

Foreword

The third Nordic ECEC conference *Investments in children and ECEC, Inclusion for all children and each child – in view of special needs and How can long term development be supported by research?* was held in Oslo 11-12 November 2013. About 80 policy makers and researchers from the Nordic countries participated actively in presentations and workshops on the three conference themes: 1) Investments in children and ECEC, 2) Inclusion for all children and each child – in view of special needs and 3) How can long term development be supported by research?

A meeting place

There are not too many natural meeting points neither for ECEC researchers from different fields, disciplines, traditions and countries nor for researchers and policy makers. In the conferences in 2009 and 2011 many “who should have known each other already” met and made contact. Hopefully this was the case in the 2013 conference too. An important goal for all the conferences has been to gather researchers from different disciplines in order to strengthen multidisciplinary in ECEC research in a Nordic context.

Raising questions and sharing experiences

ECEC research has developed since the first conference in 2009. The volume of ECEC research has increased and we see ECEC research projects in an increasing number of disciplines. In the presentations and in the following workshops questions were raised about how research on ECEC can and should be used by society. We hope the conference contributed to shared experiences and knowledge about policy making and research across and within the Nordic countries. This would be important contributions to a long-term and knowledge-based development of ECEC and society.



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About the presenters

■ Kerry McCuaig

*Early Childhood Development
Foundation*

Kerry McCuaig is the Atkinson Charitable Foundation's Fellow in Early Childhood Policy, working with the Atkinson Centre at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. She is co-author of Early Years Study 3, Making Decisions,



■ **Jukka Mäkelä**

Jukka Mäkelä

Key note

Early childhood development as economic development

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Early childhood development is economic development with a very high return. A decade ago this statement would have been dismissed. Spending on programs for young children was conceived as consumption, an immediate cost to the economy. An expanding research

base refutes this claim and has swelled the ranks of economists,

biologists, health economists and financial economists.

Programs that track children's development and economic effects; and



The Chicago and Abecedarian studies included samples of children who attended both preschool and

Canadian cost-benefit analyses

Canada does not have comparable random control studies. Canadian studies have also differed from the American big three by including the immediate reimbursements produced from the increased workforce participation of mothers and the mid-term repayments from early childhood programs that can be predicted for children, such as reduced need for special education.

In 1998, University of Toronto researchers calculated the impact of providing publicly funded educational child care for all children aged 2–5 years.⁶ The net cost of \$5.2 billion annually (1998 CDN dollars) was premised on an overall parental contribution of 20 percent, with individual fees scaled to income. The new system would create 170,000 new jobs, but these would replace 250,000 unregulated child minders, for a net employment loss. New educator jobs were assessed at an average wage and benefit level of \$36,000 annually, a significant improvement on remuneration levels at that time.

The authors determined the benefits at \$10.6 billion. About \$4.3 billion was foreseen for children in improved school readiness, graduation levels and future earnings. The majority, and the most immediate, dividends (\$6.24 billion) came from mothers. Affordable, available child care would allow women to work, to shorten their stay out of the labour market following the birth of their children and would permit them to move from part-time to full-time work. This



Why did younger children receive no lasting benefits from the interventions, while older children did? One explanation is that the modest project investment per child did not provide enough intensity for younger children.⁸ Program spending in the older children's sites was on top of investments already made in every child via the school system. Schools offered a universal platform so that enriched supports reached

FIVE CANADIAN COST-BENEFIT ANALYSES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING

Author	Year	Program	Costs	Benefits
Chen, S. & G. F. (2011) "The Economic Benefits of Early Childhood Education in Quebec" <i>Journal of Human Capital</i>	2011	Examined benefit of enhanced maternal employment due to low cost child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quebec gains \$1.5B in increased tax Pays \$340M less in social benefits Increased GDP by +1.7% 	1:1.05 for Quebec government 1:0.44 for Canadian government
Chen, S. & G. F. (2010) "The Economic Benefits of Early Childhood Education in Quebec" <i>Journal of Human Capital</i>	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$580,000 per site for 5-years to enrich programming benefits benefits 	B	



As of 2008, more than 60 percent of Quebec children ages 1–4 years had access to \$7-a-day, state-subsidized child care. By comparison, in other provinces, only 18 percent of children in this age group were in a licensed care. Quebec’s program expansion has been rapid since its inception, reaching 220,000 spaces. Demand still outstrips supply, with full coverage predicted for 2014.

