What should be the relationship between early childhood and compulsory education? What can they learn from one another and by working together?

The rapid expansion of early childhood education and care means that most children in affluent countries now have several years at pre-school before compulsory education. This raises an important question about the relationship between the two. Whilst it’s widely assumed that the former should prepare children for the latter, there are alternatives. This book contests the ‘readying for school’ relationship as neither self-evident nor unproblematic; and explores some alternative relationships, including a strong and equal partnership and the vision of a meeting place.

In this ground-breaking book, Professor Peter Moss discusses the issue with leading early childhood figures - from Belgium, France, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United States - who bring very different perspectives to this contentious relationship. The book starts with an extended essay by Peter Moss, to which the other contributors are invited to respond critically, as well as offering their own thinking about the relationship between early childhood and compulsory education, both their current understandings and suggestions on future directions.

Students, researchers and academics in the field of early childhood education will find this an insightful and timely text. But so too will their peers in compulsory education, since the book time and again raises searching questions about pedagogical purpose and practice in this sector.

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