Symposium on Studies of Child Perspective: As a researcher in one’s own work community

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In this presentation, we examine a researcher’s position in one’s own work community. It is based on the first of authors doctoral studies, which are in progress. The research topic is ”Creating a participatory culture of action: A multimethod research study on interactive planning and action between children and adults in ECEC setting”.

The data is collected from the early childhood education and care (ECEC) setting where the first of authors worked at the same time as a teacher, leader, and researcher. This presentation is based her observations and research diary. There are two and a half years of observations and considerations from different research situations with children and educators. Children and educators are co-researchers in the research. The aim for the co-operation is that the relation between a researcher and a co-researcher is as equal as possible. Key concepts are power, confidence, and understanding.

Being a researcher in one’s own work community allows a lot but there are many things to resolve both before, during and after a research project. The research has to be very transparent, ethically sensitive and reliable when the researcher is a member of the work community. The researcher and leader is an insider and an outsider in the work community at the same time. With the children, an adult can never be a plenipotentiary member of children’s community. The fact that the researcher is known by the children beforehand makes co-researching with children productive. Especially one on one discussions between the researcher and a child are easier, because the children are familiar with the researcher. It is important that the co-researches know which situations are part of the research and which are not. Both children and educators have to be able to refuse to be co-researches.

Being a researcher in one’s own work community is rewarding and it enables one to examine the ECEC setting from within the community. This requires constant awareness of one’s own position.

Keywords: Early childhood education, Researcher’s position, Co-researching, Work community