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Inclusion and exclusion processes in children's play

Based on a pilot project with analyses of video recordings in a daycare centre, a model for analysis of inclusion and exclusion is being developed. The model can be used as an observation, analysis and evaluation tool that examines the learning environment and children's communities in daycare facilities, and in which inclusion and exclusion processes can be observed in pedagogical practice. Whether children play alone, with other children or with an adult, they are usually included physically, but not always socially or mentally. The article demonstrates how practice can be analysed with the aim of qualifying and systematizing the work of including all children in communities. Results from the pilot project show, among other things, how children have strategies for becoming part of the children's community or an adult-guided play, and how a child who walks around alone is not excluded but interacts with the physical learning environment.

Keywords: Inclusion, exclusion, inclusion matrix, children's communities, play, video analysis

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In a pedagogical perspective, in international educational research (Mitchell, 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Mayo, 2012; Melhuish, Ereky-Stevens, & Petrogiannis, 2015), one looks on how pedagogues organize pedagogical practice so that high quality can be offered to all children and all children can be physically, socially, and mentally included. According to a survey of the work with inclusion in daycare centres, conducted by the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA), there are clear connections between several systematic forms of practice and strategies and an inclusive practice. The mapping shows that there is a focus on inclusion, but the mapping also indicates that exclusion is a widespread phenomenon in preschools (EVA, 2014). This indicates, as international research also demands, that there is a lack of empirical research that shows evidence about which factors contribute to more inclusive research, pedagogy, and didactics in preschools (Nind, 2014, 2017; Engsig, 2022).

Research questions and methodology

The research question that is sought to be answered in this article is: Which processes in communities in daycare settings lead to some children being included while others are excluded?

The research is based on observational studies of the quality of the learning environment and children's (un)structured play activities in a daycare centre using video recorded with GoPro cameras mounted on the children. These video recordings are encoded using the Playground Observation of Peer Engagement (POPE) (Locke, Shih, Kretzmann, & Kasari, 2016). POPE makes it possible to indicate how often children play by themselves or engage in play with others, who they play with the most, and when an activity or play is led or guided by staff. Video recordings make it possible to capture the children's own voices and record children's activities/play and togetherness from a first-person perspective. The modern technology and method have enabled novel approaches to children's everyday lives that have not previously been available to child researchers and which, combined with action learning, can both give children a voice and make research more inclusive (Nind, 2014; Østergaard & Eskildsen, 2023).

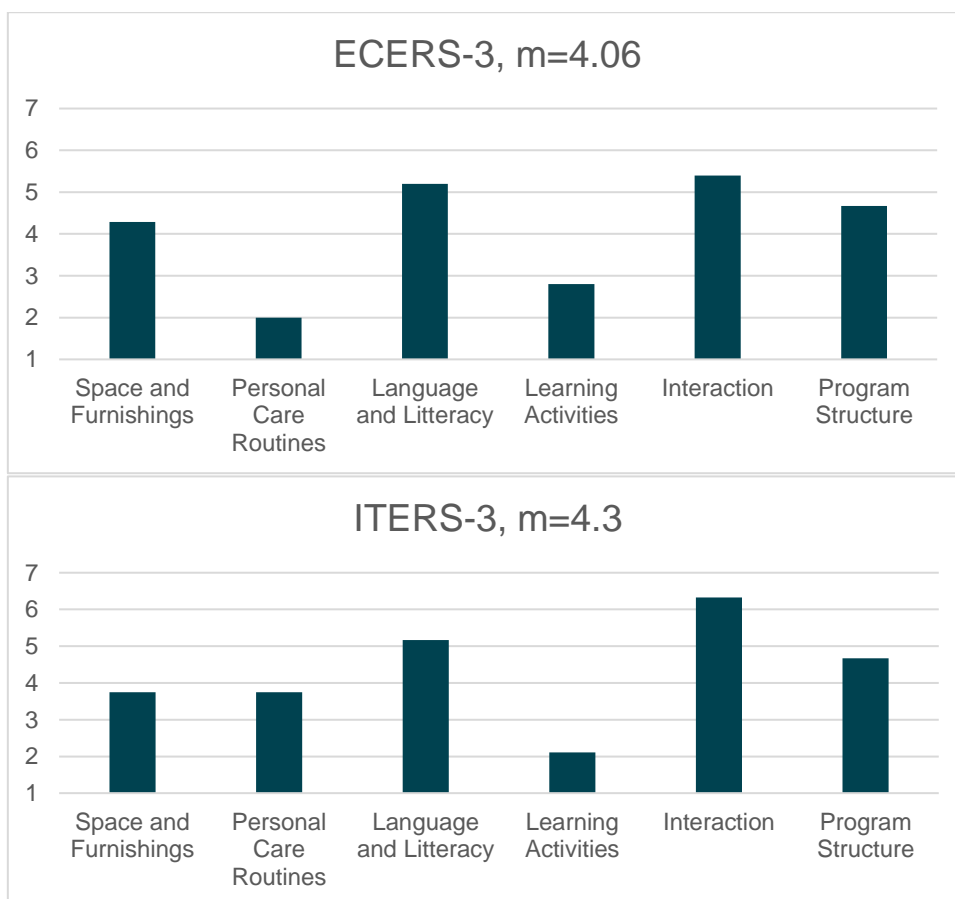
The video recordings have been analysed to identify inclusion markers, i.e., signs of inclusion or exclusion, which are discussed and justified theoretically in the so-called inclusion matrix (Qvortrup, 2012). Lars Qvortrup's original definition of inclusion is a matrix made up of mental, social, and physical inclusion on the one hand and of different communities on the other (Qvortrup, 2012). We choose to conduct a pragmatic form analysis (Peirce, 1955) that delineates the three forms of inclusion and exclusion and identifies children's communities as the empirically based delimitation from the outside world. Children's communities are distinguished and observed as child-child interactions, child-adult interactions, and children's interaction with physical space (see Figure 1). Thus, it becomes easier "to observe how key distinctions work or operate in practice" (Jönhill, 2012, p. 54). The question is not what inclusion is, but what inclusion does. Being included is about actions that bring about inclusion. This develops the original inclusion matrix for tracing inclusion and exclusion, so that it can clarify differences between being inside or outside a social system as a form-analytical tool (Jönhill, 2012). This means that we can observe and distinguish diverse types of inclusion, e.g., how a child can be physically included, but at the same time feel mentally excluded.

