

**Heskia Barad, I. (August, 2019), Empowering preschool teachers through teacher led professional development. Paper will be presented at the 29<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the *European Early Childhood Education Research Association*, Thessaloniki, Greece.**

### **Abstract**

#### **Introduction**

This study evaluates the efficacy of a teacher led professional development course for enhancing preschool teachers' autonomy, sense of empowerment and accountability for their professional development and teaching.

Empowered teachers are professionals who have the power to create curricula, administer their own lessons, and, as a result, have the ability to effectively teach their students. When empowered to direct their own professional development, teachers claim ownership of their work and invest in it accordingly. Engaged, focused, positive teachers have a tremendous impact on student achievement (Desimone, 2011). The study is based on the empowerment approach, which considers empowerment to be a phenomenon that occurs at different levels: individual, organizational and in communities (Zimmerman, 1995).

#### **Paradigm, methodology and methods**

50 preschool teachers' group leaders participated in an 8 session course, and simultaneously, led their own group of preschool teachers, in a self-created curricula course. Self-report feedback data were collected post the 2 courses.

#### **Main finding or discussion**

Results indicate a highly satisfaction mark of the course and a growing sense of autonomy and accountability of teachers toward their professional development.

#### **Implications, practice or policy**

The findings may broaden the understanding of the contribution of self-created teacher led professional development for teachers practice.