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
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*

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

Dimension of society
Curriculum goals

Preschool teacher dimension
Preschool teachers didactical and subject knowledge

Child dimension
Children’s interest, participation, experience, understanding and change of knowledge

Dimension of the environment
Conditions created for children’s learning
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...


