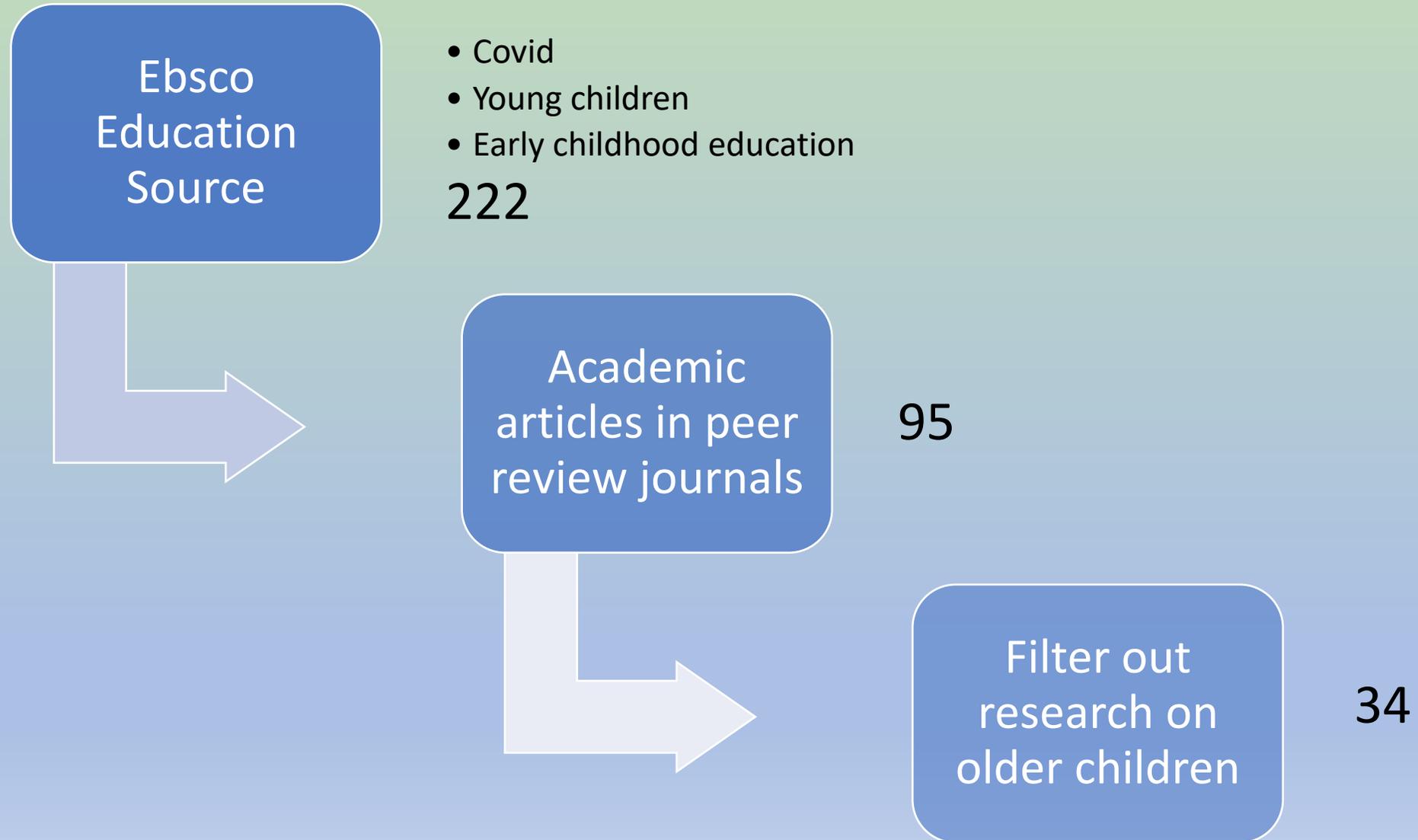


# Young Children and Covid-19: What does research have to teach us?

Dr. David Brody

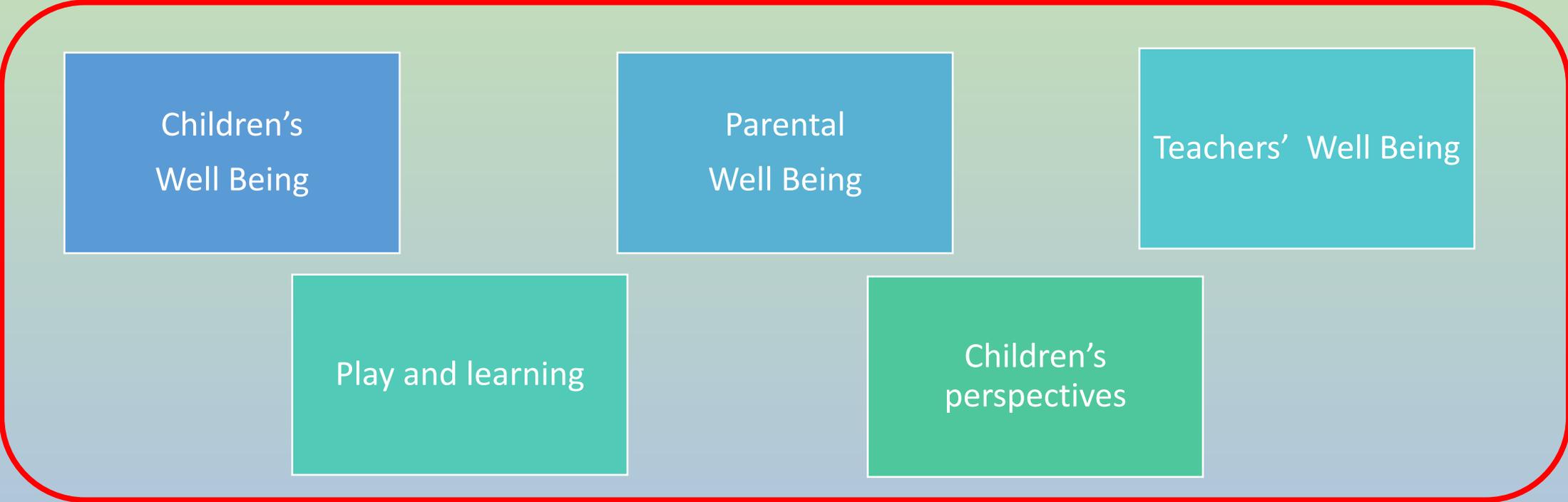
Coordinator – Early Childhood Research Group  
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# Literature search process



