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Managing the Quality of Substitute Workers in Early Childhood Education

Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

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Thesis

Expertise
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The aim of this thesis was to find ways to improve the quality of substitute work done in the context of daycares. The purpose was to provide guidelines that ensure quality for substitutes coming to work in the daycare setting.

The data for the thesis was collected via two mixed focus groups consisting of 14 workers in the field of early childhood education (managers, practical nurses, and teachers). The focus group interviews were conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams due to the coronavirus pandemic and in accordance with the guidelines set by the City of Vantaa. The idea was to use the inter-view data to explore how quality is viewed in the context of Early Childhood education and what kind of guidelines could be in place to keep this quality standard with changing substitutes

The results showed that the qualifications and training of the substitutes affected the quality of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The interview revealed that in terms of improving structural quality there should be changes in policy, a smaller adult-to-child ratio, good manage-ment, higher education for the staff and healthy facilities in use. Process quality elements that were found to be important in the research were the different levels of interaction between the children and the workers and the guardians and the workers. The main method for quality meas-urement that was used by the interviewees was customer satisfaction and specifically the chil-dren's reactions to changes in the service.

The solution to fulfil the purpose of the research is to suggest a video induction service for ECEC because it would ensure that the training is done in the same way throughout the municipality. Other solutions to maintain quality in substitute situations would be to have training seminars to be run by the outsourcing company.

Keywords	Early Childhood Education (ECEC), quality of the early childhood education, Substitute Staff in Early Childhood Education, Process quality, Structural Quality.

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1   Introduction

The field of early childhood education (ECE) is in the midst of an ongoing transformation. Caregiver training and higher level of education have been shown to be the cornerstones of quality early childhood education (Fukkink, R.G., Lont, A. 2007:294.) In the year of 2030, the Finnish government aims to improve the quality of early childhood education by increasing the number of qualified teachers working in a group from 1 to 2 teachers per group (Act on Early Childhood Education and Care 540/2018). With these quality issues in mind, it is important to look at the quality requirements for the substitutes that come to replace the qualified workers when they fall ill. Sometimes the substitutes replace a worker for longer periods of time and, therefore it is very important to meet the general standard requirements for working within the field (Vlasov, J. et al 2019:44.)

Early childhood education can have significant positive effects on a child's development and learning when the quality of the provision is met with a standard (OECD 2015). Early years education plays an important role in not only tackling social disadvantage, but it can also boost children's cognitive and socio-emotional development (Bonetti & Brown 2018:5). The work done in early childhood education, within the Nordic countries, is guided by certain set standards for both the workforce and the way that the work is to be structured. The guiding elements for ECEC work are the national legislation on children's rights, the national curriculum, the municipal curriculum, and each child's personal plan. The work done in ECEC environment consists of multi-professional teamwork, trust, co-operation with the families and structured pedagogical day plans. Quality indicators in ECEC can be either process or structural in nature. Process quality indicators are written in the objectives of the curricula, and it consists of the interaction and encounters between the children, guardians, and the workers. Structural quality indicators contain the "iron triangle" which is the training of the workers, ratio, and overall group size (Bonetti & Brown, 2018:9).

Recent studies have indicated that caregiver training and formal education were better predictors of quality and showed more positive developmental outcomes for children than adult-child ratio and group size (Fukkink & Lont 2007:295). When considering the importance of education, it is easy to see how a substitute can affect the quality of early childhood education. Previous research concerning substitute workers by Erkkilä (2018) has also showed that the substitute staff influenced the quality of ECEC. The quality

changes were directly related to the differences in the individual substitutes. The substitute worker affected the structure of the planned curriculum and the arrangements made for that day. The employees need to take greater charge of the group and make decisions on how the work will be carried out during that day, which can cause a greater strain and workload on the employee (Lindroos, N. 2019:35).

The purpose of this master's thesis is to provide guidelines that ensure quality for ECEC when substitutes come to work in the daycare setting. The aim is to improve the quality of substitute work done in the context of daycares. The research design for this thesis was a qualitative one and the data was collected via two focus group interviews, and it was analyzed through thematic content analysis. The responses could provide insight into how quality can be ensured in day-cares even with changes in substitute workers.

2   Early Childhood Education

The first part of the theoretical framework for the thesis will consist of how early childhood education is implemented, what it consists of including aspects ECEC pedagogy, teamwork and working culture, regular contact staff in ECEC, planning and execution of the work, trust building in ECEC, the management of early childhood education, the effect of the covid-19 pandemic and the why substitute work is used in the field.

2.1   Basic Elements of Nordic Early Childhood Education Pedagogy

Nordic countries have developed the basic elements of early childhood education (ECEC) within the context of the welfare state. The main policies guiding ECEC have been to do with family policy, education policy and social policy with an underlying assumption that childcare enables parents to combine their family and working life. The past decade has brought the emphasis more on children and their ability to be lifelong learners when given the right tools from the start. Staff training and qualifications has been one of the key elements for organizing ECEC within the Nordic countries and there is a shared assumption that it drives the quality of the services (Karila, K. et al.2017:11.)

2.2   Finnish Early Childhood Education Pedagogy

Finnish early childhood education is based on the Educare model, which combines care, education and teaching and emphasizes pedagogy (OPH 2020). Early childhood education is based on the framework set by the Finnish National Agency for education, which has its roots in the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018). According to the law, all children have an equal right to ECEC services. The services can be arranged within a day care setting, family day care, play activities or other forms of day care (Järvinen et al. 2013: 90).

Childcare is a universal public service for all families and, thus every child has a right for education and care regardless of whether the parents have employment. Municipalities have an obligation to provide care for a child that is younger than 7 years old. The childcare services can either be organized by municipalities or by private day-care providers and around 80% of the children are in full-time care in Finland (Hujala et al 2016.)

The early childhood education framework sets a national standard according to which the municipalities act upon and build their own frameworks from the set standard. In the municipality of Vantaa, the framework for the core curriculum stipulates that each child has a right to planned, goal-oriented education and care. To abide by these standards each day-care creates their own core curriculum that is then further developed by each teacher within each group to form a group-based core curriculum. The group-based core curriculums are made based on each child's individual learning plans within that group. The individual learning plans are guided by the national and the municipal core curriculum frameworks. The learning plan considers the child's development, age, the strengths, abilities, interests, and their individual needs. The plan is made together with the child's parents, the child and with other multidisciplinary network partners (psychologists, special needs teachers, nurses, specialists etc) if necessary (Vantaa Core curriculum 2019: 10.)

Early childhood education pedagogy is formed through a set of values and concepts of children, childhood, and what learning entails. Pedagogy as a term encompasses all the methods and skills a teacher uses to influence learning in others, and it is concerned with the science of teaching (Husbands & Pearce 2012:5). Pedagogy can be seen in the ECEC working culture, the learning environments as well as teaching, education, and care. The pedagogical responsibility lies with the early childhood education teachers in

the day cares; however, it requires that there be an understanding between all the workers on what methods are best used to make a child flourish and learn to the best of his/her abilities (Vantaa Early Learning Core Curriculum 2019:27).

There are pedagogical variations within both public and private day-cares, because it is up to each day-care unit to emphasize the pedagogical approach that is best fit for their context. However, there has been a push towards using positive psychology as the basis of early childhood education within most public day-cares. The emphasis has been brought through by the national curriculum and the municipal curriculums. Vantaa's core curriculum emphasizes in its vision and values, the idea, that creating a positive working culture is built on the positive encouraging attitudes of the workforce. There are five central teaching areas that are emphasized in the core curriculum and each one is to be taught with a positive outlook and with humour and fun (Vantaa Early Learning Core Curriculum 2019:40.)

2.3 Teamwork and Working Culture in Finnish Daycares

One of the central features of Finnish day-care work is teamwork. Each day-care is composed of multiple small teams that have different professional backgrounds. A team is referred in this context as a small amount of people that have complementary skills and that have a set of performance goals, approach and a common purpose and they hold each other mutually accountable (Katzenbach 1993: 59.)

The function and effectiveness of the team creates the atmosphere of the entire group and either allows the kids to flourish and grow in a safe environment or in a non-effective team the children's behavior and developmental problems are harder to manage (Suomi, 2013:29). The Vantaa's curriculum for ECEC also states the working culture is made up of the multidisciplinary teams that act as each other's mentors and mirrors (Vantaa Core Curriculum 2019:37). Each team builds on each other's strengths and finds a pedagogical approach that they can all commit to in the same way. With child centred care it is vital for the team to come to an understanding on how to teach the different skills necessary for the developmental phases that the children in the group are going through. For example, it is important to have the same methods of discipline, agreement on how you teach manners, agreement on what level of assistance the children in each age group need and the ways and methods of communication within the group. Understanding teamwork's importance in the context of the day-care allows for better understanding of

how substitutes can affect the atmosphere of the group and the overall quality of care. The central features of teamwork have to do with understanding the basic duties, committing to the work, open communication, common trust, and support (Saksa 2006:10.)

The ECEC working culture is formed from agreed upon ways of working and it is shaped by the history and cultural context that the work is executed in (Keskinen 2000, 139.) Working culture is something that is collectively learned, and the knowledge is forwarded to new workers through training, induction, and mentorship. Some aspects of the working culture happen unconsciously, through feedback and negative or positive body language given by the other workers in the work situations (Erkkilä 2018: 24.) Research by Suhonen et al (2014) have shown that effective teamwork in the ECEC setting supports the children's ability to tolerate stress. This support is done through systematically observing the kids and then drawing conclusions based on the observations. Observing and documenting the observations made of the kids builds the teams knowledge of them. This knowledge allows for better guiding of individual kids and even of the group. Effective teams are flexible in the way they do the work and know where to be based on reading their co-workers reactions and experiences. An effective team is also like a smoothly running machinery where each person increases the workflow and allows for each other's strengths to be brought out better (Vlasov et al 2019:55.)

2.4 Regular Contact Staff in ECEC Provision and Care

Whether you are an early childhood teacher, practical nurse, or a children's instructor within the field of ECEC, you need qualifications or work experience to work in a daycare setting. The different qualifications can come from University (Kindergarten teacher; Special needs teacher), a University of Applied Sciences (Social Welfare Worker), vocational school (Practical nurse/Childcare worker) or vocational school focusing on families and children (Children's instructor). Kindergarten teachers, Social Welfare Workers and Special Needs Teachers' have pedagogical responsibility and act as core practitioners within the groups. The care work, medical assistance and supportive duties are done by the Practical Nurses' and Children's instructors. Groups that care for special need's children can also have Special Needs Assistants to provide extra support for the child or several children. Special Needs Assistants do not need to have formal training as they do not have group responsibility or pedagogical responsibility (Onnismaa 2017:3.)

Teachers within the ECEC setting need to have knowledge from several broad areas of knowledge since their job pertains guiding the development and learning of young children. Guiding a child's early development and learning involved working together with the families and understanding the influence of different environmental factors in the process. The knowledge areas involved in the process include early childhood development, psychology, social work, and diversity training. The families are very actively involved in the development of their child and, thus teachers and practical nurses develop a developmental partnership within the ECEC settings. The smaller the child is the more heavily the parents are involved in making the learning plan together with the workers. The process of developing and executing a well-formed learning plan involves daily communication with the parent's on how the child's behavior and body have reacted during the day and knowledge on the child's past behavior and bodily reactions (Karlsson, Bigsten & Garvis, 2017.)

Teachers are taught in their training to have a broad understanding of pre-primary pedagogy and to understand the psycho-social factors that affect learning. Some of the main emphasized areas have to do with an ecological framework of early interventions. The ecological framework views children's development as a holistic one involving a socio-cultural process and focuses on the importance of the child's learning environment. Finnish ECEC places high importance on using play for learning and teaching peer interaction at an early age so that the transition into the school environment can be a smoother one (Onnismaa, 2017:9.) Teachers need to know how to: structure the day a correct manner, how to provide good routines for the kids, how to place pictures within the classroom for easier communication, how to name each child's lockers/seats to create a sense of safety and belonging, how to place play materials and books for easy access, how to have rules and positive reinforcement materials visible and how use new technology (tablets, computers, phones and robots) and have it visible so the kids can use it (Vantaa Early Learning Core Curriculum 2019.)

Practical nurses and children's instructors are educated on how to act according to the principles of early childhood education and care. They are also guided in how to support the child's intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual development. They also learn about cultural sensitivity and how to understand the impact of cultural diversity on early childhood learning. They also plan, carry out and evaluate different tasks related to the child's basic care and upbringing, which includes the care for children with special

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needs (Onnismaa, 2017:11.) Practical nurses are also qualified to give medicine to children with medical needs such as diabetes, asthma, or allergies. Teachers do not have medical training and, therefore it is vital for each group to also have a practical nurse for the situations where a child becomes ill or needs medical attention (Omnia, 2021.)

2.5   Planning and Execution of work in ECEC Setting

The work done within the daycares involves a lot of planning and organization and knowledge on how to work in a constantly changing environment. The teachers and social workers need to design learning experiences that are appropriate for each age group that they are teaching because many of the groups have around three different child age groups operating in the same facilities. Plans also need to be made for each individual child. Planning involves using a variety of different methods such as observation, talking with the family, doing individual child assessments, networking, and discussing with a multi-professional team (consisting of social workers, child psychologists, special needs teachers, maternity clinic nurses). Teachers need to have in-depth knowledge on developmental variations between children and knowing what is normal for each developmental phase and to make assessments if a child need's extra support and care from physiotherapy, child protective services, psychologists, or other specialized fields. The child's cultural context also needs to be considered when making assessments and plans especially with a growing multicultural population (Karlsson, Bigsten & Garvis, 2017.)

The teachers' organizational skills, sensitivity, planning skills and moment to moment interactions are what have the biggest impact on a child's learning and development (Karlsson, Bigsten & Garvis, 2017). The teaching process is an interactive one and the Finnish ECEC core curriculum places a great emphasis on making the weekly teaching plans together with the children or including their interests and needs within the plan. Each year the plans change because as the kids change and age, so do their interests. It is important that the yearly/monthly/weekly teaching plans have a basis in the developmental capabilities of the child group that is being taught and to their specific worldview and cultural background (Vantaa Core Curriculum 2019:26.)

The execution of work within the Finnish ECEC setting can be divided into three dimensions. The first major dimension is upbringing which includes cultural values, norms, and ways of doing things. The main educational purpose of upbringing is to guide the

individual identity development of each child so that they gain the ability to see the effects of their behaviour on their environment and the people in their surroundings. Upbringing is used as a guiding tool to teach the kids to form their own opinions and critically evaluate their thinking and behavioural patterns and to act in an ethically sustainable way (Vantaa Core Curriculum 2019:27.) Upbringing is done by both the child's family and by all the workers within the ECEC that are involved in the child's life.

