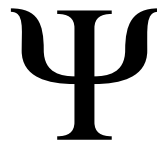




DET PSYKOLOGISKE FAKULTET



Reason for concern?
Reflections on how kindergarten staff report on child concern (1)

HOVEDOPPGAVE

profesjonsstudiet i psykologi

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Veileder Helge Holgersen

Preface (2)

Kindergartens report far too few cases of child abuse or neglect. This has been reported many times the last couple of years, both in professional journals and mainstream media. At the same time, we have learnt from research that early interventions are crucial to helping children at risk. In my opinion, kindergartens have a very important social responsibility in this field. With a background as a kindergarten pedagogue, a mother and now a student of psychology, I feel strongly about the need to reach out to these children. This is the reason why I chose kindergartens' ability to report as the main theme in this study.

I would like to thank the kindergartens I visited, and the employees I interviewed during the course of the study. Every single person I met was open and interested in the research. Even though the very idea for the study implied a certain level of criticism of the job they were doing, they seemed genuinely interested. My impression is that the interviewed employees really wished to improve their work, and contribute something positive for these children.

The fact that kindergartens generally report too few cases could indicate that we are looking at a problem that exists more on a system level, than on a personal level. Workplace culture or societal values might hold back on reporting more than, say, personal values. I hope more research can shed light on this in the years to come. Such research is needed to achieve an improvement in the field . Hopefully, the consequence could be a better life for the affected children.

I would like to thank my academical supervisor, Helge Holgersen, for excellent guidance. My husband Thorstein has provided support and great lingual help, for which I am very grateful.

I have chosen to write this text using an article format. «Fokus på Familien» (Focus on the Family) is the journal I have approached with a request for publication (see Appendix A).

About the author (2)

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Barnehageansattes refleksjoner rundt det å sende bekymringsmeldinger i gråsonesaker(2)

Intensjonen med denne studien var å utforske hvordan barnehageansatte opplever prosessen rundt det å sende bekymringsmeldinger til barnevernet i gråsonesaker. Hvordan de i denne sammenhengen opplever det å ta kontakt med foreldrene, var også et sentralt tema. Åtte barnehageansatte ble intervjuet, og det ble brukt en kvalitativ og semistrukturert metode. En hermeneutisk-fenomenologisk tilnærming ble brukt i analyseprosessen. Flere faktorer bidro til at det ble vanskelig å kontakte foreldrene og sende bekymringsmeldinger. De fleste fryktet at konfrontasjon kunne skade samarbeidet med foreldrene, eller at mistanken skulle vise seg å være feilaktig. Noen var usikre på hvordan de skulle tolke signaler hos barna. Flere var misfornøyde med den jobben barnevernet gjorde, og de ønsket et nærmere samarbeid. Dette førte til at de ansatte følte behov for å være svært sikre i sin sak før de meldte fra.

Nøkkelord: kvalitativ forskning; barnehageansattes tanker og følelser rundt det å melde bekymring; bekymringsmelding til barnevernet; fenomenologi; hermeneutikk

Reflections on how kindergarten staff report on child concern (2)

This study is an attempt at better understanding kindergarten staff's thoughts and feelings about reporting borderline cases to the child welfare authorities (Barnevernet, hereafter called CWA). It also covers staff's confrontations with parents, about problems concerning their children. Eight kindergarten employees were interviewed using a semistructured guide. In analysing the transcripts, a hermeneutical-phenomenological approach was used. Several considerations were involved in the decision of whether to report a case or not. Despite the fact that kindergarten employees found it important to contact parents early, some factors contributed to making this more difficult. Most of the interviewed were afraid that confrontation might harm cooperation with parents, or that they could be wrong about their suspicions. Some felt uncertain about how to interpret emotional signals from the children. Sometimes, it seemed easier to wait and see, or they sought other explanations. Furthermore, most of the interviewed were dissatisfied with the CWA, and wanted a closer cooperation. As a result, interview subjects felt they needed a high level of certainty before reporting. This might be a possible explanation for the low level of reports regarding concern the CWA receive from kindergartens.

