Early Childhood Education
The case of Sweden

A Story of Constructing a Comprehensive Systemic and Holistic Early Childhood Education for All Children
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Politics of Childhood – Questions
What do we want for our children here and now and in the future?

A Diagnosis of our Time
ECE – 60’s early 70’s
Huge demonstrations among parents and other supporters of ECE – 70’s
The cries score-

nurseries for all

Child care we want – but they have to be good

ECE - Institutions
Sites for ethical and political practices, in which children, teachers and parents as citizens are able to participate in a public talk and in projects of cultural, economical and social value.

Children Preschool Commission 1972
Early Childhood Education – a Public Space
A Common Good For All Children

Children Preschool Commission
Dialogue Pedagogy
The child’s development of a self Communication
Concept development
1984

LEX – Pysslingen

ECE should not be for profit

1985

The historical proposition

A preschool as *a right for all children*


*Children’s development and learning get a status of being a specific political question*

Martin 2006

Provide a place for children from one year of age in preschool or family day care center, municipal or private, and without undue delay (three to four months)
1975: 10% of all children

2% of children between 0.5 - 3 years

1976: 5% of children between 0.5 - 3 years

1998: Responsibility is transferred from Ministry of Social Welfare to Ministry of Education

The BOSK Committee

1998: A curriculum for pre-schools. Revised 2010 and 2018

Stressing Language, Mathematics and Science – in relation to each specific child’s prerequisites

From Child-Care to Education – from one year of age

International unique
Fundamental Values

Each and every person working in the preschool should promote respect for the intrinsic value of each person as well as respect for our shared environment.

The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between the genders, as well as solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the preschool should actively promote in its work with children.

The Education Act – 2010

Democracy forms the foundation of the preschool

The Education Act (2010:800) stipulates that education in the preschool aims at children acquiring and developing knowledge and values. It should promote all children’s development and learning, and a lifelong desire to learn. An important task of the preschool is to impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based.

The activities of the preschool should be carried out democratically and thus provide the foundation for a growing responsibility and interest on the part of children to actively participate in society.

Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98 Revised 2010, p. 3
An open curriculum

Goals to strive towards

(Goals to reach)

Authority to the professionals

The Reggio - Emilia philosophy –

a challenge

Loris Malaguzzi (1922-1994)

Loris Malaguzzi (1922-1994)

Malaguzzi is the guiding genius of Reggio, the thinker whose name deserves to be uttered in the same breath as his heroes Froebel, Montessori, Dewey, and Piaget.

Respect for the child as a resourceful and curious child - a child with a hundred languages and own power and desire to learn

A competent child

Gardner, 1998. xvi
A Pedagogy of Welcoming and Hospitality
Builds on Listening

1991 – Time Changes
New conditions and new challenges open up
Deregulation Market Free Choice

Lex Pysslingen is abolished
February, 2006
Freedom to establish an independent preschool
Open up for different profiles outside the municipality

FOR PROFIT?
Difficult to go back
New conflicts and issues to negotiate and solve

The critics:
- Increased costs?
- Less quality overall?
- Increased segregation? What happens with inclusion/exclusion?

A New Curriculum 2018
Stressing
- The concept of education and teaching
- The role of the preschool teacher
- The role of assessment and evaluation

The Stockholm Project
Pedagogy in a Changing World

Movement from below!
SCHOOLIFICATION?
- Networking
- Pedagogical documentation
- Progettazione
- Hundred languages

Inspiration from Reggio Emilia

Post-structuralism

Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education – Languages of Evaluation
Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999, 2013

Diversity
Inclusion
Autonomy
Trust/participation

Standards
Tests
Control
Mistrust?
The competitive world-market

 Rankings

 New Devices of Governing as a Way to Modernize the Public Sector

 Total quality management

 New public management – public choice

 How we follow up, judge and evaluate pedagogical activities is one of the most pressing issues that we have to take a stand on.

 Dahlberg, Lundgren & Åsén, 1991

 OECD

 OECD’s early childhood development and early learning study?
Anglo-Saxon ‘testology’, is nothing but a ridiculous simplification of knowledge, and a robbing of meaning from individual histories.

Robbing the meanings from individual histories?

...quality does not seem to be assured until it is expressed through numbers...numbers reign, while qualified thought is viewed with suspicion

Cagliari, et.al. 2016, p. 378

TRUST IN MEASURING AND NUMBERS

Sven-Erik Liedman
The decades of the problem child?

Do we “see and observe” more so called problem-children than ever!

Classifying and categorizing children as at RISK and in NEED – a LACKING child!

It is typical for that child!

We can’t expect more from those parents!

The problems are placed in the child – and seen as deviances from an imaginary normality?

ESSENTIALISM

Taming children’s potentialities and desires?

Taming chance?
What happens to

Democracy?
Equity?
Solidarity?

To think an other whom I cannot grasp through categories and representations is an important shift

It challenges the whole scene of pedagogy

Is diversity our greatest similarity

Can we look at life’s infinite diversity and complexity as an opportunity in our preschools and schools?

Instead of as an obstacle to overcome through shaping it into sameness and normality?

A project
Transculturalism and Communication
Children's traces in Hallonbergen

A project from STELLA NOVA preschool

HALLONBERGEN

A disadvantaged – 'problematic' suburb

Social injustice Segregation

Recognized and represented as
An immigrant preschool

A LACKING PRESCHOOL?

LACKING CHILDREN?

How can the encounter with Otherness - with difference - take place as responsibly as possible?
Stella Nova - another narrative of this sub-burb and the inhabitants living there.

View the preschool as a site for ethical, aesthetical and political practice.

An ethics of an encounter.

Subjectivity is formed in relations and in exchange in between children, adults and the material environment.

Having trust in the potentialities already inherent and immanent to children and preschools.

Listening

Not making the other into the same.
A common answer?

You know that you are not allowed to go outside the fence!

MAY WE GO OUTSIDE THE FENCE?

It is risky – the adults do not know where the project is going.

The pedagogues are taking care of the children’s collective desires

Through bringing in affordances to the environment: staffies, papers, pens etc to bring along for the children.
A lot of planning and thinking by the pedagogues takes place. The rich child, rich parent, rich teachers.

Children are already "micro-politically global" — they are already involved and participants in the global community.

HARD WORK
Focus
Cooperation
Patience
Concentration

A lot of discussions and negotiations take place.
We have to have trust and a belief in LIFE

Every other week, every other fortnight, every month, something unexpected, something that surprised us or made us marvel, something that disappointed us, something that humiliated us, would burst out in a child or in the children. But this was what gave us our sense of an unfinished world, a world unknown, a world we ought to know better...To be capable of maintaining this gift of marvelling and wonder is a fundamental quality in a person working with children (Malaguzzi, in Cagliari et al., 2016, p.392).