The second major dimension of ECEC is teaching. The responsibility of teaching lies mostly with the teachers in the groups. The teaching is meant to promote and enhance the child's ability to learn. Within ECEC children are directed and motivated to try new things and guided to use new ways of learning. The cornerstones of teaching within the core curriculum are objectives set by the pedagogical activities, transversal competences, and the learning environments (Vantaa Core Curriculum 2019:27.) The main teaching areas that are part of each child's individual learning plans in Finland are: thinking and learning**,** cultural competence, interaction, and self-expression, learning to take care of oneself, multiliteracy and ICT competence, and participation and involvement skills (OPH 2021.) The National Core Curriculum for ECEC emphasizes the viewpoint that children learn through their senses and by using their body holistically. These viewpoints are connected to the thematic contents of ECEC. The main thematic contents are:

> The rich world of languages; diverse forms of expression; me and our community; exploring and interacting with my environment; I grow and develop.

> (Vaslov et al 2019: 55.)

The final major dimension is care and it involves all the daily routine activities such as: eating, dressing, and undressing, rest and taking care of hygiene. Care is based on making sure the basic physical care requirements of the child are met and that they feel emotionally cared for throughout the day. A reciprocal, trusting and respectful interaction based on positive touch and proximity form the basis of good care and provision. The major portion of care work is done by the practical nurses and childcare workers (Vantaa Core Curriculum 2019:28.)

2.6   The role of Leadership in ECEC

The qualification requirements necessary for an ECEC leader is defined in the act on Qualification Requirements for Social Welfare Professionals (272/2005). Currently the law stipulates that day-care centre manager need to be a qualified teacher and to have adequate management skills. In 2030 the new early childhood education law 540/2018 will also require a master's degree in early childhood education from new day-care managers (Ministry of Culture and Education, 2021.) According to the research within Finnish ECEC, the directors can lead a cluster of day-care units and are responsible for the day-care centre's daily practices and practicalities and act as advocates for the staff (Heikka, Kahila & Suhonen, 2020). The ECEC centre leaders or directors coordinate the parent-teacher partnerships, communicate with all the stakeholders, are responsible for getting quality evaluations from the clients, and disseminate the latest research to the staff at staff meetings (Hujala et al 2016.)

Leadership in the ECEC setting is founded on pedagogical leadership, which is based on a clear vision, clear values, tools, staff's expertise, structure, values, and professionalism. The main goal of pedagogical leadership is to provide high quality service. Bringing high-quality work means taking a service management perspective and understanding the culturally bound structures and functions involved with ECEC. Service management also means understanding the client base and their perception of quality work and providing a service that meets that quality (Hujala et al 2016.) ECEC directors are also in charge of some the human resource functions within the day-cares an, thus they are required to examine procedures, introduce new practices, and supervise the staff and their wellbeing (Hujala et al 2016.) Leadership within the ECEC setting is in a constant change as procedures and ways of doing things change. In some municipalities budget cuts from have caused the workload of the day-care directors to increase (Keränen, 2020.)

2.7   Trust building in the ECEC environment

ECEC environments require a level of trust both between the workers and between the parent's and the workers. Trust can be defined as:

> The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party.

(Mayer at al 1995:712.)

Within the day-care setting trust can be seen as the parents' willingness to trust the up-bringing and care to the workers and it is based on the notion that the workers will per-form in ways that will achieve positive outcomes to their child. People develop their trust in day-care workers based on their communication with each other and their cooperation with each other. Teachers work experience and educational backgrounds influenced the level of trust towards them. Experienced teachers have higher classroom management and communication skills and thus may have more competence for collaboration. Expe-rience also gives confidence which can be read as an indicator of expertness. This idea of expertness, may influence if parents trust teachers and therefore they may trust some-one with more teaching experience compares to someone with less knowledge (Lerk-kanen et al 2014.)

One important aspect of teaching is also trust between the children and the teachers. Children learn best when they feel well and feel safe in their environment. It is im-portant for the children to also develop a trusting relationship with their teachers. A ma-jor part of creating a safe environment is building a trusting relationship between the child and the adult (Vantaa Core Curriculum 2019:26.) When caring adults and children get to know each other and build a trust they can predict better each other's behaviour and signals and create an atunement (Karlsson, Bigsten & Garvis, 2017.)

2.8 Pandemic in the ECEC environment

In March of 2020, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2 (WHO announcement 2020.) This global health crisis led to many different restrictions and measures that affected many workplaces and public services. The pan-demic affected the ECEC services as it was one of the major services that was kept open. The reason for keeping ECEC services open was to guarantee that health workers and other essential workers could go to their work without the stress of having to look for babysitters (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health 2020.) The reason day-care units were kept open also had to do with the fact that children were not transmitting corona-virus to each other as much as adults (Bensoussan et al 2021.) Also, it was seen as vital for small children's mental health and wellbeing, and it is part of their basic rights to receive teaching and care from ECEC (Fegert et al. 2020.)

The pandemic meant that there were new safety measures that were set in place in each ECEC unit that would help stop the spread of covid-19. The groups would keep to themselves, and workers would stay within their own groups to contain the possible virus outbreaks to smaller group units. The children would be told to wash their hand more frequently and they would be served food rather than the children taking their own food. Parents were not allowed into the day-care facilities anymore and they would hand the child over at the day-care unit's door. The workers were told to wear masks both indoors and outdoors and limit meetings to under 7 people and in a space that can allow a 2-meter safety space (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health 2020.)

In the beginning of the pandemic the number of children decreased at the ECEC units, as many parents started working from home. This development halted the need for substitutes as there was a higher adult-to-child ratio than usual. Day-cares were able to move around their own employees in case of sick leaves. This change in the demand of substitutes affected their overall supply because substitute workers had to find work elsewhere. However, as the infection rates decreased and it was understood that the pandemic may last for longer, the children returned to the day-cares and the need for substitutes grew back to normal and the outsourcing firms were not prepared for the increase in demand.

The pandemic has influenced the mental capacity of the ECEC workforce as it has influenced all essential workers. The fear of exposure to covid-19 due to lack of proper safety equipment, fear of bringing the infection home to their families. Also, the overall effects of having the many essential services being closed can be seen as factors that can burden the workers mental health. These kind of stressors and anxiety can cause some level of burnout and PTSD (Giorgi et al. 2020.)

2.9 Substitute Staff in Early Childhood Education

Children's immune systems develop and get stronger until the age of 10 years old. Before that point children are much more prone to infections. According to research children at daycare centers are more likely to get infections than in home care (Alexandrino et al. 2016). Working with children exposes the childcare workers to many health issues including infectious diseases, which causes sick leaves within the workplace. These sick leaves are in themselves a strain on the workforce and to create a safe work environment it is very important to find good quality replacement of the missing worker. Substitutes

provide a temporary replacement for the sick worker. They take on the responsibilities and roles that are involved with working with parents and children while the regular worker is away. The temporary substitution may last from a few hours to many weeks (Karlsson, Bigsten & Garvis, 2017.) The substitute is not only needed as a physical replacement but is also a requirement by law to ensure that there is the legal ratio of adults-children as is stipulated by the Early Childhood Education Act 540/2018 35 (Erkkilä, 2018: 21.)

Substitution work is usually done through a fixed-term contracts. In the Finnish ECEC context fixed term contracts are often outsourced to companies that offer short term work to employees. Outsourcing substitute work is financially more viable and more flexible than hiring people to do the short-term positions. In the larger municipalities the daycares have outsourced to one large company that offers short-term gigs to workers. Substitution therefore involves the daycare unit, the substitution company, and the substitute (Erkkilä, 2018: 16.) The substitution company oversees the quality management of their own employees; however, they do not monitor the work that is done since they are not involved with the client base nor the workers that the substitutes work with.

The requirements for substitute workers are different than if you would apply for a permanent position within a daycare. Applying to work as a substitute for ECEC you need to provide: a criminal record, have adequate Finnish skills and have an open mind and be flexible. The training for the work within the outsourced substitute companies is done within four days, during which you work within the field and get paid (Seure 2020.) There is a necessity and an implication that the substitutes should perform and execute the same work as the person that they are replacing temporarily. They should flexibly understand the job requirements for the specific shift that they are in, the age group that they are working with and know the safety issues related to the environment that they are operating in (Erkkilä 2018:82.)

3   Quality management in Early childhood Education

Research has shown that for ECEC to have the greatest benefits for a child's development, it should be of a high quality (Sylva et al, 2004.) While the laws and structures of early childhood education are transforming there has been a greater emphasis on researching and monitoring quality within the field. The term quality is a relative concept

that is based on values and beliefs that are specific to a certain time and place (Directorate-General for Education and Culture 2014: 9). According to the ECEC quality guide, the process of defining quality principles within early childhood education should be a continuous, dynamic, and democratic process. Quality in early childhood education can be seen as reflective of the values that have been seen as important during a certain time and within a certain cultural context. How early childhood education is viewed can be directly linked to what kind of society we want to build and what role early childhood education plays in the building process (Mikkola et al. 2017:9)

The specific quality definitions for ECEC have to do with values that give an indication for what the ECEC aims for and why something should be considered important. Quality management in ECEC deals with strategic actions that can be taken by the organizer to guide the quality of work within the organization. It involves planning, leadership, and evaluation of ECEC and a systematic improvement of activities to achieve the quality objectives that have been made for each term. Quality management includes planning and directing the quality, quality assurance and quality improvement. A good quality management system in ECEC ensures that the evaluation data collected by the different child groups is used and is shared by the entire organization all the way to the higher management and decision makers within the municipality and that the data is used to improve activities (Vlasov et al 2019 :12.)

When viewing quality of early childhood education from a Finnish perspective it is important to consider the Finnish early childhood education law, the governmental curriculum for early childhood education and the municipal curriculum for early childhood education (Vlasov et al 2018 :14.) Quality management is done through a cycle of evaluation. Evaluation for ECEC has been laid out by the legislation on early childhood education and care section 24 stating that,

> the use and purpose of the evaluation of early childhood education and care is to ensure the implementation of the purpose of this Act, support the development of early childhood education and care and promote the conditions for the development, learning and wellbeing of a child. The organiser and provider of early childhood education and care shall evaluate the early childhood education and care they provide and participate in external evaluations of their operations.

(Act on Early Childhood Education and Care 540/2018, section 24.)

Evaluation and development of the ECEC services is done as a cyclical process with the idea of continuous improvement. The process involves the three different levels of ECEC

which are: national level, local level, and pedagogical level. At the national level, the quality processes are managed through the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, through expert knowledge and through resources. At the local level, the quality processes are evaluated by the organizers (private and public) that evaluate their services. The local ECEC curriculum that follows the national curriculum also guides the quality delivery and the providers must also participate in external evaluations. Organizations use self-evaluations, which means collecting and producing data through different ways. One way the local ECEC unit's gather data is through customer satisfaction questionnaires. The final level for quality management is the pedagogical level which is evaluated through self-evaluation. Through the self-evaluation the staff should be able to reflect on their own work and justify the pedagogical reasons why they use certain practices instead of others and to change their implementation methods if necessary (Vlasov et al 2019: 11.) The evaluation should be systematic, and it should be carried out at different levels of activity (Vlasov et al 2019: 32.)

Quality within ECEC has been researched from different angles during the past few decades. Earlier research into quality concentrated on looking at interventions that aid a child's school achievement and cognitive development, whilst also reducing delinquency and with its aim to find out if ECEC could have harmful effects on children. The latest wave of research focused on all the different factors that effect a child's outcomes, focusing also on aspects outside of the ECEC such as the child's characteristics and the family environment. This recent trend of research made the distinction between structural quality and process quality indicators that are believed to nurture child development (Bonetti & Brown, 2018:8.)
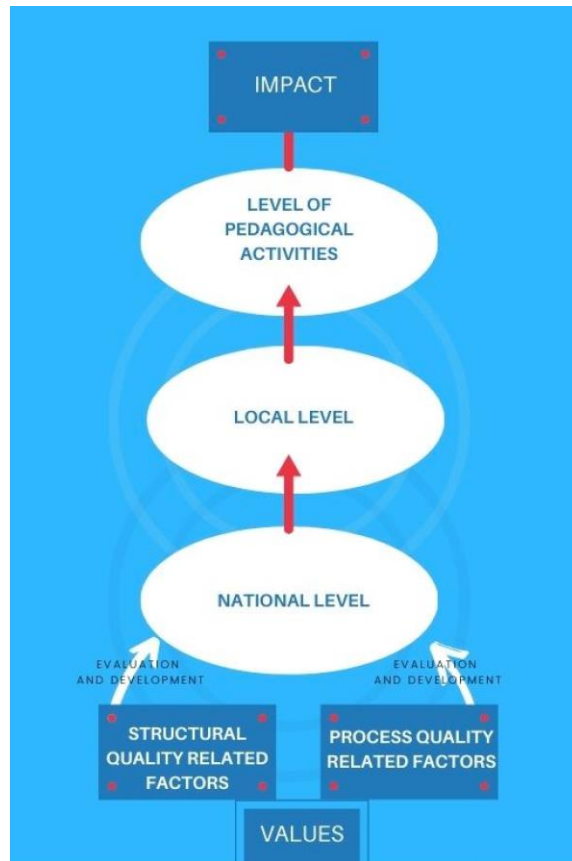
Figure 1. Model for evaluating and developing ECEC.

The definition of quality both on the local and national level is guided by a set of values. Figure 1 shows the levels of developing and evaluating ECEC activities. The light circles surrounding all the levels show that each level affects the next to some degree, and that the evaluation and development practices can happen at each level. The figure also shows that at the values are the base of all the quality factors and they are the goal that guides the activities from the national level all the way to the pedagogical activities. The main values that are at the core of ECEC quality are defined in Finnish society through the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care, the National Core Curriculum for Early childhood Education and Care, the Constitution of Finland, and the UN Convention of Rights of a Child (Vlasov 2019: 40.)

The main values that come from these core values are equity, equality, and diversity. Meaning that all children need to be guaranteed equitable opportunities. The next set of values have to do with the intrinsic value of childhood, which states that each child is

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valuable and unique just as they are. The intrinsic value of childhood also promotes social justice and prevents social exclusion on the basis of culture/sexual orientation and disability. The Finnish ECEC emphasizes social inclusion and giving each child a right to be full members of the community. Social justice values are manifested also as cultural values which states that discrimination is not accepted in any form in ECEC. The final value that is highlighted is the sustainable way of living. ECEC teaches and supports ecological sustainability and understanding that it is necessary for future social sustainability (Vlasov 2019: 41-42.)

