

Exploring babies' perspectives of spending time outdoors

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Why?

Within the discipline of early childhood, there is limited research on the outdoor experiences of babies.

The voices of babies are often excluded from research, both in studies regarding the outdoors but also more generally.



What do we know?

Babies spend time outside in a variety of ways (Adams, 2013; Ataol et al., 2022; Dinkel et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2014; Josephidou and Kemp, 2022; Josephidou, Kemp and Durrant, 2021; Kemp and Josephidou, 2023a; Kemp and Josephidou, 2023b; McHenry, 2008; Mygind et al., 2023; Morrissey, Scott and Wishart, 2015; Quinones, 2023; Rheinheimer et al., 2024; Rouse, 2016; Tourula et al., 2010; Williams, 2008; Zhang et al., 2019)

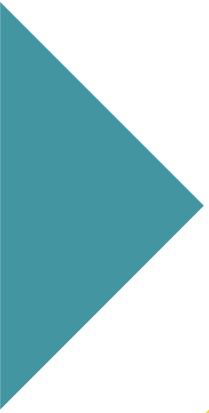
The outdoor environment has an impact on their health (Aguilera et al., 2013; Aripov, Blettner and Gorbunova, 2020; Bulugina et al., 2018; Cruells et al., 2024; Cusack et al., 2018; de Sherbinin, 2008; Deguen et al., 2021; Ferrero et al., 2017; Hajat et al., 2007; Hill et al., 2024; Jayachandran, 2009; Jones, 2019; King et al., 2018; Nielsen et al., 2020; Schinasi et al., 2019)

Some attempts have been made to listen to the voice of the baby (Elwick, 2015; Elwick, Bradley and Sumsion, 2014; Guard, 2023; Impedovo and Tebet, 2021; Orrmalm, 2020; Peters and Kelly, 2015; Salamon, 2015; Morrissey, Scott and Wishart, 2015)

What do I want to find out?

What do babies share about their perspectives of spending time outdoors?

How can babies' experiences of the outdoors be researched?



How?

With a perspective of babies as:

- **tiny humans** (Holt and Philo, 2023; Kemp, Josephidou and Bolshaw, 2025)
- **capable agents** (Holt and Philo, 2023; Sparrman, 2024; Wyness, 2013)
- **rights holders** (UN, 1989; Tebet and Abramowicz, 2019)

Thus, it's necessary to:

- take a **baby-focused approach** (Orrmalm, 2021)
- challenge **"deficit conceptions of babies"** (Kemp, Josephidou and Bolshaw, 2025: 231)
- adopt **participatory research approaches** (Salamon, 2015)
- bear **power-imbalances** in mind (Josephidou and Bolshaw, 2026)
- **acknowledge the difficulties of researching babies' perspectives** (Elwick, Bradley and Sumsion, 2012)

How?

- using **sensory ethnography** (Pink, 2015) as a way of experiencing “direct and sustained contact of [participants’] daily lives... watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions...” (O’Reilly, 2005: 3)
 - undertaking **participant observations** (Papatheodorou, Luff and Gill, 2011) potentially written up as **In-the-Picture observations** (Rix and Parry, 2017)
 - practicing **ethical symmetry** (Christensen and Prout, 2002; Salamon, 2015)
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Any questions?

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