The video recordings have been analysed to show which inclusion and exclusion processes and strategies emerge and which the children use to position themselves with and communicate about when they participate in play and other forms of participation in the children's community.

Data

Video recordings have been made in a daycare centre in two groups. The daycare centre has been selected and invited to participate based on observations that show minimal to good quality for the preschool group's learning environment measured by the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3, $m=4.06$). This is above the average for the municipality's daycare ($m=3.54$) (EVA, 2020b; Næsby, Drevsholt, & Medom, 2022). Interaction scores 5.4. The nursery group scores 4.3 on the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-3). Interaction scores 6.33 (Næsby, Agerbæk & Medom, 2022).

Good quality means that there are more materials available for play and learning, as well as an interior design that supports the children's well-being, learning, development, and formation [Bildung]. Continuously, good interactions are also observed, i.e., “that the staff involves themselves in the children's activities in a curious and enriching way” (Næsby, Drevsholt, & Medom, 2022, p. 10).



The quantitative data were collected in the two groups between 9 a.m. and 12 noon: a nursery group with children aged 2-3 years and a preschool group with children aged four. The time span of both observations is similar and was conducted by two certified observers. The quantitative data from the observations primarily serve to select a relevant daycare facility. This article focuses on the qualitative data.

The qualitative data consists of video recordings. Permission has been obtained for video recordings and their use in research and teaching from staff and parents. On the observation days, the children present were asked if they would like to participate and were explained that we would like to see how children play in a daycare so that we can educate talented adults to work with children.

Over two days, video recordings with GoPro cameras were made in the living rooms and on the playground between 9 am and 2 pm, recorded by ten different children in the two groups. A stationary camera is also installed on the playground. Each recording lasts about 20 minutes.

Twenty-two video recordings have been collected. A few of the video recordings have subsequently been excluded due to errors in the camera during recording.

Inclusion

In a pedagogical and interactionist perspective, inclusion is about participation, interaction, and relationships (Sheridan, Samuelsson, & Johansson, 2009; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2012; Næsby, 2015; Bratterud, Sandseter, & Seland, 2012). That is, how the communities inside and outside the daycare create space for different opportunities for interaction and in a dialectical relationship form the basis for children's participation (Veresov, 2020).

The more distal criteria for inclusion are the structural conditions and conditions for the organisation of the daycare area, such as the historical, economic, and political-ideological framework (Bronfenbrenner & Morris), which affect practice and the child's life in the daycare indirectly. But it is also about ethical perspectives, as expressed, for example, in conventions on children's rights and in democratic theoretical ideas about the limits of what children should have influence on and be exposed to (Biesta, 2007, Engsig, 2022). In the interactionist perspective, we see children as competent and valuable informants (Næsby, 2014).

The more subjective (or relative) criteria for inclusion include whether children participate in everyday activities in a daycare facility, whether the children are valued individually, and how it takes place. This shifts the responsibility for inclusion to staff. Successful inclusion is a question of staff's attitude towards children, i.e., their view of children, learning and development and the way in which the pedagogues unfold this through justifications for planning and implementing pedagogical processes. According to Næsby (2015), inclusion in a pedagogical perspective is aimed at children's opportunities to gain experience and develop competences so that they can succeed and have a good life today and, in the future, i.e., awareness of all children's right to good interaction, learning and participation in communities and attention to exclusion mechanisms.

Research shows that educated staff know that being heard, seen, and involved is crucial for children in vulnerable positions. Therefore, they work to create a community around the child's interests and play so that other children discover their strengths and interests (Ringsmose & Svinth, 2019). In organized pedagogy, inclusion is non-negotiable. Children have the right to participate, and justified, planned, and implemented pedagogical work must always take place based on a didactic framework. In more informal systems, e.g., in a playgroup where children play for themselves, inclusion can be negotiable (Jönhill, 2012).

