Early Years Twilight Seminar

14 August 2019 video transcript

Video 5: Continuity

DARLENE LEACH: So, Susie, one of the things that we were chatting about before was the continuity of learning for children. You've got – you've described tonight children as young as one playing alongside with children that are five, and you've got a combination of qualified teaching staff, similar to what we have here, and I know there are some services that do run a family mixed aged grouping and such. What are some of the strategies or some of the organisational qualities that supports that kind of continuity? So I'm a teacher of this child for this year. What happens next year?

SUSANNE GARVIS: I think that's the great thing about at least three staff being dedicated to the group as well. That provides a continuity of care across the child's span in preschool. So even if one teaching team member is away or sick, other two – the other two staff are there to carry on that continuity of care for the children. And, likewise, if one staff member leaves at the end of the year and a new one comes in, there are usually at least two staff there who are familiar with the children's routines, transitions, interests, who can then share that with the new staff member.

DARLENE LEACH: So are you saying that the teacher actually follows the child?

SUSANNE GARVIS: Yes.

DARLENE LEACH: For how many years?

SUSANNE GARVIS: So the teacher can follow the child up to five years, which is an incredible concept because that's an amazing time of development. And the great thing as well is that it's not only about forming relationships with the child, it's forming relationships with the family. And especially when there are multiple children who are coming in from the same family. It's an exciting journey for everybody involved to actually be experiencing the child's learning.

DARLENE LEACH: So for families, I've got to know you as an educator, and I've been delighted to have all three of my children with you over that period of time. What's my role in the preschool and – and how – how do I assess the quality of the preschool as I go through?

SUSANNE GARVIS: So one interesting thing to think about quality is there is no national agency that administers quality in Sweden. Rather, it is a decentralised approach where the preschools will have processes in place that are reported to the council. And part of this is working with parents, and so parents have to complete a survey each year, or each six months, about the quality of the preschool, and parent feedback is really important because the preschool then has to work out why are the parents thinking this way. What is this message that is actually coming from parents? And from that there will sometimes be meetings with parents to discuss what they're thinking further.

But the idea as well is that this information from the preschool is reported to the municipality or the council, and then it is also shared publicly in a public space. So as a parent, when you are looking to enrol your child in a new preschool, you are also looking at what the other parents are saying about the preschool. And part of this as well is that the parents actually understand what preschool is about because they are familiar with the curriculum. Right from the very start, parents are made aware of what the curriculum is. The wording of the curriculum is an every day language, and then the parents actually know their responsibilities from reading it in the curriculum as well. So this includes things such as being involved in the documentation, the assessment, the quality aspects of it, the inskolning and the development talks.