# Special issues – young children and Covid

- EECERJ (European Early Childhood Research Journal) Feb. 2021, 29(1)
- IJEYE (International Journal of Early Years Education) to be published



On-line learning and curriculum

Policy

Program responses

Teacher education

Special needs children



**Parent  
Surveys**

**Children's  
Well Being**

USA

Israel

Italy

Japan

# Negative outcomes for children

- USA - Anxiety and sadness [USA] (Gassman-Pines et al, 2020)
- Japan - Psychological and physical stress (Mochida et al, 2021)
- Italy - Disruption of social and play relationships.  
'Key areas of vulnerability' concerning eating: reduced appetite, irregular meals, increased consumption of snacks.  
Increased irritability, increased TV, non-acceptance of family rules (Mantovani et al., 2020)
- Italy - Dyadic stress between parent and child (Spinelli et al., 2020)
- Israel, Arab sector - Regressive behaviors (desire to sleep with parents, enuresis, language regression), irritability, mood swings, sleep difficulties, laziness, increased screen time (Ghanamah & Eghbaria-ghanamah. 2021)

# Correlates of negative outcomes for children

- Level of parents' education: negatively correlated with stress levels among children (Japan, Israel)
- Negative perception of childrearing, punitive parenting style correlated with physical stress among children (Japan)
- Family hardships (income loss, job loss, illness, childcare burdens) correlated with anxiety and sadness among children (USA)
- Increased dyadic stress between parents and children, and parental stress levels positively correlated with emotional and behavioral problems among the children (Italy)
- Negative influences on children's behavior: (Israel, Arab sector)
  - Working parents, child in isolation, family member ill with Corona, gender (girls exhibited more regressive behavior than boys)
- Universal report of more screen time unrelated to socio-economic variables

# Positive outcomes for children

- Italy - Unexpected improvements in parent/child and sibling relationships, adaptiveness and autonomy, family resilience within and between families, linguistic gains (50%) (Spinelli et al., 2020; Mantovani et al., 2020)
- Japan - “Good behavior traits” (Mochida et al, 2021)
- Israel, Arab sector - Increase in thoughtfulness, positive adaptation to limits and restrictions, more sleep (Ghanamah & Eghbaria-ghanamah. 2021)

# Correlates of positive outcomes for children

- Level of parents' education and family income correlated with lower levels of stress: (Japan)
- Level of parents' education correlated with lower levels of regressive behavior (Israel, Arab sector)
- Warm and permissive parenting correlated positively with good behavior traits among the children (Japan)

# Bibliography – child well-being

Gassman-Pines, Anna, Elizabeth Oltmans Ananat, and John Fitz-Henley II. 2020. “COVID-19 and Parent-Child Psychological Well-Being.” *Pediatrics* 146 (4): 1–9. <http://10.0.6.6/peds.2020-007294>.

Ghanamah, R., and H. Eghbaria-ghanamah. 2021. “Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Behavioral and Emotional Aspects and Daily Routines of Arab Israeli Children.” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18: 1–19.

Mantovani, S., C. Bove, P. Ferri, P. Manzoni, A. Cesa Bianchi, and M. Picca. 2021. “Children ‘under Lockdown’: Voices, Experiences, and Resources during and after the COVID-19 Emergency. Insights from a Survey with Children and Families in the Lombardy Region of Italy.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 35–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2021.1872673>.

Mochida, Seiko, Mieko Sanada, Qinfeng Shao, Jiwon Lee, Junko Takaoka, Satoko Ando, and Yoichi Sakakihara. 2021. “Factors Modifying Children’s Stress during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Japan.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 51–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2021.1872669>.

Spinelli, Maria, Francesca Lionetti, Massimiliano Pastore, and Mirco Fasolo. 2020. “Parents’ Stress and Children’s Psychological Problems in Families Facing the COVID-19 Outbreak in Italy.” *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (January): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01713>.