As mentioned, the pedagogical-sociological definition of inclusion in the present study builds on the so-called inclusion matrix (Qvortrup, 2012; Næsby, 2015). To get closer to what happens in the interactions between the children, we take a more pedagogical approach, which we substantiate and relate to empirical quality research (Næsby, 2020) and theory of children's play (Zosh et al., 2018). Thus, in the definition of inclusion, we bypass prevailing definitions, such as the "Manchester definition", which has an explicit focus on learning (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Qvortrup 2012, Næsby, 2014) and definitions within the disability and vulnerability area that are more individual-

oriented (Sergeant et al, 2022). We are more, like inclusion researcher David Mitchell (2014), concerned with what goes on in inclusion and exclusion processes and how it can guide staff to a more inclusive practice. And we are concerned that the research itself is inclusive (Nind, 2014, 2017).

According to Lars Qvortrup (2012; Qvortrup & Qvortrup, 2017) one must distinguish between physical, social, and mental inclusion, and one must distinguish between whether what one can observe is a snapshot of a continuum between inclusion and exclusion, or whether it is permanent or repetitive exclusion processes that form a pattern and that burden the individual child. A child can be momentarily excluded from one community, only to be included at the moment when, for example, the right admission ticket appears and is accepted, and a child can be partially excluded, e.g. from a certain community, but be included in another (Jönhill, 2012) It can happen a few times, or it can happen repeatedly over time, thus creating problems with exclusion from the given children's community.

Physical inclusion is determined by the question of presence or absence (Qvortrup, 2012). We extend this narrow definition to the fact that inclusion and exclusion in the learning environment in pedagogical practice in a broader sense are determined by how, for example, the learning environment in a daycare is designed to meet the children in a way that makes it meaningful to them (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2012; Pyle & Danniels, 2017).

Social inclusion is determined by the question of participation or non-participation (Qvortrup, 2012), which we will explain in a broader sense as whether the pedagogical processes and the children's own communities are inclusive (Moser, Leseman, Melhuish, Broekhuizen, & Slot, 2017).

Mental inclusion is determined by the question of experiencing inclusion: Does the individual experience himself as included, or does he not? (Qvortrup, 2012). We see this as the question of whether the encounter with the structural and procedural qualities in the learning environment is experienced meaningfully by the child himself, e.g., by engaging in play with self-chosen themes, objects, and people he finds relevant and interesting (Zosh et al., 2018). Especially young children spend energy on creating meaning from information in the learning environment in play and therefore need guidance and contextualization to derive meaning from the learning environment. This can be done, for example, by the adults scaffolding the child's coupling of added information to known experiences and concepts in meaningful ways, because it maximizes the child's learning. Zosh et al., (2018) thus argue for an expanded play concept so that it is understood and used as a spectrum (continuum) of play categories with free play at one extreme and directly directed play at the other and guided play in the middle, so that the pedagogue in practice has more opportunities to target the choice of play pedagogy to the child and the children's community (Zosh et al., 2018). With several play categories to choose from, the possibility of targeting play opens so that children can participate with different prerequisites and thus build a bridge to the child's experience of being included.

Moreover, inclusion can take place in different social contexts. In the inclusion matrix, Qvortrup (2012) distinguishes between: Formal, professionally led learning and development communities.

Adult-child communities (interpersonal communities). Informal, adult-organised communities (within and in connection with the institution). Self-organized communities (within and in connection with the institution). Child-child communities (interpersonal communities) (other forms/aspects can be added) (Qvortrup, 2012).

In the inclusion matrix, we list in the left row the three inclusion types and in the right row the inclusion markers we find in the analyses of the video recordings (see figure 3). In this way, we simplify the model and can use it as an observation and analysis tool. We want to focus empirically on the learning environment and children's communities, including which inclusion and exclusion processes can be observed, whether the children play alone or with adults. Thus, we do not focus on other communities, e.g., outside the daycare centre, although these, as mentioned, also influence everyday life in the daycare (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2012).

Children's Communities

According to section 8(3) of the Act on daycare facilities, the pedagogical learning environment must be organised so that it considers the children's perspective and participation, the children's community, the composition of the children's group and the children's different prerequisites. In EVA's evaluation of the work with the strengthened pedagogical curriculum (2020a), leaders and pedagogues have been asked what they perceive as a children's community. We link this empirical data with theory to identify what constitutes a children's community, after which we link it to the inclusion matrix. Four characteristics of a children's community are analysed (EVA, 2020a):

- 1) You are together about something in a children's community, writes EVA (2020a). We define this "something" as a community of values, e.g., the "common third" (Husen, 1996) in play and activity.
- 2) Children's communities are initiated by children, adults or by both groups (EVA, 2020a, p. 6). The statements made by managers and pedagogues here are also described in the Act on daycare facilities. Empirically, English research shows that the highest quality in daycare is seen precisely where the pedagogical processes are initiated by all participants in the children's and adult communities (Taggart et al., 2015).
- 3) In well-functioning children's communities, the form of interaction is positive, and the children learn from each other (EVA, 2020a). For some children, especially children in vulnerable positions, this is fundamental to benefit from daycare (Næsby, 2020).
- 4) Good and inclusive children's communities strengthen self-esteem and self-determination – now and in the long term (EVA, 2020a, p. 6).