Quebec parents like their options. A 2009 survey found that 92 percent of children’s centre users said the centre was their first preference for child care.¹³ In addition, 66 percent of parents with other child care arrangements said they would prefer using a children’s centre.¹⁴

Fortin’s analysis found that in 2008, 70,000 more Quebec women were at work and their presence could be attributed to low cost child care. The majority of new labour entrants did not have post-secondary credentials therefore their earnings were modest. The availability and the low cost of care removed a prime barrier to their working.

This represented a 3.8 percent boost in women’s employment, and a 1.8 percent increase in total provincial employment. Adjusting for hours of work and

Wisely investing in early childhood

These studies demonstrate the cost effectiveness of organizing early childhood programs so they stimulate children's early development as they allow parents to work. When expanding access to early childhood programming, most Anglo-American jurisdictions persist in maintaining the historic legislative and funding schism between public education programs,



Conference presentations

Gu nny Björk Eydal:

Investments in childcare policies in the Nordic countries - is there a Nordic model?

Comprehensive childcare policies are one of the main characteristics of the Scandinavian or Nordic welfare model (e.g. Hatland & Bradshaw 2006, Eydal and Gíslason, 2013; Eydal and Rostgaard, 2011). The term childcare policies applies to support provided to parents caring for young children, regardless if the support refers to paid parental leave, cash grants for care or services (Rostgaard & Fridberg, 1998). Although each Nordic country has developed extensive childcare policies, their approaches differ and the aim of this presentation is to compare the childcare policies of the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The presentation is based on previous publications by the author and Gíslason and Rostgaard (please see further the ref. list).

The aim of the childcare policies is to provide support and services to ensure children's best interest (as discussed in length in other presentations) and enhance gender equality and to provide both parents with opportunities to participate in the labour market and care for their children.

Parental Leave

The Nordic countries, with the exception of Iceland, developed quite extensive schemes of paid parental leave during the immediate post-war period and according to Gauthier (1996), they emerged as leaders among the OECD countries in this regard. Furthermore, all the Nordic countries extended maternity leave schemes to include parental leave in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Despite these entitlements of both parents the mothers used the joint rights and in the 1990s all the Nordic countries established the independent rights of fathers to paternity leaves in order to increase father's participation of parental leaves. Norway was the first country in 1993 to implement a fathers quota, right to one month use-or-loose right to paid leave but the other countries have gradually also implemented such entitlements with the exception of Denmark.



compared to 80% in Iceland and Norway and only 71% in Sweden. The figures for the age group 3-5 years are

Jan Kampmann:

Can we afford not to invest in the early childhood education sector?

My approach will not be an argument proving the immediate or long term economic benefits of further developing the early childhood education services, but more some considerations concerning the national general benefits of a continuous qualifying of the day care sector. A central argument will be, that high quality institutions are important and necessary for strengthening children's constitution of identity, social competences and a general ability to handle how to be a child and a human being in a modern world with expectations regarding the children's ability to self-government and being a part of a democratic community at the same time. Partly, this will be of enormous importance for children's preparation for entering the school system, and partly it will be of vital importance regarding strengthening the general inclusion of children into what in the Nordic countries more and more seems to be a "normal childhood". While the day care systems or early childhood education centers in the Nordic countries until fairly recently was seen as necessary for freeing parents to enter the labor market, today the primary challenge for the day care sector is not only to provide care for the children, while their parents are at work, but to be a central actor in securing an optimal socialization of children into society. This change has also consequences for our way of looking at the costs and benefits when evaluating the whole sector.



Arna H Ólafsdóttir, ur Jónsdóttir:

Effects of economic crisis on schools with reference to Iceland: How can early childhood education be protected?

