

# 5th Annual Meeting of the International Inter-Centre for the

**Danmarks**  
*The Danish* **Pædagogiske Universitet**  
*University of Education*

## Evaluation of Social Work Practice

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# Barriers and contribution factors for The Social Work in Day Care Centres

- **A literature and a case study based on a critical participative perspective**

# Goals of the Study (1)

- **Make an inventory of the perceived barriers in order to improve social deprived children's development**
- **Identify factors and processes that facilitate social work concerned about enable children and their parent to act toward challenges, take control and change**



# Goals of the Study (2)

- **Make suggestions to future social intervention in practice and evaluation**
- **Make recommendations in order to support better policies in the field of social intervention reducing inequality, that reproduces**

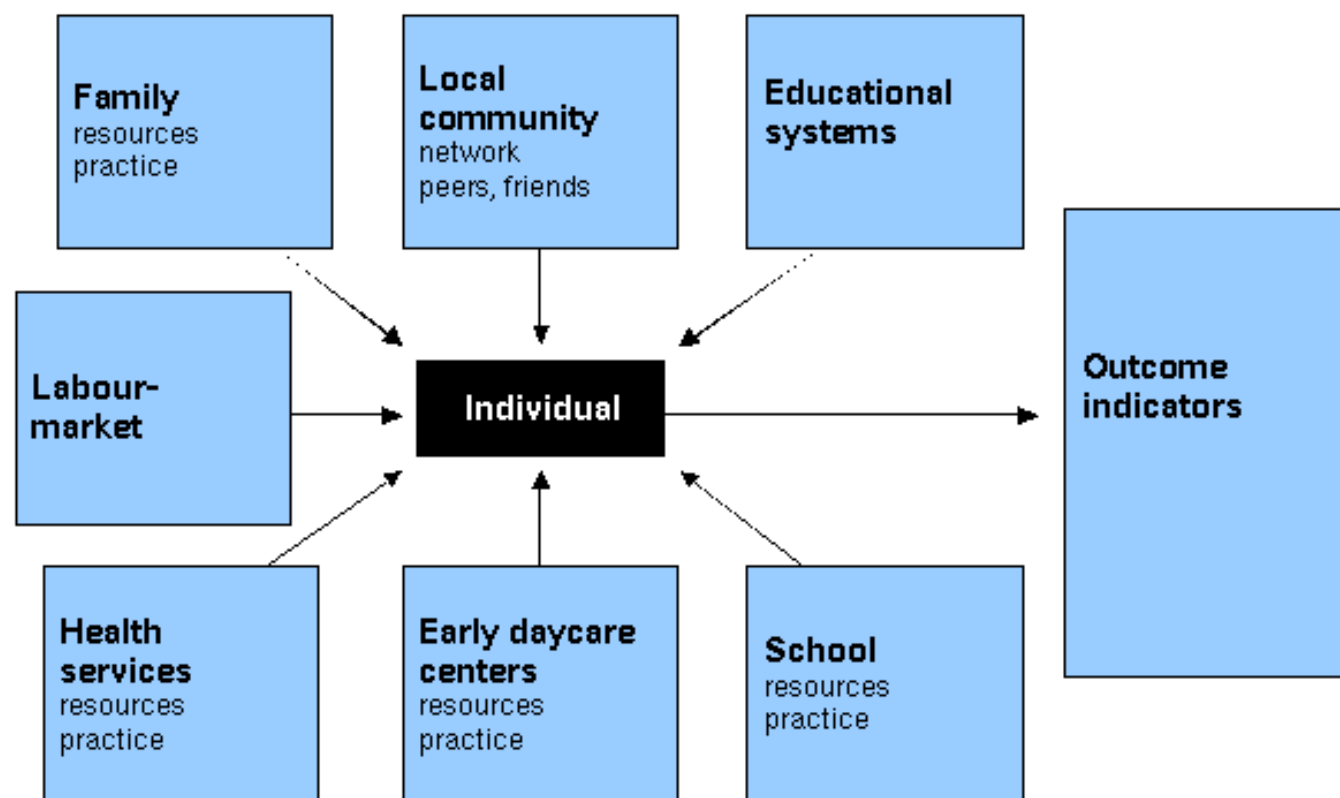


# Organisational framework

- A part of a Research Programme: ‘Social Reproduction’
- Common Goals: Explore the Theoretical Framework of Reproduction of ‘Social inequalities
- Elucidating the significance of Day care Centers, Schools, Educational System and Health Services
- jf. figur 1)



