



# Non Violent Education

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## **Violence Prevention in the Educational Institution "Kindergarten" – Present Approaches and Development Possibilities**

Country Report on present situation in Norway



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## **Country report**

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Part II written by Berit H. Johnsen, Department of special needs education, University of Oslo and Anniken Poulsson Beer, Ski kommune (see "Relevancy of violence prevention in Norwegian kindergarten curriculum")

# **I. Structure of early childhood education and Care**

## **1. (Kindergarten) legislation in general**

### **1.1 Law**

The ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the Kindergartens in Norway. The first Kindergarten Act in Norway entered into force in 1975. Today's Kindergarten Act (Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens) entered into force January 2006.

The Kindergarten Act states that the municipalities are the local authorities for kindergartens. The municipality must provide guidance and ensure that kindergartens are operated in accordance with current rules. The municipalities are obliged to ensure that there are a sufficient number of kindergarten places. Private kindergartens have a legal right to approval if they are suitable in terms of purpose and content and fulfill the requirements in the Kindergarten Act. The Government will introduce a legal right to a place in kindergarten when full coverage is reached.

The municipalities must approve kindergartens and provide guidance to them. Approximately 50 per cent of the kindergartens are privately owned.

This is the purpose of the law:

“Day care institutions shall provide children under compulsory school age with good opportunities for development and activity in close understanding and collaboration with the children's homes.

Day care institutions shall assist in giving the children an upbringing in conformity with fundamental Christian values.

Owners of private day care institutions may in their statutes prescribe that the second paragraph shall not apply.

Private day care institutions and day care institutions owned or run by parishes of the Norwegian State Church may incorporate in their statutes special provisions in regard to ideological aims. “

### **The Content of Kindergartens**

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (is a regulation to the Kindergarten Act. The Framework Plan states that all kindergartens must work goal-oriented with children's development and learning, and stimulate children's linguistic and social competence. Childhood is a phase of life with intrinsic value; kindergartens must be inclusive fellowships with space for each child. The Framework Plan has seven learning areas that children should be acquainted with in

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kindergartens

- Communication, language and text
- Body, movement and health
- Art, culture and creativity
- Nature, environment and technology
- Ethics, religion and philosophy
- Local community and society
- Numbers, spaces and shapes

Each learning area covers a wide range of learning. It is a clear connection between the Framework Plan and the Curricula for Norwegian primary schools. The learning areas are to a great extent the same, as children will meet again as subjects at school.

The aim of the framework plan is to give head teachers of kindergartens, pedagogical leaders and other staff a binding framework for the planning, implementation and assessment of the activities of kindergartens. The framework plan also provides information to parents, owners and supervisory authorities. The framework plan is therefore aimed at:

- personnel at kindergartens, as a planning, documentation and assessment tool
- parents/guardians, to provide an insight into the activities of kindergartens, and to allow participation and involvement in decision-making in accordance with Section 4 of the Kindergarten Act
- owners of kindergartens, who can set out guidelines for local adaptations to the framework plan (Section 2), and who are responsible for individual kindergartens having the necessary frameworks
- municipal authorities, which are responsible for monitoring whether kindergartens within their municipalities provide adequate pedagogical activities in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations (Section 16).

## 1.2 Early Childhood Education and Care Policy

Besides being a good pedagogical institution for children, the kindergartens also take care of children while their parents work or study. The kindergartens therefore also are a means to gain equality between the genders.

### Coverage

The Norwegian Government wishes to see full kindergarten coverage achieved in 2007. This is one of the most important goals for the Government. About 235 000 children have a place in a kindergarten. This is coverage of about 80 per cent for children aged 1 – 5 years.

By 15 December 2006 61,8 per cent of 1 – 2 year-olds and 92,8 per cent of 3 – 5 year-olds had a place in kindergarten (Statistics Norway). Almost 80 per cent of women 15 – 64 years of age are in the labour force (OECD; Employment Outlook, 2005).

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### 1.3 Structure

The Government's objective for its kindergarten policy is the provision of kindergarten places of high quality and at a low price. Kindergartens shall provide children with good opportunities for development and activity in close understanding and collaboration with the children's homes.

Kindergartens are pedagogical institutions that comprise care, upbringing, play and learning. According to the needs of the families, the kindergartens offer full-time or part-time places. The aim to build enough kindergarten and the developing work in the institutions are given top priority by the government.

#### **Children's and parents' participation**

The Kindergarten Act states that kindergartens shall assist parents in the upbringing of their children. Kindergartens shall lay a sound foundation for the children's development, life-long learning and active participation in a democratic society. The Act gives children and parents a legal right to participation. Parents can participate in the kindergarten's parents' council and coordinating committee consisting of staff parents and owner. The coordinating committee must establish an annual plan for the pedagogical activities.

