



GÖTEBORGS  
UNIVERSITET

# WHAT IS TEACHING IN A SWEDISH PRESCHOOL?

THE NORDIC WAY  
OSLO 26-27 MARCH, 2019

PIA WILLIAMS  
SONJA SHERIDAN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,  
COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING  
UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG



# Teaching in preschool

The concept of teaching in preschool, is in this presentation defined as communicative, interactive and relational and needs to be understood in a social context.

The definition rests on a theoretical perspective based on the standpoint that children learn and develop by communicating and interacting with their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1986).

Based on this perspective, children's learning and development encompasses the cultural, social, linguistic and practical context in which learning takes place.

# Political and pedagogical intentions for teaching

- In the Swedish Education Act (2010:800, 1 chap. 3 § ), teaching is defined as ”such goal oriented processes that under the lead of teachers and preschool teachers aims to development and learning through gathering of knowledge and values.”
- Based on scientific knowledge and proven experience (5 § )
- Lead by preschool teachers

# Core aspects of teaching in preschool

□ In research - teaching is:

- An intentional act, in which something is pointed out to the child – embraces all curriculum goals
- Communicative, interactive and relational
- The intersubjectivity of the teaching – perspective-taking
- A social, emotional and cognitive process
- Includes dimensions of care, play, learning, participation and ethics
- Planned and spontaneous
- Initiated by the child, the teacher and together
- Educates children for today's and future situations

# Current situation/reality in preschool and preschool teacher education

- ❑ Preschool quality significantly varies between and within Swedish municipalities.
- ❑ ECERS-3 a tool for evaluating quality in preschool - provides opportunities to study environmental and curricular quality in preschool.
- ❑ Focus of evaluation is on the learning environment rather than on individual teachers and children – in line with the intentions in the Swedish preschool curriculum.
- ❑ ECERS consists of 6 subscales and 35 items, which define different levels of quality in typical situations of preschool.
- ❑ Item scores are 1 (inadequate) through 7 (excellent).



# ECERS-3, Total and subscales with mean, minimum and maximum (n=153)

*\*Numbers below 3 are low quality*

*\*\* Numbers above 5 are high quality*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
<b>1.Space and furnishings</b>	1.86	6.29	4.22
<b>2.Personal care routines</b>	1.25	7.00	4.67
<b>3.Language and literacy</b>	1.80	6.80	3.79
<b>4.Learning activities</b>	1.10	5.36	2.71*
<b>5.Interaction</b>	2.00	7.00	5.25**
<b>6. Program structure</b>	1.50	7.00	5.03**
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>6.11</b>	<b>3.97</b>



# The development of preschool teacher's competence

A way to bridge the gap between political and pedagogical intentions for teaching and the actual situation in preschool practice

## Knowledge of what & why

- Subject knowledge
- Pedagogical awareness & critical reflection
- Competence development

## Knowledge of how

- Leadership: to lead activities, children and staff
- Organisational competence
- Simultaneous capacity