Introduction

Study on the effects of the economic collapse 2008 and onward on schools and education in Iceland was carried out by the *Journal of Educational Research* at the School of Education, University of Iceland. The data gathering took place 2011 to 2013. Data was gathered in three municipalities at all school levels. The first municipality was in an agricultural area, the second one in fishing and service area, and the third one was the capital city. In this article findings from the first two municipalities will be introduced. When analysing the data a definition of crisis within education from Pepper, London, Dishman and Lewis (2012) is used where a school crisis is seen as “an event or a series of events that threaten a school’s core values or foundational practices” (p. 6). Further, based on the experience from Iceland, it will be discussed how early childhood education can be protected in times of economic crisis and cut-downs and what seem to be the main concerns.

The economic collapse in 2008

As is well known in the international context since the Icelandic bank system collapsed in 2008, there has been a deep financial crisis in Iceland and therefore the economic circumstances of many families and children have changed dramatically in recent years. Before the collapse there was a huge economic expansion, which has been called by some the ‘greediness urge’ (Óskarsdóttir, 2009). During that period ‘modern Vikings’, mainly male, were expanding their activities, buying banks and firms throughout the world, bringing about consequences that the Icelandic public is now paying for.



In the service and fishing community (municipality 2) the data collection was as follows:

Municipality 1	Number of schools	Data collection: Interviews Focus group interview
Authorities		Superintendent
Pre-schools	1	Head teacher, group of teachers and other staff, group of parents
Basic school	1	Same plus assistant head teacher, group of other staff, group of students
Upper secondary school (run by the state)	1	Head teacher, group of teachers, group of students

Main findings: The crisis, detected, prevented and prepared for

When analysing the data according to Smith and Riley's (2012) model of how crisis should be managed in organisations we first turn the attention to how the schools have detected, prevented and prepared themselves for the crisis.

The crisis in municipality 1 was partly foreseen in 2006, which made the municipality and the schools better prepared for cut-downs. The economy in the municipality had been sliding some years before the collapse, factories had been closed down and families had moved away resulting in a lower number of students. Even the local bank collapsed before the national crash. This situation made the crisis a bit softer because the schools had already gone through some cut-downs, they were prepared but simultaneously the crisis was more long-term.

In municipality 2, the crash and the crisis in the wake came more as a surprise with fewer former warnings than in municipality 1. This step was thus more unpredictable and short termed.

Municipality 1: The crisis resolved

The pre-school teachers were already very tired of cut-downs since 2006. What they thought was the worst action was the reduction equivalent to three whole positions of staff, among them the middle managers, and the cut-downs of the special education, not the least because before the collapse they advertised the pre-school education as having special focus on children with special needs.

The difference compared to the basic school was that the pre-school head teachers and staff was more united in their actions and discussed it more in all levels of the hierarchy. They did not foresee when the cutdowns would stop but said that they could not keep on like this much longer.

	Contain, resolve
Pre-schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of opening hours • Reduction in middle management
The head teachers would have liked to have more influence in the process but the staff group was united and discussed the means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of most positions rather than dismissal of staff • Cut down of overtime, meetings moved into the daily work (2 hours added later because of parents´ protest) • Reduction of substitute positions (the head teacher did more work in the children's groups) • Less energy devoted to curriculum and evaluation activity • Reduced special education support • Cut down of all materials • Cut down of professional development of teachers

Municipality 2: The crisis resolved

In the municipality there had been high unemployment for some years before the crash of the banks and it could be expected that the municipality and the schools had suffered from crisis and cut-downs. The main difference between the municipalities was that in municipality 2 positions of middle management and the

	Contain, resolve
Pre-schools The pre-school head teachers were involved in the process the whole time and made suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of opening hours (closed 16:15) • Increasing in number of children (had been decreased before the collapse) • 10% cut down of the head teachers' wages for three years • Reduction of substitute positions (8,33% to 6%) • Cut down of professional development and of overtime, meetings were moved into the daily work • Position of the pre-school councillor cut down (has now been advertised) • Less money for food • Cut down of finances for new material but it has been restored

Influences of the crisis on Early Childhood Education

In the following table there is a summary of the influences of the crisis in the two municipalities:

