

PAPER 11

Social Pedagogical Practice in Residential Homes with Focus on the Development of Children's Action Competences

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Abstract

This paper is the eleventh 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).

The author presents a discussion of three concepts, *homeliness*, *school attendance* and *friendship*, as resources for social educators' reflection on their own practice in particular their professional action competences. Only through strong efforts in the daily work, the social educators are able to support socially endangered children and youths' development of their action competence while they live in residential homes. The ASP-project employs a two-fold approach, i.e. assessing the children's readiness in central areas of individual action competence and identifying core focus areas for counteracting social vulnerability in the daily pedagogical practice – as a supplement to the research-based theoretical and analytical outlook. The author seeks to clarify the entirety of and consistency in the field of residential care; from entry and definition of target group to the outline of the theoretical input and the unfolding of the key issues in action plans. These steps are supplemented with brief descriptions of competence analyses that operationalize the intervention study of the children and youths' action competences in learning and social life. The institutions are suggested to work with analyses of own routines and practice as part of developing the professional action competence seen in relation to the following action competence dimensions: Knowledge, skills, control, identity and action readiness.

Lastly, the paper presents a matrix for unfolding institutional areas of innovation. This matrix is exemplified by three thematic analyses that form the basis for specific local analyses of institutional practices. The three thematic areas are: 1) External dimensions - they are expected to be challenging as the professionals presumably have little control of external terms such as the school and the children's relations with people outside the institution. 2) Climate, structure and rules. Here, the social educators are suggested to investigate whether the institutions have too many rigid rules. 3) Internal dimensions which concern strengthening the children's motivation (as a means to break with the social inheritance) to develop ideal action competences and learning as part of their daily life in the institution.