Children's Rights: Towards Social Justice

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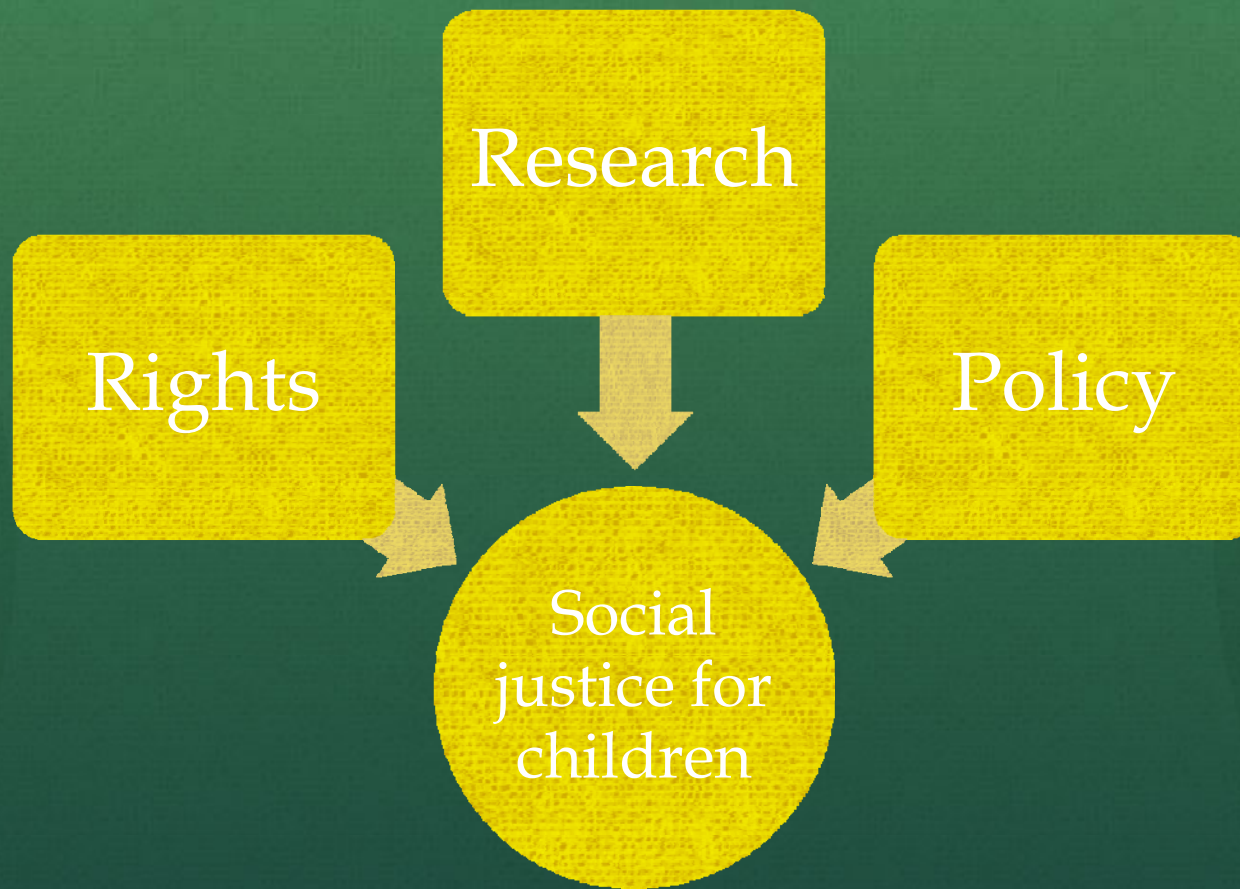
My recent work

- Smith, A.B. (2016). *Children's Rights: Towards Social Justice.* New York, USA: Momentum Press.

- Smith, A.B. (Editor) (2015). *Enhancing children's rights: connecting research, policy and practice.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

Social Justice and Children's Rights

- Social justice – everybody has a fair chance and the dignity of every human being, including children, is upheld.

- Rights – claims or entitlements justifiable on moral or legal grounds, to be provided with necessities, to be protected from harm, and to participate in society and act in a certain way.

- Children deserve dignity, respect and to participate in their culture and society

- Recognizing their rights does <u>not</u> mean encouraging them to defy adult authority.

- If an individual has rights s/he recognizes others have them too.

Strengthening Connections

Children's Rights Frameworks

- Hugely comprehensive

- UCRC most widely ratified international treaty

- All rights are holistic and interconnected

- Rights are positive aspirational goals – they don't dwell on vulnerabilities and deficits

- Children perceived as active in their own lives

Wide Range of Applicability

- Prevention of dire suffering:
  - Trafficking
  - Sexual and physical abuse
  - Imprisonment in detention centres

- To children's ordinary everyday contexts
  - Divorced or Separated families (chldren's views to be heard)
  - Housing (warm dry house)
  - Access to quality ECE (not mediocre low quality)
  - Child protection systems (responsive and informative)
  - Children's health care (how do doctors and nurses talk to and inform children?)
  - School (do children have a voice and access to social justice?)

Young children have rights too.

- Denial of children's rights in an ECE centre – (Barraclough & Smith, 1996)

- Recognition of children's rights through *Te Whāriki* (Smith 2015),