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Play and Learning in Nordic Pedagogy

- Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson
- University of Gothenburg

Ingrid.Pramling@ped.gu.se





What do we know about play and teachers' involvement?

- Teachers separate play and learning and withdraw from children's play (most common)
- Teachers observe and contribute with new materials or new experiences for stimulating the play and learning to develop
- Teachers are part of children's play activities (least common)



Children's voices!

- **Do any of your teachers play with you in preschool?**
- Lova: No, I do not think they play with us.
- Intervjuer: Why?
- Lova: (laughing) because they are teachers

- William: They need to work all the time!

- Juni: They are at the office and have breaks....but I do not know what they do when they have brakes. Maybe they look at their ipad or telephone
- Intervjuer: Maybe they do, but do you not think they play?
- Juni: No!!!!



What is learning in ECEC?

- Learning can be understood as:
 - Distinguishing something – seeing something new or something familiar in a new perspective
 - Become aware of something – making sense
 - Become a participant or changing one's participation
- There is always a WHAT of learning (a content)

Teaching

- Communication as the mechanism of teaching
 - Dialogical
- To get children interested in something or capture their interest
- To direct children's attention towards.... a learning object
- Openness and space for children to bring in their experience and imagination
- To see children as agents in their own everyday life
- To challenge children's experience



Play as a potential for children's learning

- How do teacher get access to children's play?
- How do they participate in children's play?
- How do they introduce play and become partners in play or withdraw from play?

- **EMPIRICAL STUDY** – otherwise a prevalence of philosophy or ideology in ECEC

Play-responsive teaching

- Teaching understood as activities mutually constituted by children and preschool teachers
- That participants shift between and relate **as if** (imagination) and **as is** (accepted, culturally established knowledge) without the play being interrupted
- That teachers connects to or introduce cultural resources (knowledge) that can contribute to bringing the play forward
- To help children learn new play activities (and play familiar plays in more developed ways) and that they also learn about what applies outside the play (which *is*)
- That preschool teachers become participants and co-creators in and of play
- That children's agency is promoted so that they can become genuine actors in their life and learning (rather than recipients of instructions)



Results – notions and phenomena to deal with

- To find out what children play
- To plan for becoming active in children’s play
- It is not natural for all staff to play with children play
- **Notions that become central:**
 - Intersubjectivity
 - Narratives
 - Meta-communication
- To switch between “as is” (culturally established knowledge) and “as if” (imagination, creativity)
 - to talk *within* the play and talk *about* the play



To develop pedagogy in the form of play-responsive teaching

To direct children's awareness!

To initiate & connect to children's ideas

**Equality – to make sure
all children
became participants in
cultural practices and
Forms of knowledge**





References

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