According to EVA's study, the pedagogical staff work to develop social ground rules, prevent bullying, highlight the children's prosocial behaviour, i.e., positive actions that benefit others, e.g., by saying "You cooperate" (EVA, 2020a, p. 8). However, according to several quality measurements, support for prosocial behaviour is highlighted as a challenge for the pedagogue in practice (EVA, 2020b; Næsby, Drevsholt, & Medom, 2022).

The strengthened pedagogical curriculum emphasises that the pedagogical learning environment must always be organised to consider the children's perspective and participation, the children's community, the composition of the children's group and the children's different prerequisites. The pedagogues must always consider and reflect on this in relation to the organization of the learning environment.

The fact that the form and content of the learning environment in relation to interaction and well-being (care) is reflected can make the daycare a meeting place for values and the exchange of goals and interests (Husen, 1996; Biesta, 2007). Rather than planning a practice with individual learning goals for, for example, socially disadvantaged children, an inclusion perspective must be taken that promotes an inclusion culture, i.e., a community where children can participate, both on their own and on the community's terms, where good interaction is paramount and facilitates well-being, learning and development and thus for inclusion (Næsby, 2015).

Inclusion and children's communities

We have previously defined *physical inclusion*, among other things as the degree to which the learning environment is designed so that it is experienced meaningfully for the children. In an inclusion context, children's community can be defined through the staff's choice of physical layout, selection, and availability of materials, and that the child experiences a sense of belonging to a place. This can be described as "sense-of-place" (Stedman 2002), understood as the meaning a person or group attributes to a place or environment.

Social inclusion is defined by the question of participation – not participation, and whether the pedagogical processes and the children's own communities are inclusive. In this view, children's communities can be defined as communities where children participate while they are together on "something". According to Husen, a common third, which we mention above, is about an external common concern that several people share and that they are engaged in together. It can be an experience or an activity where something is accomplished. A crucial point is that all participants have an experience of being involved in all phases, including decisions, execution and, not least, feel the value of what is going on. In other words, when several people are together on "something", a common third, it is essential that the participants experience commitment, and it is precisely the commitment to the value of what is created together that is central to the participants' experience of being common (Husen, 1996), belonging and participating.

The meaning of belonging is seen in Peers and Fleer (2014) in the context of the concepts of "being and becoming". The authors propose a deeper understanding of the dialectical relationships between unity and differences, where "belonging" refers to different individuals' self-understanding or identity (being) and the desire for relational belonging, which must be realized before they can become participants in a children's community (becoming).

A participation in a children's community can thus also be understood as the realization of "sense-of-belonging" in the individual. Belonging refers to communities and belonging and is seen as a fundamental human need that is a prerequisite for the development of an identity (Emilson & Eek-

Karlsson, 2021). Based on Vygotsky's thoughts (1978), Peers and Fleer expand their understanding by characterizing participation and learning in play as a movement between "in and out" of empirical reality. Thus, it complements the more fundamental concept of belonging to a family or group with experiencing a certain number of lasting, positive, and meaningful relationships (Peers & Fleer, 2014, p. 925). Relationships that are made visible both through the bond between people and through artifacts and spatial dimensions in everyday life in daycare (Østergaard & Eskildsen, 2023). With belonging in this understanding, it is the interaction between the environment (the entire learning environment) and the children that creates the basis for both physical, social, and mental inclusion.

Mental inclusion is defined by the question of whether the meeting between both the structural and procedural qualities in the learning environment is perceived as meaningful to the children.

Children need to understand that they are accepted for who they are and know that others care about them. This sense of being can be related to how other children and pedagogical staff show respect for each child through greetings, conversations, and actions. When a child has a sense of being recognized and seen, he builds and maintains relationships with others. The most important aspect is that a child always acts in changing social contexts as an active participant using culturally and socially created signs (Vygotsky, 1978). By doing this, an individual reorganizes the entire social situation and makes it different (Vygotsky, 1978; Veresov, 2020). It is a point that the reorganization itself occurs intrapsychically and therefore cannot be observed directly. Rather, it can be the interpsychic processes preceding and after "the child, through his self-understanding as a kind of psychological prism, has regulated his relationship with the environment" (Vygotsky, 1978; Veresov, 2020, p. 188).

For the child, being part of and working to participate in the children's community is a continuous attention to connecting with other people as well as to the types of activities and physical environments that occur in the daycare. The children's community is a phenomenon that is constantly created, maintained, and changed through actions and activities (Research in the profession and education of pedagogues, 2022), which affects each child, but which each child also influences (Veresov, 2020). In the children's community, opportunities for inclusion and exclusion are created, but the child himself also creates opportunities for inclusion and exclusion.

Analysis

The video recordings have all been reviewed and initially analysed based on children's solo play, play with other children, and play where staff is involved (Figure 1). Next, we have printed situational descriptions and communication (verbal/nonverbal) in small sequences (1-3 minutes). In the analysis, we have asked: What signs of inclusion and/or exclusion do we observe? And how can they be explained?