**Parental Well Being**

**Parent Surveys**

**Narrative case study**

USA

Germany

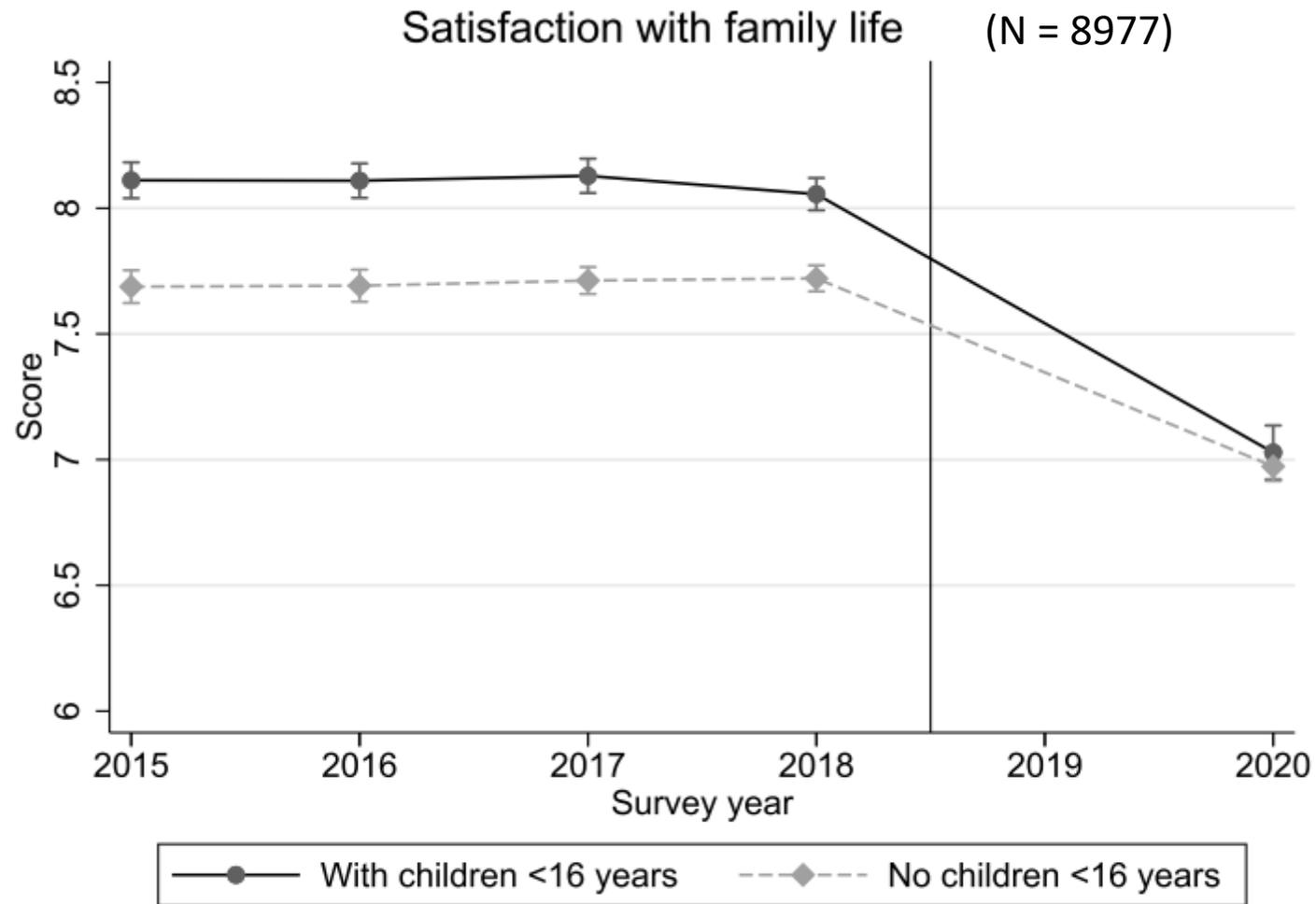
Italy

Canada

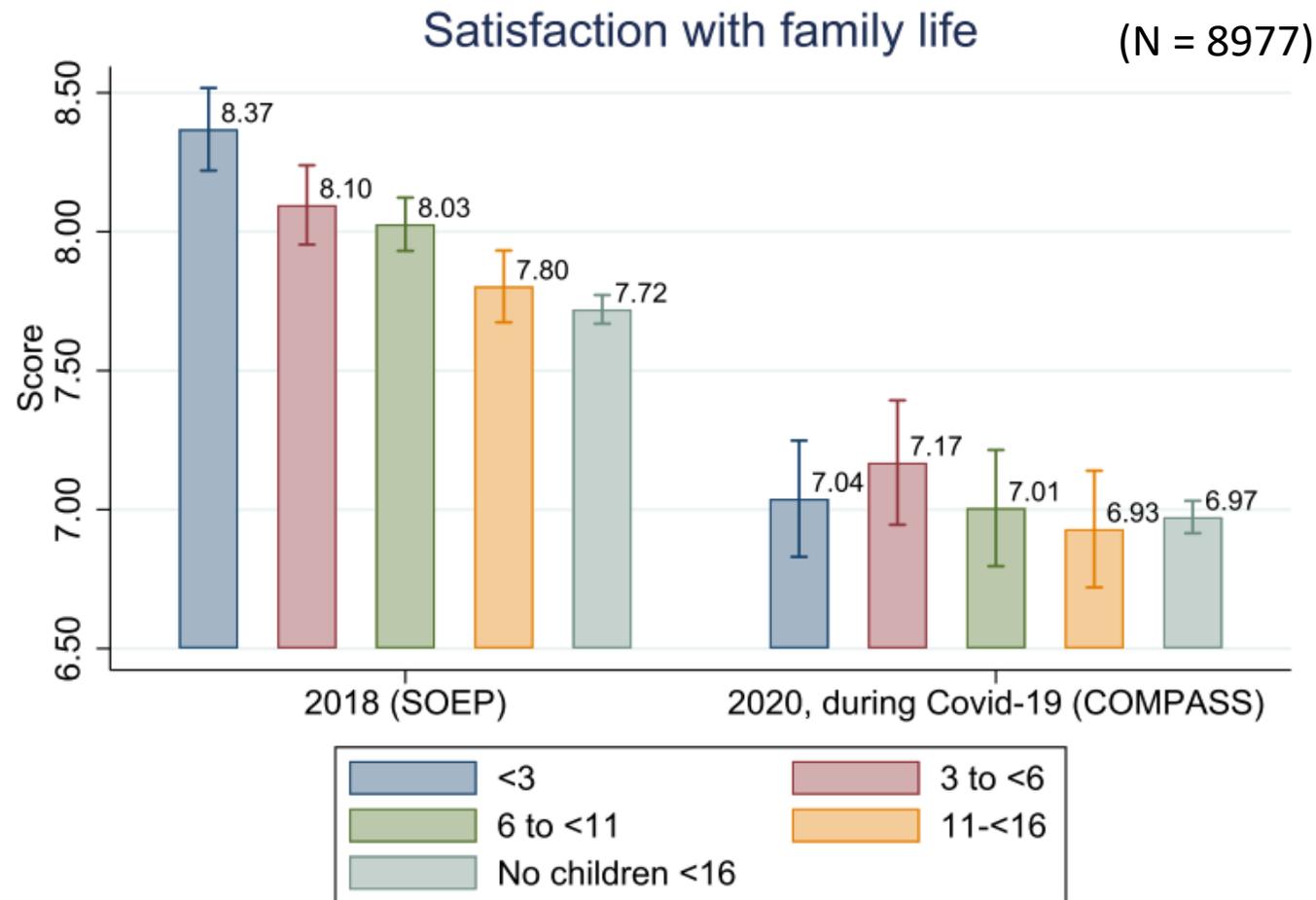
Indonesia

# Negative effects on parents

- Germany – Among parents, lower levels of satisfaction with life in general, with family life, and especially with child care. (Heubener et al, 2020)
- USA - Daily negative mood of parent increased significantly since the start of the crisis; sleep quality dropped (Gassman-Pines et al, 2020)
- Italy - Parents who reported more difficulties in dealing with quarantine show more stress. (Spinelli et al., 2020)
- Canada - Caregiver depression, unmet childcare needs, and relationship distress predicted lower-quality parenting. (Roos et al., 2020)
- Indonesia – Foreign student who is a parent experienced difficulties managing academic time and activities, worries about family conditions back home and financial needs (Fridani et al., 2020).



Heubener, M., Waights, S., Spiess, C.K., Siegel, N.A., Wagner, G.G. 2020. “Parental Well-Being in Times of Covid-19 in Germany.” *Review of Economics of the Household*, 19(1), Fig 10, p. 37.



Heubener, M., Waights, S., Spiess, C.K., Siegel, N.A., Wagner, G.G. 2020. “Parental Well-Being in Times of Covid-19 in Germany.” *Review of Economics of the Household*, 19(1), Fig 5, p. 30..