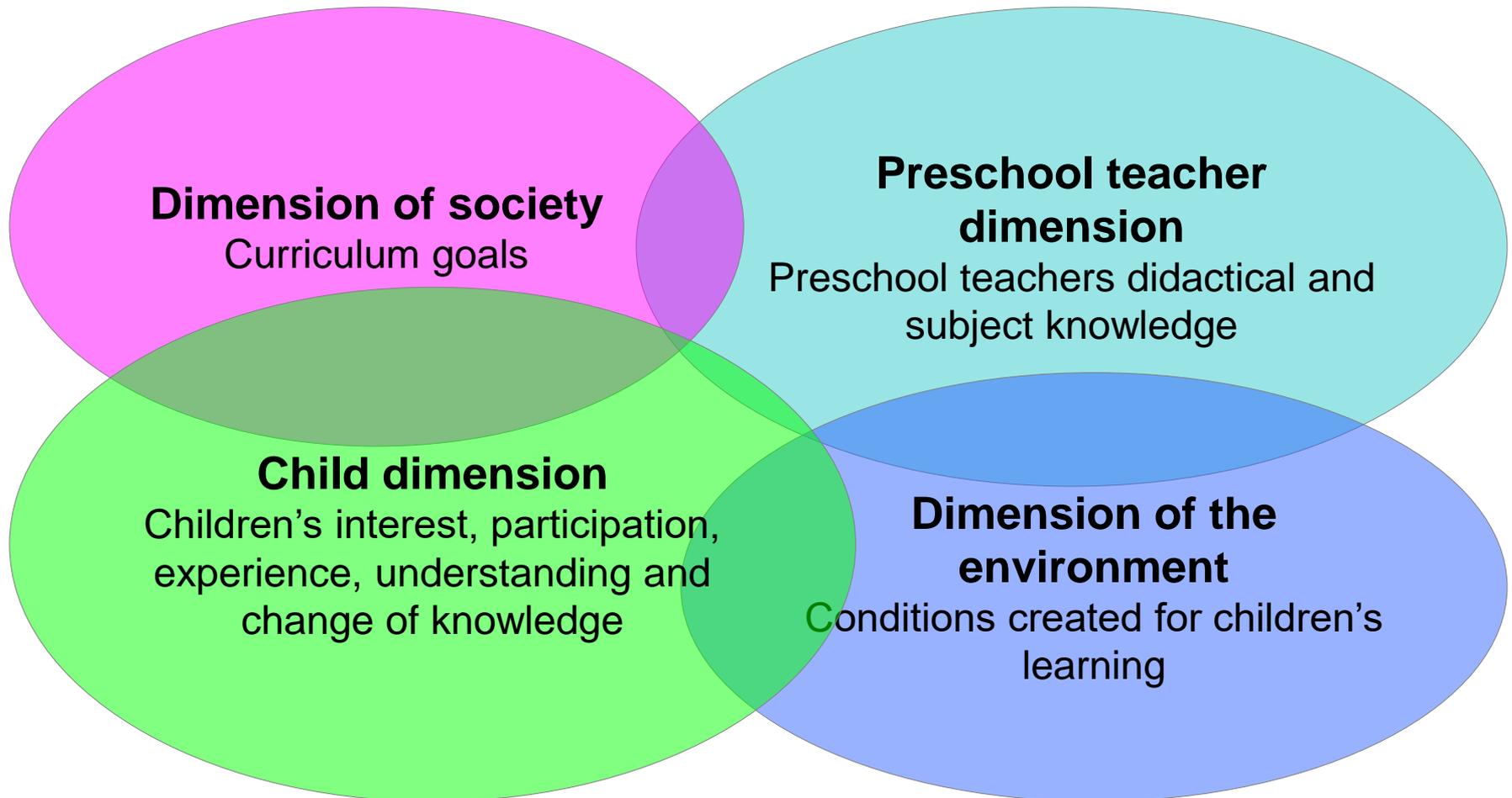
## Interactive, transformative & relational competences

- Communicative competence
- Social competence
- Competence to care
- Didactical knowledge



# Analytical lenses –

To plan, carry through, analyse and follow up teaching





# To bridge the gap...

## The actual situation, the ideal situation, and how to proceed...



- Children's participation and agency
- The preschool teacher's responsibility and competence
- The responsibility of preschool head and municipality
- Preschool teacher education
- Guidelines, policy documents, curriculum
- Research



# Concluding points

- ❑ Teacher competence - an outstanding indicator of quality, in terms of children's wellbeing, learning and developmental outcomes  
(Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2010; Vygotskij, 1986)
- ❑ Subject- and didactical knowledge
- ❑ Preschool teaching - based on scientific knowledge and proven experience, led by preschool teachers
- ❑ The competence to integrate in teaching: Play, Learning and Care
- ❑ Create conditions for children's participation and agency
- ❑ Refine teacher competence by being "nudged" in the right direction: role model, guidance, scaffolding, show & tell, conceptual understanding, time to reflect theory in a community of practice...



GÖTEBORGS  
UNIVERSITET

## Read more...



Garvis, S., Sheridan, S., Williams, P., & Mellgren, E. (2017). Cultural considerations of ECERS-3 in Sweden: a reflection of adaptation. *Early Child Development and Care*, 188,5, 584-593.

Sheridan, S., Williams, P., Sandberg, A. et al. (2011). Preschool teaching in Sweden - a profession in change. *Educational Research*, 53(4), 415-437.

Sheridan, S. (2016). Preschool teachers' pedagogical awareness – A key competence. *Journal of Korean Council for Children & Rights*. 20(4), 523-542.

Sheridan, S., & Williams, P. (2018). *Undervisning i förskolan. En kunskapsöversikt*. Stockholm: Skolverket.

Williams, P., & Sheridan, S. (2019). Förskollärarkompetens – skärningspunkt i undervisningens kvalitet [Preschool teacher competence – the point of intersection of quality in teaching] *Barn*, 36,3-4, 127-146.