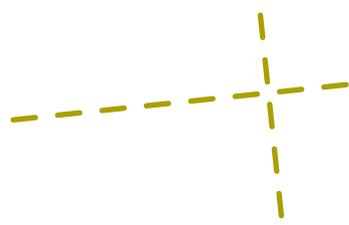


THE WORK OF THE PEDAGOGUE: ROLES AND TASKS

B U P L





DAY CARE CENTRES AS AN INDEPENDENT SPACE FOR CHILDREN'S LIVES TO DEVELOP IN

Day care centres is the generic name for day nursery schools age 0-3, kindergartens age 2-5, and day care centres that cover all age groups i.e. from age 0-10, and after-school centres age 6-10. In Denmark, the childcare centre for 0-6 year old children and the after school centre for the 6-10 year olds constitute an independent space for children's lives to develop in communities. The day care centres are not a part of the educational system, but are considered as places where children can participate on their own terms in the creation of child life. As opposed to a lot of places in the world, there is neither traditional curriculum nor division of subjects and classes in the Danish day care centres. This, however, does not mean that the children do not benefit from going to their day care centre. On the contrary, day care centres are a place where children engage in a different kind of activity, which is why things are organised differently than at school. Activities are initiated by the pedagogues but also by the children themselves, who will often start an activity or a play on their own initiative. There are no prescribed time spans and the activities can vary from short sequences and to children engaged at a play that can last for weeks. There are no specific subjects but different themes and activities are coordinated cross-curricular. Many of the activities in the day care centres challenge the child creative or physically. The day care centre is in a double sense a social meeting place: It is both a social community for children, but also a social community where children can meet across social distinctions.

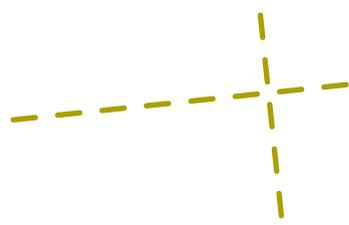
The concept "pedagogue" is specific to Denmark. The pedagogues are trained 3,5 year at Colleges and get the title: Professional Bachelor. Pedagogues have a very broad qualification and are employed both in child care services, in centres for handicapped people and also inside the sector of services for elderly people.

Most of the pedagogues work in the field of early childhood education and care. In this context they are comparable to “Pre-school teachers” in other countries. In the sector of out of school care they might be compared to “Play workers” or “Recreation instructors”, and in other services they are more like “Social workers” or “Educators”.

We have decided to use the concept pedagogue in order to maintain the specific values and attitudes of this Danish pedagogical profession to the overall development, learning and formation of children, youth and adults. Danish childcare provision is an integral and independent part of the Danish welfare society and should not be confused with the school system and formal teaching.

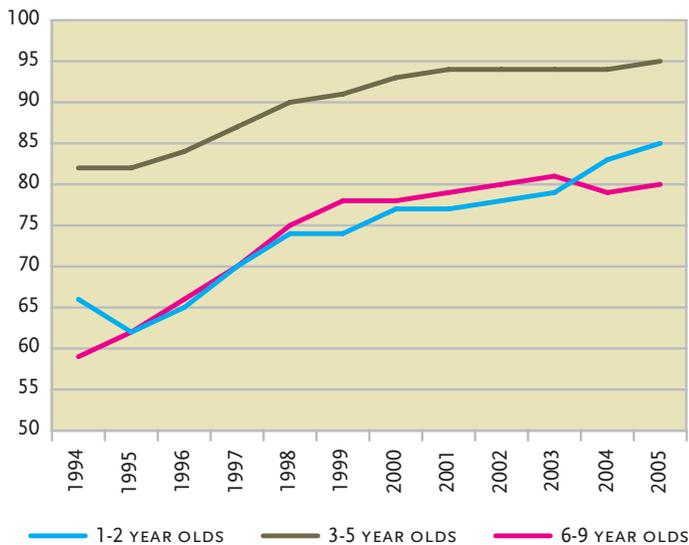
In Denmark, as in a number of other Western countries, focus has to a large extent, been placed on globalisation. There has been an increasing focus on cross-analysis and surveys which are conducted to compare these countries school systems (for example PISA surveys). The comparisons focus on traditional knowledge such as language skills, literacy and other competencies children learn in the school system. In Denmark we experience a lot of interest from many other countries who would like to see and hear about how we have organised our welfare state especially concerning the area of childcare. We have created a day care system, which means that most children have the opportunity to attend a “pedagogical offer”. 95% of all children in the age 3-5 years attend kindergarten and 80% of all children in the age 1-3 attend nursery school, and therefore they spend a large part of their waking hours in a day care centre. 80% of all children in the age of 6-10 have a “pedagogical” offer of about 5 hours after their school day.

