**Abstract**

In England, the Foundation Stage (FS) curriculum for children aged between 3-6 includes outdoor activities as part of the planned curriculum and children go outside for some of their daily learning experiences. Many children now experience the FS curriculum in school in reception classes. However, in school they usually 'go out to play' at set times usually to a large, hard-surfaced tarmac area where there is often little educational stimulation provided, and is shared with large numbers of older pupils.

The aim of this research is to explore some of the social and emotional difficulties that children may face as they transfer from learning out-of-doors in the nursery to playing on the playground at school. The methodology comprises interviews with teachers that gained their views about learning out-of-doors and explored strategies that they use to help children learn about the playground. Interviews with children identified their views about expectations of 'playtime', the way they learn about the culture of the school playground, negotiate friendships and decide what to do during this time.

The main findings highlight:

- Teachers' views about the need for, and function of, playtime;
- The ways teachers scaffold social relationships for children; and
- The different forms of social opportunity that the playground offers.

**Key words:** transition, social development, outdoor provision/play