

Förskolegården

En pedagogisk miljö för barns, möten,
delaktighet och inflytande

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Title

The preschool yard. A pedagogical environment for children's interaction and social participation

Abstract

This thesis is the result of a study that considers children's encounters with others; participation and influence in a pedagogical outdoor environment in three different preschool playgrounds. More specifically, a study is undertaken of how children's encounters are shaped in the pedagogically adapted outdoor environment of the preschool with the focus on how children's participation and influence finds expression in the preschool playground's different facilities. The physical environment is seen as meaningful and the focus is on which affordances arise in the physical environment related to facility. The study's theoretical approach is based mainly on G. H. Mead's social psychological theory and the meeting with *the other* which is combined with theories that call attention to the significance of the facility. An ethnographic method has been applied. By way of two years' field studies, with a total of 78 days spent in the three different environments, data has been collected through observations and photography and by listening to, and talking with, children and preschool teachers. To participate in the children's everyday life has been a precondition for understanding children's different encounters and meeting places in the preschool playgrounds. On the basis of the analysed results, the study shows that all three preschool playgrounds had pedagogical outdoor environments which were designed so that the majority of the facilities gave a variety of offerings, something that contributed to different children being able to relate to, and find, their own affordances in different facilities. The results of the study also show that the majority of preschool children in the studied activities were socially competent and good negotiators. Thereby, they were shown to have good preconditions for participating and exercising influence in the day-to-day outdoor activities. At the same time, the study results demonstrate that the children's agency and interaction at all three preschool playgrounds are determined on the basis of the level of recognition they received in their encounter with other children and in the encounter with teachers.

Keywords: Preschool children, preschool yard, interaction, outdoor environment, participation, place.

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