BUPL wish to question whether there is a need for further efficiency and goal orientation of childhood. On one hand BUPL believe that parents are enthusiastic about the system we have constructed, but on the other hand, we have a government that empha-



sises the importance of Denmark being in the top of PISA surveys and other international benchmarking. The question is whether we as a pedagogical profession have been good enough at describing and communicating what pedagogues do in the Danish day care centres. In this booklet, we offer a description of what pedagogues do, and why we think it is important that day care centres not become a part of the education system, but are kept as special space for children's lives to develop within.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COVERAGE OF DAY CARE IN PERCENTAGE FROM 1994-2005



Source: Statistics Denmark

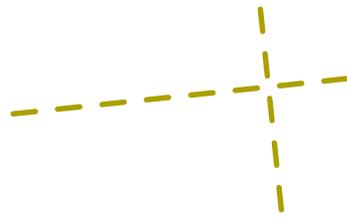
Explanation to figure 1: The coverage of day care describes the amount of children in the given age group enrolled in day care centres, child minding and after school centres.

PEDAGOGUES CREATE A FUN, SAFE AND CHALLENGING EVERYDAY ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN

In Denmark there are 60,000 pedagogues, who daily perform a professional pedagogical task with children. Pedagogues have the responsibility of creating "pedagogical" conditions and settings that are characterised by experiences, zest for life, commitment, interest, and care. "The pedagogues" most important job is to enable the children attending the centres to have a secure, fun and challenging experience. Through time there have been many discussions about how the pedagogical work should be described. This booklet gives an account of some of the crucial pedagogic notions and understandings, which describe the direct work with children. The booklet does not describe under which circumstances and settings that the pedagogical work develop and evolves in relation to (for example the economic resources). The intention is, that the booklet can create a basis for a discussion of the foundations of pedagogical work, and how the pedagogical challenges in every day life can be solved with an awareness of the diversity of pedagogical work as a whole. This, also include the circumstances and frames present at the individual centre.

NOT EVERYBODY CAN, PEDAGOGUES CAN

Pedagogues undertake a professional pedagogic task, based on the subject qualifications achieved through the Professional Bachelor. The education takes 3,5 years and is based on alternation and interaction between theory and practice. The work as a pedagogue is based on personal competencies and an awareness of ones own norms and values. Pedagogues professional expertise implies both theoretical and practical knowledge of children's' development, play, friendship and conflicts. The professional expertise encompasses knowledge of pedagogical methods and tools and also ethical considerations. Pedagogues have an overall perspective on



childrens' lives and perform a work characterised by many different tasks and functions.

BUPL believes it is essential to define and to make more visible, the essence of pedagogical work, and thereby make more transparent, what pedagogues do every day in the Danish centres and what pedagogues responsibilities are. The booklet is to be seen as BUPL's suggestion to an overall understanding of the the pedagogue's work and what basic tasks exist within all types of pedagogical work with the focus on the direct work with children.

A MODEL OF THE BASIC CONCEPTS IN THE "PEDAGOGICAL" WORK WITH CHILDREN

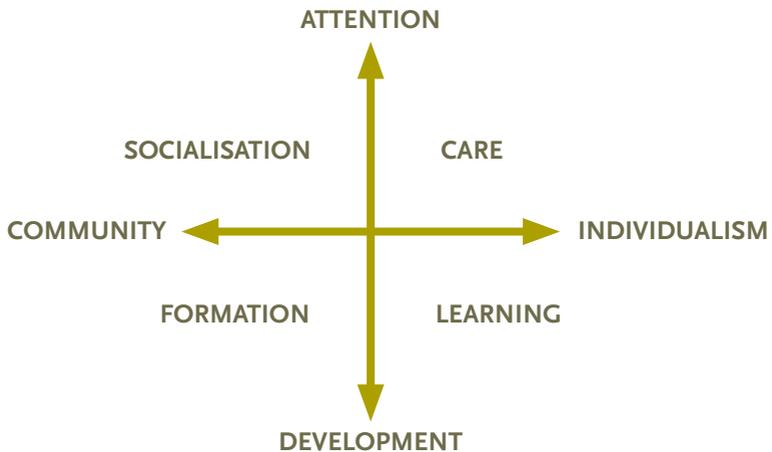
The model mentioned below outlines some of the fundamental concepts, which describe the work of the pedagogue with a focus on their relationship with the child or the young person. The object of the model is to describe the professional pedagogical practice holistically and with it contribute to the understanding of the pedagogical work as a question of "either" rather than "either or", which many other descriptions of the pedagogical work result in.