Keywords: qualitative research; kindergartens' thoughts and feelings about reporting child concern; report to the CWA; phenomenology; hermeneutics

Introduction (2)

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the state has an important responsibility towards its children. All actions concerning children should be made with the best interest of the child in mind, and the state is obliged to render assistance and establish institutions that can protect children from abuse and neglect.

In Norway in 2009, 270.200 children aged 0 to 6 years held a place in kindergarten (Statistics Norway [SSB], 2010). In the age group one to five years old, 88,5% went to kindergarten. This puts kindergartens in a unique position to observe the children's care situation.

According to Norwegian law (Barnehaeloven §22), kindergarten staff is obligated to inform the CWA when they suspect child abuse, or lack of care. A concern or suspicion about a child's care situation is sufficient to inform the CWA. After that, it is the CWA's task to evaluate and decide a course of action.

At the end of 2009, 35 641 children and adolescents received support from the CWA (SSB, 2010). That means 2.95 per cent of the children and adolescents in Norway. According to SSB, kindergartens were responsible for only three per cent of the cases reported to the CWA in the age group 0-18 years. For the age group 0-6, nearly 15 per cent of the reported cases originate in kindergartens. Considering the fact that most Norwegian children spend much of their time in kindergartens, the low number of reported cases gives reason to wonder. Despite this discrepancy, it seems hard to say how many cases should have been reported.

In a study by Backe-Hansen (2009) it was difficult to say whether kindergartens report as many cases as they should. Some factors contribute to lowering the number. If the CWA have already received a report regarding a child, subsequent new reports are usually not registered. There can be several reasons why concerns about children are not reported. The problem may not seem serious enough, or the situation improved, or

another care service provider seemed more appropriate. Some of the concerns that make it more difficult to report are: lack of information about what actions are taken by CWA; a report to the CWA could affect the cooperation between parents and kindergarten negatively; it might be easier to cooperate with other institutions (than the CWA); difficulties when talking to parents; kindergartens lack guidelines for action.

According to Backe-Hansen, kindergarten managers reported a need for more knowledge and qualifications in their field, in order to make correct decisions. They also would have preferred a more active and visible CWA. A better cooperation between CWA and the kindergartens was also requested. Only a relatively low amount of reported cases lead to action by the CWA. This could partly be due to inaccurate reporting practices. A better-informed kindergarten staff might therefore improve accuracy in reports, in its turn leading to better case handling by the CWA. A similar finding is reported in a study by Bratterud and Emilsen (in press). In the project «Små barns rett til beskyttelse», kindergarten employees reported feeling unsure about how to conduct the conversation with the parents. How the parents could react was also a concern. A majority were unsure whether a case was serious enough to report, and whether it was documented well enough. Kindergarten staff was also afraid to be wrong about its suspicions. In a report by Øverlien and Sogn (2007), the authors claim that pedagogues in kindergarten constitute one of several professions who lack knowledge about child rights, sexual abuse, violence and methods used in conversation with children. This can have serious consequences for their ability to detect danger signals in children.

In a master's thesis by Walsøe-Lehn (2009), there seem to be four main patterns of reaction usually chosen by kindergarten employees, two of these regard borderline worries. One pattern is characterized by staff quickly reaching a common concern for a child, and a decision on how to handle the situation is made. Previous, positive experience with reporting similar cases might help this decision. If a kindergarten manager has

previous experience with reporting leading to negative consequences for the child, this can still make it hard to reach a decision. Another main pattern is characterized by employees who take long before acting on individual worries. Typically, managers lack a systematical approach and have trouble making decisions. These different approaches seem to affect the final decision on whether to report or not.