# Bibliography – parental well-being

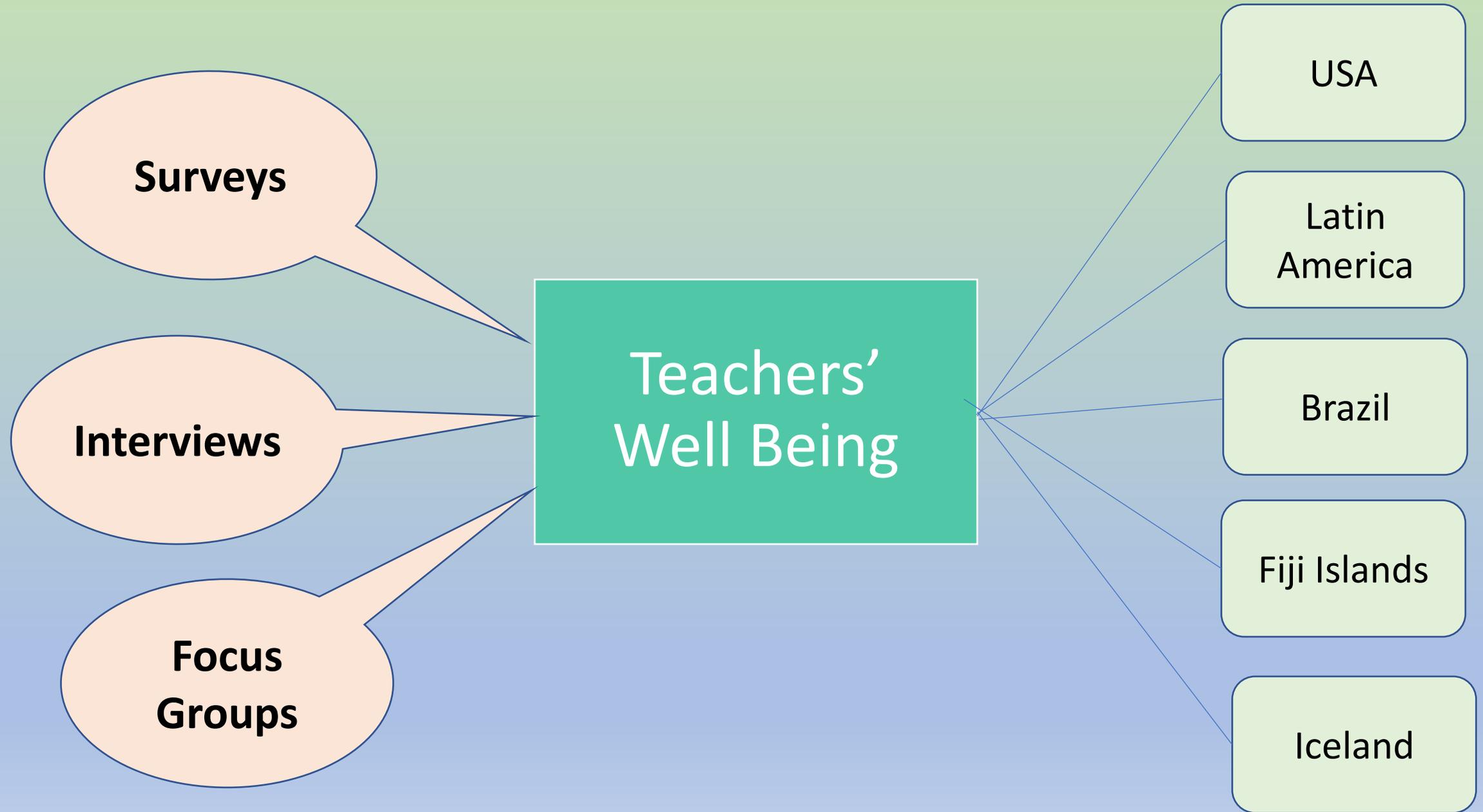
Fridani, Lara, Ulfa Elfiah, Selfi Handayani, and Aschawir Ali. 2020. “Thought, Attitude and Action: The Struggle of an International Phd Student-Mother during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Australia.” *Journal of International Students* 10 (Special Issue 3): 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v10iS3.3200>.

Gassman-Pines, Anna, Elizabeth Oltmans Ananat, and John Fitz-Henley II. 2020. “COVID-19 and Parent-Child Psychological Well-Being.” *Pediatrics* 146 (4): 1–9. <http://10.0.6.6/peds.2020-007294>.

Heubener, M., Waights, S., Spiess, C.K., Siegel, N.A., Wagner, G.G. 2020. “Parental Well-Being in Times of Covid-19 in Germany.” *Review of Economics of the Household*, 19(1), 91-122.

Roos, Leslie E, Marlee Salisbury, Lara Penner-goeke, Emily E Cameron, Jennifer L P Protudjer, Ryan Giuliano, and Tracie O Afifi. 2020. “Supporting Families to Protect Child Health: Parenting Quality and Household Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic Short.”

Spinelli, Maria, Francesca Lionetti, Massimiliano Pastore, and Mirco Fasolo. 2020. “Parents’ Stress and Children’s Psychological Problems in Families Facing the COVID-19 Outbreak in Italy.” *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (January): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01713>.



# Concerns of teachers – conflicts of caring

- Worries about their personal lives and their professional lives (Fiji Islands)
- Worries about becoming infected and then infecting their own families (Iceland);  
Worries about reopening of the schools before a vaccination is available (Brazil)
- Concern over the mental health of the children and their families, concern over food security (US, Latin America)
- Professional concerns about their ability to deliver online learning
  - Unavailability of digital tools and internet services both for themselves and their students (Brazil, Latin America, US)
  - Inability of caregivers to help with the online learning (Latin American, US)
  - Lack of professional development and training in digital technologies (Latin American, US, Brazil, Iceland)
  - Inappropriateness of online teaching for young children (Latin American, US)
- Feelings of a lack of appreciation and understanding of their working conditions (Iceland)

# Bibliography – teacher well-being

Atilas, Julia T, Mayra Almodóvar, Aleida Chavarría Vargas, Maria J A Dias, and Irma M Zúñiga León. 2021. “International Responses to COVID-19: Challenges Faced by Early Childhood Professionals.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 66–78.

Dayal, Hem Chand, and Lavinia Tiko. 2020. “When Are We Going to Have the Real School? A Case Study of Early Childhood Education and Care Teachers’ Experiences Surrounding Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* 45 (4): 336–47.

Dýrfjörd, Kristín, and Anna Elísa Hreidrasdóttir. 2020. “Keeping Preschools Open during Covid-19: The Employees’ Perspective.” *Sodobna Pedagogika/Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies* 71 (4): 206–22.

Malta Campos, Maria, and Lívia Fraga Vieira. 2021. “COVID-19 and Early Childhood in Brazil: Impacts on Children’s Well-Being, Education and Care.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 125–40.

