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**Emotional labour and the democratic ECEC**

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Technocratic accountability, which is impacting on ECEC practices in England, is based on Cartesian dualist thinking where the givernment favors evidence based knowledge to work with children. As a result the emotional aspect of the nursery work and emotional labour has become increasingly complex and unrecognised. In this paper we argue that, beside the evidence based practice, there are more relational, connected, embodied ways to understand what it really means working with young children. Employing qualitative data from two projects the focus was on emotional labour which is read with postsrtuctulaist and affect theory to reconsider knowledge-making practices in ECEC and challenge existing Cartesian dualisms which seek to separate thinking and doing. Data from the first project sees us analyse small stories from nursery staff highlighting the relationship between government policies and the dominant narratives and discourses. The second project notes entanglements with human and non-human bodies enacted with affect theory which reveals embodied and haptic more-than-human productions of emotional labour generating alternative ways to explore ECEC work. By engaging with these two theoretical and conceptual positions we offer multiple contact zones to consider ECEC professional knowledge(s) and reveal the ways these can shed a different light on professional practice.

Key words: ECEC Professional; emotional labour; postsrucuralism; affect theory; relationality; knowledge-production