The last decades of research underscore the importance of early intervention to improve relations between caregivers and children, as well as improving childhood conditions (Rye, 2002; Moe, Moe & Smith in Haavind & Øvreeide, 2008; Mash in Mash & Barkley, 2006). It is therefore of great importance to have a close and well-functioning cooperation between kindergartens and the CWA. The Norwegian ministries of children (Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet) and education (Kunnskapsdepartementet) have made a guide («Til barnets beste – samarbeid mellom barnehagen og barneverntjenesten»), in order to improve this relation and make it easier for kindergarten employees to decide whether to report a case.

In order to find out whether they report as much as they should, we need to know more about what kindergarten staff bases its decisions on. In this study, the goal was to gain phenomenological insights, about the informants' thoughts and feelings concerning reporting child concern to the CWA. Finding patterns that describe employees' feelings and the actions they themselves find most important, is a main goal. Using a first-person perspective and «folk psychology» (Bruner, 1990), the focus on kindergarten employees' experiences could contribute to a better theoretical understanding of this field. This study is an attempt at getting a better understanding of how employees in kindergartens think and act in borderline cases.

Method (2)

Methodological approach (3)

In this semi-structured interview the theoretical perspectives are hermeneutical and

phenomenological. The hermeneutical elements show that an interpretation process is used when reading the text (Kvale, 2002). In trying to understand a text, readers move back and forth between trying to interpret the text as a whole, or its constituent parts. The aim of this hermeneutical circle is to reach a common and communicative understanding of the text. According to a phenomenological perspective, the subjects' own perspectives on how they experience their lifeworld becomes important (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The aim of the study is therefore to capture what the persons think and feel about reporting a borderline case to the CWA, and about having the difficult conversation with the parents. Furthermore, it is vital to search for the essence of the phenomena, and to find some common themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To a certain extent, the knowledge is produced in interaction between the interviewer and the interviewed. The interviewing situation itself might also bring some changes and new insights to the persons being interviewed. This necessitates a process where the interviewer has to continually reflect upon what she contributes to the data, and how this affects the research.

Reflexivity (3)

As a mother of two small children, and with a previous career as a pedagogical leader, I have a strong personal interest in the field. I find it important that kindergartens report all the cases they should. A higher level of reporting has the potential to improve the lives of many children. Here, we are entering the realm of morality. It can be easy to become judgmental - moral decisions are always easier for an outsider. I am under the impression that kindergarten staff wants to make the right decisions, but sometimes finds it hard to know what those decisions are. I have been aware that my previous experience and point of view might affect my role as an interviewer, and have continuously through the research reflected upon this with my academical supervisor.

Ethics (3)

The study was approved by the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD).

Participants (3)

An invitation to participate was sent out to 9 kindergartens in the area north of Bergen (See Appendix B). Some information regarding the research project followed, along with information about how the data would be treated. 7 kindergarten managers (all female) and 1 pedagogical leader (male) were interviewed. The pedagogical leader worked in the same kindergarten as one of the managers. The participants had different degrees of experience, several with more than 10 years of experience. Four communal and four private kindergartens were investigated.

Interview protocol (3)

The interviews were semistructured in order to give the participants the opportunity to show their understanding of the situation, and to give detailed descriptions of the themes focused upon. As a consequence, the interviewed were not given the exact same list of questions every time; the answers they gave would vary the course of the interviews to a certain extent (See Appendix C).

Interviewing (3)

Nine interviews were made with eight participants (one person was interviewed twice). The interviews all took place in their respective kindergartens. The interviews lasted between 23 and 45 minutes, on average just under 30 minutes.

Data analysis (3)

Following a method for systematic text condensation (developed by Malterud, 1993), the analysis went through these stages:

1. All the interviews were read through by this author, and the academical supervisor.
2. Units of meaning that described the participants' experiences were identified, and a consensus validation was agreed upon.
3. Common themes were coded.
4. Those text elements having the same codes were collected, and when finding a

common meaning here, they were expressed as concepts.

5. The concepts were compared to the original text in its full form. In this way, they could be validated according to the context.

Findings (2)

The overall theme was how kindergarten staff thinks and reacts in borderline cases.

Several themes emerged.

Theme 1: routines (3)

Each kindergarten had established a set of rules and routines on how to react in cases where there was suspicion or worry. All kindergartens also had routines on bringing any concerns to their respective managers. If needed, the issue could also be discussed in the departmental teams.

Theme 2: «Wait and see» and the notion that one has to be absolutely sure (3)

Despite the focus on discussing in teams, kindergarten staff was considerably more reluctant about actively voicing its concerns to the CWA. One manager put it this way:

If we are very unsure, we might wait and see for a while. Especially if we might have to involve the CWA. But arranging a meeting with the parents – to hear them out about the situation in their home or how they feel about their situation – is something we try to do. We want to give them an opening, a setting where they can open up. We can't confront the parents and go to the CWA every time a kid acts a little differently. Kids' moods vary too, and such variation can be perfectly normal. We give it some time, unless there is something very obvious, of course.

This perceived need for more documentation in uncertain cases, was something most of the kindergartens had in common. They all found it very difficult to take a final decision of whether or not to notify the CWA, especially in borderline cases. «To take that step does

not feel all right, because one feels so unsure whether it is the right thing to do. You're never a hundred per cent sure about something being wrong.» This statement is characteristic of most of the interviews. Overall, employees wanted to be very sure about their concern before submitting a formal report to the CWA. Two of them were under the impression that kindergarten staff is good at finding other, less problematic explanations.

Theme 3: difficulties when interpreting emotional signs and child behavior (3)

When considering whether something might be wrong, the employees used their professional judgment, but also their gut feeling. They seemed to evaluate the child against an informal standard of what is considered normal. Most of them found this hard at times, since there is a broad spectrum of normal behavior. «These signs... there are millions of them, and they are difficult to interpret. [...] We can't run to the CWA all the time.» The previous statement illustrates how the interpretation of emotional signs and child behavior is not an exact science. Bad tooth health can be one possible warning signal – but when a child does well in other ways, such a signal might not be enough, one manager explained. A couple of kindergarten managers found it problematic to handle rumors about children or parents in their kindergartens. They were unsure about what to do when hearing rumors. If a child was functioning well overall and the parents behavior wasn't considered cause for concern, an investigation might never be started, even if there could be some reasons to worry.

If, on the other hand, a child directly expresses something that might be cause for concern, they would try to follow up with a dialogue and questions. To have a conversation with a child didn't seem difficult, and they would not hesitate to talk to the children. The interviewed felt they were good at making close relations and establishing trust with the children. This could enable the children to open up to the staff. However, the competence levels on communicating about difficult issues seemed to vary to some extent.

Theme 4: Hesitation to take action caused by a fear to harm cooperation with the parents

(3)

Like a previous statement above shows, some did not hesitate to initiate a conversation with parents if needed. The sooner staff starts communicating with parents about possible problems connected to their children, the better cooperation with these parents usually works later on, and the easier such cases resolve, according to one manager. Several emphasized the importance of being well prepared for these difficult conversations. Even though most of the interviewed felt it was important to set a low bar for contacting parents about problematic situations, this seemed difficult to follow-up in practice. All except one felt that it was difficult to bring up possible problems in conversation with the parents. They feared such an initiative might harm the parent-staff cooperation. Avoiding conflict was usually the easier choice.

There is a definite fear for the consequences of confrontation. I have personally experienced parents withdrawing their children from kindergarten. We are open about what we do when we contact the CWA, but that might cause the parents to lose the trust our cooperation depends on. [...] We still have to have a workable relationship with the parents after something like this happens.

The statement above shows a common fear. All of the interviewed found it hard to touch upon issues that were difficult and personal for parents. Several experienced that parents would stop sending their children to kindergarten and maybe even move to a different part of the country, after being confronted with problems and a possible CWA intervention. Also, if staff had established a close and personal working relationship with parents, confrontations were made even more difficult. In borderline cases with considerable uncertainty, they felt they were walking a thin line between giving rightful warning and

unjustly insulting parents.