**Teacher  
and  
parent  
surveys**

**Play and  
learning**

USA

Ireland

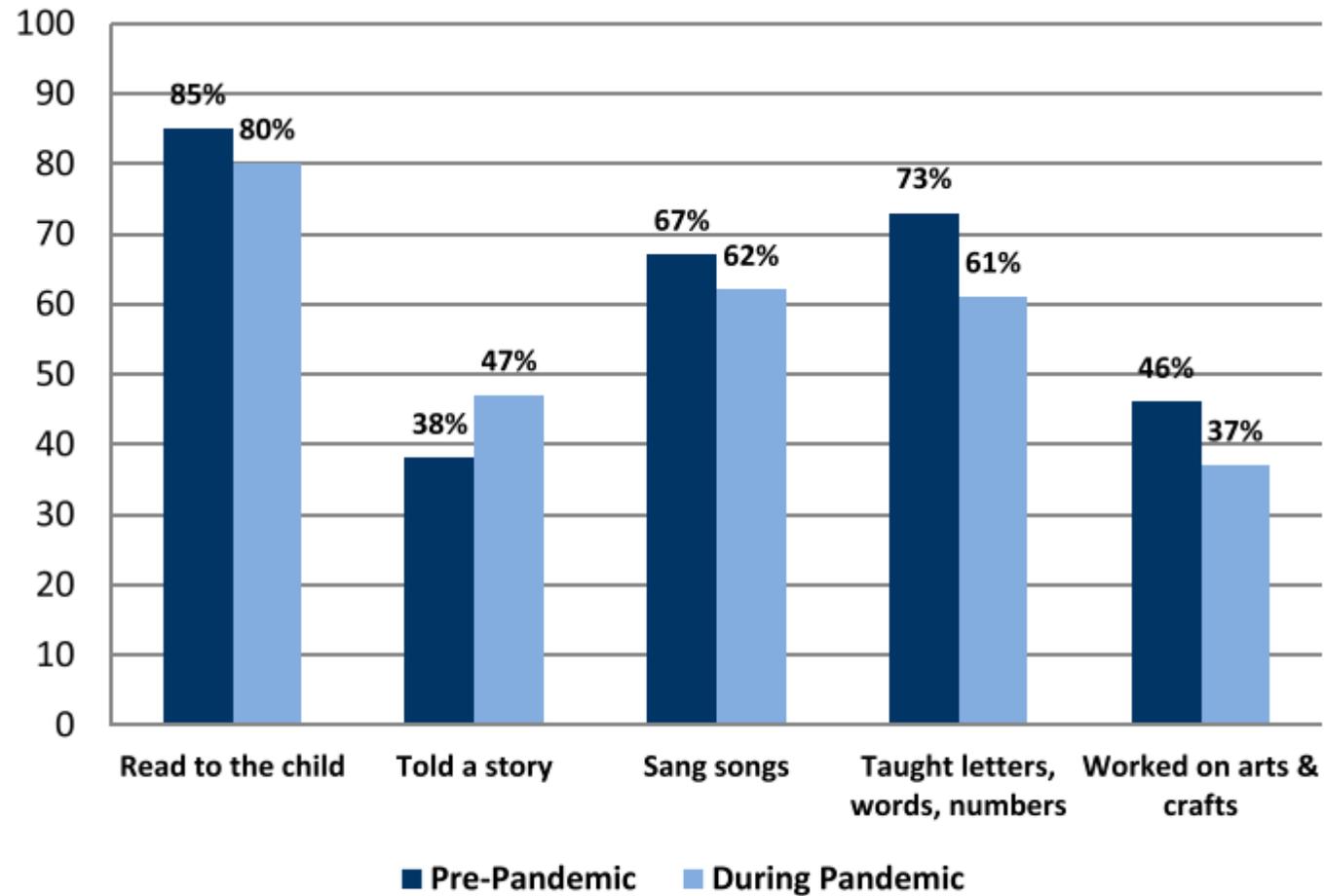
# Play and the shutdown

- Play is considered a primary mediator for stress and a buffer for emotionally trying times among young children (Elkind, 1981; Chatterjee 2018)
- Irish teachers encouraged parents to play with their children as a primary strategy to support social and emotional development.

They expressed concern and uncertainty about play upon return to school because of Covid regulations. (O'Keeffe and McNally, 2021)

- Decline in parent-child activities at home (Barnett et al., 2021)

# Parent-child activities before and during pandemic



**Figure 2.** Percentage of parents that reported engaging in a child activity three or more times per week Pre-Pandemic (2019 NHES) and during Pandemic (NIEER). Sources: Cui, J., and Natzke, L. (2020); Barnett, W.S., Jung, K., and Nores, M. (2020, August).

