The well-being of Children and Pedagogues in ECEC – bodies and space matters

*unni lind

Roskilde University, Denmark

The well-being of children is on the agenda in Danish (Daycare act 2015) and international politics and it is considered both economic and efficient (OECD 2015) to improve children well-being.

This means that the well-being of children is mainly examined on an individual level, that the well-being of children and pedagogues being examined separately, and that relevant indicators are to be found in order to launch educational and health initiatives (KORA 2016). However, these indicators find it hard to link the well-being of children and pedagogues with being in the world. Jensen & Moser (2008) emphasize that the learning processes should be considered in a corporeal perspective, and so should well-being. Humans are anchored in the world through their bodies and their experiences are interwoven with their corporeal being in the world (Nordtømme 2015; Jensen & Moser 2008). This also implicate awareness of spaces, since the physical properties in ECEC contribute to children’s well-being (Løkken & Moser 2012).

This individualization and the division between the well-being of children and pedagogues means that bodily, physical and structural factors that frame the everyday life, and which affect the children’s well-being and the workers job satisfaction, is not included in the study of the well-being of children; nor is it considered how this contributes or create barriers for the pedagogical work with the well-being.

In this presentation, I will present findings from my Ph.d. study: The well-being of children and adults in ECEC. The study is a combined practical fieldwork (Arenkiel et al. 2012) as well as a critical-utopian action research project (Nielsen & Nielsen 2007; Duus et al. 2014) that draws on experimental phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 1994; Zahavi 2014) and critical everyday life theory (Heller2016).

Based on my empirical material from the everyday life in ECEC, I will discuss how bodies and space becomes important in understanding well-being of children and pedagogues in ECEC. I propose well-being perceived and examined as collective processes, that involves both children and adults and as an embodied and contextual phenomenon.

*Keywords: Well-being, Bodie and space, Pedagogical work, Early Childhood Education and care*