In Denmark as well as internationally there is an ongoing discussion about the relation between attention and development. Attention is not just passive looking after, but also active care. It is an obligation for the day care centre to embrace all children in the centre where children have to adjust to each other. Development can be seen as a task that consciously seeks to shape and teach children, both tangible skills and competencies and also enables them to participate in life in modern society.

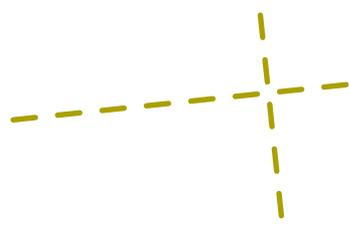
Another basic debate concerning the pedagogical work is to what extent it is the individual or the community that is to be used as a starting point in care. This notion of the individual and community has among other ways often been described in terms of "Child-centred pedagogy" versus "'Civic pedagogy". The modern peda-

gogue has to ensure a community, where children with diverse backgrounds, gender and age can be brought to function together. At the same time, we as pedagogues must be aware of the individual child's possibilities and potentials, and whether the child has a need for extra effort and attention.

MODEL FOR PEDAGOGICAL TASK IN DAY CARE CENTERS



The model shows four basic notions and four central areas that can describe the pedagogical tasks: Care (take care of), socialisation (to and in communities), formation (for citizenship and democracy) and learning (development of individual skills). For example the model illustrates that the "pedagogical" task is not simply about



development, but also about looking after, that pedagogues not only put the individual child in the centre, but also take care of the interests of the community.

Pedagogical work cannot only be described or understood one-dimensionally, but also has to be described and understood as something with several dimensions.

PEDAGOGUES LOOK AFTER CHILDREN

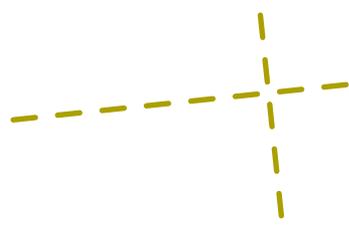
Care describes the relationship between pedagogues and the children in an accommodating, considerate and responding way and the assurance that the child is safe and secure while at the institution. Professional care implies awareness and empathy towards the child needs. Care has several aspects which are interlaced, and it is necessary that the pedagogue must be aware of and has responsibility for all these aspects of care:

1. The emotional contact and social interaction, that the child takes part in. For example you show interest in the children and relate to them in a way that expresses that you like them, and that you relate actively to their needs, signals and development (psychologically)
2. Children's physical well being (care and handling children's physical needs) in relation to the child's need, signals and development (physically). For example you ensure the child gets the needed rest or ensure that, the child exercise and use their body.
3. To show interest and commitment in what interests the child. For example you listen, understand and enter the thoughts, questions and activities that are occupying the childrens' minds. This also implies for example knowledge about and interest in the current children cultures and modes of expression, their problems and fields of interests.

To provide care constitutes a large and important part of the time pedagogues spend with children, and to receive care is important to all children regardless of their age. Care and looking after relates to those social conditions, that determine childrens need to be taken care of in institutions, so they will have a safe place to be and not come to harm. Care is furthermore the basis for children and young people's psychological and physical well being and is important for their further journey into life. Society's responsibility for its childrens is among other things realised through care. To provide care for children, can as a whole be described as taking care of and attending to children's emotional, physical and cognitive development.

PEDAGOGUES CREATE THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTIVE AND CHALLENGING COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

Socialisation covers the aspects when pedagogues educate the children to function within the framework the centres create for the children's social life regarding both the interaction between children, but also between the children and pedagogues. In the centres children often encounter public life and a series of societal contexts are passed on through the way the centre is organised. This means that the child encounters and can relate to the way the everyday life is organised and the way the centre through its functions works as a community with norms and values. The crux of socialisation is the process which contributes to the individual becoming part of a community. The existing community in centres has two aspects: The close and local communities which mean that the child or the young people have to be able to get on with the children they spend every day with and also by participating in the life in the centre where they socialise with the greater community (society). The task for the pedagogues is to create a framework for children's lives, where they can meet across social boundaries.



