

Learning in ECEC – a matter of curiosity

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Curiosity and community learning

Four boys (three years old) are sitting across some older (five years) boys at lunch. They are very engaged looking at the older boys. These boys have been occupied with an experiment involving the cold meat and the sliced vegetables served for lunch. The children are free to take and make what they like at the table. Two of the older boys have made a brown bread with mackerel and ham on top of it.

One of the small boys are making his bread. He is observing the boys food. He has already put raisins on his bread, and now he ask the teacher, if he can have a piece of ham on top of the raisins. He smiles and the teacher hand him the ham. He put it on top of the raisins. He eats his bread with great joy.

The big boys leaves the table. Now the younger boys extent their food experiment. One boy start to replicate he saw the older boys do, and soon the two other boys follow. They are laughing while they are experimenting with the cucumber and the red and green pepper slices. They use the pepper slices as tusks and put the cucumber up as eyes. They eat and laugh, and remain at the table for a long time. At last the teacher ask if they have finished the lunch. They break up, and together they walk to the playground.



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How does curiosity link to learning and how does it become a catalyst in both professional learning processes and an vital part of children's everydaylife?



Astonishing learning processes

“.. I think it also has to do with believing in, that they can do more than we think they can, we have given them the change to try, and it leads to more, and (about) the new children in the group, now they (the older children)help them, before it was us, but now they do it, because they can, this, we have become more conscious about..”

“.. These things wouldn't have come to our attention, or had been discovered, they wouldn't have said it, if it hadn't been “organized out”, .., if we hadn't done this, it would not have come forward. This process has pushed us the most forward..”

“..you think you know what they want, and most of the times you do, but sometimes something turns up, which they (the children) hardly knew themselves that they wanted, they get to tell it, it convey something along, and it also turns out to be the way we want to go..”

It is the transformation of focus that made the change, children's bodily movements does not longer disturb us; it makes sense because now, you understand their needs to move around

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- **Problem;** everyday life in preschools seems today to have been colonized by economical agendas and goals targeted the future (OECD, national and municipal social mobility and economical agendas)
- **But;** Early intervention in ECEC and giving children equal opportunities in Education, is about the foundation for learning processes
- **Curiosity is an important component in the development of inclusive educational practice**



Advocacy for using curiosity as a catalyst in learning processes

- Children are predisposed for development - we are born curious, but for most people it will fade out or be targeted a specific area – *so we need to keep curiosity alive*
- Curiosity is not synonymous with learning - it is the catalyst, a driver, an urge or an arousal – and it manifest it self in various forms – *but curious people learn more and they develop participatory skills for how to pursue their curiosity*
- Curiosity leads to cognitive arousal and then it may lead to search for further investigation– this we have to use as a catalyst for both in ECEC and in ECTE
- Curiosity is at its highest from 3- 11 years, - we need to support that all children are given the opportunity to stay curious and that it becomes a part of their learning skills -
- and as a professional tool, - *we need to awake curiosity and feed the urge for professional development*

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