Municipality 1	Municipality 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy was that the crisis should not affect the children's education, but although the teachers were not content with the daily work. • They felt they were protecting the basic needs but not working as educators. • They were especially discontent with the restructuring of the special teaching. • Although, they are planning a developmental project. • The parents did not feel the changes so much but were worried about the staff's endurance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy was that the crisis would not affect the children's education, and they were content with the results. • They felt that the crisis and cutdowns had not influenced the children's education. • They were working on a common developmental project in the municipality and needed more time for discussions. • The parents did not complain and admired the leading of the pre-school community and the coherence in the staff group.

Municipality 1 and 2: Recovering, learning

In the following table the learning of the crisis is summed up. The main difference between the municipalities was that in municipality 2 the recovering had already begun and there were more optimism that in municipality 1. The crisis was already more long termed there and the staff was about to lose their patience.

Municipality 1 Recover, learn	Municipality 2 Recover, learn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff agreed to the cut downs for certain period of time, but said they could not do this forever • Head teachers did not expect additional funding in the near future • Different (more) collaboration existed between staff and parents • Tighter collaboration among staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovering had begun • It was more easy to cut down as the situation was good before • More stability in the staff group • Collaboration of pre-school head teachers increased loyalty • People were optimistic, the community more relaxed and the staff thought about positive and enjoyable things

Was there a pre-school crisis?

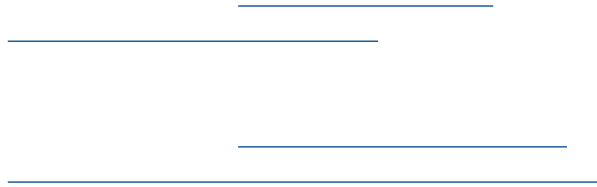
According to Pepper et al., (2010) a school crisis is "an event or a series of events that threaten a school's core values or foundational practices" (2010, p. 6). In can be argued that overall basic functions of schools in Iceland has been protected, especially in the basic schools as it is best protected by law and there the disruptions were minor to the general running and basic values of schools. This has been possible as prior to the crisis Iceland was spending relatively much on pre- and primary education and ranked high among the OECD countries in 2007 (OECD, 2007). In the pre-schools there were more disruption of the daily work but the situation was different in these two municipalities that were studied, as there were signs of pre-school crisis in municipality 1 but not in municipality 2.



How can the early childhood education be protected in times of crisis and cut-downs?

Iceland is the only Nordic country that has been suffering of economic crisis in wake of a bank collapse in recent years although i.e. Finland has gone earlier through similar period. Although, signs of economic rationalization and cut-downs are well known in Nordic and international contexts. If nations are going to protect the education of children and students in the educational system the learning from this research can be put forward in the following elements: The children’s education should be prioritised and protected formally in the society, collaboration of stakeholders is crucial, especially teachers and parents, pre-school head teachers should involve every teacher/staff member into the discussion about means, thus top down strategy should be avoided. It is also a very important action to spare reduction of positions of staff educating the children and cut downs should be organised for defined period so recovering can be seen and felt. Where there is a slow recovery within pre-schools and other institutions in the Icelandic society it is increasing stress and irritation.

In many ways the Icelandic authorities have done well but early childhood education could be put higher in general on the agenda. The short version of solution, not only in times of crisis, but in all times is: Where there is a will, there is a way.



Eva Siljehag:

Pre-school teachers and special educators – a shared democratic mandate?

Pre-school teachers create a qualitative context around children with special needs (Siljehag, 2012). But are all voices heard? A critical scientific special pedagogy needs to analyze and describe different kinds of perspectives (Siljehag, 2007, 2010; Helldin, 2010). What does this mean?