The first guidelines and indicators for evaluating quality within Finnish ECEC was formed in 2015 by Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC). FINEECs task for the quality guidelines was issued by the Department for Early Childhood Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture. Assessment of quality within ECEC is done through quality indicators. Quality indicator is a description that is verifiable that encompasses the desirable properties of high quality ECEC. An indicator is the basis for measurement, a target level used to summarize more complex information into a form that can be understood and managed more easily. The ECEC indicators are the foundation for a more consistent national level set of practices and principles that allow for ECEC to be evaluated and developed (Vlasov et al 2019:12.) The quality indicators for ECEC are separated into structural and process quality (Sylva et al 2006). Process quality contains elements that affect a child's day-to-day experiences with the ECEC setting, whereas structural quality encompasses general characteristics of ECEC like social, physical emotional, instructional, and interactional aspects related to the children's activities (Slot et al, 2015).

3.1   Process Quality

Process quality related factors are manifested within the daily encounters between the ECEC staff, children and the families and the children's daily experiences with ECEC. Process quality factors within the ECEC setting are associated with the objectives that are specified within the curricula and their relation to the way the pedagogical activities are planned, implemented, led evaluated and further developed (Vlasov et al 2019:53.) Research suggests that process quality is closer to the children's own learning experiences and is more responsible for either negative or positive learning outcomes than structural quality (Sim et al 2018:20). Overall, process quality describes each unit's specific operating culture that ties to the child's experiences, and they describe *how* the content and objectives for ECEC are realized in practice (Vlasov et al 2019.)

The first main process quality indicator is the child-adult interaction, which plays a major role within the ECEC setting. The interaction is influenced by the level of sensitivity that the workers have at encountering the children within the group. It is also important that the workers' pay attention to the kids cognitive and emotional needs and that they respond to these needs, whilst taking the children's initiatives and backgrounds into account. The level of sensitivity is related to the emotional support that the adults offer during one-on-one interactions and during group-level interaction. Emotional support includes fostering and creating a positive atmosphere within the group through a positive and respectful way of being together. The way that this positive atmosphere is manifested is through smiles, positive interactions, encouragement, and enjoyable shared activities. The sensitivity of the adults has been shown to develop and increase the children's safe attachment and been proven to better social skills in the day-care context (Vlasov et al 2019:53.)

The child-adult interactions are positively influenced also by the way the group activities are organized, the negotiated rules and agreements, making use of transitions for pedagogical purposes and clear expectations concerning the child's behaviour. Another element of the interactions is the type of high-quality instructional support using a diverse and rich language during the daily interactive situations (Howes et al, 2008.) In the Finnish ECEC context child-adult interaction is viewed from a child-initiated approach that has its basis on socio-constructivism. In this approach the child is at the centre of the activities and that the child's interests are accounted for in the activities and in the child's personal learning plan. Teachers that use child-centred practices perceive the children as active learners that construct their knowledge through their understanding and prior experiences (Lerkkanen et al 2014.)

The second main process indicator is the pedagogical activities involved in ECEC. Pedagogical are based on instruction and care and education and in which quality is guaranteed through developmental support, responding to the children's basic needs and their learning and wellbeing. Pedagogy involves the way that the physical and psychological learning environments are structured. The structure should encourage the children to play, express themselves, create and explore. Pedagogy also involves rigorous planning, documentation, evaluation, and development of activities and is the foundation of delivering high-quality ECEC. Within the planning process comparisons between the objectives and the contents of the ECEC curriculum to the child groups needs are made

and create the cornerstone of the teaching. Pedagogical documentation allows the activities to be made visible for easier evaluation and gives direction for further development (Vlasov et al 2019:63.)

The third process indicator involves leadership at the level of the pedagogical activities. Pedagogical leadership of the activities in ECEC environment is done by the teachers in the groups. The pre-condition for effective pedagogical leadership involves the structure of the organization and a willingness to adopt a shared leadership position and the teachers attitudes towards developing and leading their group (Vlasov et al 2019:63.)

The final process indicators have to do with different levels of interaction that happen in day-cares. The first level of interaction happens between the children's peer relationships. It is the task of the workers to foster positive peer relationships and peer acceptance. A child's social and emotional development and interaction skills grow through positive peer relationships. The second level of interaction happens between the staff members and in a multidisciplinary cooperation. Implementing pedagogical activities within the ECEC environment involves a complex professional interaction that happens between the staff members. Support from administration, an open operating culture, flexibility, and the professionals' teamwork skills influence the effectiveness of the multidisciplinary cooperation. The purpose of the multidisciplinary cooperation is to create a network that supports the child's development and learning. The final level of interaction is between the guardians and the staff members. The quality of all the ECEC processes is influenced by the cooperation between the guardian and the staff. The individual learning plans for the children are done together in cooperation with the parents (Vlasov et al 2019:66.)

Evidence suggests that process quality can be increased through in-service training, formal pre-service training, coaching-on-the-job, and other strategies that increase professional development within the ECEC setting (Slot et al 2015.) Burchinal et al (2002) found in their research that teachers that took part in workshops for professional development provided higher quality care and were more sensitive in the way they interacted with the children (Burchinal et al 2002.) The social skills and learning of the children are much more positively impacted by child-initiated interaction and pedagogical practices.

3.2   Structural Quality

Structural quality is the main objective of both national curricula and ECEC regulations and has a major effect on the costs of the service (Vandell et al, 2010). Structural factors can be considered the marginal conditions for organizing the ECEC. The elements that encompass structural quality have to do with group size, staff to child ratios, staff wages, staff working conditions, staff stability, staff training education, and experience. It can also include other features such as: health and safety provisions, management practices and adequate indoor and outdoor space (Fenech 2011.) The most important elements include training, ratio and groups size and they have been referred to as the "the iron triangle" of quality, because the other elements are affected by them. It is difficult to isolate which element has the greatest impact on quality because they often depend on each other and they are impacted by government regulations (Bonetti & Brown, 2018:9.) Structural factors for quality are tied to aspects such as *who* takes responsibility for the ECEC activities, *where* and *what* type of setting the activities take place in (Vlasov et al 2019.)

The first element within structural quality with a high impact on the quality of care is the training given to early childhood caregivers. Research suggests that educated caregivers can provide more sensitive personal care, have better know-how on what is developmentally appropriate practice, provide better language stimulation and provide richer learning experiences (Fukkink & Lont 2007:295.)

Professional competence has been researched to be one of the main indicators of ECEC quality and especially with developing and ensuring structural and process quality (OECD Working Conditions Matter 2012:2). Staff qualifications matter a great deal and research suggests, that formal higher level specialized training leads to better ECEC quality, providing the warm and stimulating interactions that nurture a child's learning. However, it is not only the staff's professionalism that has positive outcomes on a child's development, but also a competent system that can sustain and contribute to the ongoing need for professionalization and continuous training (Directorate-General for Education and Culture 2014:30-33.) An analysis of Finnish data within the CARE project showed that staff's higher educational level combined with a longer work experience gave a higher quality of interaction and more smoothly and efficiently organized activities (Vlasov et al 2019:48.)

The second element with a high impact on structural quality has to do with child-to-staff ratio. The general mechanism that ratio influences, has to do with child-adult interactions. Having more staff has been shown to increase the frequency that adults play and talk with the children and, thus facilitates positive interactions through a more appropriate style of caregiving with less restriction and control (Smith et al 2000.) There is no international norm as to what the ideal ratio is, however, there are some norms that have been accepted. Smaller ratios are needed with smaller children and children with disabilities (Bonetti & Brown 2018:22.) In Finland, the ratio for under 3-year-old children is 4:1 and for children over 3 years old 7:1 (Alila 2015).

The final structural quality element within the "Iron triangle" is group size or specifically within a classroom setting. Smaller group sizes allow for a better learning environment, due to higher opportunities and for focused and quite activities, and individualized teacher-student interactions. There is no international golden rule as to what the best number of children is for an optimal result, however studies have shown that a class of 20 children is optimal (Barnett et al 2004.)

4   Research aim, purpose, and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to find ways to improve the quality of substitute work done in the context of daycares.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide guidelines that ensure quality for substitutes coming to work in the daycare setting.

Research Questions

1. What is considered good quality work in daycares?
2. How is the quality of work provided by the substitutes controlled currently?
3. What are the effects of having an unqualified substitute in a group?
4. What are the effects of having a qualified substitute in a group?
5. What effect do environmental factors have on the quality of substitutes?

5   Setting of the Research

The research took place in two Early Childhood Education Units in the municipality of Vantaa. The day-care unit contains two buildings that have a total of 8 groups. There are 4 groups that have children between the ages of 3-5, 3 groups that have children between the ages of 0-3 and one pre-school group with children of the age 6 years old. The units contain over 140 children all together and around 30 childcare workers (teachers, practical nurses, students, and helpers). Within each group there is at least one teacher and two practical nurses and if there are special needs within the groups there is also either a group appointed helper or a single child helper.

The day-care unit is part of central Vantaa's day-care services. There are around 179 day-cares within the municipality of Vantaa and the day-care that the research will take place is part of the public services offered to families within the municipality. The children that are eligible to receive care within these specific day cares are selected based on where they live. With public day care services, you can only pick the day cares that are closest to your place of residence unless there are some specialized services related to your child's needs that need to be taken into consideration. Due to inclusion principles set by the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018) all children have an equal right to receive public day care services, thus most day-cares also have children with disabilities and children from multiple different ethnic backgrounds.

6   Materials and Methods

Qualitative research methods were chosen for this research because it allowed for better understanding of meaning or in other words it gives a better view of what is important to people based on their worldviews. It is also an interpretive and reflexive approach that aims to explain the phenomenon through highlighting the interconnectedness between the nature of enquiry (Chandler, C.I.R et al 2013:13.) The aim is to explain the phenomenon from an emic perspective that can be achieved via insider cultural knowledge. The knowledge gained will be reflected on and its validity and reliability will be analyzed and questioned (Chandler, C.I.R et al 2013:15). The data was collected via two mixed focus group interviews and analyzed through thematic content analysis.

6.1   Data Collection

The data for the thesis was collected via two mixed focus groups consisting of workers in the field of early childhood education (managers, practical nurses, and teachers). The reason for choosing focus group as the data collection method, is to gain understanding of the day care workers experiences, feelings, and opinions in relation to substitute work. The interaction between the group members can assist the individuals involved to clarify and explore their points of view with greater depth (Liamputtong 2011:5.) The idea is to develop an overall view of the effects of substitute work on the quality of day care work and an understanding of what could be done to improve the quality of work from multiple perspectives. The focus group interviews were conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams due to the coronavirus pandemic and in accordance with the guidelines set by the City of Vantaa. Each focus group consisted of 7-8 professionals from different fields within early childhood education ranging from early childhood education teachers to helpers. The video interviews were recorded through Teams-software through videorecording; however, the cameras were not on to conceal the identity of the interviewees.).

Focus groups was selected as the data collection method for this research on the grounds that it allowed for the topic to be analyzed and viewed from multiple points of view with open dialogue (Morgan, D.L., Spanish, M.T 1984:253). A focus group is a group meeting in which selected individuals are invited to join a discussion about a focused topic. The group is considered focused because it includes a collective activity of debating or reflecting over a common theme or experience (Liamputtong 2011:4.) The researcher acts as a facilitator and moderator (Nyumba et al 2018:1.) The researcher's role as a moderator is to introduce the topic, guide the conversation, and encourage interaction. If necessary, the moderator can intervene to keep the discussion on the topic or to aid in bringing a smoother flow for the discussion (Swartling 2007.) The importance of the moderator was emphasized during the focus group interviews as they took place in an online platform and there was a need to moderate between the two groups to make sure that the everyone could hear each other and that the vocalizations could be recorded adequately without noise disturbances.

The sampling method used for the focus group was purposeful sampling from daycares within the municipality of Vantaa. Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for selecting more information rich cases and for the effective use of a more limited number of resources. Purposeful sampling is a type of non-probability sampling

method, and the sample is chosen through the judgement of the researcher. The disadvantages of purposive sampling have to do with higher levels of bias and lower levels of reliability and generalizability of the data (Palinkas et al 2015.) It is important in qualitative research that the individuals that are interviewed know as much as possible about the phenomenon being researched and possibly have a lot of experience with the topic. The sampling method should therefore be purposeful and relevant to the research topic (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018.)

The researcher has worked at 17 daycares within the municipality of Vantaa so it was easier to contact the daycare managers to ask if a focus group interview could be conducted within their facilities. This however also creates a bias for the study as the researcher knows several of the workers working at these daycares. A daycare manager was contacted by phone and asked if it would be possible to do research in the two daycares that they manage. A manager's approval is needed to receive a research permit from the city of Vantaa. The manager approved the request and thus was provided with the research plan and the Finnish version of the questionnaire (Appendix 4).

The timing of the study is very important since the work done in daycares does not allow for a large portion of the workforce to be away from their groups for extended periods of time. The interviews were conducted during the general meeting days that the daycare already has in place, since they are generally allotted for several workers to be away from the group in one go. The meeting days usually have an allotted time between 12-14 for a meeting to take place. The groups usually make internal arrangements so that one worker can manage the whole group during naptime. A general information sheet about the interview (Appendix 1), the participant consent form (Appendix 2) and the participant information sheet (Appendix 3) were all handed to the individuals that wanted to take part in the interview one month before the interview. The interview dates were scheduled one month before the interview was to take place and the questionnaire was handed to the daycare director so that she would be aware of what will be asked from the employees. The interview was conducted during a time when there were corona restrictions in place and all rules relevant to the ECEC setting within the municipality of Vantaa were adhered to during the interview.

6.2   Structure of the Focus Group interview

The data was collected via a semi structured interview that consisted of open-ended questions that answered the research questions. Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative data collection strategy that allows the researcher to have more control over the topic then just an unstructured interview. However, since the interview is not structured it still leaves room for discussion and it does not limit the range of responses. The interview questions are semi structured to make the research more dependable and confirmable since there will be two focus group interviews (Allen 2017: 579.)

Semi-structured interviews involve creating a guide in advance and the interviewer can either follow the guide to the letter or then move back and forth through the questions depending on the flow of the discussion and based on the informant's responses. The topics of the semi-structured interview in this research stem from the research question and the underlying conceptual model of the phenomenon being researched. In addition to using directly related questions the semi-structured interview also can use probed questions that bring up further information on the topic. The semi-structured interviewing style was also chosen for the research because the concepts and the relationships with them are well understood (Given 2008:811.)