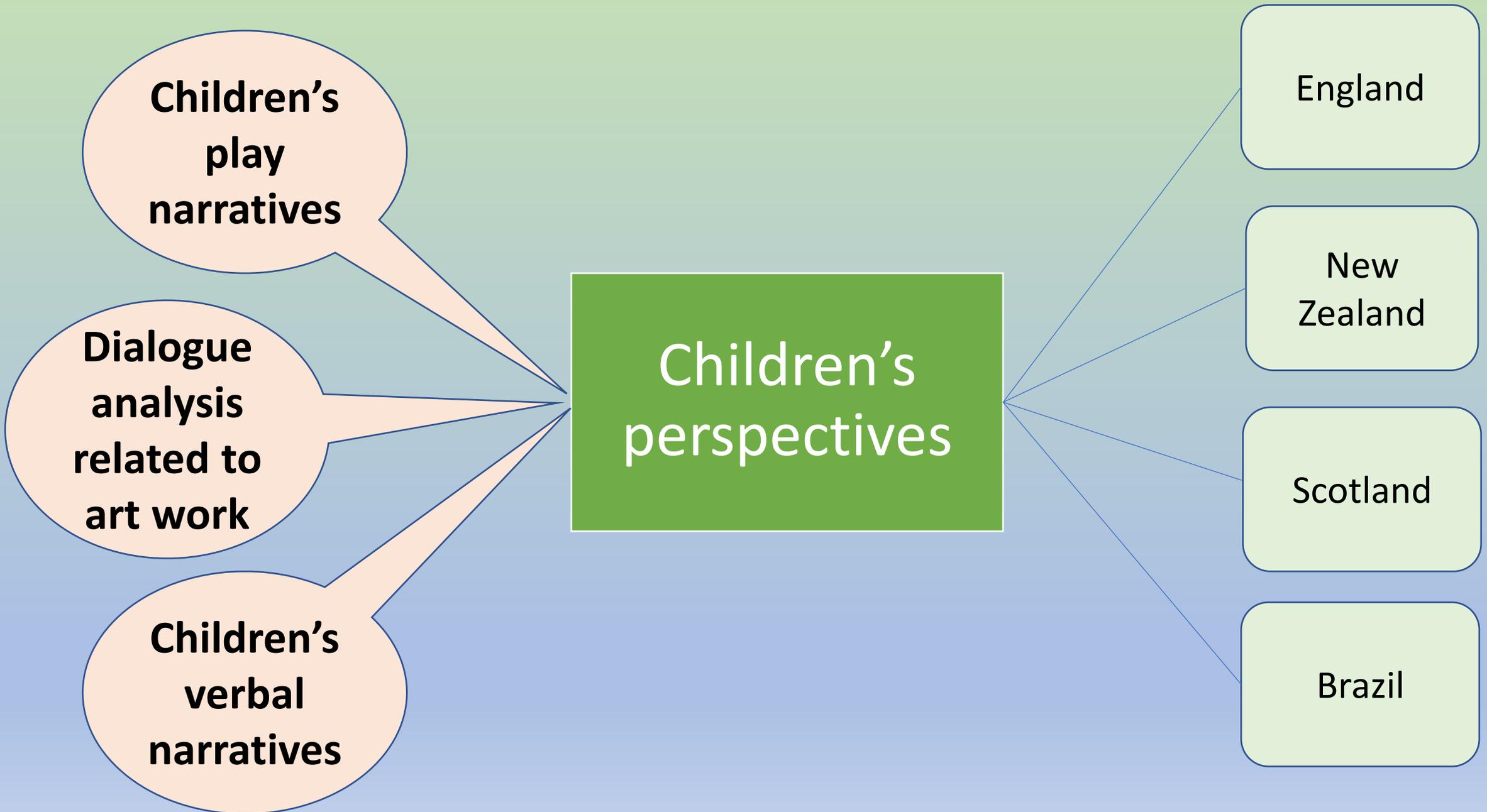
# Bibliography – play and learning

Barnett, W. Steven, Rolf Grafwallner, and Georgenne G. Weisenfeld. 2021. “Corona Pandemic in the United States Shapes New Normal for Young Children and Their Families.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 109–24.

Chatterjee, Sudeshna. 2018. “Children’s Coping, Adaptation and Resilience Through Play in Situations of Crisis.” *Children, Youth and Environments* 28 (2): 119–145.

Elkind, David. 1981. *The Hurried Child. Growing up Too Fast Too Soon*. Boston, MA: De Capo.

O’Keeffe, Christina, and Sinead McNally. 2021. “‘Uncharted Territory’: Teachers’ Perspectives on Play in Early Childhood Classrooms in Ireland during the Pandemic.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 79–95.



# The child's voice and Covid

- Children exhibited resilience in transitioning between lockdown at home and return to the nursery. In all three countries they are expressing a desire to:
  - Regain their daily life and routines
  - Be with their friends
  - Have extended time to play
  - Be outdoors
  - Have authentic information (Pascal and Bertram, 2021)
- Children's narratives about the pandemic changed over time
  - June – July 2020: Worry about the disease, knowledge about hygiene measures, and missing school and friends
  - August - October, 2020: Concern about obtaining vaccination, relevant deprivations: impatience to go outdoors, friends, school activities, physical touch with friends (Malta Campos and Livia Fraga, 2021)

