

Welcome to the new Critical Issues section

Beth Blue Swadener

We are excited to launch a new section to the *International Critical Policy Studies* journal with this issue. The Critical Issues section features shorter essays addressing pressing issues facing the early childhood field as well as children, families, and communities locally and globally. The featured essays in this issue represent discussions of US policies which are currently restricting educational practices and curriculum dealing with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), banning books, and putting preschool through university educators' jobs on the line if they teach banned topics. While being fought in the courts, such policies are deeply damaging and are likely difficult to imagine for many readers outside the US.

The first essay, by Joy Anderson, provides context for these Executive Orders and other state and national policies restricting and banning anti-oppressive education. As a classroom teacher, teacher educator, and education policy scholar, she examines policies in five of the states in which she has lived and worked. The second essay, by Xiaohan Zhu, uses a personal narrative from the standpoint of a career as an early childhood faculty member and new mother, to reflect on impacts of the anti-DEI laws in Texas and their direct threats to research and teaching. Taken together, these essays convey the national and local impacts of the rise in authoritarian, Nativist, and restrictive education policies of Trump's second term.

We welcome submissions for future issues (summer and fall this year and beyond) which address a wide range of critical issues and have been fortunate to receive a number of strong submissions. Submissions should not exceed 2500 words and limit references, and ideally be written in first person. Please send to: beth.swadener@asu.edu or upload to: <https://iccpsonlinejournal.org/index.php/childhoods/submission/wizard>