Prior to the larger focus group interviews a piloting of the focus group interview was conducted to test the interview questions with a group of 2 interviewees in the field. The pilot was necessary to test the capability of Microsoft Teams for recording conversation and to see if the questions elicit interaction around the topics. A pilot study is a smaller-scale implementation that lasts for a shorter amount of time and involves a smaller number of participants. The pilot also allows the researcher to practice moderating, develop interview skills and determine potential problems that may arise in the actual study. The pilot also provides the opportunity to fine tune the questions and determine which ones provide richer responses (Given 2008: 625.) The pilot interview showed that the research instrument was useful, and it provided the right kind of conversation around the topic. One of the interview questions was fine-tuned and changed slightly as it was slightly unclear according to the interviewees. The pilot interview also allowed for testing how Microsoft teams works for recording audio, and it provided insight into how close the interviewer and interviewees need to be to the computer for good audio.

During the interview, the interviewee introduced themselves, the purpose of the study, establish the aims and duration and explain what will happen to the collected data and how they will benefit from the data (Chandler, C.I.R. et al 2013:43). The opening introduction contained an expression of gratitude to the interviewees and contained a brief explanation of the consent form and the data privacy notice that they will each signed prior to the interview (Allen 2017: 580.)

Four questions were chosen for the research, and they represent engagement, exploration, probing and an exit question (Allen 2017: 579). The first questions aimed to open the background of the participants for the sake of the study and to engage them in discussion. The second question explored the topic on the surface and helped gain insight into the participants view of quality within the ECEC context. According to the quality principles set by the European Commission one of the main elements of quality care is a shared understanding over what high quality ECEC services mean and what aspects best promote a child's wellbeing, learning and development (Directorate-General for Education and Culture 2014:8). The second set of questions (Appendix 4) targeted this common ground to see if there is a shared meaning over the underlying conditions that portray high quality care in ECEC. The concept of quality can have different meanings and a different set of values associated with it and, thus it is important to understand the participants views on the concept of quality.

The third set of questions (Appendix 4) probed the topic further and helped to answer the research questions and allowed to gain understanding into whether substitutes affect the quality of care within the ECEC setting. Education and training are shown in research to affect the quality of care and the quality of learning for children within the ECEC environment, therefore it is important to hear whether substitutes with different educational backgrounds affect the quality of work (OECD Qualifications matter 2011: 3). The additional probing questions a-c were meant to bring depth to understanding the effect and seeing what specific qualities in the workers affect the quality. The final question (Appendix 1) brought depth to the study and allow for improvement suggestions that can be used in the future to develop substitute mentoring/training work and it is the exit question the end the interview.

The first focus group interview took place 24.3 and it consisted of 7 individuals that were either practical nurses, helpers, or children's instructors. The 7 individuals were from two different day-cares and, therefore they each took part in the interview through their day-

care's laptop. The other group consisted of 4 individuals and the other group of 3 individuals. Each smaller group shared one laptop and we had a three-way online Teams meeting between us. The interviewer invited both teams to join her Microsoft teams platform so that it could be recorded into the interviewer's own platform.

The second focus group interview took place 26.3 and it consisted of 8 individuals that were either kindergarten teachers or kindergarten social welfare workers. These 8 individuals were also from two different day-cares and so they were split into two groups of 4 and they took part each in their own day-care building via teams.

6.3   Data Analysis

The data was analyzed via thematic content analysis. The idea of content analysis is to first code the data or the participants ideas and then interpret the codes by using comparative methods. There are three phases to thematic content analysis; reducing the material, displaying the data, and drawing conclusions or interpreting the data according to the themes that are formed (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009:109). The recorded teams video call was transcribed word for word and each interviewee was assigned a number (interviewee 1, interviewee 2). The text was read five times to understand the overall data and to see what kind of codes could be found. After reading the data the transcription was uploaded to MAXQDA2020 and the first cycle of coding was done according to different appearing word themes (Appendix 6). The codes are data chunks of varying size that can be assigned a descriptive label or in this case a word or a small sentence that describes the data chunk. These codes are used to retrieve and further categorize the data chunks so that it is easier for the researcher to cluster the segments according to the theme or the research questions (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014: 8.)

The process was repeated five times to find patterns and create the right color codes for the words and phrases. Once the color codes were found to be good, the analysis progressed to the second cycle of coding. In the second cycle of coding Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014, suggest that it is useful to map the codes or to layout the component codes visually to see how they interconnect. Mapping by computer has many advantages because the data can be moved around multiple times with less effort (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014:10.) The codes formed from MAXQDA2020 were transferred as post it notes to the program Miro for further analysis (Miro program 2020.) Within Miro the codes were grouped multiple times to see what kind of commonalities could be formed from the data or what categories and what subthemes arose from them. Higher themes were

formed within the Miro platform (Appendix 7) and the themes were linked to the research questions (Chandler, C.I.R et al 2013:79.) Thematic content analysis allows for combining verifications and then drawing conclusions that arise from the data and thus finding answers to the research question after thorough data analysis and interpretation (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009:110).

7   Findings

The findings will be shown by opening the themes and subthemes through the research questions. The research questions will be presented through subheadings and then under each subheading the different themes will be broken down to show the results that emerged.

7.1   Good Quality Work in Daycares

The workers talked about ECEC quality through the way that quality if perceived in the work that they do and in the daily work settings. The main themes that arose in both interviews were: quality measurements, the qualities of a professional ECEC worker, the role of management and future improvements. Each of these themes contained elements from both structural and process quality.
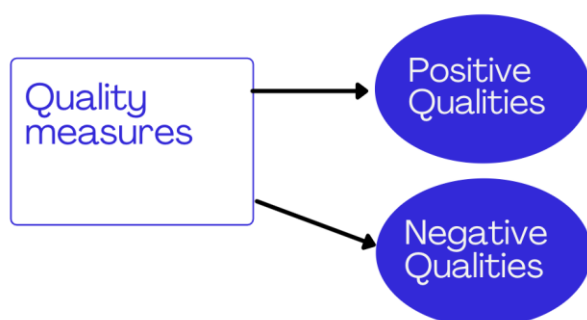
7.1.1   Quality Measures

Figure 2. Theme and subthemes

Quality measures contained subthemes of both positive and negative factors that can be observed in the day-cares. The three important quality measurements that were seen in the daily work was related to customer satisfaction, the structure of the work and the

children's reactions and experiences. The negative factors that were seen to affect the quality of ECEC work were lack of resources, lack of space and large child-adult ratio.

Positive Qualities

Customer satisfaction was seen in terms of a cooperation and a connection that was formed between the workers and the families.

"In my opinion when you find a good connection with the families it affects all the activities positively. So, if like the cooperation works then it definitely affects the entire system."

A good structure for the day and a framework under which the work is done, were seen as factors that influence the quality of the work. The interviewees felt that a well-structured day created a safer environment for the kids. A well-structured day was seen as an indicator that the day would run more smoothly even with substitutes.

"The day structure affects the quality. A well-structured day creates a safe environment."

"Quality is that we do things within a certain framework. And when we stick to it things go smoothly."

One of the main customer groups in ECEC is the children and therefore their satisfaction and enjoyment is one measure of success. The way that you can measure customer satisfaction from the kids is through their positive behavior and the way that they experience the service. Customer satisfaction and the children's experience within the ECEC are process quality factors and they play a large role in whether the service is seen as quality oriented. Another important customer group within the child groups is the special needs that need to be taken into consideration in the structure and the daily programs created for the kids.

"When you see that the kids are enjoying themselves and you see that they are growing up there all the time and learning".

"If we talk about like quality service in Early childhood Education. Then I think it means professional workers and that the kids enjoy their time there. That we provide them the

right kind of services and that we take into consideration the safety and enjoyment of the special needs kids."

Negative Qualities

The workers also talked about elements that create a bad quality ECEC environment. It is important to understand both what is a good quality and bad quality within the ECEC environment, because it allows for reflection and allows the day-cares to strive for better quality. The interviewees talked about a lack of resources, noise and being in a hurry as negative quality measure. They also talked about large child groups, and changes in the workforce as elements that affect the quality in a negative manner.

"Lack of resources and always being in a hurry makes the work lack quality."

"Large child groups, noise, and the constant changes in the workforce that seems to have a huge effect. And exactly that that we sometimes get substitutes and sometimes we are pushed to our own physical and mental limits. It really affects the overall quality of the work."

The physical structure of the daycare buildings was also discussed as an element that can affect the work negatively. Some of the day-care buildings in Finland were built for smaller child groups and the workers felt that at times there is not enough physical space to do the work efficiently. Professionalism was also emphasized as the solution for the lack of space since ECEC professionals know how to use the space in an efficient manner.

"The space should physically be measured to be enough for everyone. Because a lack of space causes anxiety. You even feel it physically if there is a lack of oxygen. This place was built a long time ago when the child groups were smaller so there is now a lack of physical space. As professionals we need to know how to use each corner efficiently and that requires resources, mental strength and planning."
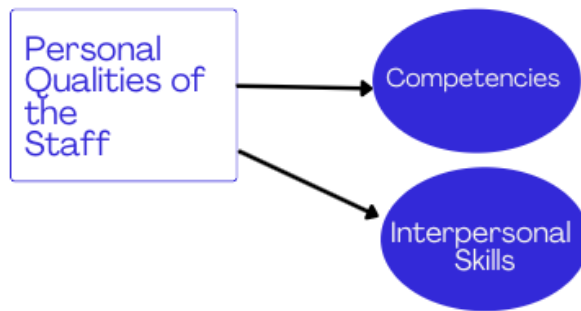
7.1.2 Personal Qualities of the Staff

Figure 3. Theme and subthemes

The qualities of a professional ECEC worker rose as a theme multiple times during the interviews. Educated and qualified workforce, structure of the work and professional traits were the subthemes that arose.

Competencies

The workers were seen as vital for good quality work performance. Pedagogy and the use of pedagogy in the work was also seen as a good quality in a ECEC worker.

"That is quality. That we are trained pedagogically, and that the pedagogy comes through in our work. And from that basis of that we perform our work well."

"It affects the work positively if there are professional workers that are doing the work."

There were certain personality qualities and intrinsic values such as flexibility that was seen as important for quality work. One central quality was also the ability of the workers to structure and plan the work and be goal oriented.

"The goal-oriented nature of the work and the way that we plan and the pedagogy in our work."

The workers own inner strengths and resources was also highlighted as a quality factor. The effects of the substitution caused less harm if the staff had planned the work well and had the energy to take on a larger part of the workload.

"Well structured work affects the quality so much. And qualities such as Flexibility and that everyone does something and that all the workload is not packed unto one worker that then has to do all the work."

"With substitution it really depends on what type of person shows up, how you have planned the work for that day and what your own personal strengths and resources are."

Interpersonal Skills

The ability to cooperate and do teamwork were highlighted and the Finnish saying blowing into one coal was used to emphasize its importance of working together as a team. Sharing the workload was emphasized in both interviews as a central quality factor. Motivation was also seen as an important quality in the ECEC workers, and the workers suggested humorously that there should be a motivation meter for workers.

"The fact that if all the workers work in like close cooperation and that we all blow into one coal. Then it really helps each individual to cope better."

"There should be a motivation meter for this work to measure it. You need to be motivated."
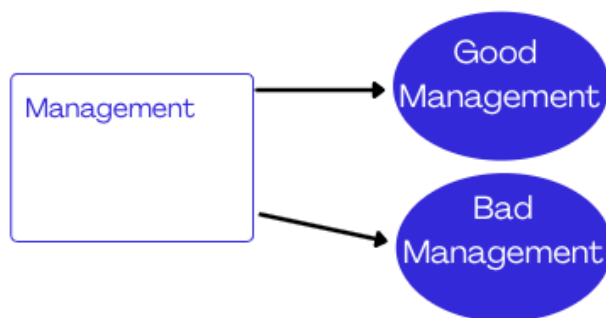
7.1.3   Management

Figure 4. Theme and subthemes

Management was seen in a central role in the quality of the work. The subthemes that arose from management were good management and bad management. It was seen as affecting it both positively if the management is done well and negatively if it is performed poorly.

Good management

Management is responsible for upkeeping the quality standards that have been laid out in the national and municipal ECEC curriculum.

"Of course, good management affects the ECEC quality."

Bad Management

They also are the ones that get the direct customer and upper management feedback and make changes within the work environment accordingly. The comments in the interview relating to management were very short but to the point.

"Bad management can really be a hindrance to the quality."
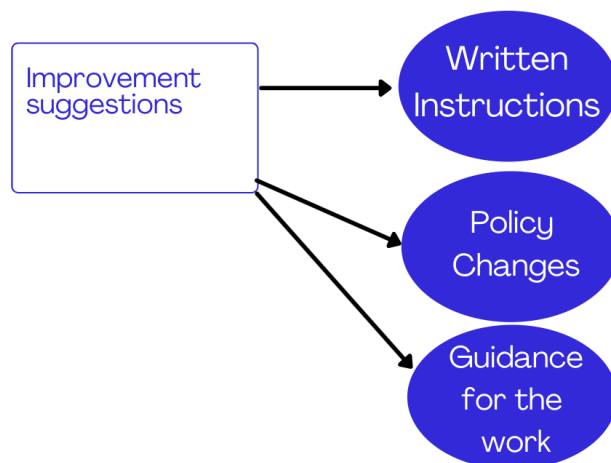
7.1.4   Future Improvements

Figure 5. Theme and subthemes

The interviewees gave many improvement suggestions to enhance the work create a quality ECEC atmosphere.

Written Instructions

The workers suggested that maybe there should be a folder or a list that the substitutes could read, and it would give them ideas of what tasks they have that day or week. However, this would also require that they know how to read written Finnish and understand what is written.

"We have a folder that we always give to substitutes. But there are people that do not know how to read Finnish or do not understand what they are reading. So, what can you do? Because of this there should be a standard."

"What we could do is provide a list in the groups in the morning, so they know that you need to do this and that today. It does not mean they have to everything on that list but that it would be a frame of reference to what we think should happen and they could always go check the list to know what will happen next. Maybe that kind of system would work."

Policy Changes

One suggestion was bringing back the rotating or permanent substitutes for each daycare unit. The municipality of Vantaa used to use rotating substitutes within each unit that would replace the workers when they were ill. Each unit had at least one rotating worker and so the worker would always be the same familiar substitute that already new the ways of the workplace and was familiar to the children. This improvement was seen as necessary because there has been a lack of substitute or a lack of availability of substitutes. Many daycares have been doing work with a low number of adults and thus the ratio of child-adult has been legally too high. It is each daycares legal obligation to ensure that there is at least the legal ratio of children and adults because with a higher child-adult ratio the work quality suffers, and it can cause safety issues. Political policy was also discussed, and the workers hoped that the political leaders would change policy to allow the workplaces to hire their own substitutes rather than using the outsourcing company.