In Sweden pre-schools have had their own national curriculum since 1998. From that year pre-school institutions belong to the Ministry of Education. This means that all children from age 6 to 16 are included in an educational system. Pre-school teachers have since then a responsibility for the care of the children and of their learning. All children and each child have the right to learn (UNESCO, 1994). The institutions have the obligation to evaluate the pedagogical work. The National Curriculum emphasizes this and writes in their documents how school pedagogies are used in many pre-schools (Skolverket, 2008; 2010). They point out that pre-schools do not have the same obligation as schools. The National Agency highlights that several individual development plans in pre-schools describe special goals of individual knowledge for each child. Pre-school teachers are however not allowed to individually assess each child and special knowledge goals. The National Curriculum was revised in 2010. Mathematics and languages was given new attention. The National Agency for Education highlighted the need for skills training of pre-school teachers.

Our Department (The Department of Special Education, University of Stockholm) was given an assignment to educate pre-school teachers. We created a course and the content was the perspective of special education needs together with languages, communication and mathematics. We implemented the course during 2009-2011. The Swedish Government paid the local authorities. The institutions got the possibility to employ supply teachers. Pre-school teachers were studying half-time in our department.

The students wrote reflections during the course. With their permission I used and analyzed all their reflections (total 1000 pages, 2009-2011). I was looking for some special situations. The pre-school teachers wrote a lot about creative activities. I wanted situations that included both this, mathematics and languages. The situations should also include all children and children with or without special needs. I created small stories from the reflections. Some of them described how the pre-school teachers are searching for children's experiences and interests. Some other stories tell about how the students and the children learn mathematics and languages.

Engrossed children

The examples describe how children with functional impairment, very quiet children or children who communicate with sign support gained motivation and courage in the creative activities. For the first time some of them took the role in a play and another very quiet child started to retell a story. The students described it as a special breakthrough for some kids. I emphasise how certain children "show themselves" and act "independently in the situation" (Siljehag, 2012). In this situation the children were "engrossed" and concentrated (Gadamer, 2002). Peers and the pre-school teachers were the recipients. One of the students writes: "He understood the whole concept, both the form and content. I never saw such a happy child when he received the applause" (Siljehag, 2012). A qualitative context was the conditions for a breakthrough. This included a consciously critical special needs analysis from the students. The work requires awareness of interpretation procedures, meaning of analytical work and area knowledge. But in my final analysis, I pointed out that the children's own thoughts of the events or lessons were not included in the students' reflections. Did we take the children's learning for granted? Their peers saw them act for the first time. Perhaps this means a new role and new learning for the child and for the peers? Is it possible to find out how the children describe this? Special education situations also need knowledge about how to collaborate. This applies both to adults and to children.



children, extra gymnastics and support in mathematic learning. Materials needed to be adapted to different degrees of difficulties. Both the children and the pre-school teachers emphasized time for relaxing, peace and quiet.

Pre-school teachers and special educators – a shared democratic mandate?

Special educational implications from these examples above show that several levels in an educational society have to support all children and each child. International and national policy documents give every child the right to be educated and to learn. Those examples describe how the government, the local authorities and the pre-school organization made it possible to educate both pre-school teachers in special education and pre-school teachers to be special educators. The examples also show that education can make impact on both a working team and children. An assignment as special educator involves collaborating with the management, to know different cultures at pre-schools with the intention to look for questions and expectation from the field. It also includes network contacts inside and outside the pre-school (Siljehag, 2007). Traditional special education only highlights individual problems. Today, the special education research includes different knowledge areas and disciplines. It means that a variety of theories and perspectives are used to understand and investigate different situations. Both pre-school teachers and special educators meet each other in those situations. To make the context visible they both use observations and talks and a rating scale. Their standpoint is participatory action research to make it possible to learn about the child's world. Some of the children with special needs show themselves in front of their peers for the first time. When children were asked about their environment at the pre-school unexpected proposals for changes came from children.

What happens then? How can pre-school teachers and special educators together ensure each child (with special needs) that their appearance and proposals make impact among peers and in the environment? This is a democratic process that each child should take part in. It means that both pre-school teachers and special educators have to learn about inclusion, participation and democratic processes (Ainscow et al., 2012; Allen, 2003). In the view of special education special educators are considered as "The Spider in the Web". The special education societal assignment includes counteracting all kinds of alienation and marginalisation of every child. Social justice needs to be discussed and critically investigated with all stakeholders in 8 procecli3npallve ss An. hrocecne a w er



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Anne-Lise Arnesen:

Inclusion and challenges in Early Childhood Education and Care with reference to Norwegian politics and practices

Introduction

The aim of this presentation is to explore inclusion with regard to kindergarten as part of the wider societal and educational political landscape in Norway. I raise the following questions:

Which contradictions and tensions exist in Norwegian policies and practices regarding inclusion in the ECEC field within a 'knowledge society' perspective?

