(Re)marking heteronormativity: Resisting practices in early childhood education contexts

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Children: A nation’s capital. Investing in our children

• Capital: n. wealth owned by a person or organization or invested, lent or borrowed.
• Invest: v. devote (one’s time or energy) to an undertaking with the expectation of a worthwhile result; endow someone or something with (a particular quality or attribute).

Heteronormativity: What kind of investment is this?

• It is an investment in constituting ‘the other’.
• It is an investment in discrimination and limiting discourses.
• It is an investment in unfairness, inequity and disrespect.
• It is an investment in silence.
Investing in heteronormativity: Investing in silence

- Sexualities issues are silenced through dominant discourses despite awareness of alternative discourses that enable access to notions of diverse sexualities and family forms.
- How does a continued investment in silence lead to or diminish possibilities for high quality teaching and learning in early childhood education?

Dominant discourses assisting investments in silence

- Discourses of the nuclear family.
- Discourses of sexualities as dangerous and risky.
- Discourses of childhood innocence and developmentalism.

Investing in silence: Discourses of the nuclear family

- "Hullo Mrs Duck!"
- "Girls don’t kiss each other!"
Investing in silence: Discourses of sexualities as dangerous and risky

• “If we talk about it, won’t normal parents be scared their children will grow up to be like that?”
• Opening cans of worms and boundary crossing.

Investing in silence: Discourses of childhood innocence and developmentalism

• Rona and Pat discuss sexualities, parents and children’s development.
• “Sexuality to me is an adult thing…and so I couldn’t see it, you know, like as a focus, as something that yeah would come through.”

The consequences of silence: ‘Masking possibilities’

• Silence about sexualities issues masks possibilities for who and how teacher educators, teachers, children and families can be.
• Silence masks possibilities in terms of how we might work effectively together.
• Silence also masks possibilities for understanding the world beyond the constraints of heteronormativity.

Alternative investments: What might they look like and why might they be useful?

- Investments in recognition.
- Investments in social justice.
- Investments in confronting prejudice, homophobia and discrimination.

Forging ahead: Investing in a socially just future

- Talk
- Think
- Evaluate
- Read
- Gather
- Connect

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