#### **The kindergarten collaborates with the following public institutions:**

##### **Child welfare service**

The main task of the child welfare service is to ensure that children who live in conditions that could damage their health or development receive necessary and timely help and care. Having the child welfare service able to fulfil its task in relation to children in serious situations may often be dependent on receiving information from others.

Through their daily, close contact with children, staff at kindergartens plays an important role in observing and receiving information about the care that children are receiving at home and about their backgrounds. In order to ensure that children in serious situations are seen by the child welfare service and receive the help they need, it is highly important that staff at kindergartens comply with the duty of information when it comes into force. Section 22 of the Kindergarten Act imposes a duty on all employees at kindergartens to inform the child welfare service if there is reason to believe that a child is being abused or is suffering from other serious forms of neglect. This duty of information overrides their duty of confidentiality.

A place at a kindergarten is a measure used by the child welfare service. A place at a kindergarten can either be a voluntary measure or a measure imposed by the child welfare service. Section 13 of the Kindergarten Act states that children for whom a resolution has been made in accordance with Section 4-12 and the second paragraph of Section 4-4 are entitled to prioritised admission. Close cooperation with the child welfare service is important where a place at a kindergarten has been used as a measure pursuant to the Child Welfare Act. This is equally important when the child welfare service requires assistance from the kindergarten in relation to a specific child.

A general and systematic system of collaboration between the kindergarten and the child welfare service should be established. Individual municipalities must find appropriate solutions for how kindergartens and the child welfare service should cooperate. The aim should be cooperation on the basis of regular, formal contact, common goals in relation to the child and an understanding of one another's tasks and ways of working. Kindergartens and child welfare services are two of several institutions that help to create safe environments in which children can grow up.

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### **Mother and child health clinics**

Mother and child health clinics are responsible for general preventive health care and for promoting healthy lifestyles. They ensure that children grow up in a safe environment in a given municipality. Health clinics can suggest that an application should be made for a place at a kindergarten for children who have a particular need for pedagogical assistance, and can provide an expert opinion during discussions on the prioritisation of admissions. Health clinics can cooperate on the provision of services for children with special requirements.

Health clinics shall give advice and guidance on the provision of medication at kindergartens and on the prevention of contagious diseases. Health clinics are also of key importance in mapping children's language skills.

### **Pedagogical-psychological counselling service**

The responsibilities and tasks of the pedagogical-psychological counselling service in relation to pre-school children are set out in the Section 5-6 of Act no. 61 of 17 July 1998 relating to Primary and Secondary Education. The right of children to special educational assistance is set out in Section 5-7 of the same act. The special educational assistance can be given at kindergartens.

The pedagogical-psychological counselling service is one of the many professional bodies that can provide an expert opinion on whether a child with a reduced level of function may be entitled to prioritised admission to a kindergarten in accordance with Section 13 of the Kindergarten Act. The pedagogical-psychological counselling service can in such cases also provide advice and guidance to the kindergarten.

The pedagogical-psychological counselling service is the expert body for recommendations on special educational assistance. If a kindergarten seeks collaboration on and help with an individual child at the kindergarten, the parents must have given their consent. Parents must be actively involved in this cooperation.

### **Duties and responsibilities related to child welfare**

Municipalities and the state both have duties and responsibilities related to child welfare. All municipalities must have a child welfare service that carries out day-to-day activities in fulfilment of the law. This service provides advice and guidance, conducts surveys, rules on matters assigned to it under the law and prepares cases for consideration by the County Social Welfare Board. It also implements and follows through on projects and programmes.

The Ministry of Children and Equality is responsible for multi-sectoral policies directed toward children and youth.

And overarching goal of Norway's child and youth policies is to secure a good, safe environment in which children and young people can to grow to adulthood. Services and opportunities are to be equal for everyone. Of central importance are efforts to combat marginalization, equalize living standards and promote opportunities for children and young people to influence social developments. Such efforts are undertaken in concert with other ministries, national agencies, municipalities and non-governmental organizations.

## **1.4 Financing**

The state, the municipalities and the parents finance the kindergartens. There are national regulations concerning parents' fees, and maximum fee is NOK 2330 per month. (App. 291. - Euro) The parents' part of funding the total running costs varies between approximately 22 and 30 per cent. Maximum fees were introduced in 2004. The state gives grants for establishing and running of kindergartens.

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Public and private kindergartens must be treated equally in relation to public grants. This year's governmental budget has 18 000 million NOK for kindergartens. According to the OECD Norway used 1.7 per cent of GDP for kindergartens in 2004.

Municipalities are permitted to charge a reduced fee for the second and third child, and also reduce prices for those with smaller income. Also children with special need who benefit from a stay in kindergarten, gets reduced fee. The level is locally decided. The monthly fee must not exceed 2330 NOK for the first child; virtually all of the country's municipalities applied the maximum fee system.