Within this systematics, we have looked for signs, or what we call markers of inclusion and exclusion, respectively. Inclusion markers can be, for example, when children play alone or look at pictures, books, and other materials, they often whisper/speak loudly to themselves. They think

aloud and show joyful or lively facial expressions. The first analyses of video based on this systematics thus led to an expanded understanding of alone time. Children may well be or walk around alone. It is not necessarily an exclusion marker, as they interact with the learning environment. Conversely, an exclusion marker may be, for example, that a child spends a lot of time walking around searching for other children or games/activities to participate in without, for example, stopping and interacting with the environment (an exhibition or the like), or that the child seems decidedly bored, as Hansen (2012) has also shown.

In the next phase, the markers are transferred to the inclusion matrix, where differentiation can be made between physical, social, and mental inclusion (Figures 2, 3 and 4).

Figure 1) Inclusion and exclusion markers

	<i>Inclusion markers</i>			<i>Exclusion markers</i>		
	CA	IBC	IBA	CA	IBC	IBA
Form of community	Alone Interaction with the physical learning environment	Interaction between the children	Interaction between adults and children	Alone Interaction with the physical learning environment)	Interaction between the children	Interaction between adults and children

Video example 1: Child interact with the learning environment

The first example from the video footage is about a barely 3-year-old girl who, with her camera on her chest, walks alone down the hallway between play rooms and wardrobe. She stops in front of an exhibition with names and photos of all the children in the room, including herself. For more than a minute, she pronounces the children's names aloud to herself. The few she does not recognize, she skips. A few times she goes back to the photo before the one she did not recognize and repeats her "name reading."

The observation (video recording) can now be analysed and the markers – the signs of inclusion and/or exclusion can be noted in the matrix along with the scores items form the initial ECERS-3 observation.

Figure 2) The physical learning environment

	Markers
Physical inclusion	Exhibition in the learning environment pictures of the other children, "me and those I go to nursery with" Decor so abundant and relevant toys and materials are available to the children Many items displayed (5.5.1) several of current interest (5.5.2).
Social inclusion	Interaction with "the others"/learning environment – a meaningful understanding that "here I belong" You can easily tell what the children's interests are (5.7.1)
Mental (experienced) Inclusion	Talking to herself – talking to the pictures Know/recognize the other children's names Shows satisfaction/harmony that can be interpreted as she experiences being part of the community

The girl in the example is alone – but not excluded. She interacts with the physical learning environment (the exhibition of children's photos). She looks at pictures of the other children, says their names, and connects socially and mentally in her interaction with them (Veresov, 2020). The example shows how the structural framework – in this case the interior design with the exhibited materials – creates conditions for inclusion. The interaction creates sense of place, i.e., a sense of recognizability, manageability and predictability that can potentially lead to a sense-of-belonging.

Thus, we can say that by interacting with the learning environment, she gains a meaningful understanding of belonging to the group. The child interacting with an exhibition is talking to herself, but the exhibition also speaks to the child in a meaningful way. The child has an aesthetic experience that creates a connection between exhibition and psyche. The child experiences meaningfulness in an experience by connecting it to something he already knows (Zosh, et al., 2018, p. 5) and is thus figuratively included. In this way, a meaningful environment gives a "voice" to the children's experiences and backgrounds and makes learning and play culturally relevant to them (Parker & Thomsen, 2010).

Children's exhibitions, which in this way can give children meaningful experiences and experiences, can, like play theoretical explanations (Zosh, et al., 2018), call for children's active involvement. This means that children have choices – large or small – regarding the content or processes of their activities. In the idea of active engagement, there is no requirement for physical or bodily activity, it is more something with "what children have their attention directed to, whether their bodies are active or not" (Zosh, et al., 2018, p. 4). Children are engaged in a self-directed effort and at the same time maintain the ability to maintain a distance. "I'm me seeing me and others in a photo, but I'm me and the other (in the photo) at the same time."

The design of the learning environment must consider that inclusion depends, among other things, on having enough toys and materials, so that all children can currently have "the necessary admission ticket" in their hands (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2015). In several videos, it is observed that play participation and inclusion can depend on the presence of toys and materials so that children are not rejected, or conflicts arise. For example, it is observed how it is necessary to acquire paper money to participate in the grocery game; How you must have a character like the

other children to participate, and how children communicatively negotiate to share toys – and not share. In a sand game, a child wants a shovel to help make a cake, but there are no more shovels available. The shovel is the necessary "admission ticket". In another example, we see two toddlers playing mother/baby with some figures. A third child sits and watches but participate (only observingly) in the game because they all have figures. The importance of having materials – and having enough of them – has also been found in other studies in nurseries, e.g., Hansen (2012).

Video example 2: Child interacts with adults and children

In example two, we see a child approaching a table where a pedagogue and a group of children are building LEGO and playing with small dolls. The child – a boy wearing the camera – has dressed up and is supposed to be a monster. The teacher sees the boy and meets his initiative, among other things by loudly exclaiming: "Oh no, a monster, oh no, what are we going to do...", to which the boy makes monster noises. The pedagogue gets up and invites the boy to run after him. He does this while the pedagogue continues to shout: "Oh no, a monster...". A moment later, the pedagogue runs around the entire institution with a big laughing and shouting "monster" after her. After a lap of running, the monster catches the adult. The pedagogue encourages other children to participate by shouting: "Oh no, the monster has taken me – run – run", after which the boy runs after the other children – laughing big.