Being aware of this, most kindergartens have a policy of letting the manager confronting parents in these difficult conversations. That way, they try to avoid harming everyday parent-staff relations (where managers play a lesser part). Like one of them pointed out: «That way, parents can channel their frustrations towards the manager, while still cooperating with the rest of the staff.»

Another finding is how staff can hesitate or altogether avoid a confrontation when parents are high in social status. This can be especially true if they are newly employed, and parents who have a comparatively better education and a higher social status. In a difficult talk with the parents, experience and personal courage can be a big help for a manager. Also, several managers found that if a confrontation went well, the experience made later talks easier. One manager found that a well-functioning parent-staff cooperation made confrontations easier.

Theme 5: dissatisfaction with the CWA – and need for a closer cooperation (3)

I have thirty years of experience, and when we report a case to the CWA, the way they follow up is a disaster. It's usually been a big and difficult decision for the kindergarten to report, so we hope for a swift reaction. But then it doesn't happen. That is our experience. They spend too much time, and allocate too little staff and resources. The official in charge might be replaced, and replaced again. And when nothing happens, we end up being the bad guy in the story.

Our experience is that when the CWA gets as far as to starting an investigation, they do not care enough about the children, and focuses too much on helping the parents. That worries me a lot. [...] They are so focused on helping parents keeping their kids, almost at any price. [...] They are concerned with arranging formal

meetings [...] but do not actually initiate any action.

These statements illustrate a common understanding. To a certain extent, the interviewed understood that the CWA had limited resources and manpower available, but even in light of that were dissatisfied with their performance.

Others were less critical, however. Most wanted a closer cooperation and a higher level of advice and support from the CWA. They nevertheless appreciated the possibility to make anonymous call-ins to voice their concerns. A couple of managers found the consultation teams offered by the city useful. Another common complaint was the lack of specific information about what happened to a case after the CWA had been alerted. This information is confidential in Norway, but several kindergarten managers disagreed with this rule. They would have liked to have a basic level of information about the child's problems - to give them and their staff a better understanding and enabling them to help better in everyday situations. If staff knows what to look for, it can help more effectively, and also give valuable feedback to the CWA. Access to sensitive information could be restricted to, for example, department heads and the managers. Both already have routines on how to deal with sensitive information.

If we'd only known more, for example if a mother had psychological problems, or if there was drug abuse... Then we'd be able to picture what life as a three-year old could be like, with a mentally ill mother. Our staff might gain a better understanding of what was wrong with the child. When we've tried something that does not work, we can get frustrated and a bit resigned. With more information, we might have taken a child under our wing, and give it the love and care it lacks at home.

Several of the interviewed also would have liked more information about how the

CWA works, and what methods the institution uses. Better-informed parents and kindergarten staff could make it easier to contact the CWA. Some of the interviewed felt the CWA needed to avoid being perceived a faceless bureaucracy.

Discussion (2)

Kindergartens' attitude towards reporting borderline cases (3)

The stories of the people interviewed show that there are several considerations involved in making the decision of whether to report a case or not. In general, they all point to the rules and routines regulating their field of work. When staff start worrying about a child's situation, that is usually set off by their professional judgement, or a more diffuse feeling that something is wrong. Several of the interviewed believed it is important and advantageous to contact parents early in borderline cases. However, this goal seems hard to attain in practice. Even though the best interest of the child should be the focus, there seem to be many considerations to make. One dilemma could be whether staff dares risking the parents' trust in order to help the child. Thus, the fear of consequences seems to affect how staff handles the situation. Another dilemma is caused by difficulties in detecting signs that give reason to worry. The fact that employees were generally dissatisfied with the CWA's performance, further complicates the picture. Staff's experience of an absent, or hard to reach CWA probably led to a higher threshold for contacting them. All these factors seem to push staff into thinking it needs a very high level of certainty before taking action. In an unsure situation with no clear demand of taking action, it might be easier to wait and see.