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### 1.5 Age of children visiting kindergartens

Kindergartens in Norway are for children aged 0 – 5 years. Children start compulsory school the year they turn six. Parental leave is either 44 weeks with full wages or 54 weeks with 80 per cent wages.

## 2. Forms of kindergartens

There are several kinds of kindergartens in Norway.

Ownership is either municipalities or stately, or private (personally or organisations)

Mostly the kindergartens are whole day. From 07.00 or 07.30 to 17.00 five days a week. However there are still some short time kindergartens 11 – 15. But since most parents want full day institutions there are less of these kinds of kindergartens now. However, it is possible to share, or use a place in kindergarten fewer hours than full day place (9 h) and of course pay less.

Some municipalities also have what we call Open Kindergarten. It's a place where parents can go to and meet other parents with small children. But they cannot leave their children. One teacher is responsible for the kindergarten and it is usually open 3 days a week, from 10 to 13.

There are several different contentedly kindergarten too. It is from religious kindergartens, to Waldorf/Steiner and Montessori kindergartens.

We also have Nature kindergartens in the main land, and Skerry kindergartens along the coast.

Many kindergartens try to have a specific form of content in there work. We have Reggio Emilia, Music, Language minorities and Islamic kindergartens.

### **Kindergartens for Sami Children**

Norway's indigenous group, the Sami people, are about 1.8 per cent of the population in Norway. Most of the Sami live in Northern Norway, a great part also in Oslo. About 1000 Sami children have a place in kindergarten.

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The Kindergarten Act states that the kindergartens must take account of children's social, ethnic and cultural background, including the language and culture of Sami children. Further kindergartens for children in Sami districts must be based on the Sami language and culture. In other municipalities steps must be taken to enable Sami children secure and develop their language and their culture. This legislation relates to the ILO's Convention no 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens states that kindergartens for Sami children in Sami districts must be an integrated part of Sami society and must demonstrate the diversity, vigour and variety of Sami society. Sami statutes must include the aim of strengthening children's identity as Sami people through use of Sami language, and by teaching children about Sami culture, ways of life and society. At kindergartens catering for Sami children but outside Sami districts, parents and children are entitled to expect staff to be familiar with Sami culture, and to emphasise it as part of the kindergarten's programme.

The Sami Assembly has special grants to establish informative material and information to and about Sami kindergartens.

### **3. Kindergarten teachers**

#### **3.1 Education**

Bachelor degree – education for kindergarten teachers:

Care taking, play and learning are important tasks for a kindergarten teacher. You learn how to take the responsibility for an environment that provides care, confidence, security, learning and ability for children. A kindergarten teacher also learns how to organise for children's experiences, adventures and play.

#### Full-time study:

The full-time study lasts for three years. The first two years work with different subjects – often project-related in groups. These studies are combined with practical learning. The last year of the study the students are specializing in a subject that ends in a bachelor exam. Pedagogy is the main subject in the study.

#### Part-time study:

The part-time study has the same subjects and themes as the full-time study.

However, the part-time study takes four years. The practical experience gained by the students through their daily work has immense importance and focus.

The study is organized with a part of the time at the college, and a part of it in their working place, where they are doing different tasks.

#### Practice

Practice learning is a central part of the education. It lasts for totally twenty weeks during the three years. There is two weeks practice in primary school – first level.

#### Further educational courses

There are different possibilities for further educational courses, for example master grade.

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### 3.2 Professions of kindergarten teachers

The kindergarten teachers are qualified to work in kindergartens as team leaders. Many of the kindergarten teachers become headmaster of the kindergarten. Some of them get jobs in social- or medical organisations.

With one year of relevant further educational courses kindergarten teachers can be teachers in primary schools (first to fifth level).

### 3.3 Status of kindergarten teachers

They have the same status as other occupational groups with three years university college education, for example registered nurses and social workers. They have yet lower status than teachers on higher levels.

### 3.4 Selection criteria for teachers

To enter teacher training you have to pass general examination (as to any other university or higher education. During the studies, the practice teacher will tell if the students are qualified to work with children, if they have the personal qualifications necessary.

#### Staffing

The Kindergarten Act states that head teachers and pedagogical leaders must be trained pre-school teachers or have other college education that gives qualifications for working with children and pedagogical expertise. Pre-school teacher education is a three years university college study with bachelor degree. Pedagogical leaders without pre-school teacher education must have further education in teaching in kindergartens. According to regulations there must be one pedagogical leader per 7 – 9 children under the age of three and per 14 – 18 children over the age of three. Further staffing must be sufficient for the staff to carry on satisfactory pedagogical activity. By 15 December 2006 the staff in Norwegian kindergartens consisted of approximately 70 000 employees. Approximately 30 per cent of these were trained pre-school teachers. Approximately 13 per cent of the head teachers and pedagogical leaders were not educated pre-school teachers and had dispensations from the educational requirement. There is a lack of staff in Norwegian kindergartens today in accordance with the educational requirement. The Ministry has laid down a strategic plan that consists of various efforts for recruiting pre-school teachers to kindergartens (June 2007).

