Mapping the experiences of immigrant educators in early childhood and school settings in Canada and beyond

Nahal Fakhari; Milena Pimentel; and Jessie-Lee McIsaac

Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood

Link to article

BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND METHODS

Immigrant early childhood educators (ECEs) are becoming the backbone of Canada's Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) sector as demand grows.

However, many still face challenges in having their qualifications recognized and feeling included and valued in their workplaces.



The purpose of this study was to conduct a scoping review focusing on the experiences of immigrant educators in **Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**

These countries were selected due to some degree of characteristics in immigration policies and early childhood practices.

KEY FINDINGS

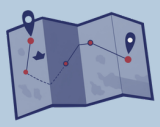
NUMERICAL FINDINGS



13 out of 1930 articles met our inclusion criteria



Published between the years **2012 to 2022**



7 articles were from the United States, **4** from Canada, **1** from Australia, **1** from New Zealand, **0** from the United Kingdom

DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

Articles discussed...



Defining their identity as educators in a new country was often complex, as they had to adapt to new cultural contexts while also finding ways to represent themselves.



Immigrant educators experienced challenges in **how they cared for children**, including their feeding practices and teaching approaches.



Immigrant educators reflected on play-based learning, viewing it as a Western approach that differed from teaching practices in their home countries, yet remained open to it, bringing their own pedagogical practices.



Immigrant educators held a deep and empathetic understanding of immigrant families. They drew on their own experiences to understand the exclusion caused by cultural and language barries.

CONCLUSIONS

Immigrant educators bring valuable cultural knowledge that supports inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments, yet their contributions and perspectives often remain overlooked.

Rather than investing in long-term workforce solutions, immigrant educators are often recruited to address labour shortages despite facing challenging conditions, including low pay, job insecurity, and dependence on employment for permanent residency, creating unequal power relations.

It is essential to recognize and value immigrant educators' contributions while investing in culturally responsive work environments that ensure fair compensation and equitable working conditions.

SSHRC CRSH
CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS CHAIRES DE RECHERCHE DU CANADA
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY
Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre