



# Instability in Early Childhood Care: Understanding Fluctuations in Exposure and Quality and the Impact of Instability on Child Development

**Professor Michal Perlman**

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**12:30 – 13:45**

**Room 408–410, Meng Wah Complex, HKU**

**Chair: Professor Stephanie Chan**



## **Abstract:**

Recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses reveal weaker than expected associations between exposure to early childhood education and care (ECEC) and child outcomes. Instability in children's exposure to good quality ECEC may explain these weaker than expected associations. In this talk Professor Perlman will discuss heterogeneity in how instability is conceptualized and operationalized (e.g., children attending multiple classrooms/programs simultaneously or across time, staff movement within programs and fluctuations in quality of ECEC children receive across time). Drawing on empirical evidence from papers published by Professor Perlman and her students, she will discuss how these fluctuations are measured through multiple methods and provide evidence of their contributions to child development, including children's mental health and emotional well-being. Bringing together the different ways instability is conceptualized and assessed and how it correlates to the wellbeing of young children is an important step towards improving ECEC experiences for young children and their families. Implications for policy and practice will be discussed.

## **About the speaker:**

Michal Perlman is a Professor in the Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She is the chair of the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the University of Toronto. She studies how early environments are associated with children's wellbeing. She is particularly interested in the quality of interactions that children have with their caregivers both at home and in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings. She has helped develop efficient ways of measuring the quality of interactions between family members and in the ECEC context and is developing interventions to improve the quality of interactions children experience. She also studies how to conceptualize and measure ECEC quality more globally, parents as consumers of ECEC services, associations between ECEC quality and child outcomes and a range of policy questions related to ECEC. More recently Michal and colleagues who co-lead the Equity in Education centre at the University of Toronto have been identifying key skills needs for success in the 21st century and how to teach these skills to young children. Michal has published her work in a variety of peer-reviewed journals and her work has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the McCain Foundation, the Lawson Foundation a range of government counteracts and many others.