In the present study, kindergarten employees were often unsure about whether to alert the CWA. Formally, kindergartens are supposed to notify the CWA whenever they are concerned about a child's care situation. According to the guide from the Norwegian ministries of children and education, they are obliged to be attentive to any concerns regarding children, using its professional judgment and knowledge about the family. The

CWA then has the entire responsibility for deciding how to handle the case. However, this is not as easy as it may seem. Since an alert or report necessarily has to contain some documented elements, this may force staff into presenting concrete findings. However this can be considered self-contradictory: the whole point of alerting the CWA early is to have a low-level channel to present early and more or less undefined concern. However, one can suspect that this does not work well in practice. According to this study, staff feels it cannot report without feeling sure and having something tangible to report. The reluctance to alert the CWA seems to push them towards making their own assessments. This study alone cannot tell whether that is representative for most kindergartens. But if it is, it can partly explain the low number of reported cases to the CWA.

Walsøe-Lehn (2009) indicates that there are several different challenges for kindergarten managers when trying to reach a decision on reporting borderline cases. As mentioned previously, managers might be unsure whether reporting will actually help or harm the child. If previous reports did not seem to help, or even worsened a case, such an experience would raise the bar for delivering the next reports. According to Walsøe-Lehn, this could lead to a lowered number of reports and a hesitation in making decisions. A closer cooperation with the CWA might have helped managers in their decision-making.

The fact that kindergarten staff had difficulties detecting and assessing the seriousness of children's emotional signs, could indicate a need for improved qualifications and knowledge in this field. This fits with findings in the study by Øverlien and Sogn (2007), and the study by Backe-Hansen (2009), where kindergarten managers reported a need for more knowledge. In the working paper by Bratterud and Emilsen (in press), the interviewed felt confident about their ability to look for signs of violence or abuse in children. On the other hand, they wanted more knowledge about violence and abuse. A lack of knowledge might prevent the detection of abuse or neglect. According to Øverlien and Sogn (2007), a lack of knowledge about danger signs might lead to individual

diagnoses being set, while problems actually originate from the child's social environment. A child could for example be a victim of neglect or abuse, but end up getting a diagnosis of behavioral problems. There are other findings that give reason to worry as well. If kindergartens evaluate cases based on how well-functioning a child is, that is a frightful proposition. Children have individualized reactions to problematic care situations, and the level of everyday functioning should not be used as a basis for evaluation. Such evaluations are the responsibility of the CWA.

They also feared harming the cooperation with parents. These findings seem to be in line with previous research (Backe-Hansen, 2009; Bratterud & Emilsen, in press; Drugli 2002). Maybe the hesitation to confront indicates a greater need for training on how to carry out these difficult talks. The findings in the present study showing that staff wanted a closer cooperation with the CWA, and a more active CWA, are also found in the studies by Backe-Hansen (2009), and Bratterud and Emilsen (in press). If kindergartens are reluctant and have a high threshold before reporting cases, it becomes even more important for them to have a good cooperation with the CWA. Maybe a designated person in the CWA, working as a liaison could facilitate that - and lower the bar for reporting concerns. If such liaisons could also regularly contact designated kindergartens, staff there would perhaps feel a lesser need to assess cases itself. Anyhow, there seems to be a need for more information from the CWA.

Profession ethics are, in a wide sense of the word, about moral and ethical considerations that affect people in their professions. Parson's take on this is that the professional needs an «emotional neutrality», should act based on universal principles, and that preferential treatment should be avoided (Christoffersen, 2005). Clients' and profession interests should be prioritized. The professional relation is limited to a certain aspect of the clients' life. In addition, it is based on trust and honesty. Real life is probably more complex, has more conflicts, and might not be adequately described by this