#### A strategy for raising the competence in the sector

The Norwegian Government's goal in addition to full kindergarten coverage is to offer kindergartens with high quality. Competent staffs are the most important factor. The Ministry has recently developed a strategic plan for the raising of competence in the ECEC sector. Efforts at the cost of approximately 60 million NOK this year (2007) is prescribed in the strategy. The Ministry prioritize some central elements in this strategy: pedagogical leadership, children's participation, language and language stimulation and transition from kindergarten to school. Another important part of the strategy is a practice-based research and development research programme for the ECEC sector at the Norwegian Research Council commissioned by the Ministry.



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## 4. Organization

### 4.1 Size of groups

Kindergartens are organized in several ways. Most frequently there are 9 children (0-3 years old) and 18 children (3-6 years old) in a group. When the groups are age-mixed, one child 0-3 years old counts as two children 3-6 years old. In Ski and some other municipalities we have group of 14 (0-3) and 27 children (3-6). There are two teachers and two assistants working in these groups. And the buildings are planned for many small groups, with more rooms.

### 4.2 Number of teachers per child

In groups described above there are three educators. According to the law for Norwegian kindergartens at least one of the staff has to be educated as kindergarten teacher. The rest of the staff usually is assistants, without any formal education.

### 4.3 Opening times

The opening times in Norwegian kindergartens are different. Kindergartens hospital personal opens at 6:45 am, and close at 5:00 p.m. The most common opening times in Norwegian kindergartens are from 7:30 a.m. to 5 :00.

A few kindergartens in Norway have opening time during the night.

## 5. Diversity

Diversity and integration is of high relevance in the Norwegian school system. In the Framework plan there are several points concerning this issues listed up as especially important values:

- Understanding for the own and for other cultures
- Language as an important means for the development of identity
- Integration: support of all kind of needs
- Experience that equal attention is paid to boys and girls

Norway has a very integrative school system and has no categorisation of children. All children with special needs are integrated and have a priority right to special support and services. The same right goes also for children with a bilingual background. Children with disabilities are therefore well represented in the Norwegian kindergarten. Today Norway is a multi-religious and multicultural society. Kindergartens shall reflect and respect the diversity represented by groups of children. At the same time the kindergartens should also include values and traditions from Christian cultural heritage.

The staff would therefore have to

- generate interest in, and contribute towards an understanding and tolerance of, different cultures and lifestyles
- help children who are experiencing conflicts at home to find constructive solutions
- be conscious of the importance of staff as role models, and behave in such a way that children are supported in their own identities and develop respect for one another
- develop an understanding of different traditions and lifestyles

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## II Violent behaviour, violence prevention (VP) and peace education (PE)

### Relevancy of violence prevention in Norwegian kindergarten curriculum

Norwegian kindergartens are based on a curriculum laid down in the "**Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens**", a plan that the teachers have to follow, but it also gives them a wide range of possibilities in how to work and what to emphasize in the various times of the year. In Part 1, the social mandate of kindergartens, p 5 it is stated "*Kindergartens have a responsibility in society for the early prevention of discrimination and bullying*"

Social competence is about interacting with other people in a positive manner in different situations. This competence is expressed and learned by children through interaction with each other and with adults. It is reflected in children's abilities to show initiative and to maintain friendships. Understanding social situations and processes and acquiring social competence require experience of and participation in the community. Social competence is constantly developed through actions and experiences. This occurs through all situations over the course of the day. All children must experience a wide variety of interaction. Everyday life at kindergartens should be characterised by positive emotional experiences. Joy, humour and aesthetic experiences must be important parts of children's existence at kindergartens. Through care, play and learning, children's social competence will both be expressed and confirmed through their ability to put themselves in other people's positions and to show compassion. From a young age, children can show that they care about one another, solve conflicts and see each other's perspectives. They can show consideration and care. They do this both through physical and verbal actions. They must learn to cooperate on positive forms of interaction. Kindergartens shall be characterised by experiences that foster self-esteem and a sense of achievement, play with peers and a sense of belonging to a positive community.

Kindergartens shall help to ensure that children develop confidence and pride in their own backgrounds, and respect for the cultural values and expressions of others. Interaction challenges children to master the balance between expressing themselves and recognising the needs of others. Social competence is very important as means of preventing the development of problem behaviour such as discrimination and bullying. Kindergartens have a responsibility to society for the early prevention of such behaviour.