What challenges can be identified in view of increasing emphasis on cognitive dimensions of child development and standards, assessment and language testing of small children? Is it correct to say that we are heading towards 'pedagogics of suspicion' rather than embracing diversity?

Finally: What kind of knowledge and research as basis for inclusive practices in kindergartens do we need? How may kindergartens with a diversity of children and inclusive practices?

I start by looking at current changes in the ECEC field and what we may mean by the term inclusion, and what it 'looks' like.

Changes in the field of ECEC

Along with the other Nordic countries Norway has been held up as a prominent example of a social democratic welfare state, characterized by a relative strength and autonomy of political institutions and universalistic (Esping-Andersen, 1996) and inclusive policies. The neo-liberal wave of the last decades, however, associated with the 'knowledge society', has had considerable impact in all the Nordic countries. During the last decade ECEC in Norway has undergone radical changes. The administrative responsibility for kindergartens has been transferred from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Research, accompanied by

reforms and curriculum adjustments. We have seen a fast expansion of the number of children attending kindergarten, with a particular growth of children below 3 years of age. Today almost all children between age 3 – 5 attend kindergarten (97 %). A steadily increasing number of children are reported as being in risk of developing language and behavioral problems, and provisions of special educational assistance in kindergarten are growing (NOU 2009: 18). These changes must be looked into and scrutinized from a perspective of marginalization and exclusion/inclusion.

What does inclusion mean?

Inclusion is a term with multiple connotations and implications. It is a concept that takes on different meanings depending on what perspective is used and whether it is seen as an end point or as a process. According to UNESCO inclusion is defined as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children through increasing participation in play and learning activities, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (ECEC).

Actively enhancing inclusion also implies not only involving children with special needs to take part in the regular activities, but also actively fight against processes of exclusion - and to expand what is taken to be 'regular' by challenging the environment in using creativity and inventiveness to find alternative solutions to organize activities in which all can take part. I see inclusion and exclusion as two sides of the same coin (simultaneous processes), that can be analysed from multiple perspectives (see models in Arnesen, 2012). Developing inclusive environments for all children involve *pedagogical, political, institutional, relational and ethical* (subjective) dimensions interact.





Standards, testing and assessment of small children - a pedagogy of suspicion?

An increasing attention on social inequalities and underachievement in school has actualised the importance of a good start for all, and kindergarten has become a strategic site for intervention. Intervention in itself is not a problem. But how intervention is performed, its objectives, its context, by whom it is undertaken and on what kind of knowledge it is executed must be critically scrutinized.

Kindergarten in Norway has to a great extent been defined by non-standardization. It has traditionally

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Jukka Niemelä :

How knowledge about the needs and potentials of the developing child can support inclusion in ECEC

Skills of interpersonal understanding

Various researchers have described the inborn skills of assessing interactions. Steven Porges (2009) has described primary ways of recognizing the safety or danger of a situation. It is the interoceptive gut-feeling, the inner body reactions to a variety of signals from both the environment and the people in them. Certain physical signals portend danger for the human: for example sudden loud noises, darkness, and being left alone. Other humans signal safety or danger through their body postures, tones of voice, facial expressions. When the primary perceptive system describes a situation as safe, the child can be socially engaged. This is the state in which learning and development happen.

Colwyn Trevarthen (1998) has documented, how well even a premature baby reacts to rhythmic answers that synchronize with her own expressions. This is called



The shame and pain of exclusion

This is an example of the immediate effects on children of not being answered to, of not being held in interaction. Exclusion is an experience of being left out. This creates the emotion of shame. Shame is a necessary emotion in social animals, giving motivation to look for better ways of functioning so that the group will accept one as a part. In this way shame is a socializing emotion and has been used extensively in child rearing. However, shame is very easily overwhelming, and shame should be avoided. When shame experiences abound, they are a risk factor both for depression and for aggression. One reason for this is that the experience of exclusion causes true pain.