”The pedagogues” contribute both consciously and subconsciously to the socialisation and education of children, and help them form the cultural norms or “codes” that are essential for social and moral actions. This means, that children are educated to respect and conform to different rules and demands enabling us to thrive together in a community.

The pedagogues create the framework for the day to day structure in time and space and in this way also contribute to which kind of communities are considered as appropriate for the children they are dealing with. For example in what way the rooms are decorated, when to eat, when to listen to music, what activities are prioritised, how to treat each other and so on. In the creation of this framework of challenging communities the pedagogues contribute to ensuring that children are socialised and prepared to get on in social matters throughout life.

PEDAGOGUES CONTRIBUTE TO CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT- AND LEARNING PROCESSES

Learning covers the aspects that pedagogues contribute to the development of different skills and knowledge in the individual child through planned activities, but also by creating the framework for informal learning to occur. There are different approaches to learning and also learning processes can be described and understood in a series of ways: For example one can differentiate between cognitive, emotional and physical learning. Furthermore learning and learning processes are encompassed by the social conditions and/or institutional relations the child is a part of. It wasn't until 2004 that a law about a pedagogical curriculum was implemented in the day care centres (0-6 years) in Denmark. In this it is described, what areas the children need to be acquainted with in their day care centre. Furthermore it is important to point out, that learning is not only to be developed through deliberate and planned courses,

but equally takes place informally and is learned through different social contexts.

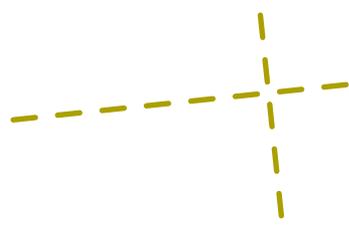
However children (and adults) learn, when they get the opportunity to be active, responsible and have the opportunity to participate in different situations of the every day life of the institution. Different activities, plays and different ways of interacting and are helping to develop different skills and knowledge areas. Pedagogues have the responsibility to ensure, that children have the opportunity to experiment, investigate, try out and experience via play, and other activities and being together and thereby ensure that children are challenged and experience different learning processes throughout their life in the institution.

PEDAGOGUES CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN FORMATION PROCESS AS DEMOCRATIC CITIZENS

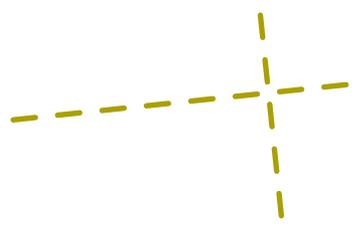
Formation in the pedagogical work covers pedagogues creation of the framework to give the children a background and ability to relate to and to act ethically in the society they live in.

Through formation children both encounter knowledge and enlightenment. They encounter the ability to apply knowledge and skills and consequently experience what kinds of people are formed through this. Formation points the attention to the participation of the children and the possibility of self-fulfilment and through that, skills are obtained that allow them to learn to make choices. It is about teaching children to investigate and understand the world and reality that they live in and teach them to discuss and take a stand on values. It is essential that pedagogues meet children with understanding and support, and children get the opportunity to critically express their opinion and the opportunity to test and experiment with different ways of solving tasks and conflicts.

Furthermore formation is about children's development of self-confidence and possibilities in the community as well as their emo-



tional development. It is also about helping them become capable of acting socially responsible and through this contribute to ensure and develop the social coherence in society. To summarise it is about what children are and how they become active participants in decisions concerning them as citizens in a democratic society. Pedagogues are responsible for enabling children to actively, responsibly and constructively take part in social life and by this contribute to promote solidarity democracy and humanity in society.





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BLEGDAMSVEJ 124, 2100 KØBENHAVN Ø, DENMARK
WWW.BUPL.DK

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you want to read more about the Danish Day Care centres and BUPL, you can find more information in the pedagogical profile of BUPL or the booklet about BUPL.

BUPL – The Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators – is the trade union for the trained staff – the pedagogues – in nurseries, kindergartens, age-integrated childcare centres, out of school care and leisure time centres as well as leisure time and youth clubs.

BUPL organise more than 95% of all pedagogues in the Union. The aims of BUPL is to defend the professional rights of the pedagogues both in the field of salary and working conditions as well as the quality of education and care in the different types of child care services.