"It would be good to bring back the back-up workers that we used to have. Like person X. Because with the new law that obligates to report any maladministration starting 1.8.2021 and so it will be absolutely necessary for us to have the legal amount of adults."

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"I am hoping that the political leaders would make some good decisions and we could have back each unit's own substitute and other such things".

Guidance for the Work

Another suggestion that to improve and create a good quality work environment was to have better guidance for the substitutes or new workers. ECEC work is the type of work that you learn through experience and through doing. Therefore, the interviewees felt that it would be best to have a more thorough induction either from the outsourced substitute company or that each unit would have one person that would provide quick training for the substitutes.

"It should be planned beforehand that what is easiest for a substitute. So that you take someone to be the guide for the week that allows for better induction."

7.2   Control of the Quality of Work Provided by the Substitutes

The main theme that arose from controlling the quality of substitute work was the qualities of the current substitute system.

7.2.1   Shortcomings of the Outsourcing System
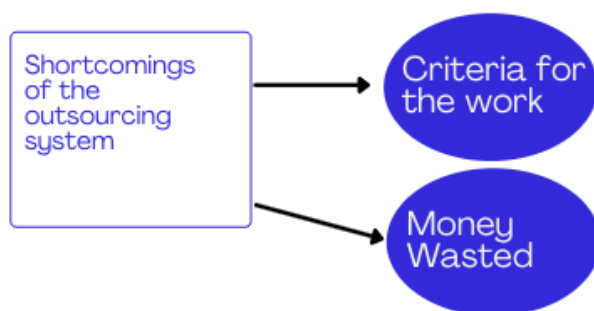
Figure 6. Theme and subthemes

The interviewees felt that the work provided by the substitutes varied significantly and that there did not seem to be a standard level for the work. The interviewees felt that there should be some standard and that it would include expectations for what to expect from the work that the workers do. The subthemes that came were criteria for the level of the work, performance requirements, rewards for the work and training for the work.

Criteria for the work

The lack of criteria and the lack of standards were what affected the quality of the overall work done by the substitutes. Quality was viewed as a set of standards that should exist for the work that needs to be done.

"But there is like no criteria for the substitute job currently."

"But seriously there should be some standard. When they are obviously not professionals. Quality means that there is some minimum standard that you can categorize and expect something in return for the work."

"It has an affect because there is no standard quality for the substitutes."

Money wasted

The workers felt that one main shortcoming of the outsourcing system was that it was a waste of money. This was because some of the substitutes that were hired, did so little work that they received pay almost just for standing around at the workplace.

"I have to say that with this current substitute system that the city's money is being thrown to waste."

"Money is fully wasted. For example, I can say that today we have a situation where with all due respect the person just gets money for standing around."

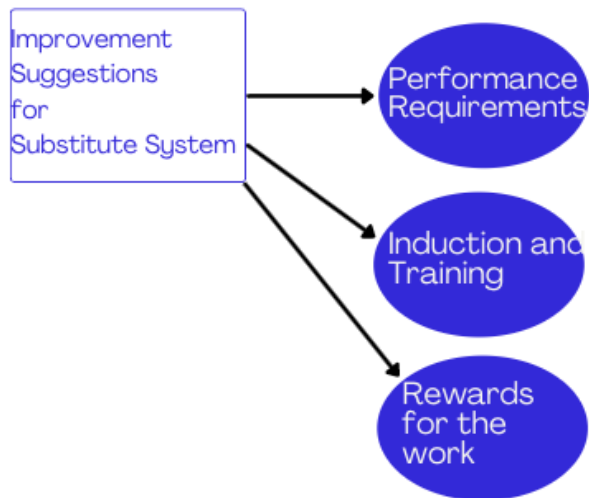7.2.2 Improvement Suggestions for the Substitute System

Figure 7. Theme and subthemes

Performance requirements

There were issues with language, work experience and physical ability requirements that the substitute workers lacked that came up during both interviews. The work done in day-cares can be quite physical especially when working with smaller kids that require carrying and care, which is why the physical requirements were highlighted. The interviewees felt frustrated that the substitution company hires anyone willing to do the work without any standard criteria. Some of the substitutes that had been hired in the past were of retirement age, which made it harder for them to perform some of the tasks. The language requirement was discussed because the work in ECEC environments requires a lot of communication between multiple different groups. You need to be able to communicate with the kids so that if the kids have issues and they tell you about the issues you can react in the correct manner. The work also requires that you understand what your co-workers expect from you and that you know where to be and what to do next. Within ECEC environments the work pace is fast and there are many changes that happen throughout the day, and you need to be able to communicate the changes. The final group that you need to communicate with are the parents. With the parents it is vital that you know how to tell them if there were some issues with their child during the day so that they can make sure the child is ok at home.

" I do feel that it is a serious thing that you should physically at least be able to squat. Because I guess you are just not so flexible at a certain age anymore and maybe at that point you should stop doing this work."

"So, some just do not speak even a word of Finnish or have any experience working with kids".

Induction and Training

A basic induction course or a different type of education for the job was suggested as one solution to give qualifications for the substitution work. The workers felt like too much of the induction and the education was on their shoulders and it should be the company's job to provide those services. The workers sometimes saw that there was an enthusiasm to learn in some of the substitutes, but then felt like they do not have time to teach them on top of their own work.

"There should be some course. It requires too much from us right now. There should be a course that the company provides. Or at least create a minimum standard that is required instead of it always being a surprise what you get."

"If you use Seure then in my opinion it should be their responsibility to provide a wider and greater education and to update the education."

"No offence but sometimes you see that they obviously want to learn the skills, but this is not the place to teach them. I have no time to teach".

The substitutes were seen as not only lacking qualifications but also some of the substitutes were seen as lacking any work experience or idea of what the work entails within the ECEC environment. One suggestion was that the workers should at least have some work experience of working with kids so that they would know what to expect when you come to work in a day-care.

"Maybe it would be good if the substitutes at least had some kind of experience of working with kids or that you know at least a little bit of what to do when you come here. So that would at least be quite good. Or at least it would be good if they knew what a day-

care is and what we do here. Because some can think we just are and hangout here all day".

Rewards for the Work

The pay level is the same for unqualified substitutes as for the long-term employees with education and qualifications and the logic of this was brought into question during the interview.

"Isn't it weird if you think they have the same pay? They have the same responsibility during the workday as us. Why are we required to study for this job for 3 years, but Seure does not require even a day? Why is that?"

7.3   The Effects of Having an Unqualified Substitute in a Group

The main themes that arose from having an unqualified substitute had to do with lack of professional qualities, negative customer experiences and negative working conditions that arise from the situation.

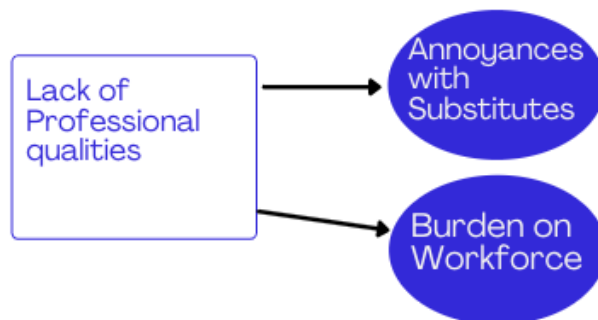### 7.3.1   Lack of Professional Qualities

Figure 8. Theme and subtheme

The theme of lack of professional qualities arose in the interview as one of the main hindrances to good workflow. Unqualified substitutes were seen as a burden on the work community. The subthemes were to do with grievances with the new substitutes and the strain it creates on the permanent workforce

Annoyances with new substitutes

New and unqualified substitutes caused more of a strain and were viewed as another child in the group that you must explain things to on top of the already heavy workload. Qualities that were lacking were: a lack of flexibility towards changing groups or shifts, poor communication skills, and negative communication moments between the substitutes and the permanent workers.

"Sometimes we get a totally new sub that does not know anything and then they are like another child more in the group. You have to constantly tell them and explain that do this and that and it is just annoying to have to have those communications with them."

"One thing is also that they basically don't do anything but the shift that they are given. So, they lack flexibility."

"Or if they have been ordered for the 6-year old's group but then in the morning you have to say that hey you should go to work with the under 3-year old's and then they say that I will not do that. I guess it is their right as a worker but then we need to be flexible when they are not."

Burden on the permanent workforce

The lack of flexibility from the substitutes caused the workers themselves to have to be more flexible and change their personal plans even outside the workplace. Therefore, it had effects on the workers personal lives and their own plans. The constant changes were seen as elements that have a personal effect on the workers.

"I have to say that then we have to switch our shifts if they don't and then it means you cannot plan anything outside of work."

"It really starts to affect you personally if you constantly have to change everything."

The workers felt that there was a lack of trust towards the substitutes if they did not take responsibility during their workday. This burdened the workers and they felt that they were unable to leave the worker with the kids. At times in the day-cares, you are given responsibility for the entire group. This can happen for example during outdoor play or while the other worker does necessary paperwork.

"It is scary when they have been hired as a substitute and they are supposed to be responsible for the kids. But sometimes you get people that you just don't trust with leaving the kids with them for even a little bit so ethically I have to be present all the time even though we hired that person to take some of the load off."

"I just want to add that at its worst, a bad substitute can bring you more workload. That kind of a workday is a very heavy one."

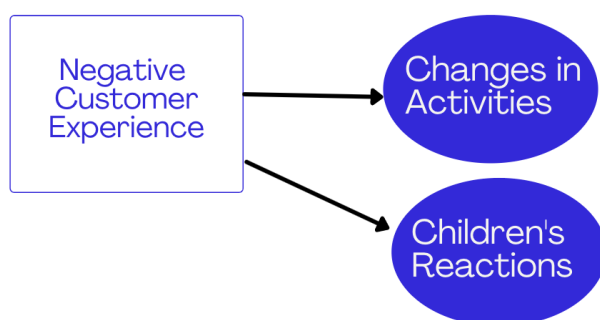7.3.2   Negative Customer Experience

Figure 9. Theme and subtheme

When the workers do not know what kind of substitute they will get the next day, it affects the planned and organized events and activities. The subthemes that came from the theme were changes in planned activities and the children's reactions.

Changes in the planned activities

Often the activities are moved or changed if you get an unqualified substitute. This in turn was seen as the cause of and negative interactions with the parents and thus client dissatisfaction. Previously the workers mentioned that they need to be flexible when there is a substitute but, in this context, the entire group needs to be flexible to changes. So, the need to be flexible affects the workforce and the customer families.

"Well, when the whole group needs to be flexible and when you cannot do the planned activities it creates bad interactions. You need to constantly explain to the parents that the activity has been moved again. You also have to say that you do not know when you can do the activity because you do not know what is coming."

"Of course, bad substitutes affect the parents too. There are parents that say they haven't read the weekly plan because they just get bored that it keeps changing so much".

Children's reactions

The children's experiences with unqualified substitutes were also highlighted because the kids' reactions created a heavier workload for the workers. Thus, their presence was seen as a hindrance rather than a help. Children need to feel safety in their learning environments. They find safety by testing the ability of the adult to create the safe environment. When new substitutes come that do not know the rules and ways that the group's function, the kids feel the need to test the new adults. Being able to fulfil the weekly plans and promises is extremely important when working with kids. In each group there are special needs kids, and they usually trust that what is promised will be fulfilled. Thus, the children feel a disappointed and a lack of trust in their caregivers when plans get changed.

"Or even just their presence because the kids feel the need to test their boundaries so much more with the substitutes."

"They are so disappointed. We must tell them that we will not go to the woods, and they have been waiting for it like the rising moon. Or then we have to cancel some other plans."

When there is an unfamiliar adult that does not know how to interact with the children in the right manner, it creates a lack of trust in the children. In these cases, the workers felt that the children rely more on the familiar adults that are present, and this creates a larger workload for the workers.

"Even though they are big pre-schoolers then they still rely more on the familiar adult, and they come to the familiar adult. And this just increases when more familiar adults are missing, the ones that are present become burdened by this workload because of course they will always turn to the familiar adult.

It can be scary especially for the kids under 3 to have unfamiliar adults that they are not used to, and it takes time for them to get to know new adults. They might cry more and

need the familiar adults lap or arms more, which also causes the workers to have a heavier workload.

"It is quite scary for the shyer kids to have some stranger working with them. It might make them cry more."

"And especially with the smaller kids it really affects if there is a new substitute every day. It takes them a day to get to know the new person. And if you imagine that it is supposed to be a safe day but then there are strangers running around. Of course, it affects the quality."

7.4 The Effects of Having a Qualified Substitute in a Group

The workers viewed substitution quality from their own experiences working with different types of substitutes. The themes that arose from the interview had to do with structural qualities such as work safety and workflow and how a proactive worker can affect both elements. Substitutes were seen as either good or bad and good substitutes were ones that had some sort of work experience or an education in the field.
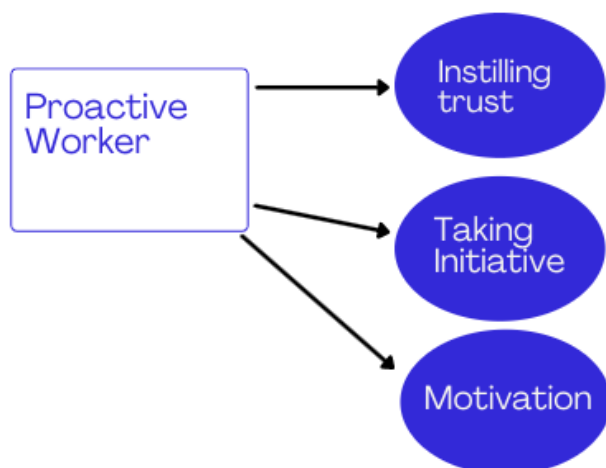
7.4.1 Proactive worker

Figure 10. Theme and subthemes

One of the most important functions of a day-care is to keep the children safe during the day when their parents are at work or studying. The topic of safety was discussed multiple times during the interview from both a negative and a positive perspective.

"With a good substitute everything goes smoothly. Also, the work goes safely so you don't have to improvise."

Instilling Trust

Familiar and good substitutes were seen as trustworthy, and they made the workday better. Knowledge of the working culture of the workplace was seen as a positive quality and previous knowledge of kids in the group. In terms of the quality the interviewees felt that a familiar substitute was the best kind of substitute.

"But then when you get a familiar substitute or a good one, they might already know the ways of the house and they might know all the children in the groups. Then it is easier to trust that everything will go smoothly, and that the day will work out."