Figure 3) Child interacts with adults and children

	Markers
Physical inclusion	The children are together for something Other children are invited in The activity is "open" (29.5.1; 35.7.3)
Social inclusion	The form of togetherness is positive The pedagogue magnifies the child's initiative and makes it visible to the other children – and the other children to participants in the play The teacher is the play leader but withdraws when the play can continue the children's own terms (34.5.2; 34,7.3)
Mental (experienced) Inclusion	Showing joy (shouting and laughing loudly; looking at the other children and the adult and laughing) 29.7.2; 30.5) Joy (laughter)

The markers we find in the observation of the "monster play" indicate that the boy is included in the play and a community emerges, first with the pedagogue, then with the other children. The pedagogue magnifies the boy's initiative so that he can feel his seen and met emotionally. The boy shows immense joy (laughs loudly) throughout the play. Based on these emotional expressions, we interpret that it is experienced meaningfully and that this play strengthens the child's self-determination.

Another crucial point is that the pedagogue's guidance of and participation in play ceases where the children themselves continue playing. This supports the children in playing themselves; to be able to manage and develop the inherent narrative in the play (the monster chasing the other children), and the pedagogue works inclusively.

The pedagogue expands the story, which comes from the child's initiative, involves other children – and the children themselves continue to play. The teacher withdraws from the play, which can now continue based on the children's own terms. The boy and the other children have their full attention focused on the content of the play and each other as participants. It shows that they experience play as meaningful (Zosh et al, 2018), as a positive interaction that strengthens self-esteem and the boy's sense-of-being and belonging. It is an activity that is "open" (everyone can participate, or not) and that strengthens well-being and self-determination (Moser et al., 2017).

The centre generally scores high for Interaction as measured by the ECERS-3 tools in the study of the quality of the daycare learning environment (Næsby, Drevsholt, & Medom, 2022), but is challenged on the point of being sensitive to children's nonverbal cues and that of identifying children's positive behaviour towards other children (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2015, p. 85). The boy's behaviour – I am a monster – is only indirectly recognized and singled out as positive behaviour towards the other children. The pedagogue is a role model, and her behaviour shows the other children how the boy's play initiative meets and is supported positively, and she could reinforce the initiative by articulating it towards the children's group.

Video example 3: Children interact with children

In a third example, a girl (4-5 years old) sits on the floor on a play mat and plays with a fairytale house and dolls. A boy of the same age - the same as in example 2 - comes with a toy rocket in his hand and asks if he can join. He cannot, she replies, "because I'm playing with Yvonne" (a girl she has been playing with for a while). The boy asks again – a couple of times – if he can join and tries to point out that he can also play with things (referring to: “so the adults say”). She says no – and turns the fairytale house around and sets up some play equipment between her and the boy. She also takes the toys from the boy’s hands. Then the boy gets up and we see on the video how he turns his body and looks around for other play opportunities.

Figure 4) Child interacts with second child

	Markers
Physical inclusion	Are in the living room near other children Communicating with other children

Social inclusion	<p style="text-align: center;">Contacts second child</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Have toys that could give access to play (31.5.1)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rejected linguistically and bodily (puts playhouse in front) but without further conflicts (31.5.3)</p>
Mental (experienced) Inclusion	<p style="text-align: center;">Talking to another child</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Interact with the other child and with toys, but walk away from the other child after the rejection (31.5.3)</p>

As we see in the example, children sometimes reject each other, e.g., on the grounds of "I'm playing with someone else". It can be experienced as a threat to the current social order in the ongoing play that the girl in the example has with her friend. In principle, it is fair that she protects the game that is going on, just as it must be respected that a child sometimes needs "privacy".

The boy is physically included in the room/institution, but in the current situation he is socially rejected. The girl sets up an obstacle so that he cannot join, and she articulates this rejection. Bodily she also turns away from him. There is a short conversation – question/answer – but the "verbal admission ticket" presented by the boy – even though he asks several times – is not accepted and he is momentarily excluded. We interpret it as a momentary experience of exclusion, in that no "common third" is established.

Discussion

In the everyday life of the daycare centre, children seek to live up to the expectations of adults and to some extent other children, while at the same time seeking to gain recognition both formally and informally in the children's group by being "active and competent participants in underground life" (Koch, 2013, p. 99). This means that children's well-being and opportunities for inclusion in children's communities increase when the child can balance between participation and recognition in the children's culture, and among adults in connection with play and activities (Lind, 2019).

How does the structural framework influence/create conditions for inclusion/exclusion processes?