The same areas in the brain that activate with actual physical pain activate with experiences of social exclusion. As this pain is not localized it has not been taken for real before new functional magnetic imaging of the brain (Eisenberger, N. I. 2003). In literature and music the heart-rending pain of being left alone has received much understanding. Depression is the feeling of not being able to change one's hurtful lot. When excluded, there is very little one can do. Except, of course, try to hurt the other. Exclusion increases bad will towards others and leads to the rise of aggression (DeWall, C. N. 2009). In fact, social exclusion can be seen as to be the greatest developmental risk factor for children. It has been estimated that, in Finland, over five per cent of youth are at risk of social exclusion. This is a human catastrophe to the youths themselves, a tremendous loss of human potential for the society. It also comes with a high price tag, with an estimated € 1 million for increased service costs for the lifetime (Nilsson I, Wadeskog A 2008). As many trajectories of social exclusion stem from the early years of childhood, ECEC is a major potential for early prevention of social exclusion.

Prevention is possible

The prevention of exclusion starts from making sure every child is accepted as a part of its group. Being seen and accepted for whom one is, being heard supported in one's group leads to empowerment and the increase of agency. Organizing the ECEC system so as to offer experiences of inclusion to all children has a high value in itself. It is a good social investment to create settings in which children with various

backgrounds and various needs come together in groups led by adults whose training increases their capacity to support inclusion of all. The ECEC must organize itself so as to accommodate the individually different developmental needs of children.

The individual developmental needs of children should not be seen as diagnoses but as variations of the human condition (i.e. the normal variations in impulsivity or in the capacity to intuitively understand the emotions of others). These needs, whether special or not can be met only in the moment-by-moment co-regulation of the inner state of the child. When children are sensitively answered to in every-day situations, they can attain a larger part of their own potential.

Pedagogical sensitivity

Pedagogical sensitivity is the capacity of the adults to notice signals that individual children send, while keeping group functioning a priority (Ahnert L et al 2000). Through attuned oversight and timely but short responses, an adult can support the stress regulation of individual children while supporting primarily the functioning of the whole group. From an individual child's point of view it is vital to know that when their stress rises towards an intolerable level, this will be noticed and co-regulated by the adult. The group offers the adult support through the inherent sympathetic capacities of children. Helping one child to manage her negative stress supports others in their trust that they, too, will be helped when in need. Likewise, children learn to help each other when the adult's intervention is attuned.

In the LASSO research group of the University of Helsinki led by Associate Professor Nina Sajaniemi, we are developing and testing an intervention protocol to support pedagogical sensitivity in ECEC. It uses short video-clips from real-time situations to demonstrate how children show their needs and react to having them met. There is a short theoretical manual that covers the developmental needs of children as outlined above. There is a focus on how to support learning and prosocial behaviour through co-regulating children's stress. This brings about more positive affective states.

Developmentally supportive ECEC practices

Positive emotions support development and learning.

The brain-body systems of all social mammals have

distinct systems of motivation and action that end uphps9.527.velohai(velopmest isiva mammals ha)24.9pathwdiexplort sy



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Jan-Erik Johansson:

Do we have a Nordic model in ECEC? Past, present and future knowledge production from the horizons of staff, administration, politics and research, in a period of full provision for all children of under school age

If we map the broader Early Childhood Education field of knowledge, one important characteristic is the different knowledge interests of the different stakeholders involved, namely the political system, state and local administration, and staff, parents and children. These groups focus on different aspects of ECEC, which creates a resource problem since knowledge development is expensive: parents think of their children, state administration focus the total system etc. Another characteristic is the different focuses of academic disciplines – there is no consensus among researchers on the most important aspects of ECEC, compounded by diverse specialties relating differently to the stakeholders in the field. For example, parents

are probably more concerned with the individual child's development. Actual research on ECEC, which creates a resource problem, is often fragmented and lacks a common theoretical framework. This is a characteristic of the field.