Taking Initiative

The interviewees felt that the substitutes personality had a large effect on how the workday.

"A good sub is one that asks questions and that is self-guided."

"It depends so much on their personality. But like if they ask when they do not know what to do to figure out what the structure of the day consists of and what will say happen in two hours. So, like ones that take initiative and know where to be at the right time. So, like if you don't have time to explain it is important to ask."

Motivated worker

A good substitute was seen as someone with the right motivation to do the work. The respondents felt that even qualification is not enough if the person lacks motivation.

"*Even if the person has the education and qualifications from our field. If they lack the enthusiasm and motivation, it is nothing. It is important to be motivated when doing substitutions. A good one is a motivated one*"

7.5 The Effect of Environmental Factors on the Quality of Substitutes

The final research question arose during the interview. The world is going through a global covid pandemic, and it has effects on most workplaces and on the way the work is performed. Within the day-care context the themes that arose had to do with the actual pandemic and the difficulties of finding substitutes.

7.5.1 Effects of Covid-19
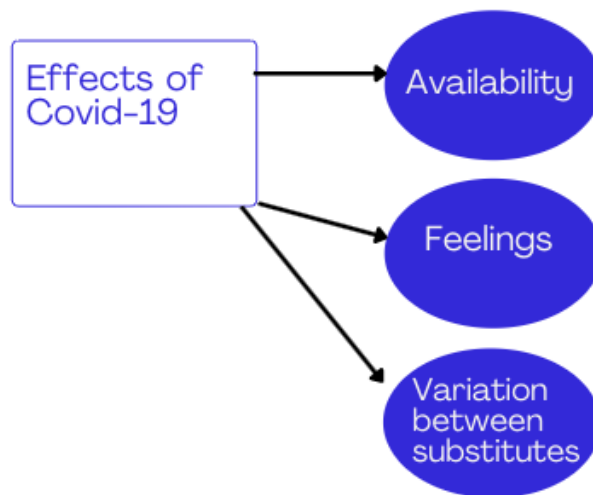

Figure 10. Theme and subthemes

The interview was conducted during the corona pandemic. The effects of the pandemic were discussed briefly in both interviews because it was seen as influencing the quality of work. The subthemes from the pandemics effect were the availability of the substitutes, the feelings that the workers felt towards the substitutes and the variation between substitutes.

Availability of substitutes

"When there is a pandemic, the work is not nice anymore, so no one wants to come and work here. They are not professionals. We are the professionals because we are here no matter what."

"Nowadays it has been so that you cannot even get any substitutes and it is causing the full-term employees to be at their last straw."

It was felt that it is hard to get substitutes and that this lack of resources was causing the workers to feel more burdened than usual. The workers used descriptive sayings such as being at their last straw because of the lack of substitutes to describe the level of annoyance.

Effect on Feelings

The pandemic affected the work done in the ECEC context by adding to an already heavy workload. Day-cares were one of the necessary services that was left open when many other services around Finland closed. ECEC services are essential so that nurses, doctors, and other personnel can do their work without having to stress about their kids. The societal situation was seen as affecting the way that the workers viewed the substitutes and that it is difficult to teach new subs when you are tired from doing your work.

"Of course, this societal situation affects our feelings towards the substitutes. Corona has eaten at us and is making us all tired. So of course, you don't want to start guiding anyone on top of your own work because you are trying to keep the kids ok in this environment."

Variation between substitutes

The variation in the substitutes and was described as anything between earth and heaven meaning that they can be good or bad substitutes. The variation and gap between the quality of the different substitutes was emphasized and a correlation with the pandemic was inferred and it was seen as part of the reason why there was a larger gap between a good and a bad substitute.

"You never know before the next day if you will even get a substitute. And then the substitutes can be anything between earth and heaven."

8 Limitations

The study was originally supposed to consist of two face-to-face focus group interviews held within one of the researched day-cares. The coronavirus pandemic affected this plan and created the need to have the interviews done through an online platform. The interview groups needed to be further split into two separate groups that were then both invited to the Teams meeting. Having two groups within a Microsoft Teams meeting made the interview situation less natural and the discussion was not able to flow naturally as the moderator had to always mute one group to hear the other group. Some discussion topics may have been missed as the group had to wait for their turn to speak. The groups needed to be under 4 persons, due to the risk of infection that exists within the day-care environment. The limitation was also in place, due to the health and safety measurements that needed to be taken in accordance with the law.

The people in the interview groups needed to sit quite far apart from each other, which made it hard for the researcher to hear some of the respondents. Due to the safe spacing need, discussion was interrupted multiple times with questions such as "can you repeat that because I did not quite hear it". At times, the respondents would respond while the mic was on mute and would need to repeat their answer once the mic was turned back on again. The focus groups were meant to be more mixed in terms of professions to create a more reliable sample, however it was not possible due to the lack of availability of certain worker groups. The stress of the pandemic affects the workload and the way that the work is perceived, which may have skewed the interview. The interview would need to be repeated after the pandemic is over to see if the findings are the same.

The interview was conducted in a Finnish day-care and therefore it was conducted in Finnish. Parts of the transcribed text were translated into English for this thesis and, thus some of the ideas may have been lost in translation. The interviewees used a lot of Finnish sayings to describe aspects of the work and some of the sayings were hard to translate straight into English to convey their correct meaning. The sayings were very descriptive and were a nice addition, however they do carry a cultural meaning, which is hard to translate. There were also very humorous moments in the interview that are not conveyed in the findings since you cannot hear the tone of the conversation in the quotes.

The work in the ECEC environment is often very stressful and hectic and the workers use humour as a defence mechanism even when speaking of very difficult and serious issues.

8   Ethical Questions and Trustworthiness

During the research ethical considerations were taken into account and GDPR standards were met in terms of data storage and management. The researcher has familiarized herself with the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity ethical principles of research and with the Rector's Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences, Arenes ethical guidelines concerning the thesis process (TENK 2019, Arene 2020). The participants were given a participant consent form (Appendix 2) and a participant information sheet in Finnish since the focus groups were conducted in Finnish Day-cares (Appendix 3). The participants were informed a month in advance about the research and were aware of the research purposes. The author will declare that she gained no financial gain from the study nor was there a conflict of interest (TENK 2019, Arene 2020.)

The research was conducted in manner that respects the autonomy and dignity of the participants, respects both the immaterial and material cultural heritage of the individuals and the research does not cause harm or risk to any of its participants (TENK 2019:8). The individuals participating had free will to choose if they want to participate and they were selected based on their own willingness to participate in the focus group. The participants were told that they are allowed to refuse participation or discontinue participation if they wish to do so. All participants were told about the content of the research and how the data will be processed at the beginning of the interview, and it was disclosed in the papers given to them prior to the interview. There were a few participants that left in the middle of the interview, and it did not affect the results or influence the flow of the discussion.

Ethical considerations were upheld at every level of the study and data was stored and handled in a manner that protected the individuals involved. In the beginning of the study each participant was informed of the purpose of the research and about the anonymity of their responses and the way that the data will be handled. The video call was recorded without the use of camera and with audio only to retain the anonymity of the participants. The research was conducted responsibly.

The focus group interviews were done during a global coronavirus pandemic. Finland had strict laws and guidelines that needed to be followed so that everyone's safety could be assured. The researcher made sure that the Finnish Health and Safety Administrations guidelines were followed, and the director of the day-care made sure that we also adhered to the municipality's guidelines concerning ECEC environments. The guidelines that were followed were that all the interviewees sat at least 1 metre away from each other. The maximum amount of people in a room with the computer was only 4 and they all wore masks during the interview. The researcher was in a different room from the interviewees and wore a mask whilst in the day-care facilities and avoided unnecessary contact with other people within the facility (THL Transmission and Protection from Coronavirus 2021.)

The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and reflexivity (Korstjens & Moser 2018: 120). Credibility involves the level of confidence that can be placed on the findings. The researcher has worked in the field for many years and so had some familiarity with the topic beforehand. The theoretical research added to the knowledge base and gave an understanding as to what needed to be asked to give an overall picture of the topic. For credibility, the data was triangulated by gathering information from people from multiple educational backgrounds and with different roles within the setting. The original idea was to have both focus groups be more mixed than they were. It would have been nice to also have some of the helpers present to gain a deeper understanding from multiple perspectives, however all the helpers were occupied with work during the interviews. Triangulation also involved persistent observation of the data when developing and analysing the thematic codes. The researcher studied all the data and re-coded it until it brought about depth of insight into the topic (Korstjens & Moser 2018: 122.)

For transferability, the context, the research process, and the participants were be described in as much detail as possible. Ensuring dependability and confirmability involved keeping the data analysis process within the accepted standards for conducting the design and interpreting the results from the data in a neutral manner (Korstjens & Moser 2018: 121.) The research steps will be described in full transparency and the records and notes will be kept allowing for an audit trail.

Reflexivity involved the researcher examining their own values, assumptions and pre-conceptions and their effect on each of the phases of the study process (Goldbar & Hustler, 2005:17.) The researcher has worked within the of ECEC as a teacher for over ten years and thus maybe had some biases in terms of their view of substitution standards, stemming from their experience. This bias, experiences and world view are hard to change because it is part of the subjective experience.

Since the researcher has worked in many daycares within Vantaa, so she knew some of the interviewees on some level, which was both a hindrance and a strength for the research. The teachers in Vantaa often have mutual conferences or extra training in which you get to know teachers from around the municipality, so it is hard to find ECEC workers that you do not know on any level. The researcher found it more important to perform the research in the municipality that she works in and knows how the work is done within that municipality, since there is some variation in how ECEC work is performed in Finland. It is important for the researcher to reflect on her place within the inner circle and this case the researchers inner circle is the early childhood education workers of Vantaa. An authentic and shared interest in the research topic between the interviewer and the interviewees helps to create a more open dialogue (Juvonen 2017.) There was also a level of comfort between the interviewer and the interviewees, which helped and eased the communication and allowed for the discussion to run very smoothly which reduced the need for long warm-up. The main hindrances involved in an inner circle interview, are that some issues may be left out. There may be an assumption that the interviewer understands some part of what is being discussed at a more familiar level and, therefore parts of the answer are left unspoken (Juvonen 2017).

9 Discussion

This section presents the relevance of the findings and their implications and contributions to the already existing body of knowledge. The findings will also be reflected through the theoretical background and interpreted in the light of both structural and process quality factors. The research topic of the effects of substitution on ECEC quality has not been researched very much in the Finnish context. The purpose of this research was to is to find ways to improve the quality of substitute work done in the context of daycares. The hope was that the thesis would also provide guidelines that ensure the quality for substitutes coming to work in the daycare setting.

The research questions allowed for the topic of substitution to be viewed from multiple angles. The first research question dealt with one of main topic of the whole thesis, which was the meaning of quality within the ECEC setting. Quality is a relative term that is viewed differently culturally, contextually and is affected by the time (Smith et al. 2000.) The research showed that quality was viewed by the interviewees from both the structural and process quality points of view. The workers saw process quality factors such as: customer satisfaction, cooperation with the families and the children's experiences within the ECEC setting as important indicators of quality. The kid's enjoyment and good communication with the families showed that the work being done was quality work.

The interviewees mentioned the kid's enjoyment as an important criterion for how they measure quality. Process quality involves creating a positive atmosphere for the kids that fosters their development in the right manner. This positive atmosphere can then be seen and manifests in the kids as joy, smiles, social interaction, and these in turn promote a safe attachment and indicate that the staff has the right level of sensitivity (Vlasov et al 2019:53.) Another important process quality factor is the guardian's involvement and cooperation with the ECEC staff, which can contribute significantly to the quality of ECEC. Communication and cooperation between guardians and parents have been raised to be one of the key objectives of early childhood education and care (Fenech 2013.) Research has even shown that more engagement between the staff and the guardians enhances the development and the learning experiences of the children and in the long-term can prevent social problems (Hujala et al. 2017.)

The first research question and the findings related to it, also brought to light the importance of a pedagogically well-structured work. The interviewees emphasized the importance of doing the work within the ECEC framework and that having the day structured creates a safer environment for the kids. Within the responses you could see the mutual influence of both the structural and process quality elements and how one influences the other. Structural quality factors such as having a professional education in the field allowed the workers to have the capability to create process quality by creating a pedagogically structured day for the children that follows the municipal curricula. Well planned pedagogical, creative, and diverse methods of operation inspire kids to learn and develop (Vlasov et al 2019:54-59.)

Structural quality factors that were perceived to affect the quality of the work had to do with the education of the workers, personal qualities of the staff, staff to child ratios, indoor space, and management practices. The interviewees felt that it is important to be trained for the job so that you can work pedagogically. Several studies have shown a similar link that a third-level qualification is tied to a more child-oriented pedagogy, better linguistic support as well as higher quality learning environments and processes (Burchinal et al. 2002; Degotardi 2010.)

The qualities that the ECEC workers valued in other professionals were the ability to structure the work in the right way, flexibility and motivation, and the ability to cooperate and do teamwork. Research by Manning et al (2017), also indicated that Staff's professional attitudes and skills play a role on the quality of ECEC work and on kids' development and learning. Teamwork was highlighted as an important element because the work done in daycares consists of work done in multi-professional teams. Effective teamwork consists of systematically observing the kids and together as a team drawing conclusions based on the observations (Vlasov et al. 2019: 55.) The importance of teamwork was also highlighted in Saksa's (2006) research and what was seen as important were the commitment to the work and open communication and trust between the workers (Saksa, 2006:10.)

The respondents talked about structural quality factors such as staff-to-child ratio and indoor space from the negative quality perspective. They viewed large groups sizes as a hindrance to good quality work because it creates noise. Studies by Magnuson et al (2007) have also pointed at the positive impact that smaller groups had on creating higher level pedagogical work and the way they affected children's development and the quality of the work. Quality improvement suggestions for creating better structural quality within ECEC from the respondents had to do with changing policy or bringing back the permanent substitutes, better training for new substitutes and written instructions for the work. Erkkilä's (2018:68.) research into management's views on substitutes also supports this research result, as her research showed that management felt that it is vital to have the right kind of training and induction to be able to do substitute work.

Indoor space was seen as lacking in one of the day-care units and it was seen as a negative structural quality indicator as it created a lack of oxygen. Well-functioning and healthy spaced facilities have been linked to higher-quality learning (Vlasov et al

2019:48-49.) However, as the interview also pointed out, pedagogically trained workers know how to make and shape any kind of environment into a well-functioning pedagogical space even when there is a lack of space.

