



## Educational Leader

*There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.*

**Looking at the element in detail** - A service reviewed what the NQF Guide said about element 1.1.2 and understood educators must implement a program which reflects each child's:

- understanding and knowledge
- strengths
- ideas for the program
- culture
- abilities
- interests.

This week and in the following weeks we're looking at an article about inclusive practices – something which is essential in implementing a child-centred program. Inclusive practice in this context is practice that promotes a culture of equality, social justice, participation and recognition in the social space of an early childhood Service – and it's discussed from a behaviour management perspective.

The article explores six real life scenarios and two rationales, or theoretical perspectives, using real educators' answers to interview questions in a Danish ECEC setting.

The rationales discussed are the 'Essentialist' and the 'Relational' and these are summarised in the following Table.

Issue	Essentialist	Relational
Identity	Stable & determines how we act	Fluid & shaped by continual interactions
Social rules & norms	Consists of a basic structure	Varies between & within different groups
Social competence	Know & act in line with basic structure	Know & act in ways suitable for specific context.
Problem identification	Problem children lack social competencies	The conditions to build child-teacher & child-child

### Week 7, 14 March – 18 March 2022 - 1.1.2 Child-centred

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		interactions are not suitable
Level of problem	Individual	Structural & interactions
Strategy for solving problems	Changing the conduct & personality of children. If too demanding, removing children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflexive pedagogy*</li> <li>• Better conditions eg ratios</li> </ul>
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More (rigid) rules, structures &amp; limits</li> <li>• Observation schemes for diagnosis</li> <li>• Special institutions or groups for problem children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking critically at one's own contribution to the interaction</li> <li>• Clear communication about expectations &amp; demands</li> <li>• Small groups for all children</li> </ul>
Value orientation	Children assimilate & submit to existing conditions & social order.	Inclusion, addressing equality, mutual recognition, social justice & participation.

\* reflexive pedagogy means supporting people with the knowledge and skills (eg identified through critical reflection) to change their thinking and actions.

Let's look at the first scenario: *the problem of 'acting-out' children*

*"In our institution we have about sixteen children out of a total of 40, who need special attention. ... Furthermore, we have these copycats, who follow when the acting-out children are running around. Finally, we have some children, who are introverted and withdrawn, which is a problem, too, which we have to give attention. The acting-out children are very*

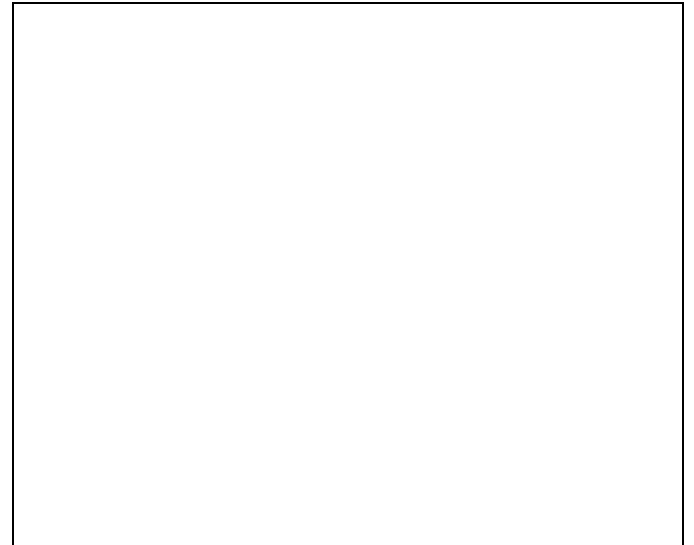
*provocative. They need an adult all the time. So if you are alone in the room – and we often are because of cutbacks and quite a lot illness among the staff – it is very frustrating that these children demand that much. ... They are running from one room to another, and when they are out in the playground they don't want to come into the room again. They hit the other children, and they are actually quite provocative and demand attention all the time. ... Especially one of our children is really attention-demanding and provocative. He is verbal all the time, answers back and hits the staff, and he is impertinent. There are conflicts around him all the time.”*

Some of the points to note here include:

- the distinction made between acting-out children (further divided into copy cats and hard-core troublemakers) and well-behaved children
- the view that acting-out children are not keeping the social order - running around, hitting, answering back etc – and not complying with the expected child behaviour, which for example, includes submitting to power structures where the teacher is more powerful/important. Children are expected to do what they are told – if not, they're seen as a problem
- the idea that appropriate child behaviour requires children to verbalise their feelings, needs, demands and frustrations – but voicing these things can be interpreted as a middle-class norm, meaning teachers expect children to adjust to middle-class norms - (and problem children are seen as those who have not been brought up in this way)
- these teachers not considering how a stressful environment or children's interactions affect their behaviour – despite blaming the stressful environment for the way they may act.

You can see from the table that this approach meets the 'essentialist' criteria. It's an approach that does not fit with the relationships based approaches of the EYLF – and prevents children's full inclusion and participation.

Can you see any of the essentialist approach in your educators? How could you restructure the environment or curriculum to make it less stressful? What educator-child interactions may be contributing to 'problem behaviour?'



Source Hanne Warming (2011) Inclusive discourses in early childhood education International Journal of Inclusive Education, 15:2, 233-247

#### **Week 7, 14 March – 18 March 2022 - 1.1.2 Child-centred**

## Education Curriculum and Learning Policy

Policy explains the service is implementing the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and what educators will do to meet EYLF learning outcomes and the Regulations. For example educators will:

- base each child's learning around their interests and knowledge
- regularly assess what each child knows, can do and understands
- regularly extend learning through planned and spontaneous experiences and intentional teaching
- partner with families to promote children's learning and regularly invite families to contribute
- value every child equally
- provide families with information about their child's learning and participation in the program whenever requested
- build connections between the service, schools and the local community
- promote play and implement activities that are meaningful to children and support their wellbeing, learning and development
- use strategies like demonstrating, dramatic play, role play, open questioning, speculating, explaining, shared thinking and problem solving to promote and extend children's learning
- provide opportunities for children to learn from each other
- evaluate the curriculum at least weekly
- regularly document learning so it's easy to understand
- display the Curriculum
- work with the Educational Leader to continually improve teaching practices.

Do you have any feedback or comments about this policy? Please include below.

Educator's Name	Educator's Signature