

Authors: Mehri Zamanbin (Utrecht University), Mara A. Yerkes (Utrecht University), Jana Javornik (University of Leeds).

Presentation: Mehri Zamanbin (Utrecht University)

Keywords: childcare policy, disability, comparative analysis, capability approach

Title: Resources for whom? A comparative study of childcare policies for parents of disabled children in the UK and the Netherlands.

Previous studies illustrate that affordable, good quality childcare creates opportunities for many parents to better reconcile work and care (Yerkes et al. 2018) or reduce family care to enable meaningful contributions to society (Javornik and Ingold 2015). However, these studies often overlook parents of disabled children. Our limited understanding of the availability of affordable, good quality childcare for parents of disabled children is problematic. Parents of disabled children spend a greater amount of time on caregiving, which exceeds that of parents of typically developing children. Moreover, the availability of childcare (in particular good quality childcare) is a phenomenon with which many working parents struggle (Brown and Clark 2017). This paper contributes to the rich cross-national childcare policy literature by analyzing the provision and design of childcare services for parents of disabled children in the UK and the Netherlands. Building on emerging research on capabilities in work-family policy (e.g. Hobson 2013, Robeyns 2017 and Yerkes 2018), this paper seeks to analyze the extent to which childcare services in these countries provide parents with resources to live the life they have reason to value. This may include reconciling work and care, but could also mean reconciling care with other valued activities such as education. Broadening childcare policy analysis to include the design of both childcare and health care services aimed at the care of disabled children improves our understanding of childcare services in cross-national perspective.