Education is defined as

local context that determines the outcomes. On the other hand, since we cannot do without international comparisons, we have to be careful when assessing the results and all nations cannot be on top at the same time! In the history of education, problems arise when one paradigm rules: *Fröbelianism* during the 1960's is one case of external expertise inducing problems. The *Fröbelianism* in language teaching is another strange idea, based on the dogma not to use vernaculars! Not to mention the investment in *Fröbelianism* during the 1960's. One solution is to accept variation and long term development (cf. Basalla) instead of frequent pendulum swing revolutions. Since education is both locally and internationally determined, multiple perspectives and all kind of studies with a direct focus on ECEC are needed.

Q3. A Nordic model

The Nordic region is almost a federation, connected through history and migration. There are thousands of relationships involving all kinds of NGOs, churches, political parties, footballers, civil administrators, companies and families and so on. Then follows formal collaboration jointly financed. But what about ECEC? France, Belgium, UK and USA meet Fröbel 1850 through the first generation of Froebelians. Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway develop contacts decades later with *Fröbelianism* (1827–1899) and Pestalozzi-Fröbel-Haus (P-F-H) in Berlin (cf. Denner, 1988) where she developed a social-pedagogy to save working class children. She aimed at play, work and learning in a homelike institution. One principle is *Fröbelianism* and the aim is to compensate for loss of home experiences. She uses much of Fröbel's programme except his play theory. The teacher role is to be internally active and externally passive. The content is organised in monthly themes such as seasons and holidays. The idea is to build on the child's drive for activity. The result is a programme at a distance from traditional school, and a somewhat invisible pedagogy, because of the teacher's indirect control of the children. This version of Froebel comes first to Finland and Helsinki with *Fröbelianism* (1856–1920); *Fröbelianism* (1874–1935) in København is trained in Dresden;

Fröbelianism (1881–1967) works in Stockholm and Hamburg; *Fröbelianism* (1902–1989) in Oslo is trained at P-F-H. In -49.8(tis1int.32 Td[(is trai -1.3raillfhKt)])TJog,



and a historical-comparative focus. The distinction between pre- and inter-active curriculum by Philip Jackson (1968) is one starting point. We should not study the national curriculum only but the whole

Jyrki Reunamo:

Day care based on developmental feedback for the staff The Orientation project – a longitudinal study of day care and pre-school activities

The Orientation project is a research and development project conducted in Finland and Taiwan concerning Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The project includes comparative research and learning environment development based on research results.





As can be seen in Figure 2, in Finland only 2% of the activities were scaffolded play. In Taiwan scaffolded play included 21% of the general activities in day care. The difference is huge. In Taiwan scaffolded play is the second most frequent activity, in Finland the least frequent activity.

Figure 3.
The mean of children's involvement in different activities

children and educators were wondering if the play could take them even further. Because scaffolded play turned out to be a valuable way to work and children could enjoy it for long periods of time, one task in Finland became the following:

The staff of one day care centre planned, developed and tested a solution model for a year. They presented their development model in May 2012 together with the other 2016 models, see Figure 5.

Figure 5.
The solution model for scaffolded play produced by the staff in Sorvankaari day care center in Nurmijärvi Finland.

In Figure 3 we can see that scaffolded play was a very involved activity both in Finland and Taiwan. This means that during scaffolded play children were

The project is based on developmental feedback. For that feedback we need to see that the activities are evolving. Our next data collection will be in 2015. We invite our Nordic colleagues to join us in the research. A proposition for a comparative research in Nordic countries can be found in http://www.helsinki.fi/~reunamo/apu/Nordic_ECEC_comparison15.pdf. Take a look at the Orientation project blog at <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/orientate/>. If you find the idea worth considering, do not hesitate to contact me. The everyday interaction and dynamics in Nordic ECEC need to be studied. There is no existing comparative research of the everyday practices and processes taking place in and between Nordic countries. How can we discuss Nordic ECEC if we do not have any solid knowledge on what is going on?



Conference participants

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