

Denmark

Country Overview

Generated: 2024-12-01 10:46:20



Country name

Denmark

Author of this description

- Dariush Djamnezhad, LU-CRED, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Department of Clinical Sciences Lund, Lund University

- Björn Hofvander, LU-CRED, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Department of Clinical Sciences Lund, Lund University

Introduction

Denmark has several examples regarding the development of social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes for early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. Some of these initiatives are also evaluated. One prominent example is the program We Learn Together, which has been evaluated by TrygFonden's Centre for Child Research.

Development

Denmark's education system has a long history in placing importance on social and emotional learning (Clouder et al., 2015). As such, it is no surprise that it permeates the pedagogical foundations in Denmark's framework for preschool curricula, called the strengthened pedagogical curriculum, which features six pedagogical themes (Ministry of Children and Education, 2018):

- 1) Comprehensive personal development;
- 2) Social development;
- 3) Communication and language;
- 4) Body, senses and motion;
- 5) Nature, outdoor life and natural phenomena;
- 6) Culture, aesthetics and community.

As an example, the theme Social development entails the development of empathy.

ECEC in Denmark is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Education, though there are several forms of ECEC stemming from different providers, such as municipal preschools or private daycare (Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet, n.d.). This split responsibility for ECEC provision is also reflected in developing projects regarding SEL. There is no single organisation that drives the development, usually cooperation is required. One example of a project, called "Vi lærer sprog i vuggestuen og dagplejen" (We learn language in the nursery and day care) was a cooperative effort between several organisations, municipalities, researchers and developers, and also funded by the Ministry of Children and Education (Bleses et al., 2019).

Assessment

Assessing quality and adherence to guidelines in ECEC is generally under the responsibility of local municipalities and the leader of the child care unit, though formal guidelines are available. These are supported by the Ministry of Children and Education and the Danish Evaluation Institute. They don't necessarily have an enforcing role, however, greater emphasis is placed on evaluating the use of their framework and guidelines on a national level (Danish Evaluation Institute, 2022). The pedagogical framework states that ECEC settings should establish an evaluation culture, but the concrete approach is largely determined locally (Ministry of Children and Education, 2018). Further guidance is provided in brief materials provided by the ministry, which can be summarised in three steps that act as a cyclic process (Danish Evaluation Institute & Ministry of Children and Education, 2018):

- 1) Have a clear purpose for the evaluation
- 2) Document with a focus on learning environment and common reflection
- 3) Analyse to set a direction for your future practice

The guidance on evaluation is based on a research review by the ministry, though its focus remains on evaluation in ECEC settings in general and not necessarily factors related to SEL. Still, social development and SEL programmes are mentioned as possible areas of evaluation (Danish Evaluation Institute, 2018).

Evaluations of specific interventions are also conducted in Denmark. Several projects regarding evaluation of SEL interventions have been headed by TrygFonden's Centre for Child Research. Projects regarding ECEC are often aimed at language, but the previously mentioned project Vi lærer sprog i vuggestuen og dagplejen also had a focus on empathy and self-regulation. This program will be longitudinally evaluated in a new version called Vi Lærer Sammen (We Learn Together). An earlier example is a project called Leg og læring i vuggestuen (Play and learning in the nursery) which also investigates the interventions effects on language skills, along with social development and problem-solving skills, but with the focus being on the nursery rather than preschools. The centre also investigates tools for measurement that focus on well-being and personal development for children and youth (TrygFondens Børneforskningscenter, 2021). Work has also been done to validate a Danish adaptation of the strength-based questionnaire Social-Emotional Assessment/Evaluation Measure ([SEAM] Sjoe et al., 2017; Sjoe et al., 2020; Sjö, Kiil & Jensen, 2021).

Intervention

The previously mentioned programme We Learn Together is described as a flexible curriculum, closely tied to the strengthened pedagogical curriculum. The programme contains a flexible curriculum with suggestions and materials for activities that educators can use to plan their curriculum according to learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are language, mathematics, executive function and socioemotional competence. The program consists of four core elements (Aarhus universitet & TrygFonden, n.d.):

- 1) Flexible pedagogical framework where educators use their professionalism to plan In-depth, Focus, Exploration (different modules);
- 2) Strengthens language, mathematics, executive functions and socio-emotional competencies through goals that describe what children can learn if given the opportunity;
- 3) Focus on interaction quality through the use of supportive and differentiated strategies that support how children learn best;
- 4) Reflection on practice through assessing children's development and implementation of We Learn Together.