The final issue that was seen as affecting both structural and process quality within the ECEC had to do with the way management practices were implemented. Good management was seen to affect the quality positively, whereas bad management had a negative effect. Effective leadership or management has been linked in studies to enhancing the ECEC quality by providing clearly defined mission and objectives that can be felt at the level of pedagogical activities. Good managers also enrich and allow for better cooperation and communication between the guardians and the ECEC workers (Fonsen 2014.) Hujala (2013) named leadership or management practices in day-cares as one of the central core components for quality early childhood education.

The second research question opened the topic of the control for the quality of the current substitute system. The interview revealed that the current substitution company lacks criteria or standards for the kinds of workers it hires. This is contrary to earlier findings by Erkkilä (2018) that revealed that day-care managers were mostly happy with the quality of the substitution system. The previous research suggested that hiring substitutes from an outsourced company had made the work of managers easier and that they had received good workers from the company that performed well on the job (Erkkilä 2018: 57-60.)

The interviewees felt that too much of the pressure for induction and training was on their shoulders rather than the outsourced company. Erkkilä (2018) also pointed out in her research that the induction and training pressure lies with the company that hires the service rather than the employer or the outsourcing company. Her research showed that in day-cares, this constant training of new substitutes was done by the hiring day-care and that often there is a system in place for new substitutes, which requires that one worker oversees the induction. This is also opposite to how training generally works at workplaces, and it is usually the employer's duty to train their workforce to assure quality (Erkkilä 2018:74.) The interviewees felt that the induction and training of the substitutes should be updated and that it should be companies' duty to provide the right education to their employees otherwise the money spent on untrained substitutes is wasted by the city.

The interviewees felt that not only would further induction be necessary for the workers but that there should be some physical and language requirements that would need to be in place for the workforce. The rewards for the work were also seen as unfair because the substitutes did not necessarily have the same qualifications or work experience as the permanent workforce. Haapala (2016) found that substitute workers were paid less, than permanent workers and that there was a substantial different in pay between public sector and private sector work which is contrary to what the new evidence suggested.

The third research question dove into the topic of unqualified substitutes and their effect on the work done in ECEC. Substitutes were seen as unqualified if they lacked experience and or qualifications for the work. There are laws and regulations in place that require qualified professionals to do work in day-cares, however these requirements are only in place for longer substitutions. Hiring unqualified substitutes is done to ensure safety and that there is at least the right legal adult-to-child ratio (Erkkilä 2018.) The interview revealed that the substitutes lack professional qualities that are required in the field such as flexibility and a lack of communication skills. The inflexibility of the substitutes caused the rest of the workforce and the customer base to become more flexible and open to changes. In the long-term having to be flexible with your work hours causes a strain on the workers as they cannot plan their life outside of their work. Erkkilä (2018) also found in her research that there is an expectation that substitutes should be flexible in terms of their working hours to ease the use of the substitute system.

The greatest strain from having an unqualified substitute was seen in the customer experiences from both the parents and the children. Interactions between the workers and the customers are process quality indicators within ECEC according to Vlasov et al (2019). Therefore, negative customer experiences coming from constantly changing plans and negative interactions with the parents would indicate that the quality of the ECEC service is lowered when you have unqualified substitutes. The children's reactions towards a new substitute manifested as testing their boundaries more and relying more on the familiar adults that are present. Erkkilä (2018) also found in her research that children rely on the familiar adults more when there is a new substitute present. The workers felt that the parents and children get frustrated when the weekly plans change due to the changes in staff and this in turn causes a strain on the relationship between the parents and the workers.

The fourth research question was meant to allow for the aim of the thesis to really be explored to see what qualities substitutes brought to the day-cares. The idea of this was to show that there are certain standards that could be in place to ensure quality substitutions. Qualified substitutes brought more work safety and elicited trust in the workers. Erkkilä (2018) also found in her research trust was raised as a vital issue when thinking about substitutions. You need to be able to trust the person and assume that they can take responsibility and that can only be done when you know the person or if you are assured of their qualifications (Erkkilä 2018:87.)

Personality traits of a good substitutes were taking initiative and asking if they did not know what to do and that they were motivated to do the job. Previous research has also shown that taking initiative is one of the most important qualities of a substitute because it also shows that you are willing and motivated to do the work. It is vital in working cultures nowadays that the worker knows how to offer their services without being asked to, and that they flexibly move from one work are to the next (Järvinen 2008.)

The fifth question came up as the research was being done, since the effects of the global pandemic were evident in all fields of work, thus it was inferred that it also would influence the ECEC work. There was already a lack of substitutes within ECEC before the pandemic began (Yle 2021.), but the shortage grew even greater during the pandemic. This shortage was also noted by Erkkilä (2018) by the managers she interviewed, and they pointed out that it is hard to get substitutes during vacations and the flu season. The pandemic can be seen as a long-lasting flu season with greater restrictions than we usually experience, which may explain the reluctance for workers to do short gigs in places where there is a possibility of infection (Erkkilä 2018:72.) The pandemic also affected the feelings of the workers and has made them more tired than usual as there are constantly new guidelines for the work and the stress of possibly getting infected. Giorgi et al (2021) have also pointed out in their research that the covid-19 pandemic has taken a mental health toll on workers in especially healthcare field, but this same toll can be felt by other essential workers that have to deal with working face-to-face with people.

The interview showed that there are many ways that the quality of the work in ECEC can be improved. Having permanent substitutes would ensure better teamwork, trust and cooperation between the workers and it would ensure that the children do not need to adjust to new people each time a worker is sick. Management can have an active role in

making sure the quality is upkept, but policy changes need to be made so that management can legally make the right adjustments to both process and structural quality. The overall hope of the respondents and the manager would be to have permanent substitute workers that would be hired to the day-cares across the municipality of Vantaa. This is because the permanent substitutes would legally be required to have qualifications and work experience before being hired for a longer-term position.

Having qualified and experienced workers is one of the major guidelines and standards that the outsourcing company or the municipality hiring should adhere to. However, if policy changes do not take place, the day-cares can at least ensure that there is a quick induction method set in place for new substitutes. The induction system could be the same in the entire municipality, which would ensure a certain set of quality standards. The interview revealed that there are already induction folders for new workers. A suggestion could also be a quick guide video that could be sent by the hiring party to the outsourcing company as this would ensure that the workers would understand the tasks even if they do not know how to read Finnish fluently. Another suggestion would be training seminars for all the new substitute workers. Within the seminars you could show the video and do interactive tasks to prepare the workers for what is to come. Thus, the guidelines that are suggested through this research is that a quick induction method could be adopted by either the day-cares or the outsourcing company. This would require less work from the permanent workforce such as an induction video or an induction seminar.

10 Conclusion

The field of early childhood education is a complex and fragmented one. The theoretical background showed that there are many elements involved in creating a high-quality ECEC service ranging from the pedagogical work to the interactions between the workers and the clients (Sim et al 2018.) Research suggests that high-quality ECEC can enhance a child's development and can have positive long-term effects in their learning (Hujala et al. 2017.) Therefore, it is important to research different elements of ECEC services such as substitute work to see if it influences the quality of the service.

The research presented was a qualitative research aimed at finding ways to improve the quality of substitute work done in day-cares and giving some guidelines as to what could be done to ensure that the quality stays the same when working with substitutes. The

responses revealed that there are ways in which the quality could be improved in the ECEC environment. In terms of structural quality, the respondents suggested changes in policy so that the qualifications of the substitute workforce could be ensured. Other structural quality factors that were seen as important were a smaller adult-to-child ratio, good management, higher education for the staff and the significance of having well-functioning and healthy facilities. The results supported previous research by Bonetti & Brown (2018) and Vlasov et al (2019) that highlight the importance of the different structural quality elements in ECEC.

Process quality elements that were found to be important in the research were the different levels of interaction between the children and the workers and the guardians and the workers. This interaction or lack of interaction was seen as factors that affect cooperation and customer satisfaction. An important measure of process quality success was seen as the children's happiness and joyful reactions. Substitutions affected the customers negatively by creating changes in the arrangements of the day and the children reacted to the new worker by testing their boundaries and clinging more to the permanent workforce. The pedagogically planned activities that have been specified in the curricula often had to be changed during substitutions, which impacted process quality negatively.

The research showed that qualified substitutes brought more work safety and elicited trust, whereas unqualified substitutes were viewed as a further burden because they lacked professional qualities and because they had to be trained for the task. The current substitute system was viewed from a negative viewpoint also because of the current global covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic affected the supply and demand of the outsourcing company, which affected the kinds of workers that they had to offer during this difficult period. The pandemic may have affected the interviewees answers as they have been under more stress than usual. Better induction and a set of standards were given as improvement suggestions for the current system and as a further guideline the entire induction system could be standardized through videos or a training system.

Further research could be focused on creating a good induction system for substitutes to see if an effect on they would have how perform their work. There should also be further research into the general quality of ECE on both national and international settings, as suggested by Sheridan et al (2009) and this could show if there is interdepend-

ency of quality dimensions such as cultural context and society on the users of the service. The results provided in this research on quality factors in ECEC are contextually limited to the Finnish setting.

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Appendices   Appendix 1

RYHMÄHAASTATTELUPYYNTÖ

Hei,

Opiskelen ammattikorkeakoulussa koulutusohjelmanani Sosiaali- ja terveysalan palvelujen ja liiketoiminnan johtamisen kehittäminen. Opinnäytetyössäni on tarkoitus tutkia varhaiskasvatuksen sijaisten laatua. Tutkimuksen avulla on tarkoitus kehittää ohjeistus sijaisille, jonka avulla voidaan takaa varhaiskasvatuksen laatu tulevaisuudessa.

Tutkimus laadullinen ja se toteutetaan fokusryhmähaastatteluna. Haastattelun tarkoitus on ymmärtää tutkittavaa ilmiötä syvällisemmin. Fokusryhmähaastattelu toteutetaan sähköisenä Microsoft teamsin kautta ja se äänitetään ilman videota, jotta haastateltavien anonyymisyys säilyisi paremmin. Haastattelut litteroidaan ja sen jälkeen pilkotaan ja analysoidaan sisällönanalyysin avulla.

Mielipiteesi on erittäin tärkeä, joten jos koet mahdolliseksi osallistua tutkimukseen, pyydän, että ilmoitat johtajalle. Haastattelut järjestetään kahdessa erässä maaliskuussa. Tarvitsen molempiin 6-7 henkilöä ja ne järjestetään sillä tavalla, että haastateltavat ovat samassa huoneessa ja ovat yhteydessä haastattelijaan Microsoft Teamsin kautta. Haastattelu kestää maksimissaan tunnin. Haastattelun teema-alueet annan tutkimukseen osallistujille tiedoksi etukäteen. Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on täysin vapaaehtoista ja tulokset tullaan esittämään ryhmätasolla. Aineisto hävitetään analysoinnin jälkeen.

Kiitos avustasi!
Miia Kröger

Metropolia
University of Applied Sciences

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Suostumus tutkimukseen osallistumisesta

Tutkimuksen nimi: Sijaisten laadun hallinta varhaiskasvatuksessa

Tutkimuksen toteuttaja: Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu Oy, Miia kröger, Puh.0449735016,

Miiamaria.kroger@gmail.com. Ohjaaja: Eijä Metsälä, Eija.metsala@metropolia.fi,

Dosentti, FT, RH, Yliopettaja, Myllypurontie 1

Minua _____on pyydetty osallistumaan yllämainittuun tutkimukseen, jonka tarkoituksena on parantaa varhaiskasvatuksen sijaisten työn laatua kehittämällä ohjeet joiden avulla varmistetaan työn laatu.

Olen saanut tutkimustiedotteen ja ymmärtänyt sen. Tiedotteesta olen saanut riittävän selvityksen tutkimuksesta, sen tarkoituksesta ja toteutuksesta, oikeuksistani sekä tutkimuksen mahdollisesti liittyvistä hyödyistä ja riskeistä. Minulla on ollut mahdollisuus esittää kysymyksiä ja olen saanut riittävän vastauksen kaikkiin tutkimusta koskeviin kysymyksiini.

Olen saanut tiedot tutkimukseen mahdollisesti liittyvästä henkilötietojen keräämisestä, käsittelystä ja luovuttamisesta ja minun on ollut mahdollista tutustua tutkimukseen liittyvään tietosuojaselosteeseen.

Minua ei ole painostettu eikä houkuteltu osallistumaan tutkimukseen.

Minulla on ollut riittävästi aikaa harkita osallistumistani tutkimukseen*.*

Ymmärrän, että osallistumiseni on vapaaehtoista ja että voin peruuttaa tämän suostumukseni koska tahansa syytä ilmoittamatta. Olen tietoinen siitä, että mikäli keskeytän tutkimuksen tai peruutan suostumuksen, minusta keskeyttämiseen ja suostumuksen peruuttamiseen mennessä kerättyjä tietoja ja näytteitä voidaan käyttää osana tutkimusaineistoa.

Allekirjoituksellani vahvistan osallistumiseni tähän tutkimukseen.

Jos tutkimukseen liittyvien henkilötietojen käsittelyperusteena on suostumus, vahvistan allekirjoituksellani suostumukseni myös henkilötietojeni käsittelyyn. Minulla on oikeus peruuttaa suostumukseni tietosuojaselosteessa kuvatulla tavalla.

_____,   _____   .   _____.   _____

Allekirjoitus: _____

Nimenselvennys: _____

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET/ TIEDOTE TUTKIMUKSESTA

Sijaisten laadun hallinta varhaiskasvatuksessa

Pyyntö osallistua tutkimukseen

Teitä pyydetään mukaan tutkimukseen, jossa tutkitaan varhaiskasvatuksen laatua ja jonka tarkoituksena on parantaa varhaiskasvatuksen sijaisten työn laatua kehittämällä ohjeet joiden avulla varmistetaan työn laatu. Olemme arvioineet, että sovellutte tutkimukseen, koska olette töissä varhaiskasvatuksen parissa ja teillä on kokemusta työn luonteesta ja sijaisten tekemestä työstä varhaiskasvatuksesa. Tämä tiedote kuvaa tutkimusta ja teidän osuuttanne siinä. Perehdyttyänne tähän tiedotteeseen teille järjestetään mahdollisuus esittää kysymyksiä tutkimuksesta, jonka jälkeen teiltä pyydetään suostumus tutkimukseen osallistumisesta.

Vapaaehtoisuus

Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on täysin vapaaehtoista. Kieltäytyminen ei vaikuta teidän oikeuksiin ja kohteluun teidän työpaikalla.