# Play narratives reflect Covid experiences:

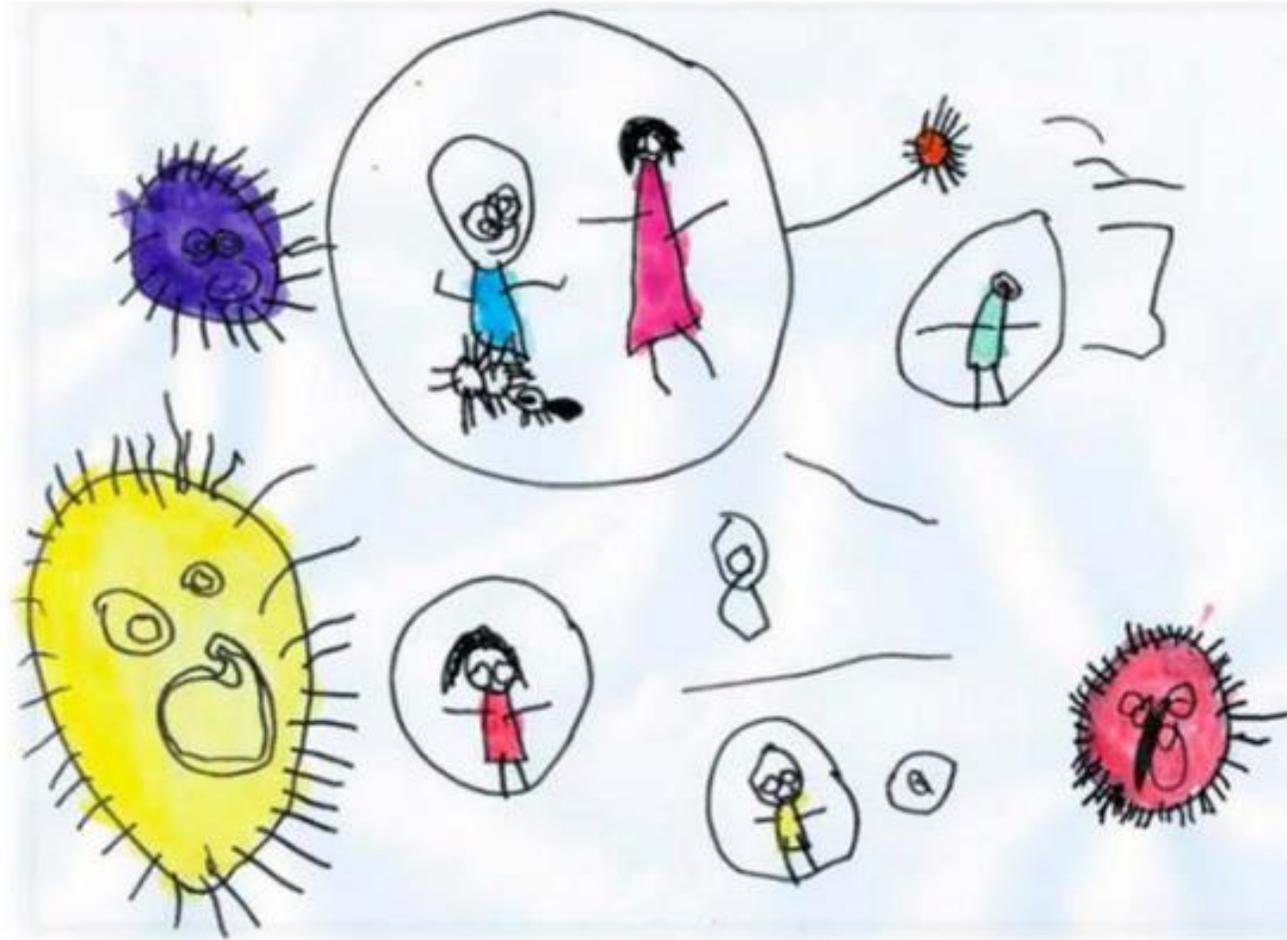
## Group story

A small group of children in one nursery are repeatedly playing what they call the 'death game'. One child role plays the mum who coughs, and then falls down. The other children then carry out various rituals e.g. bringing blankets, pillows, drinks and then, after some time, the 'mum' dies. If a practitioner comes near the children while they are playing this game the children run away but then repeat the play later. They seem to need to conduct this play away from adults. The practitioner wonders why they don't want to play this game in 'public'—do they feel it is a taboo subject and should they get involved in the play and support it OR is it that it is a private sharing experience with their peers and should they respect this? (Pascal and Bertram, 2021)

# Children's working theories

- Children's working theories about the virus emerged through their drawings and art work, as they described their creations.
- Children working theories gained complexity over time.
- Children developed theories about the virus, their protection, and the dictates of the state.

(Kahuroa et al., 2021)



“If we stayed with our own bubble these viruses couldn’t hurt us. Viruses looked so happy because they made people sick. They were spiky and naughty. They were outside of our houses and waited for us to go outside so they could hurt us.”  
(Caleb, New Zealand)

# Bibliography – children’s perspectives

Kahuroa, Raella, Linda Mitchell, Olivia Ng, and Terina Johns. 2021. “Children’s Working Theories about Covid-19 in Aotearoa New Zealand.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 6–20.

Malta Campos, Maria, and Lívia Fraga Vieira. 2021. “COVID-19 and Early Childhood in Brazil: Impacts on Children’s Well-Being, Education and Care.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 125–40.

Pascal, Chris, and Tony Bertram. 2021. “What Do Young Children Have to Say? Recognising Their Voices, Wisdom, Agency and Need for Companionship during the COVID Pandemic.” *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 29 (1): 21–34.

# ECEC stakeholders and Covid

- Profound ways in which children, parents, families, and teachers have been affected.
  - Resilience and agency in each group.
  - Caring and the cared for.
  - Who are our clients?
  - What would an ecological approach to research on this topic look like?
- 

Children's  
Well Being

Parental  
Well Being

Teachers' Well Being

Play and learning

Children's  
perspectives

On-line learning  
and curriculum

Policy

Program  
responses

Teacher  
education

Special needs  
children

תודה על ההקשבה!

ד"ר דוד ברודי

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