The learning environment consists of both interactions with others and interactions with the surroundings. This means that the design of the environment, e.g., whether there are many child-oriented exhibitions, appropriate amounts of toys and other interesting materials and equipment, has an impact on the children's opportunities to be included in play and other children's communities. The example of the girl (figure 2) interacting with the exhibition of teddy bears and photos of the children shows how the learning environment can be inclusive. Empirically, she is alone (there are no other children or adults nearby), but according to the theory we understand that she has her attention focused on the children's community – the other children in the photos on display – and in the process she is both physically and mentally included. The exhibition is part of the learning

environment and judging from the interaction, it meets the child in a way that makes it interesting and meaningful for her to look at and relate to.

Similarly, crowding can create more exclusion. The structural framework can prevent participation/inclusion - e.g., if there are too many children in the group for everyone to sit near a kindergarten teacher if desired. Or if there is no room on the floor for both the car track and the farmhouse to be there when several children want to play with them at the same time (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2015).

The social rules of the game also provide a framework for inclusion and exclusion. They are present both in the direct interactions, e.g. when the pedagogical staff praise and acknowledge the children's initiatives, support and emphasize positive prosocial behaviour, and when the children in their interaction, as in example 3, try to gain access to a game by referring to "that you can do it", or to something the staff has said, That it decides those you are allowed to do, e.g. participate.

How do pedagogues work inclusively?

The complexity of practice is also shown by, for example, reversing the example of the monster. What does it look like from the other children's perspective? Children who are playing with blocks and dolls (example 2) may have their play interrupted. The pedagogue thinks it would be good to support the boy who plays monster, but this happens – for a period at least – at the expense of that play and the children who are already doing something else. In everyday life, there are many dialogues that are not continued, developed, and followed up because other children require attention. It is both a challenge structurally; there are not enough adults, organizationally; for instance, too few adults come to the playground immediately after lunch, and educationally; how do I meet all children's individual needs for guidance and support for play and learning? An answer to the last question may be that it is about teaching children how to play and learn and establish good friendships and interactions, for example by supporting prosocial behaviour (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2015).

In example two, the pedagogue shows positive recognition of the child's initiative, gives meaning to it, and strengthens the sense of belonging (Peers & Fleeer, 2014). Sometimes it is done with body language, common gaze direction, and physical or communicative contact. For example, the pedagogue shows that she is horrified: "oh, no, a monster".

From an inclusion perspective, the pedagogue is being empathetic, responsive, attentive, and sensitive. In general staff show interest in and appreciation of children's perspectives and offer mental and physical accessibility and facilitate secure attachment. Specifically, interacting with the children in their current and closest development zone, guiding them into the potential development zone, and then leaving the initiative to the children themselves – so that they learn to play (Næsby, Okslund, Pedersen, & Skytte, 2022). This gives all children the opportunity to meet the expectations, e.g., in relation to the learning environment's (performance) values and align with their individual (performance) abilities (see, for example, Goffman 2010, Frederiksen, 2012). With

Veresov (2020), we can also say that sense-of-being and becoming stand in a dialectical relationship with belonging.

In inclusive practice, it is precisely important to highlight prosocial behaviour (positive actions that benefit others) (EVA, 2020a). This means, for example, that the pedagogue points out and talks about positive interactions between the children, e.g., praising a child who helps another child, sending appreciative smiles to a child who helps set the table (Harms, Cryer, Clifford, & Yazejian, 2019). Prosocial behaviour in the nursery is also promoted by the pedagogue talking to the children about their actions, feelings towards others, e.g., helping to recognise and verbalise facial expressions and explaining the intentions behind other children's actions (Harms, Cryer, Clifford, & Yazejian, 2019) as well as very concretely: "There, there, just as gentle, otherwise it hurts".

In an inclusive practice, the pedagogue interacts positively with the children during play and activity, helps the children get the materials they need, and occasionally guides and shows the children how to use and have fun with the materials (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2015). In "The Monster Play", the pedagogue magnifies a child's initiative, becomes participant in a play, and includes by making the child visible to the other children and helps the child into the play.

In example three, where the same boy as in the "monster game" is rejected by the girl, it requires a pedagogical intervention to be able to help out in the interaction between the boy and the girl if he were to participate in the game. Here it is not enough for the boy to refer to what "an adult has said" or to have the right "admission ticket". The pedagogical intervention could be based on professional judgement as to whether to intervene. This estimate includes an assessment of whether the girl who is dismissive has something at stake with other children in the play. Is she waiting for another child to come? Does she need alone time (private life)? Is it okay for her to reject the boy? Is it something that happens again? Several times, or is it only in the concrete and momentary situation?

Do children include or exclude each other in play?

In the effort to gain participation and recognition from the other children, the children will often use conscious strategies in the attempt, despite a rejection, to maintain their self-esteem and protect their self-understanding.

One strategy we have observed in the video recordings is that children – to participate in play – try to secure the right "admission ticket". The child in example three brings a prop to play and asks permission, but in this case, it is not enough. In general, research, e.g., on affordances – the options toys and materials offer children (Gibson, 2014) – shows that insufficient quantity and quality of toys and materials creates more conflicts and rejections among children and that quantity, variety and breadth of toys and materials causes children to play together more and for longer periods of time (Sandseter & Storli, 2020).

