**The Subjective Experience of Women Combining the Roles of Motherhood and Early Childhood Educator**

**Abstract**

This article focuses on the need to bring women to the center of the discourse and research on early childhood education. Women who study to be experts in the field of early education take it upon themselves to educate children and help them develop, based on a belief in the education system; at the same time, these women were raised in a culture that sanctifies motherhood. During their education and professional training, they encounter theories emphasizing the importance of a stable and secure relationship with one’s own children. The current study examines the relationship between the two spheres of identity among mothers working in early childhood education, and how their professional role affects their maternal functioning. Towards that end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty-two early childhood educators who are also mothers. The findings indicate that the participants’ role as mothers is influenced by their professional role in the education system, and that this fact presents challenges to them in the private sphere. Following statements made by the interviewees, the “myth of convenient hours” is proposed as an accurate description of the jobs filled by female early childhood educators. Additionally, the concept of “maternal feelings” is replaced with “tender feelings” towards children in the education system.

**Keywords**: Early education, motherhood, maternal feelings, tender feelings, convenient work hours.