Kindergartens shall constantly work to support and promote the social competence of individual children and groups of children. Staff is role models whose own behaviour helps to teach children their social competence. Active and clearly expressed staff is needed to create a warm and inclusive social environment. Recognition and supportive relationships form the basis for the development of social competence. (Part 2.4, p 28)

Through work on communications, language and texts, kindergartens shall help to ensure that children

- listen, observe and respond to mutual interaction with children and adults
- develop their understanding of concepts, and use a varied vocabulary
- use their language to express feelings, wishes and experiences, to solve conflicts and to create positive relationships through play and other social interaction

(part 3.1, p 34)

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Manifesto against Bullying (2002 and 2005) is emphasising responsibilities of pre-school and school education for implementation and assessment of primary violence prevention and teacher's role as models.

## **Violent Behaviour in the Kindergarten – or Interaction, Interaction Difficulties and Creation of an Inclusive Safe-Haven of Peace and Socio-Emotional Wellbeing**

**A discussion of choice of terms, concept content and project perspective, and answer to the Daphne project check list on country level / report based on literature**

**Berit H. Johnsen**

### **Introduction**

This text contains answers to our Daphne II project's **Check list country level; report based on literature, part II: Violent behaviour and peace education**, with the exception of Topic 6,2 questioning about the national curriculum of the kindergarten, which I leave to my good colleagues and project partners who administrate kindergartens.

Topic 5, 6 and 7 are answered under somewhat other headings, but with references to the concrete questions. The first part of the text contains a discussion of the terms 'violence' and 'violent behaviour' and their application related to interaction between children in kindergartens. Alternative concepts are presented and related to a different project perspective than the one decided. The concepts 'interaction', 'interaction difficulties' and 'resource based interaction development' are applied in the following account of the project questions.

The text presented here should be viewed as a first draft. More Norwegian and international literature is available than the one presented and referred to here, especially related to different resource based educational programs for kindergartens. It is therefore, my hope that gathering, reading, evaluation and presentation of summaries of relevant texts will be a continuous activity through all parts of the project. By relevant texts I mean literature about educational programs, perspectives, traditions and ideas supporting non-violent interaction and creation of kindergartens towards inclusive safe-havens of peace and socio-emotional wellbeing. This is an aim and a perspective that will never be fully reached, but should always be endeavoured.

### **A discussion of relevant terms and concepts**

**The terms 'violence' and 'violent behaviour' in kindergartens (5. Violent behaviour)**

The terms 'violence' and 'violent behaviour' are interpreted differently in different idiochronic (different historical times) and synchronic (same time, different places) contexts, and even in different professional discourses within the same geographic area. Thus 'violence' has been (Befring, 2005; Johnsen, 1998/2000) and still is a much used term in arguments in favour of increased police activity and criminal punishment, whereas terms such as 'neglect' have been used within the old child rescue movement and 'behaviour difficulties', 'socio-emotional barriers' and 'negative interaction' are applied terms within current education and special needs education discourse (Befring, 2005; Johnsen, 1998/2000).

This DAPHNE content description strengthens my interpretation and application of the concept 'violence' as actions against or inflicted upon children, when applied in a DAPHNE program context, and especially when focus is on children in kindergarten age.

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Prevention of violence against- as well as suppression and neglect of children and other vulnerable groups is a main issue in the Convention of the Child's Rights (UN, 1991). Violence, suppression and neglect against children results in more or less severe traumas in the children. **Trauma, traumatic- and post traumatic stress** are thus key concepts for understanding how children experience violence and the consequences of violence for their health, well-being and optimal conditions for learning, development and other facets of life quality. Traumatic and posttraumatic stress may be caused by violence, suppression and/or neglect on different societal levels. We may differentiate between large-scale-, local and micro or small-scale level. The sieges of Sarajevo and Gaza, the manslaughters in Rwanda and the shootings in Northern Ireland are examples of large-scale human-induced violence or catastrophes with serious consequences for children. So have also earthquakes, forest fires and floods, which may be classified as natural catastrophes (which currently are viewed as possibly long-term human-induced, but this discussion will not be followed up in this text).

On local level violence against children happens within the family, in the near surroundings of the child and in the kindergarten or its surroundings. In the DAPHNE I report (European Commission, 2005) an overview of the different project issues highlights a sinister list of violence against children, such as child abuse in general, domestic violence, social isolation, child trafficking, child sexual abuse and child pornography, physical punishment of children, dangerous care, violence in the media, violence against children with learning disabilities, violence, mobbing or bullying in school and peer violence (The complete list is quoted in Appendix 1 to this text). In Norwegian context violence related to kindergartens and preschool care which has gotten media attention over the last years are related to possible child abuse, sexual abuse, child neglect by a private "day-care mother", hostage taking of kindergartens and evacuation of kindergartens because of police raid at dangerous criminals in the neighbourhood. Search in media only resulted in one substantial discussion of violence between children in the kindergarten<sup>1</sup>.

