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Equality Through Participation and Togetherness

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Inclusion – concept and aims

- What is inclusion?
 - a fundamental normative principle in democratic society:
 - the right to participate in social and cultural life
 - and have access to educational, social, cultural provisions
 - consequently a social contract,
 - not a treatment paradigm,
nor a strategy in special education

- Aims in preschool and school inclusion
 - civil rights – a matter that also concerns children
 - social participation - preschool and school are arenas of major significance for the child as citizen
 - development and learning – inclusion and social participation triggers and stimulates

Preschool in society – an ecological model

- Microsystem
 - Preschool as educational and social arena: proximal processes in learning, caring and peer cultures
- Mesosystem
 - Interactive system between preschool staff and parents
- Exosystem
 - Educational system and its organization
 - Support system and its organization
- Macrosystem
 - Legislation and civil rights
 - Cultural norms and values, public opinion

Parallel cultures in preschool and school contexts

- Learning culture
 - Oriented towards development and learning
- Caring culture
 - Satisfies physical and emotional needs
 - Protects safety and security
- Children's peer culture
 - Creates and defends independent fields of interaction (play-ground, schoolyard, street corner ...)
 - Relative equality between members
 - same size and perspective on the world
 - shared experience of adult supremacy
 - horizontal communication pattern
 - 'Here-and-now' and pleasure oriented

Social participation - concept

- *Preconditions* for participation
 - physical presence on the arena
 - accessibility of activity
- *Actualized* participation
 - observed interaction, "co-activity"
 - sense of engagement
 - acceptance by partners
- *Regulation* of participation
 - autonomy

TACIS project

Joining Efforts to Create Inclusive Kindergartens

Aims and objectives

- **Microsystem**
 - Improve educational results of children with special needs by offering equal opportunities
 - Implement inclusion in mainstream kindergartens
- **Meso- and exosystem**
 - Create professional teams engaged in this implementation
 - Develop methodological and practical resource materials in inclusive practices
- **Macrosystem**
 - Support state educational policy in recognizing inclusion as means for equal educational opportunities in pre-school age
 - Create a network of NGO:s and individuals who recognize the advisability and importance of inclusion

Project children

boys (34=71 %)

girls (14=29%)

age

average

- 3-5
- 6-8

5 y 10 m

53 %
47 %

5 y 3 m

64 %
36 %

problem

sensory-motor }
cognitive } disab

38 % }
68 % } 76 %

health

9 %

soc-behaviour

82 %

dev delay

24 %

57 % }
64 % } 79 %

50 %

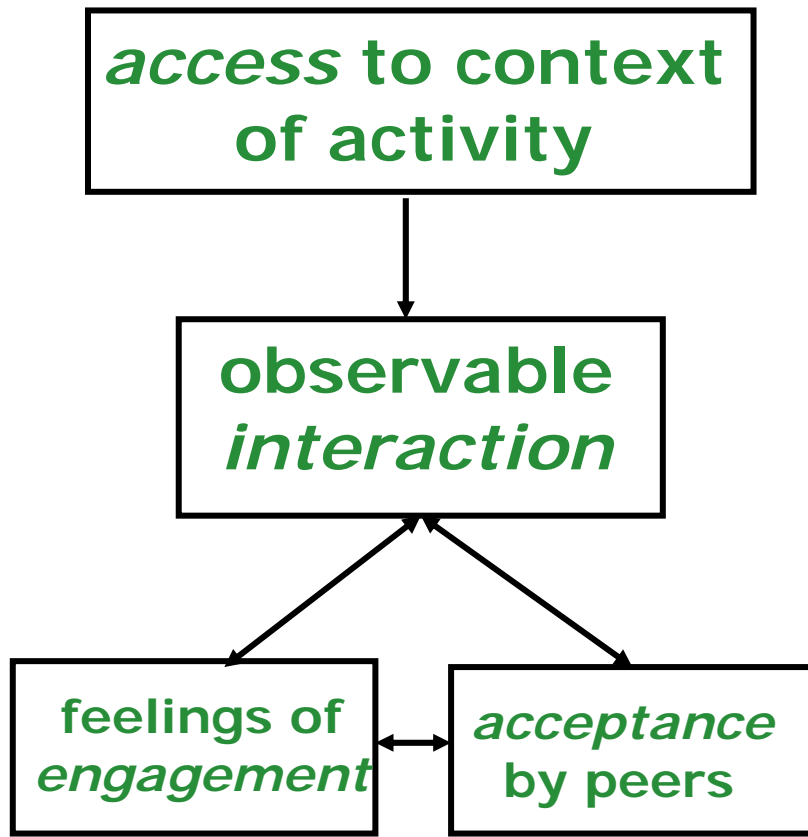
71 %

57 %

Microsystemic goal attainment

	sens-mot disab	cogn disab-delay	soc-beh difficulty
Language	X		
Perc-cogn	X	X	X
<hr/>			
Gross mot			X
Fine mot	X		X
<hr/>			
Social beh			
- group/peer	X	(X)	(X)
- self		X	
- comm skill	X		X

Restricted participation: symptoms and causes



- accessibility barriers: **cause** to low interaction, low engagement and acceptance
- low frequency of interaction: **symptom** of low participation **circular causal relation** to engagement and acceptance
- low engagement and acceptance **symptom** of low participation

Parent's, preschool's & professional's evaluation

- Parents
 - 1. Peer relations 2. Learning 3. Caring
- Preschool teachers
 - Initially accepting but concerned about own competence and contacts with parents
 - Increased confidence but need of additional time and professional support
 - Positive evaluation of children's achievements
- Preschool directors
 - Important to give equal opportunities
 - Support from NGO significant resource
 - General increase of preschool quality
- Psychological-medical-pedagogical committees (PMPK)
 - Unclear legal foundation creates complications
 - Certain lack of conceptual understanding concerning inclusion
 - Worried over preschool competence and criteria for inclusive vs. correctional education
 - Prepared to promote resources for additional teacher training

Dilemmas of inclusion

- ❑ individual differences vs. social equality
- ❑ general education vs. special support
- ❑ self image
 - ❑ being "like others" - being in need of special support
- ❑ peer acceptance
 - high acceptance in attitudes - low level of interaction
- ❑ teacher task
 - observation of individual needs – intervention directed towards environmental barriers
- ❑ parent's perspective
 - asking for inclusion - demanding special support
- ❑ societal situation:
 - inclusive isolates - segregating environment
 - legal rights - organizational obstacles

Promoting participation in inclusion

Family has a key role

- Empower parents, listen, show respect
- Collaborate between home, school and special support – but remember that home and school are different cultures!

Organization of education and special support

- Relation between preschool and primary school
 - continuity in transition
 - inclusive opportunities during entire school career
- Service provisions integrated in the inclusive classroom

Promote public-political dialogue

- Celebration of diversity as a democracy issue in society
- Facilitate advocacy and initiatives outside public organization