# Figure 1



# Method (1)

- **Systematic literature review on**
  - Intervention processes in day care centres
  - Approaches and outcome evaluations



# Method (2)

- **Empirical case study of perceived barriers and contributing factors in selected Danish day care centers based on**
  - Screening (N=1600)
  - Qualitative interview with leaders (N=18)
  - Casestudy continued, observations and interviews with all involved (N=4)





# Strategy of the Literature Study

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- Existing Danish research and datacollections
- Internet



# Strategy of the Literature Study (continued)

- **International literature**

- Sources: Eric, Psyk-Info, Medline
- Search Therms:
  - Day care, Early day care
  - Intervention, Social work
  - Effect, Long-short time effect
  - Outcome, Evaluation
  - Social reproduction, Social deprivation
  - Riskgroups

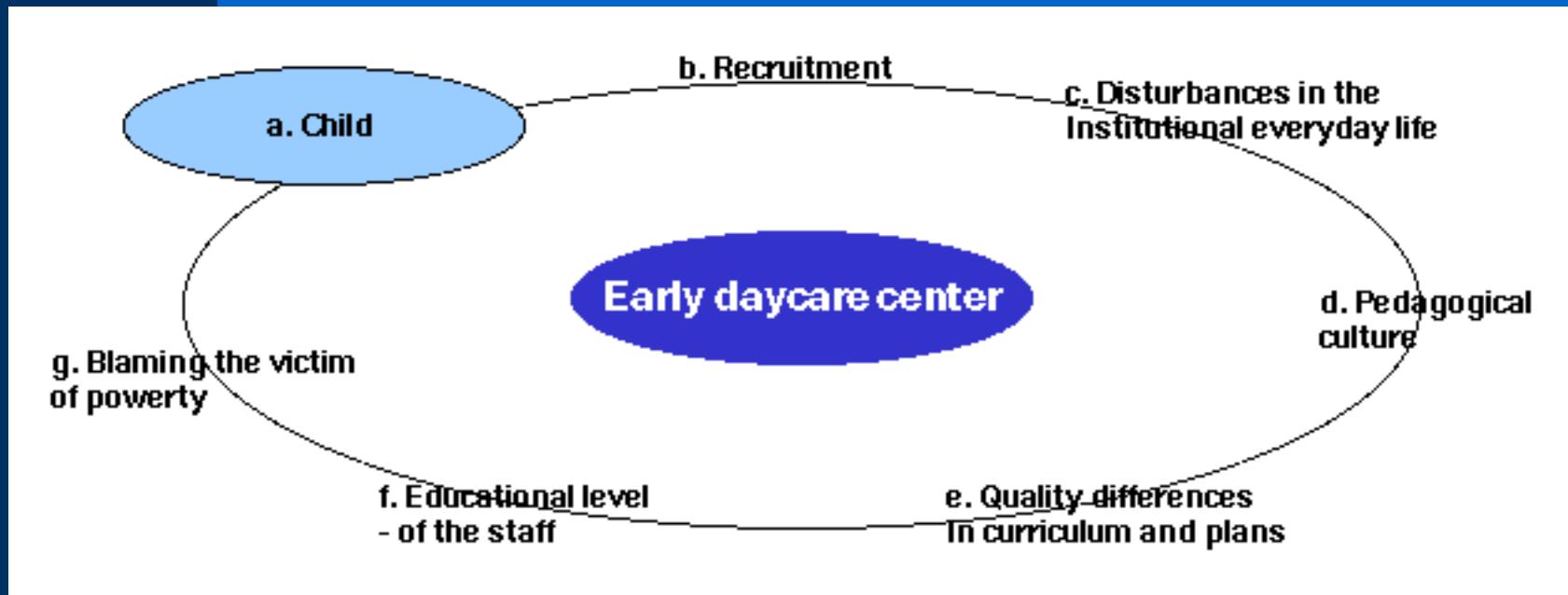


# Results of the Literature Study (1)

- The Danish study emphasizes ‘black box’ phenoma, as shown in figure 2
- Conclusion: We need to interpretate cultural, mediating processes, and practice as well as intervention processes and the individual outcomes



# Fig. 2



- Source: Task force on social reproduction, SFI 1999



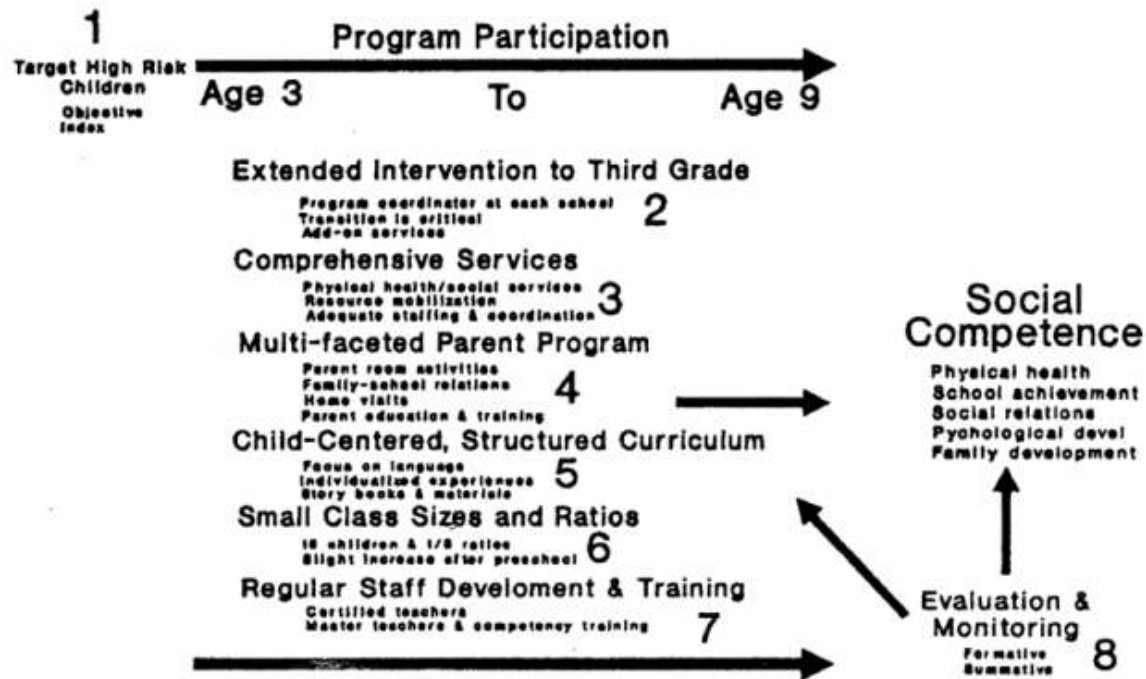
# Results of the Literature Study (2)

- **Theoretical framework – different approaches**
  - Compensation approach (Reynolds, 1998)
  - Pragmatic approach
  - Critical/participative approach (Gallagher, 1990)



# Fig. 3

Figure 1  
Eight Principles of Effective Early Childhood Programs



● Source: Reynolds, 1998



# The critical approach, participatory and empowerment goals

- **The main issue:**
  - Increasing children and parents competence by empowerment can change families. Individual and families are influenced by feelings of powerlessness and by inability to change their circumstances by their own actions. Intervention goals are enhancing powerfullnes
  - Health promoting strategies as a part of intervention
- **Gallagher, 1990).**



# Barriers reported in the literature

## - by type (1)

### ● Conceptual

- Implicit approaches, lack of sufficient measurements to give evidence for effect related to the approach
- Lack of indicators of effect , what are the outcomes?
- Lack of evaluation model of processes in practice and of 'black box' phenomena

### ● Organizational

- Quality differences in pedagogy and culture
- Children have difficulty in taking advantage of the options
- Daily life characterized by disruptions, few eventful activities

- (Gallagher, 1990).