Much of the kind of violence highlighted as violence on local level happens on micro level in dyadic situations, where one adult or adolescent violates a child in a situation where nobody else are there to defend the child or give evidence about the deed (Frederick, 1985; Green, 1985; Johnsen, 2005; Pynoos, 1994; Tesera, 2001).

From my point of departure as a researcher within Norwegian and international Special Needs Education, I do not find the explicit and logical connection between peace education and studies of peer violence in the kindergarten. I also question the application of the concepts 'violence' and 'violent behaviour' as fruitful instruments for understanding and practicing peace education in kindergartens. I fear that in spite of the good will behind this focus, it may result in negative labelling of young children's activities in the kindergarten, and to attempts to avoid and suppress expressions of aggression between children in the early period of life, where they need to learn to express and handle such feelings in continuously more peaceful ways over a period of many years. I am aware that my arguments are based on a combination of the idiochronic and synchronic context and research discourses I am situated in on the one hand, and my individual research based view of the nature of children in kindergarten age, their level of mastery and need for resource based communication and education on the other hand. However, I expect that articulation of differences in basic viewpoints such as these between participating countries may encourage important discussions leading to increased and extended knowledge related to the topic as well as research methodology.

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<sup>1</sup> A search in homepage of NRK – the Norwegian National TV and Radiostation - with the key words 'violence' and 'kindergarten', gave 0 results. Search in one of the largest newspapers, Aftenposten violence towards children/kindergarten' and 'violence by children/kindergarten' gave 9 + 18 results, mostly about violence against kindergartens in foreign countries (such as during the riots in the suburbs of Paris: November 2005), discussions related to new regulations, and questions if the regulations prescribing safety in kindergartens are opposed to children's need for activity.). Two items were about violence by children in kindergartens. The most prominent of the two was an article by the Danish psychologist and freelance journalist, Jesper Juul, where he discusses the two phenomena, aggression and violence, based on an example of a child who had spitted in the face of a peer. He concludes that aggression and violence are two different phenomena, and that violence is not necessarily a consequence of aggression. He also argues that it is important to engage more males in the kindergarten in order to create balance between feminine and masculine socialisation practices (Juul, 25.05.2006).

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## **Violent behaviour, behaviour disorders and relevant concepts describing interaction difficulties in kindergartens.**

Special needs education is one of the research- and higher education disciplines that highlight learning and development possibilities and barriers of human beings from birth to high age. Barriers to interaction and communication difficulties in preschool age (0 – 6) are amongst its issues. In the following I present the concepts used in the presentation of study courses related to this topic as examples of key concepts in current Norwegian context<sup>2</sup>:

- **Bachelor program:** Here is a part of a course with the title *Psycho-Social learning difficulties, social competence, risk factors and mastering strategies* (<http://www.uio.no/studier/emner/uv/isp/SPED3000/>)
- **Master program (Norwegian):** The main course in this topic has the title: *Serious interaction- and behaviour problems in kindergarten, school and society. The topic contains special needs educational work with early intervention, prevention and cross-disciplinary cooperation are central factors. The topic is divided in four areas:*
  - *Bullying and violence in school and society*
  - *Neurologically related difficulties and other psychic problems*
  - *Neglect and child care*
  - *Intoxication- and criminality-related difficulties*(<http://www.uio.no/studier/program/spesped-master/index.xml>)
- **International Master of Philosophy program:** *Socio-emotional learning, mastery and development, and barriers that may occur related to society, individual and interactivities* (<http://www.uio.no/studier/emner/uv/isp/SNE4220/>)

As showed above the term ‘violence’ is used once and then in connection with school and society. We find the concepts ‘socio-emotional’ and ‘psychosocial mastery and learning’ representing a resource based view, whereas ‘socio-emotional barriers’, ‘risk factors’ and ‘interaction- and behaviour problems’ are the conceptual main tools setting the perspective for human relation- and educational problem solving.

### **Systematic work with interaction difficulties in Norwegian kindergartens**

Data regarding prevalence of interaction difficulties in Norwegian kindergartens are based on the educational focus, laws and regulations in the country. A short clarification of this is therefore necessary.

According to laws and regulations support of groups and children with interaction problems is implemented on two levels.

