

## **PAPER 10**

### ***Pedagogical Practice in Day-care with Focus on the Development of Children's Action Competences***

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#### **Abstract**

This working paper is the tenth in the series of fourteen electronic publications about the Danish research project "Action competences in pedagogical work with socially endangered children and youths – effort and effect" (The ASP-project).

It directs attention to the pedagogical work of enhancing the life chances of socially endangered children and thereby counteracting social exclusion. An enumeration of pedagogical principles for the work with endangered children indicates two presumably conflicting approaches within the pedagogical practice. One approach stresses the relation between children and adults, while the other stresses the social life in the child group. Based on the theoretical approach of the ASP-project these two perceptions do not form an either/or relation but rather a both/and, as the underlying notion is that the development of the competences of endangered children requires the interplay of various pedagogical principles.

This paper thus seeks to identify elements that can contribute to the development of a didactic approach in day-care; i.e. to contribute to proposals for a dynamic and situation specific didactic model. A didactic outlook that qualifies the practitioners and educators in terms of organizing an ideal pedagogical practice is expected to contribute to all children's development of action competences – and thereby also socially endangered children. The paper defines the ideal pedagogical practice for socially endangered children and action competence as follows: quality in the pedagogical work lies in the interplay of the professional and the child when the e.g. preschool teacher 1) treats the child with dignity and appreciation, 2) adjusts to the child and follows its initiatives, 3) talks to the child about matters that preoccupies and interest him/her, 4) praises and shows appreciation when the child unfolds competences, 5) assists the child in focusing attention, 6) supports the child in generating meaning of the surrounding world, 7) elaborates on and explains relevant aspects of the surrounding world, 8) helps the child take control of external situations and teaches him/her to set boundaries, 9) shows that being good at something generates energy and motivation and 10) demonstrates how to accept that some things one may not be good at.

The paper presents case examples from the practice field; the examples stem from observations in selected day-care centres, which formed part of a project that sought to describe the quality of children's lives in day-care (Broström, 1998). Theoreticians and practitioners may aspire to combine all relevant considerations in one theoretical approach. This, however, does not fall within the purpose of the present working paper, although a cultural historical activity theoretical approach may be seen as the overall theoretical framework.