# Barriers reported in the literature

## - by type (2)

- **Structural**

- Uneven distribution
- Insufficient manpower and support
- Curriculum plans – formal and informal

- (Gallagher, 1990).



# Empirical study (1)

- **Case study of 18 day care centres**
  - Recruited through a screening study (Jensen, 2002)
  - Representation of different types of intervention, ratio of children from socially deprived background, geographically scattered
  - Varying degree of explicit goals and plans for the social work



# Empirical study (2)

## ● Data collection

- Screening (N=1600), identifying the problems, and ratio of problems in certain day care centres
- Semi structured interview
  - With headmaster

## ● Data analysis

- A thematically level
- An explorative and analytic level



# Research Theme (1)

- How are the problems manifested in the day care centres and how do the leader identify these?



# Research Theme (2)

- What is done in the day care centre, What is current practice in the social work and which explanations is given?



# Research Themes (3)

- How are the leaders expectations of effect, and their visions of the prognosis?



# Research Themes (4)

- Which factors are perceived as barriers toward the day care centre making a 'difference'?



# The main Goal is to explore the question

- **Can life in day care centres increase chances in life for children affected by 'negative' social reproduction?**
  - That is to promote individual competence and counteract processes of marginalization?





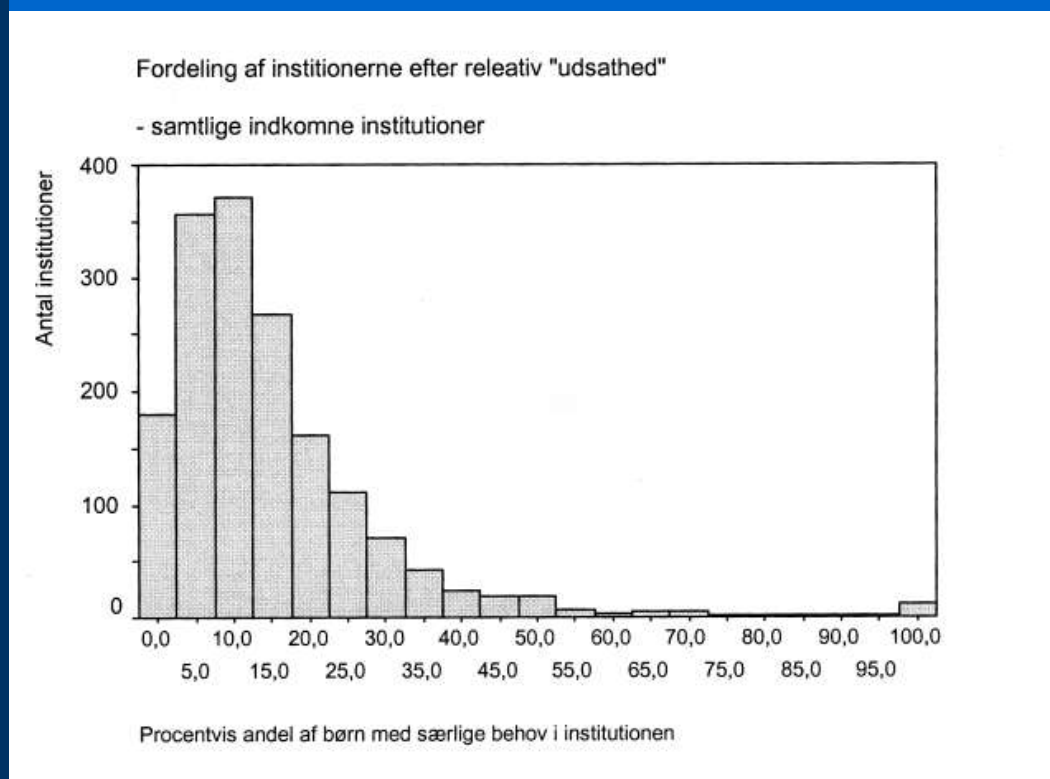
# Results of the empirical study (1)

