(Re)Making the politics of belonging in early childhood education

The Nordic way 27.3.2019
PhD, post doctoral researcher
Jaana Juutinen
University of Oulu
jaana.juutinen@oulu.fi
(Re)Making the politics of belonging in early childhood education

The Nordic way 27.3.2019
PhD, post doctoral researcher
Jaana Juutinen
University of Oulu
jaana.juutinen@oulu.fi
It is morning in the preschool group with 21 children aged from 3 to 5, ten different nationalities and diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Once a month there are having a breakfast with families and children. I was invited there as a researcher to discuss with parents and children about our research project. First I meet a lady who visits the group once a week and her job is to support mother tongue of 5 children from Somalia.

I take a cup coffee and sit down with one family and leader of the preschool, mother wants us to talk Finnish, she wants to learn to use the language. Soon a little boy approaches me with board game, shows me a small picture of playing a game. We start to play. Suddenly boy vanishes to hall, he goes to put his nametag on the wall under the sign “Who are here today with us?”
WHO and WHY HERE TODAY?

- Early education teacher and preschool leader (children aged 1 to 6 years), PhD researcher and university lecturer on early education

- Doctoral study as a part of three early childhood education projects; Tellis, Belong and ValuEd during the years 2013-2017 (funding; The Academy of Finland, Nordforsk)
  * 6 preschools (children aged from 1 to 6), educators and leaders

- Currently; post doctoral researcher at the Nordforsk funded project 2018-2020 "Politics of belonging: Promoting children’s inclusion in educational settings across borders"
  * 2 preschools (children aged from 3 to 6), educators and leaders
How?

Ethnography in preschools (videos, participatory observations)
Narrative and visual methods
Close collaboration with the educators and leaders in the preschools

Collaboration with the Nordic researchers
As May (2013) puts it, “an individual’s sense of belonging is affected by collectively negotiated understanding of who ‘we’ are and what ‘we’ stand for, and who gets excluded as the ‘other’ “ (p. 3).

The politics of belonging challenge to focus on belonging and exclusion as a relational rather than an individual phenomenon;

the relations significant for belonging and exclusion are not just between humans, but they are also material, cultural, economic, historical and political by nature.

(Juutinen, 2018; Sumsion & Wong, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011).
SO WHAT? Moving from daily encounters to decision-making

Co-existency of belonging and exclusion
Constant movement, never finished

Individually sensed, framed by legislation and policies in the early education settings

Children's active role

(Juutinen, 2018, 66)
It is morning in the preschool group with 21 children aged from 3 to 5, ten different nationalities and diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Once a month there are having a breakfast with families and children. I was invited there as a researcher to discuss with parents and children about our research project. First I meet a lady who visits the group once a week and her job is to support mother tongue of 5 children from Somalia.

I take a cup coffee and sit down with one family and leader of the preschool, mother wants us to talk Finnish, she wants to learn to use the language. Soon a little boy approaches me with board game, shows me a small picture of playing a game. We start to play. Suddenly boy vanishes to hall, he goes to put his nametag on the wall under the sign “Who are here today with us?”
SO WHAT?

Why quality ECEC is part of politics for social equity?

Meaningful points in relation to belonging in ECEC:

Group-size, adult-child ratio, personnel structure
Structure of the day, part-time / full-time children

Educators pedagogical knowledge about the use of learning environment, materials and spaces, but also capability of collaboration with diverse families and understanding of multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds

Quality of interaction; sensitive encountering, listening

Connectedness with inclusion, participation, solidarity, equality and diversity

Where do you belong?
How do you know / feel that you belong?
What kind "voices" are heard / researches are read when decisions are made in relation to ECEC policies?
How can we assure that quality ECEC reaches children and each child feels belonging in ECEC settings?
Thank you!
References:


(Re)Making the politics of belonging in early childhood education

The Nordic way 27.3.2019
PhD, post doctoral researcher
Jaana Juutinen
University of Oulu
jaana.juutinen@oulu.fi