In another video, we observed how a child repeatedly asks to be allowed to participate in a play but is rejected because "she doesn't have the same toy characters" as the other children. Only when the child "cracks the code" and finds himself a matching toy does the child manage to join the game.

Exclusion can occur when there is a discrepancy on social characteristics (from temperament, individual competencies, and skills to more culturally borne traits such as values, ideals, and interests). This can happen, for example, if a child is "too small", attends another group, has late language development, or has other ethnicity, etc. (Frederiksen, 2012). With reference to Frederiksen (2012), discrepancies arise between the (performance) values of the learning environment and the individual's (performance) ability.

Conversely, inclusion is promoted when children are safe, can read each other's emotions and align expectations to each other's performance level and negotiate a game (e.g.: "Playing in a farm? Can I join? So, I could be the kind of person who brought food to the animals?). There is excellent quality in the children's communities when the children are respectful of each other, exhibit positive social behaviour and that the learning environment is stimulating and challenging, so that there is an opportunity for the children to have many conversations with each other (Frederiksen, 2012; Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2015).

Conclusion

The article demonstrates how practice can be analysed in a systematic framework with the aim of focusing on which inclusion and exclusion processes in daycare facilities take place and identifies which processes should be supported and which – e.g., based on the purpose of the Act on daycare facilities – should be avoided. Recordings with GoPro cameras and the analysis in relation to inclusion markers can contribute to a systematic insight into what children do and do not do in the interactions that are offered to them and that arise. It could qualify the work of including all the children in communities.

For play and activities to allow all children to succeed, it is crucial to consider children's opportunities "to participate and influence content, activities, form, organization and learning environment" (Sheridan, 2009, p. 251). It refers to mental and social inclusion and is about how children experience and understand the world, and thus how they from their own perspective seek to create meaning and manage interaction with the environment, staff, and other children. From an inclusion perspective, when we want to approach children from their perspective, we must try to understand the children's own meaning-making based on their abilities and understandings of their own lives (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2012). This also applies to physical inclusion, which is strengthened through reflected pedagogical design and organization of the learning environment.

All children have equal opportunities to participate in learning activities, play and routines with interest and commitment if they engage in a way that considers their personal requirements, time, and context (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2012). Through high-quality interaction, the pedagogue can provide sensitive guidance and establish the emotional basis for play and experimentation in the environment. As in example three, a child may be momentarily excluded from one community, only to be included in the next, as in example two, and a child may be partially excluded, e.g., from one community, but included in another (Jönhill, 2012). In concrete practice, the pedagogue should be

aware of whether the momentary or partial exclusions constitute a pattern that negatively affects a child's self-understanding and indicates a more systematic and thus problematic exclusion from the children's community.

The first analyses in the pilot project show that, as in the first example, children can be included even if they are not together with other children or adults for a period. That it is important to have the right "admission ticket" to participate in a community, but that other conditions, such as the strength of the relationship other children may have with each other, as in example three, are a stronger inclusion marker than having or saying the right things. And that the role of the pedagogue, as in example two, means a lot to the children's opportunities to participate in the children's communities. The explanation why exclusion is a widespread phenomenon in daycare centres may be that disorganised pedagogy opens for exclusion mechanisms, e.g., by leaving children on their own for a large part of the time (Jönhill, 2012; Næsby, 2014).

Strengths and limitations

It is relevant to conduct more research into how the pedagogue is a co-creator of the conditions for children's well-being, learning, development, and inclusion and can be exclusionary through their own actions or omission of action. Furthermore, it is relevant to investigate which processes are at play in the children's own communities, as this is still under-elucidated in the research. In this pilot project, we have tried to assess a new method (video recording and inclusion matrix) that can shed light on the processes that take place hidden from the pedagogue.

The present research thus contributes to the knowledge base within the field. Video recordings that are systematically analysed from an inclusion perspective can capture processes in children's communities that might otherwise be difficult to capture, just as methods that can capture the role and actions of the pedagogue in interactions, e.g., play in an inclusion and exclusion perspective, etc., are in demand within research (e.g., Mathers, 2021; Nind, 2017).

It is still uncertain whether the markers of mental inclusion we find are real expressions of children's experiences. The perceived inclusion is precisely the child's own experience and a perspective we do not have direct access to. We have access to what the children say and do and must interpret how something makes sense to them and what the meaning is.

The GoPro's give a first-hand impression of children's encounter with their surroundings by recording, for example, the rejections or invitations to play that each child encounters and how and where specific interactions take place. You see and hear what the individual child sees and hears, but we do not see the child's facial expressions and body language (e.g., Østergaard & Eskildsen, 2023).

In traditional observations, children's facial expressions are available to the observer. This provides a different approach to the children's perception of their own situation and can thus provide an insight into how emotional engagements are expressed in the children's interaction with each other and with the physical space.

Observation has been made in one daycare centre. This means that nothing unambiguous can be concluded or that the inclusion markers found can be generalized. It requires more research with a larger sample to be assessed and become a tool that can support the identification of unwanted exclusion processes. Further observations in a larger sample will be able to show whether the inclusion matrix could serve as an evaluation tool that could form the basis for promoting the development of all children's opportunities for participation in the communities.

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