- Identifying the problems with social deprived children as manifested in daily life in the centre (from screening)
  - Most frequently problems identified by individuals:
    - Social
    - Emotional
    - Psychological, low self-esteem, lack of well-being
    - Behavioral, hyperactive or introspective
    - Learning disabilities, lack of concentration
    - Physical, health, hygiene
    - Nutritional problems, overweight
    - Low intellectual level
  - Frequency on certain day care centers(jf. Fig 4)



# Figure 4

## Concentration of problems



- Source: Screening, Jensen 2002



# Results of empirical study (2)

- **Current practice in the social work and what explanations are given?**
  - **Two approaches are identified**
    - A compensation type of effort based on a view that socially deprived children are deviators from norm
    - A changing type of effort based on the viewpoint, that what is normal is differences and all have resources and rights to develop competence to act



# Results of empirical study (3)

- **Expectations of effect, and visions of the prognosis**
  - **Prognosis is 'bad'**
    - “I don't really believe, that day care centres can help break with negative social reproduction. We cannot compensate for the most fundamental things”
  - **Prognosis is 'good'**
    - “Can day care centers do anything? Yes we can, and we have done so through the last 20 years. The way is to give children and parents ambitions and motivation to take control over their own life's”



# Results of empirical study (4)

- **Factors perceived as barriers toward the day care center making a 'difference'?**
  - **Structural factors**
    - The municipality
    - Ratio of adults / child
    - Concentration of problems
    - Insufficient manpower
    - Gab between tasks and allocation of resources
  - **Organizational factors**
    - Insufficient communication with and support from external collaborators, pedagogical – psychological counseling offices
    - Poor collaboration with other interdisciplinary bodies
    - Lack of time and space
    - Insufficient education to the staff
    - Culture chock between day care centres



# Results of empirical study (4)

- **Factors perceived as barriers toward the day care center making a 'difference'?**
  - **Conceptual factors**
    - Insufficient background knowledge about solving the problems among staff
    - Lack of precise goals, and plans for intervention
    - Lack of evaluation and measurements
    - Rhetoric 'shape' reality



# Results of empirical study (5)

- **Factors enhancing intervention that makes 'a difference' (preliminary results)**
  - Preparing, planning framework, evaluation
  - Financial resources
  - Education for the headmaster and the staff
  - Personal influences of the headmaster
  - Sharing values and explicit goals
  - Empowerment strategies
  - Parents involvement



# Conclusions and recommendations (1)

- Importance of systematic and planned intervention strategies with explicit goals
  - Planned intervention from identifying ‘good’ examples of the ‘ideal situation’
  - Diversity of real situation must be taken into account
  - Barriers must be addressed at different levels (personnel, organizational, structural, conceptual) and stages (before & during the intervention)
  - Longtime-effects demand long-term intervention and long-term evaluation studies





# Conclusions and recommendations (2)

- Combination of educational and critical/participative approach
  - Promote children's resources in all level
  - Promote children's and parents competence to act, participate in society and turn powerlessness to powerfulness



# Questions that arises (1)

- Is it an utopian dream to think that early intervention can make 'a difference'?
- If not, then we have to make further research to identify not only barriers but the contributing factors and examples of 'good practice' – how do we do that?



# Questions that arises

- Which conditions are fundamental for success?
- What is quality? What are the outcomes?
- How to evaluate make evidence for effect
- Who are responsible?



# Figure 5. A research and evaluation model