The intervention has been evaluated in randomised controlled trials, showing a positive effect on language and maths skills (Bleses et al., 2020; Bleses et al., 2021).

Another example of an intervention is the CAT-kit. CAT stands for Cognitive Affective Training and is a collection of tools used in individual treatment. It was originally developed in Denmark for use

with children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (CAT, n.d.).

References

- Aarhus universitet & TrygFonden. (n.d.). Vi lærer sammen. https://childresearch.au.dk/fileadmin/cchildresearch/dokumenter/Publikationer/Vi_laerer_sammen_folder.pdf
- Bleses, D., Højen, A., Jensen, P., Rathe, A. B., Boisen, L. A., Nielsen, H., & Jensen, C. H. (2019). Vi lærer sprog i vuggestuen og dagplejen: En målrettet og struktureret indsats, som virker ved at styrke læringsmiljøet for de yngste (Børne- og Socialministeriet). https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2019-03/Vi%20i%20C3%A6rer%20sprog%20i%20vuggestuen%20og%20dagplejen_Final.pdf
- Bleses, D., Jensen, P., Højen, A., Slot, P., & Justice, L. (2021). Implementing toddler interventions at scale: The case of "We learn together". *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 57, 12-26.
- Bleses, D., Jensen, P., Slot, P., & Justice, L. (2020). Low-cost teacher-implemented intervention improves toddlers' language and math skills. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 53, 64-76.
- Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet. (n.d.). Typer af tilbud. <https://www.uvm.dk/dagtilbud/typer-af-tilbud>
- CAT. (n.d.). About CAT Kit. <https://cat-kit.com/about>
- Clouder, C., Pedersen, C. S., Cefai, C., Madrazo, C., Boland, N., Antognazza, D., & Berrocal, P. F. (2015). Social and Emotional Education: An International Analysis (Fundación Botín Report 2015). Fundación Botín. <https://www.xn--gewaltprvention-an-schulen-nhc.ch/pdf/2015%20SaE%20Education%20Internat%20Analysis%20Davide%20211.pdf>
- Danish Evaluation Institute. (2018). Evaluerende pædagogisk praksis i dagtilbud. <https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Evaluerende%20p%C3%A6dagogisk%20praksis%20Forskning%20kortl%C3%A6gning%20FINAL-a.pdf>
- Danish Evaluation Institute. (2022). Evaluering af den styrkede pædagogiske læreplan. https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2022-02/dagtilbud_forskning%20og%20viden_Evaluering%20af%20den%20styrkede%20p%C3%A6dagogiske%20l%C3%A6replan.pdf
- Danish Evaluation Institute & Ministry of Children and Education. (2018). Kort om evaluerende pædagogisk praksis. https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2021-03/7047%20SPL%20T02%20Kort_om_Evaluerende_paedagogisk_praksis_16_WEB%20FINAL-a.pdf
- Ministry of Children and Education. (2018). The Strengthened Pedagogical Curriculum: Framework and Content. https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2021-03/8077%20SPL%20Hovedpublikation_UK_WEB%20FINAL-a.pdf
- Sjøe, N. M., Bleses, D., Dybdal, L., Nielsen, H., Sehested, K. K., Kirkeby, H., Kreiner, S., & Jensen, P. (2019). Measurement properties of the SEAM questionnaire using rasch analysis on data from a representative danish sample of 0-to 6-Year-Olds. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 37(3), 320-337.
- Sjøe, N. M., Kiil, A., Bleses, D., Dybdal, L., Kreiner, S., & Jensen, P. (2020). Assessing strengths and difficulties in social development: a comparison of the Social Emotional Assessment Measure (SEAM) with two established developmental psychopathological questionnaires. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 17(1), 103-122.
- Sjö, N. M., Kiil, A., & Jensen, P. (2021). Teachers' perspectives on strength-based and deficit-based instruments for assessing socioemotional development in early childhood. *Infants & Young Children*, 34(1), 33-45.
- TrygFondens Børneforskningscenter. (2021). Measurement Tools. <https://childresearch.au.dk/vaerktoejer/metoder/measurement-tools>

Citation

This document was generated from the database used to create the Country Overviews Compendium:

Koltcheva, N., V. Coelho, (2022). Social and Emotional Development for Children aged 0 to 7 years old: European Countries Overviews Compendium. EU-SELF Project. ISBN 978-619-233-213-6 (can be downloaded from <https://euself.nbu.bg>)