

Ph.d.-afhandling

Børns fysiske aktivitet i børnehaver

En analyse af 5-6årige børns muligheder og betingelser for fysisk aktivitet
i forskellige børnehaver og den fysiske aktivitets betydning for
børns udvikling

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English summary

The growing concern in society about the health situation in Denmark and the occurrence of diseases caused by children's (and adults') passive lifestyle is the starting point of the project. Health studies have shown that physical activity is important for children's health. Studies in social science have confirmed the importance of physical activity in children's development. When the 5-6 year old children spend many hours with peers and pedagogues in preschool, it is important to find out, how their development through activities in preschools is. Therefore scientific research in preschools is needed to discover, what possibilities there are for children's physical activity in different preschools and also to investigate, what meaning children's participation in physical activities has from their own perspectives.

The methods in the project are 1) Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised edition, ECERS-R, 2) analysis of documents, 3) semi structured interviews and 4) video observations.

The physical environment means a lot for the possibilities that children have for being physical active. The pedagogues' attitudes to physical activity and their priority of physical activity in the preschool are the social environment and predicts how and how often children can engage in organized *body and movement activities*. Some pedagogues see children's joy of movement as the most important goal in the pedagogical practice, while the main goal for other pedagogues is to prepare children for school. Also the health- and movement discourse in the preschool is influencing on children's possibilities for physical activity.

Focus in this project is on the pedagogical practice and on 5-6 years old preschool children's activities, especially on the interactions between the pedagogical practice and children's physical activities. The physical and the social environments for children's physical activities have been investigated in different preschools. Also children's own perspectives on physical activity have been investigated.

The Sport Preschool offer better possibilities and conditions for children's physical activities than the Mainstream Preschools do. It is possible to organize body and movement activities so that all children participate and enjoy physical activity together with other children. There are positive effects of physical activity on children's development of social and personal competences and on their

cognitive and emotional development as well. Physical activity has an important role in children's play and has several meanings and functions.

Video observations of children's own play and other physical activities showed considerable differences in the conditions for children's physical activities in different preschools. The Sport Preschool offered the best possibilities.

Children in the different preschools had the same motives and intentions related to physical activity in their own play. Children were physical active in play, because it was funny. And it was also nice to be with friends in a physical activity. They could also achieve or qualify a special competence and also challenge the other children's competences as well as their own.

The pedagogical practice in preschools can support children's joy of movement and joy of using their body in an active way and they can investigate their own competences and strengthen their feeling of self-assurance. The pedagogical practice can also set limitations for children's physical activity and their joy of movement and body activity.

Five conditions for enhancing children's physical activity must be present in the pedagogical work:

1. The pedagogues have to organize the physical activities so that all children participate
2. The pedagogues have to offer different kinds of physical activities and on different levels
3. The pedagogues have to organize the physical activities for children in meaningful interactions and facilitate children's interactions and relations. It also means for children, who normally would not interact with each other
4. The pedagogues have to give verbal as well as physical instructions
5. The pedagogues have to realize that they are role models for the children.