perspective. As we have seen, staff's fear of confrontation might lead it to postponing necessary action. Small children are powerless and vulnerable by themselves, and totally depend on adult intervention in situations with possible abuse or neglect. Parents can sometimes hold back or actively hide information. Fear for the consequences of confronting parents is not necessarily groundless, perhaps especially if they are well-educated and resourceful. Everybody is probably not treated the same in real life; this stands in contrast with Parson's perspective. In cases with doubt regarding a child's situation, staff might seek those explanations that allows it avoid conflict. When choosing between several options for action in a possible dilemma, non-action can also be considered a choice (Aadland, 1998). When kindergarten employees are not obliged to act immediately, non-action could be the easier, and therefore preferred choice. Obviously, this varies from individual to individual. While some of the interviewed in this study have never reported a case, other have reported several. Sometimes, children send out signals indicating problems in several ways, but Drugli (2002) claims that this does not necessarily lead to early intervention. In order to better detect these signals, one has to be alert and willing to look more thoroughly at the child's situation.

Limitations of the study and implications for the future (3)

Although this study is supported by other research, caution should be made about making too general assumptions. Due to a small sample in a limited geographical area the phenomena are not necessarily found elsewhere. There is a need for more research, and perhaps a possible future direction could be to investigate how closer cooperation with the CWA could work better. A first-person perspective, focusing on the people dealing with these issues in kindergarten is needed, if research is to bring changes to the field.

Conclusion (2)

This study showed that there are several considerations involved when kindergarten employees are in doubt of whether or not to report so-called borderline cases. Despite the

fact that most of the interviewed found it important to contact parents at an early stage, in a lot of cases they did not actually do this. Uncertainty about being right, and fears about risking parents' trust might make it easier to seek other explanations, or simply wait and see. Also, a dissatisfaction with the CWA, and a perception of an absent CWA raised the bar for reporting. This created a need for being absolutely certain before reporting.

Kindergarten staff probably needs to improve the ability to detect early signs of abuse or neglect. It is also likely that strengthened staff training would help it feel more secure in its role, when trying to connect with parents in these borderline cases. A much more open communication with the parents, where kindergartens' role and responsibilities regarding child concern are made very clear, might also ease the process.

One might question whether kindergarten staff would have reported more, if it were more certain about a concern. Strictly speaking, we cannot know for sure. On the other hand, they have an obligation to act and report when there is concern for a child. By law, they are bound to act – no matter how unpleasant a confrontation might be. This is part of their professional role, for which they receive their salary. It is easy to see the dilemma affecting kindergarten staff. It has several loyalties at once – both to the parents and to the child. Sometimes, they might be forced to choose. A closer cooperation with the CWA might ease this problematic situation, if the CWA could support and help staff facing such difficult decisions. Staff seems to need being backed up – especially on the notion that it is legitimate to worry.

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Appendix A:

FOKUS PÅ FAMILIEN

Retningslinjer for forfattere

Levering av manuskripter

Manuskripter sendes til redaksjonssekretær som vedlegg til e-post. Oppgi alltid hvilket tekstbehandlingsprogram du har benyttet.

Redaksjonens behandling av manuskripter

Mottatte manuskripter vurderes av redaksjonen, eventuelt i samråd med faglig rådgivende utvalg.

Manuskriptstandard

Artikler bør ikke overskride 52 000 tegn inkludert mellomrom. Litteraturliste og noter regnes som en del av artikkelen. Debattinnlegg bør ikke overskride 30 000 tegn inkludert mellomrom og bokanmeldelser bør ikke overskride 15 000 tegn inkludert mellomrom.

Tidsskriftet benytter tre grader av overskrifter. Artikkelens tittel/undertittel, avsnittstittel og undertittel. Marker tittelgraden i parentes.

Manuskriptet skal også inneholde

- Forfatternavn, biografiske opplysninger, adresse og artikkeltittel
- Kort sammendrag som ingress
- Engelsk sammendrag med engelsk tittel
- Nøkkelord
- Nummererte sluttnoter
- Litteraturreferanser, alfabetisk ordnet

Tabeller og illustrasjoner

Tabeller og figurer markeres i teksten med fortløpende siffer. Disse vedlegges manus som separate dokumenter. Send også en papirutskrift av alle tabeller og illustrasjoner til redaksjonssekretær (se adresse 2. omslagsside).