1). The kindergarten is for All and, similar to all other educational levels (primary education, lower- and higher secondary education) it is obliged to give education in accordance with the individual levels of mastery and needs of all children. This calls for meaningful and individually adapted education in the group as the main arena. The municipality is obliged to assign their kindergartens

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<sup>2</sup> Quotations are translated to English by the author of this text. Norwegian quotations follow in this footnote: From Bacc. program: (Psykososiale lærevansker, sosial kompetanse, risikofaktorer og mestringsstrategier). From M. Ph. Program: Alvorlige samspills- og atferdsproblemer i barnehage, skole og samfunn. Emnet omfatter spesialpedagogisk arbeid hvor tidlig intervensjon, forebygging og tverrfaglig og tverretattlig samarbeid står sentralt. Innholdet konsentreres omkring fire områder:

- mobbing og utøvelse av vold i skole og samfunn
- nevrologisk relaterte vansker og andre psykiske lidelser
- omsorgssvikt og barnevern
- rus- og kriminalitetsrelaterte vansker

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recourses enabling them to offer such flexible education. As an example of how this principle of the law is organised, in Oslo each sub-city has a Professional Educational Centre (Pedagogisk Fagsenter) for kindergartens. From this centre cooperation and support with individually adapted education and special needs educational is coordinated, and practiced in the single kindergartens ([http://www.bydel-alna.oslo.kommune.no/barn\\_og\\_unge/pedagogisk\\_fagsenter/](http://www.bydel-alna.oslo.kommune.no/barn_og_unge/pedagogisk_fagsenter/)).

2). When the educator in a kindergarten has explicit reason to assume that a child has special needs of a kind and level calling for extra resources in order to give the child sufficient individually adapted education, it is his/her duty to report this to the leader of the kindergarten. After informed acceptance of parents or other primary caretakers, the kindergarten applies to the municipal Educational Psychological Centre for further assessment and documentation of possible special needs. Documentation of special needs shall in accordance with the *Education Act* (1998), § 5-7, release additional funding for special needs educational resources.

Thus, in accordance with the *Education Act*, interaction difficulties in a kindergarten group or related to single children are dealt with either through flexible group support related to 1) above or, in case of serious and long term individual socio-emotional difficulties, in a combination of 1) and 2). Only information about prevalence of documented individual support might in theory be statistically available on national level. However, strict rules defending the right of individual privacy limit access to such information.

#### **Prevalence of interaction problems in kindergartens** (5.1. Data of prevalence of behaviour disorders (violent behaviour) - age-specific: 3-6).

No official statistics of prevalence of interaction problems or individual children who have additional special needs education resources because of socio-emotional difficulties are found on national level. The most updated information about additional special education resources in general in kindergartens is from 2002-03, published in the report *Kunnskapsstatus om spesialundervisning i Norge* (Solli, 2004: 61-62). It states that 2.958 children (1% of all children between 1 and 5 years<sup>3</sup>) are given additional resources in accordance with § 5-7 in the *Education Act* (1998)<sup>4</sup>.

The overwhelming majority of these children get 10 or less additional hours for special needs support per week, whereas 8% get 21 hours or more per week. No national statistics are found, which differentiate between main causes for documented special needs, which are all kinds of assessment indications from severe multiple disabilities to level of language & speech mastery or neglect in the home environment.

On municipality level search was done on the homepage of Oslo, without any results regarding statistical information about special needs. The same goes for one of the sub-city administrations. (However, it might be that further search in research literature may reveal some estimates on local and/or national level).

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<sup>3</sup> These are the only relevant statistical figures found so far, and they give information about the age range 1-6 in the population of children, not age 3-5 in the Kindergarten population, as asked for.

<sup>4</sup> *Resources to special needs education in the kindergarten are distributed in accordance with the Education Act mainly relating to Primary and Secondary Education.*

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## **Long-term studies of interaction, interaction difficulties and resource based interaction development in kindergartens**

(5.2. Long-term studies of interaction difficulties; 7.2. (Long-term) studies of life-skills/peace factors/resilience factors, empathy, social competencies)

There is much relevant literature regarding primary-, lower and upper secondary school level, and less on kindergarten level. However, I have found some age-relevant research literature, mostly focusing on positive interaction, communication and mediation. I have to look better into the gathered literature when I am back in my office at the University of Oslo.

An increasing number of Master- and PhD studies are produced applying the eight ICDP themes for resource based communication and mediation. However, the international Master studies of teacher-pupil/s interaction referred to in the following, focus on the primary school (Andenet, 2005; Belew, 2005; Pavlovic, 2005; Teshome, 2004; Varunek, 2005).

A number of Norwegian governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGO) are occupied with protection of children's rights and education.

Search on the governmental institution *The Ombudsman for Children* (<http://www.barneombudet.no/>; <http://www.barneombudet.no/cgi-bin/barneombudet/>) resulted in zero hits regarding studies of violence against or by kindergarten children. No hits at all regarded violence by kindergarten children, but a huge number of hits focused on violence against children in kindergarten age (For more information, see Appendix 3 and homepage).