Voitte myös keskeyttää tutkimuksen koska tahansa syytä ilmoittamatta. Mikäli keskeytätte tutkimuksen tai peruutatte suostumuksen, teistä keskeyttämiseen ja suostumuksen peruuttamiseen mennessä kerättyjä tietoja ja näytteitä voidaan käyttää osana tutkimusaineistoa.

Tutkimuksen tarkoitus

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tarkastella varhaiskasvatuksen sijaisten työn laatua kehittää ohjeet joiden avulla varmistetaan työn laatu tulevaisuudessa.

Tutkimuksen toteuttajat

Tutkimuksen toteutuksesta ja rahoitusta vastaa tutkija itse ja se tehdään osana Yamk opintoja. Metropolian rooli on tukea ja neuvoa läpi prosessin.

Tutkimusmenetelmät ja toimenpiteet

Tutkimus laadullinen ja se toteutetaan fokusryhmähaastatteluna. Haastattelun tarkoitus on ymmärtää tutkittavaa ilmiötä syvällisemmin. Fokusryhmähaastattelu toteutetaan sähköisenä Microsoft teamsin kautta ja se äänitetään ilman videota, jotta haastateltavien anonyymisyys säilyisi paremmin. Haastattelut litteroidaan ja sen jälkeen pilkotaan ja analysoidaan sisällönanalyysin avulla.

Tutkimuksen mahdolliset hyödyt

Tutkimuksen avulla on tarkoitus kehittää ohjeistus sijaisille, jonka avulla voidaan takaa varhaiskasvatuksen laatu tulevaisuudessa

Kustannukset ja niiden korvaaminen

Tutkimukseen osallistuminen ei maksa teille mitään. Osallistumisesta ei myöskään makseta erillistä korvausta.

Tutkimustuloksista tiedottaminen

Tutkimustuloksia käytetään ylemmän ammattikorkeakoulun opinnäytetyöhön, joka julkaistaan Theseus-tietokannassa. Tutkimustulokset käsitellään anonyymisti ja tutkimuksen aikana noudatetaan Euroopan asettamia GDPR tietosuoja käytäntöjä. Tutkimustulokset annetaan myös osallistujille opinnäytetyön valmistuttua esimerkiksi sähköpostina.

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Tutkimuksen päättyminen

Myös tutkimuksen suorittaja voi keskeyttää tutkimuksen.

Lisätiedot

Pyydämme teitä tarvittaessa esittämään tutkimukseen liittyviä kysymyksiä tutkijalle/tutkimuksesta vastaavalle henkilölle.

Tutkijoiden yhteystiedot

Tutkija / opinnäytetyötekijä
Nimi: Miia kröger
Puh.0449735016
Sähköposti: Miiamaria.kroger@gmail.com

Tutkimuksesta vastaa / opinnäytetyön ohjaaja
Titteli: Dosentti, FT, RH, Yliopettaja
Nimi: Eija Metsälä
Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu Oy / yksikkö
Puh. Eija.metsala@metropolia.fi
Sähköposti:

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Tutkimuksen tietosuojaseloste: Henkilötietojen käsittely tutkimuksessa

Tässä tutkimuksessa käsitellään teitä koskevia henkilötietoja voimassa olevan tietosuojalainsäädännön (EU:n yleinen tietosuoja-astus, 679/2016, ja voimassa oleva kansallinen lainsäädäntö) mukaisesti. Seuraavassa kuvataan henkilötietojen käsittelyyn liittyvät asiat.

Tutkimuksen rekisterinpitäjä

Rekisterinpitäjällä tarkoitetaan tahoa, joka yksin tai yhdessä toisten kanssa määrittelee henkilötietojen käsittelyn tarkoitukset ja keinot. Rekisterinpitäjä voi olla Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu, toimeksiantaja, muu yhteistyötaho, opinnäytetyöntekijä tai jotkut edellä mainituista yhdessä (esim. Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu ja opinnäytetyöntekijä yhdessä).

Tässä tutkimuksessa henkilötietojen rekisterinpitäjä on [valitse jokin/jotkin seuraavista]:

Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu	☐	
Toimeksiantaja	☐	Toimeksiantajan nimi:
Muu yhteistyötaho	☐	Yhteistyötahon nimi:
Opinnäytetyöntekijä	☐	

Yhteisrekisterinpitäjien vastuut [tarvittaessa]

Jos kyseessä on EU:n yleisen tietosuoja-asetuksen artiklan 26 mukainen yhteisrekisteri, kuvaa tähän kunkin rekisterinpitäjän vastuut.

Jos yhteisrekisterinpitäjiä on muita kuin Metropolia ja opinnäytetyöntekijä (esim. toimeksiantaja), tee erillinen yhteisrekisterinpitäjyyssopimus. Sopimuspohjan saat Metropolian tietosuojavastaavalta.

Vastuunjaossa tulee ilmetä ainakin seuraavat asiat:

1. Kuka vastaa henkilötietojen käsittelystä koko niiden elinkaaren ajan? (kuka päättää esim. henkilötietojen säilytysajasta ja kuka poistaa ne, kun säilytysaika on umpeutunut?)
2. Kuka valitsee/päättää henkilötietojen käsittelyssä käytettävistä työvälineistä (tietojärjestelmät/ohjelmistot)? Kuka vastaa henkilötietojen käsittelyssä käytettävien työvälineiden ja/tai tallennusalustojen tietoturvasta? Kuka

laatii henkilötietojen käsittelysopimukset järjestelmäntoimittajien kanssa?
Muut asianmukaiset tekniset ja organisatoriset toimenpiteet?

3. Kuka vastaa rekisteröityjen oikeuksien toteuttamisesta?
4. Kuka vastaa rekisteröidyn informoinnista?
5. Kuka vastaa GDPR:n artiklan 14 mukaisesta rekisteröidyn informoinnista,
   jos/kun henkilötietoja ei ole saatu rekisteröidyltä itseltään? (jos tiedot
   saadaan vain rekisteröidyltä eli tutkittavalta itseltään, ei tätä kohtaa tarvitse
   huomioida)

**Voitte kysyä lisätietoja henkilötietojenne käsittelystä rekisteripitäjän
yhteyshenkilöltä**

Rekisterinpitäjän yhteyshenkilön nimi:
Organisaatio:
Puh.
Sähköposti:

Tutkimuksessa teistä kerätään seuraavia henkilötietoja
Henkilötietojen käsittely on oikeutettua ainoastaan silloin, kun se on
tutkimukselle välttämätöntä. Kerättävät henkilötiedot on minimoitava, niitä ei
saa kerätä tarpeettomasti tai varmuuden vuoksi.

Ammattinimike, työkokemus ja työhön liittyviä seikkoja.

Teillä ei ole sopimukseen tai lakisääteiseen tehtävään perustuvaa velvollisuutta
toimittaa henkilötietoja vaan osallistuminen on täysin vapaaehtoista.

Tutkimuksessa ei kerätä henkilötietojanne muista lähteistä.

Henkilötietojenne suojausperiaatteet

Käytän materiaalin keruuseen Microsoft Teams sovellusta Metropolian
sähköpostijärjestelmän kautta, henkilökohtaiselle -verkkolevyasemalle ,
Metropolian Excel-taulukkolaskentaohjelma ja Microsoft word ohjelmaan.
Teams haastattelu tallenetaan ilman videota ja haastateltavien nimet muokatan
formaattiin "haastateltava 1,2,3,4", jotta video säilyy anonyyminä. Haastattelut
ja litteroitu materiaali säilytetään koneella missä on käyttäjätunnus ja salasana
ja ne säilytetään paikassa mikä on lukittu.

Henkilötietojenne käsittelyn tarkoitus
Henkilötietoja ei käsitellä.

Henkilötietojenne käsittelyperuste
henkilötietojen käsittelyn oikeusperuste on haastateltavan suostumus

Tutkimuksen kestoaika (henkilötietojenne käsittelyaika)
Tutkimus kestää tunnin.

Mitä henkilötiedoillenne tapahtuu tutkimuksen päätyttyä?
Henkilötiedot tuhotaan opinnäytetyöprosessin päätyttyä.

Tietojen luovuttaminen tutkimusrekiseristä
Tietoja ei luovuteta tutkimuksen ulkopuolella oleville henkilöille/organisaatioille.

Rekisteröitynä teillä on oikeus
Koska henkilötietojanne käsitellään tässä tutkimuksessa, niin olette rekisteröity tutkimuksen aikana muodostuvassa henkilörekisterissä. Rekisteröitynä teillä on oikeus:

- saada informaatiota henkilötietojen käsittelystä
- tarkastaa itseänne koskevat tiedot
- oikaista tietojanne
- poistaa tietonne (esim. jos peruutatte antamanne suostumuksen)
- peruuttaa antamanne henkilötietojen käsittelyä koskeva suostumus
- rajoittaa tietojenne käsittelyä
- rekisterinpitäjän ilmoitusvelvollisuus henkilötietojen oikaisusta, poistosta tai käsittelyn rajoittamisesta
- siirtää tietonne järjestelmästä toiseen
- sallia automaattinen päätöksenteko nimenomaisella suostumuksellanne
- tehdä valitus tietosuojavaltuutetun toimistoon, jos katsotte, että henkilötietojanne on käsitelty tietosuojalainsäädännön vastaisesti

Jos henkilötietojen käsittely tutkimuksessa ei edellytä rekisteröidyn tunnistamista ilman lisätietoja eikä rekisterinpitäjä pysty tunnistamaan rekisteröityä, niin oikeutta tietojen tarkastamiseen, oikaisuun, poistoon, käsittelyn rajoittamiseen, ilmoitusvelvollisuuteen ja siirtämiseen ei sovelleta.

Voitte käyttää oikeuksianne ottamalla yhteyttä rekisterinpitäjään.

Tutkimuksessa kerättyjä henkilötietoja ei käytetä profilointiin tai automaattiseen päätöksentekoon

Henkilötietojen käsittely aineistoa analysoitaessa ja tutkimuksen tuloksia raportoitaessa
Teistä kerättyä tietoa ja tutkimusaineistoa käsitellään luottamuksellisesti lainsäädännön edellyttämällä tavalla. Yksittäisille tutkittavalle annetaan tunnuskoodi ja häntä koskevat tiedot säilytetään koodattuina tutkimusaineistossa. Aineisto analysoidaan koodattuna ja tulokset raportoidaan

ryhmätasolla, jolloin yksittäinen henkilö ei ole tunnistettavissa ilman koodiavainta. Koodiavainta, jonka avulla yksittäisen tutkittavan tiedot ja tulokset voidaan tunnistaa, säilyttävät Tutkija (Miia Kröger) ja vain tutkimusken ja opinnäytetyön ajan eikä tietoja anneta tutkimuksen ulkopuolisille henkilöille. Lopulliset tutkimustulokset raportoidaan ryhmätasolla eikä yksittäisten tutkittavien tunnistaminen ole mahdollista.

Tutkimusaineistoa ja tutkimuksen yhteydessä kerättyjä näytteitä säilytetään tutkija kotiona ja 1/2 vuotta, jonka jälkeen ne hävitetään

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Focus Group interview questions:

1. Background of the Interviewees
a) What is your educational background and your title?
b) How long have you worked in ECE?
c) What age group are you working with at the moment?
2. Early Childhood Education and quality:
a) What do you think the word quality means?
b) What do you feel constitutes quality care in early childhood education?
c) What elements in your work impact the quality negatively? And what positively?
3. The effect of substitutes on the work:
    a) Do substitutes effect the quality of the care?
    b) If so, how? (positive/negative)
    c) Are there differences with the substitutes that have worked with you?
    d) If so what kind of differences?
    e) Are there measures you can take to ensure that the quality standards are the same during substitution?
4. Future ideas for quality of substitution?
    a) Is there a need for quality improvement with substitution?
    b) Any final ideas on the topic?

In Finnish: Fokusryhmähaastattelun kysymykset:

1. Haastateltavien taustat:
a) Mikä on sinun koulutustausta? Ja sinun ammattinimike?
b) Kuinka kauan olet ollut töissä varhaiskasvatuksessa?
c) Minkä ikäisten lasten kanssa toimit tällä hetkellä?
2. Varhaiskasvatus ja laatu:
a) Mitä mielestäsi sana laatu tarkoittaa?
b) Mikä mielestäsi muodostaa laadukkaan hoidon varhaiskasvatuksessa?
c) Mitkä tekijät työssäsi vaikuttavat työn laatuun negatiivisesti? Ja entä positiivisesti?
3. Sijaisten vaikutus työhön:
a) Vaikuttavatko sijaiset hoidon laatuun?

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b) Jos koette, että vaikuttaa niin miten?

c) Onko Sijaisissa, jotka ovat työskennelleet kanssasi ollut eroavaisuuksia?

d) Jos on niin minkälaisia?

e) Onko jotain toimenpiteitä joilla voisi varmistaa, että laatu kriteerit pysyvät samana sijaisuuden aikana?

4. Ideoita sijaisten laadun suhteen:

c) Onko tarvetta parantaa sijaisten laatua?

d) Onko vielä jotain viimeisiä ajatuksia aiheeseen liittyen?

MAXQDA2020 coding system that was used for the research

Code System	
lack of subs/Sijaisten puute	1
Lack of criteria/kriteerin puutos	1
Physical requiremennts/Fyysinen kunto	3
Age requirement/Ikä	1
Legal obligation to inform/Imoittamisvelvollisuus	1
List/lista	1
Varahenkilöt	4
Enthusiasm to work/innostus työtä kohtaan	1
Familiar substitute/tuttu sijainen	2
Effect of sub/Sijaisen vaikutus	4
Cooperation/yhteistyö	4
Co-workers	1
Management/Johtaminen	3
Negative communication	2
Work atmosphere	2
Noise/meteli	1
Changing workers/Työntekijöiden vaihtuvuus	1
Safe environment	3
Planned Activities/ suunniteltu toiminta	1
Children's experience/lasten kokemus	11
Customer satisfaction/Asiakastyytyväisyys	5
Goal oriented/Tavoitteellista	2
Pedagogy/Pedagogiikka	4
Asking/kyseleminen	1
Motivation/motivaatio	2
Language Skills/Kielitaito	4
Folder/Kansio	2
Unpredicatability	4
Difficulty being a sub/Sijaisena olemisen vaikeus	2
Workload/Kuormitus	14
Oma-aloitteisuus	3
Induction/Perehdytys	1
Knowledge of daycares/Tietämys päiväkodeista	1
Work experience/Työkokemus	5
Ammatillisuus	4
Course/Kurssi	3
/Guidance/Ohjaaminen	2
Easing the work/Työn helpottaminen	2
Pay/Palkka	7
Difference in work classification/Luokittelu ero	4
Amatour work/Amatööri	1

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Forming subthemes and themes in Miro