RECONCEPTUALIZING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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- Resource depletion, solid waste disposal problems, loss of biodiversity, climate change, unequal access to resources, colonialist legacies

- The effect of human activity on a geological scale (Anthropocene)
PARADOXES TO CONFRONT

• humans are both responsible for, and mortally vulnerable to, the life-threatening biospheric changes

• we arrived here by thinking that we can endlessly intervene to ‘improve on nature’, always find new techno-fixes to repair the messes we have created, and/or use up the earth’s resources without suffering the consequences
• Just as 19th-century industrialization and 20th-century urban change gave birth to new forms of inquiry, the environmental challenges we face require novel questions, practices, methodologies that enhance our early childhood lexicon.
• challenges to the structures and habits of early childhood education and its guiding concepts

• opportunities for experimental research and praxis in early childhood education
• Child-decentring
• Focusing on entanglements, interdependencies
- Re-situating non-humans within ethical domains
• What early childhood education practices are adequate to this new epoch?

• What kind of political engagements are needed?
The **Common World Childhoods Research Collective** is an interdisciplinary network of researchers concerned with children’s relations with the more-than-human world. Members work across the fields of childhood studies, early childhood education, children’s geographies, environmental education, and Indigenous and environmental humanities.

We approach children’s lives as situated and embedded in ‘**common worlds**’ (Latour, 2004). The notion of common worlds is an inclusive, more than human notion. It helps us to avoid the divisive distinction that is often drawn between human societies and natural environments. By re-situating children’s lives within indivisible common worlds, our research focuses upon the ways in which their past, present and future lives are entangled with those of other beings, non-living entities, technologies, elements, discourses, forces, landforms … In particular, our common worlds research follows the themes of children’s relations with other species, with the material world and with place.
Multispecies relations in early childhood education

in a time of extinction
Material relations in early childhood education in a time of waste challenges
Weathering relations in early childhood in a time of climate change
Experimentations in collaboration with early childhood educators
How do we decentre the human, shifting our gaze to how "objects, bodies and spaces do crucial but often unnoticed performative work as vital materialities within the classroom" (Taylor, 2013)
“Everywhere there is agency . . . the universe is filled with agency”.

Barad (2007) writes, “the attribution and exclusion of agency—like the attributions and exclusions in the construction of the human—are a political issue”
In our work with children, we are learning to reimagine how to live with and in environmentally challenged colonized spaces.