*The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet)*

<http://www.uttanningsdirektoratet.no/>; <http://www.uttanningsdirektoratet.no/templates/>) is the main national institution following up laws and regulations regarding education from kindergarten to upper secondary level. They publish reports and administer some innovation and research. Search on their homepage did not give results regarding studies of interaction and interaction difficulties in kindergartens

Search in one international and one local NGOs gave no results regarding studies of interaction and interaction difficulties in kindergartens (*Save the Children, Norway*:

<http://www.reddbarna.no/> <http://www.reddbarna.no/default.asp> ; *Stine Sofie Stiftelsen*: <http://www.barnerett.com/>).

A number of studies have been produced related to the ICDP perspective of resource based communication and mediation between primary caretakers in the family, kindergarten and schools (<http://www.icdp.info/>). Studies related to [non-violent communication](#) are also reported from Marshall B. Rosenberg's *Center for Non-Violent Communication* (<http://www.cnvc.org/>).

To make a thorough national and international literature overview within this area is a work-consuming task reaching far beyond the time given for this first part of the project. I make it my suggestion that all project participants gather literature all through the project periods, so that in the end that may be an important contribution from this project.

## **Interaction, interaction difficulties and resource based interaction development in kindergartens: Human-relation & educational programs, perspectives, traditions and ideas**

(6.1. Well evaluated programs of violence prevention; 7.1. Well-evaluated programs of life skills/peace factors/resilience factors, empathy, social competencies).

The search for concrete and delimited programs regarding prevention of negative interactions, development of positive interaction, and creation of a socio-emotional safe-haven for all (Johnsen,

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2005; 2007) is necessary, but not sufficient from the point of departure of a holistic kindergarten- and schooling view. Education programs, perspectives, traditions and ideas need to be integrated in long-term planning as well as daily activities. However, to make a thorough national and international literature overview within this full area represents another work-consuming task reaching far beyond the time given for this first part of the project. Therefore, I repeat my suggestion that all project participants gather literature through the project periods, so that in the end that may be another important contribution from this project. In the following, sadly, I have to limit this presentation to mention a few projects and describe two such in more details in appendices.

Regarding **prevention and fading-out of negative interaction**, I have found one project; *Manifest against Bullying* (Manifest mot mobbing, 2002). The manifest consists of a history of evaluated development, documentation of connection to international and Norwegian principles and legislation, as well as documentation of goals and activities. It is a cross-ministerial document in cooperation with the *Union of Education, Norway, the Parent organisation for the Elementary- and Lower secondary education* and *KS – the Norwegian association of Local and Regional Authorities*. It has a whole-life perspective, thus also focussing of kindergartens.

The local NGO *Stine Sofie Stiftelsen* (The Stine Sofie Foundation, <http://www.barnerett.com/>), which was founded by the mother of a murdered girl, has proved its sustainability through several years of activities. Leaders and teachers in the kindergarten are amongst its focus groups. The foundation's main goal is to contribute to prevention of violence against children, but they also offer seminars and conferences about possibilities for development of secure and positive environments, such as the conference *The Kindergarten – the Arena of Possibilities* (Barnehagen – mulighetenes arena). The NGO *Save the Children, Norway* (<http://www.reddbarna.no/>) has a number of local and international projects aiming at prevention of violence and suppression of children. No projects focusing of prevention of violence between kindergarten peers were found. *Save the Children, Norway* also has projects focusing on information to Norwegian kindergartens and schools about the child's rights, violation of rights and development of positive interaction and solidarity in local and international context, such as the material *Nobody Excluded* (Ingen utenfor) and *the Princesses on the Dust-Heaps* (Prinsesser på søppelhauger). This material is full of illustrations, printed information and suggestions to discussions and learning tasks.

Two international NGOs deserve special attention, because projects on their behalf are thoroughly evaluated, and also because they are applied by the Norwegian project partners. They are the earlier mentioned ICDP and Marshall B. Rosenberg's movement for Non-Violent Communication. The core themes of ICDP are applied in the base line study of the Norwegian Case-kindergartens in this project. They are also planned to be applied as main innovation procedures for one of the kindergartens (for more information about ICDP and the 8 themes, see Appendix 2 and <http://www.icdp.info/>).

Marshall B. [Rosenberg's project Nonviolent Communication](http://www.cnvc.org/) (2003) has developed into an international *Center for Non-Violent Communication*, located in California, USA (<http://www.cnvc.org/>), with branches to many countries. The centre presents a number of evaluated projects (<http://search.atomz.com/search/?sp-q=evaluation&sp-a=sp100258b0&sp-f=ISO-8859-1>). In Norway one of our DAPHNE project partners, Ski Municipality, is developing Rosenberg's approach in cooperation with other countries through the so-called *Giraffe Language* (For more information about the Ski Municipality's "Giraff språk", see Appendix 4 and <http://www.ski.kommune.no/Organisasjon/Barnehageetaten/4336/-SKI-RAFF-SPRAKET-/>).

### First draft

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**For part I:**

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