Noter

Bruk et notesystem som plasserer notene fortløpende i teksten. Notene skal listes opp etter hovedteksten og foran litteraturlisten.

Litteraturhenvisninger i teksten

Ved henvisninger i selve teksten skrives forfatterens navn og årstall for publisering i

parentes, eksempel: (Sundelin 1987). Hvis det er mer enn to forfattere oppgis bare navnet på den første samt «et al.», eksempel: (Goolishian et al. 1989).

Litteraturliste

I litteraturliste og henvisninger benyttes APA style (se <http://www.hiak.no/index.php?ID=1311> for detaljer) Litteraturlisten skrives til slutt, etter hovedteksten. Bruk overskriften Litteratur. Listen skal settes opp alfabetisk og skal inneholde alle forfattere det er referert til i tekst og tabeller. Navn/tittel på tidsskrift eller bok kursiveres.

Eksempel på referanser til artikler i tidsskrifter: Svedin, K.G., Arvidsson, E. (1989). Utvärdering av familjeterapi genom symtomförändring hos den identifierade patienten samt «consumers satisfaction». *Fokus på familien*, (17):59–66.

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Eksempel på referanse til elektroniske kilder: Eriksen, J. (2008). *Første kvotestudent med master på engelsk*. Lillestrøm: Høgskolen i Akershus. Lest 18. januar 2008, <http://www.hiak.no/index.php?ID=29=nor&displayitem=127&module=news>.

Korrektur

Forfatter får tilsendt ett eksemplar av 1. korrektur. Denne må returneres til redaksjonssekretær innen to dager etter mottatt korrektur. Det skal ikke foretas rettelser mot manus. Forfatter blir eventuelt belastet for slike endringer.

Appendix B: Infobrev

Vil du være med på et forskningsprosjekt?

Barnehager har en rekke oppgaver. De skal være et godt tilbud for barn, og det er viktig med et nært samarbeid med foreldrene. Samtidig skal de kunne melde fra til barnevernet, når de er bekymret for et barns omsorgssituasjon. Disse ulike rollene kan komme i konflikt med hverandre.

Det fins relativt lite forskning på dette feltet, og jeg er interessert i å finne ut mer om dette. Jeg er psykologstudent, og vil i min hovedoppgave intervjuere styrelser og pedagogiske ledere om utfordringer knyttet til å sende bekymringsmeldinger til barnevernet.

I den forbindelse vil samtalene tas opp på lydbånd og bli transkribert fortløpende. Data oppbevares nedlåst, og originale data slettes innen fem måneder.

Er deres barnehage interessert i å delta, ser jeg fram til et videre samarbeid.

På forhånd takk!

Med vennlig hilsen

Yvonne C. Ødegård, psykologstudent

Helge Holgersen, veileder

Appendix C: Intervjuguide

- Det er jo slik at bhg er lovpålagt å melde fra til barnevernet når det er bekymring rundt et barns omsorgssituasjon. Hva tenker du om det?
- Hvordan løser dere det i hverdagen? Har dere noen rutiner for hvordan dere går fram?
- Hva oppleves som utfordrende/ vanskelig knyttet til det å melde fra?
- Hvordan går du/dere fram i møte med foreldrene til barnet?
- Hvordan opplever du å ta den vanskelige samtalen med foreldrene?
- Har dere høy terskel for å ta kontakt med foreldrene når dere oppdager noen signaler hos barna?
- Hva tenker du om å snakke med barnet? (ubehagelig / trygg på å ta samtalen)

Egen bolk litt tidligere eller som oppfølgingsspørsmål:

Kan du fortelle om en gang du/dere har meldt fra til barnevernet/ tatt en samtale med foreldrene?

-Evt. fortelle om en gang dere tenkte, men lot være?

- Evt. hva hindret dere i å gjennomføre det?

-Evt. fortelle om en gang du/dere tok samtalen med foreldrene, og dere følte at det gikk bra? Hva var det som fungerte?

-Evt. hva fungerte ikke, hva var det som gikk dårlig?