Framework Plan for Day Care Institutions

A brief Presentation

Q-0917 E
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INTRODUCTION

On 1 December 1995 the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs - pursuant to section 2, second paragraph, of Act no. 19 of 5 May 1995 on Day Care Institutions (Day Care Institutions Act) - established a framework plan for the content of day care institutions. The framework plan is a regulation to the Act, cf. section 2 and chapter VII of the Public Administration Act, and is effective as from 1 January 1996.

The framework plan builds on the basis incorporated in the Day Care Institutions Act and the Storting's treatment of this Act.

Section 1 of the Day Care Institutions Act defines the purpose of the Act as follows:

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

Day care institutions shall assist in giving the children an upbringing that accords with Christian values.

Owners of private day care institutions may prescribe in the by-laws that the second paragraph shall not apply.

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

Section 2 of the Act states

«Content of day care institutions

Day care institutions shall be educationally-oriented.

The Ministry shall lay down a framework plan for day care institutions. The framework plan shall give guidelines for day care institutions' content and tasks."
The owner of the day care institution may adapt the framework plan to local conditions. The coordinating committee for each day care institution shall establish an annual plan for the educational activity.

Where Sami day care institutions are concerned, both section 110 A of the Constitution and the Sami Act - as well as the Day Care Institutions Act - lay down guidelines for the values and attitudes that day care institutions should mediate. The values and attitudes most clearly expressed in the Constitution and the Sami Act require a basis to be laid enabling the Sami People to safeguard and develop their language, their culture and their community life. Day care institutions should impart values and attitudes that are in accordance with the children's cultural background and the legislation passed.

This document is an abridged version of the framework plan and is addressed principally to parents, local-level politicians and owners of day care institutions. Readers wishing to acquaint themselves with the entire plan are referred to Q-0903 B/N/S Rammeplan for barnehagen (Norwegian- and Sami-language versions only).

The aim of the framework plan is to provide day care institution staff and coordinating committees with a binding framework to follow when planning, implementing and evaluating the content of their institution.

The framework plan is addressed primarily to the teaching staff of day care institutions, although remaining staff members are also responsible for ensuring that the activity accords with the plan and its intentions. The coordinating committee establishes the institution's annual plan which must be based on the framework plan. Further, each municipality (i.e. local authority) in its capacity as supervisory authority is responsible for overseeing that all day care institutions in its jurisdiction make satisfactory educational provision in conformity with the plan, while day care institution owners (public or private) are responsible for ensuring that day care institutions have the framework conditions required to enable the plan to be translated into educational activity at the particular institution.

Beyond the objectives formulated in the Day Care Institutions Act and guidelines from the Ministry, day care institutions have traditionally had little specific to go on from the community when formulating their educational content. The framework plan changes this to some extent. The plan sets out:

- binding objectives for day care institutions
- requirements as to quality in everyday social interaction
five subject-areas which all children attending day care institutions should experience during the year:
- society, religion and ethics
- aesthetic subjects
- language, text and communication
- nature, environment and technology
- physical activity and health

The framework plan does not impose detailed guidelines for the activity or prevent freedom, adaptation and variation at the local level.

The paramount objectives and framework are binding. Hence the children and their parents are entitled to expect that all day care institutions will seek to attain the objectives set, that a deliberate focus will be placed on social interaction and that the five subject-areas will form part of the content of day care institutions. The plan does not contain detailed instructions in regard to the types of topics that have to be included and the methods to be employed. Instead it sets out possibilities available within the content-areas specified.

The plan is intended as a tool for the entire staff when planning, implementing and evaluating the activity. It is also intended to help staff to view upbringing, care and supervision in a social perspective. The plan highlights the importance of the adults' attitudes, knowledge and skills when it comes to meeting, understanding and bringing up children.

The framework plan spells out what day care institutions have to offer children and parents and provides a basis for collaboration between home and day care institution. Section 1 of Act requires the institution to work in close understanding and collaboration with the children's homes. The plan provides staff and parents, owners and politicians with a basic framework for working on the content of day care institutions.

The framework plan shows what expectations are made of day care institutions. They are described as principles guiding the institutions' work. The Day Care Institutions Act enables the owner to set guidelines for adapting the plan to local conditions. These should give some indication of the scope of the content of the particular day care institution. The plan has to be adapted to a variety of operating regimes. It will be up to the individual owner, based on local conditions and framework conditions, to decide the role to be assigned to the operating regime at the day care institution in question. Collaboration between the municipality and private owners on guidelines for adapting the framework plan to local conditions would be desirable as would, in the event, agreement on joint guidelines for municipal and private day care institutions.
The plan is divided into three main parts:

**Part I: General part**, stating objectives and basic principles underlying the work.

**Part II: Content, areas for experience and learning** is fairly extensive in the plan both because no planning document has previously been drawn up for Norwegian day care institutions and because the plan is intended for use by day care institution staff with varying training and competence.

**Part III: Using the plan** considers who is responsible for what at the various levels of public administration when it comes to running and supervising public and private day care institutions. This part also deals with organisational development of day care institutions.

**PART I GENERAL PART**

**CHAPTER 1 DAY CARE INSTITUTIONS' ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY**

**The Norwegian tradition of day care institutions**

Day care institutions in Norway are part of a shared European tradition. The emergence of the modern day care institution has two roots: social and educational, represented respectively by the nursery (open all day) with the main emphasis on daily care of children, and the short-time kindergarten whose aim was purely educational. These two traditions are merged in the current Norwegian day care institution, where care of the children and their learning and development are seen as a totality.

**Day Care Institutions Act**

The first special Act for Norwegian day care institutions came into force in 1975. The Act opened the way for wider variation in the pattern of operation, and the term «kindergarten» denoted that a trained preschool teacher was responsible for the activity. A decentralised development pattern adapted to local needs and conditions was a basic feature of the Act. This ideology was carried further in subsequent law revisions and in the Day Care Institutions Act of 1995.

The Day Care Institutions Act of 1995 contains a particularly important provision that the Ministry shall establish a framework plan for the content of
day care institutions. This marks a clear-cut assumption by the community of responsibility for the content of day care institutions.

The Act also contains a new provision on Sami day care institutions:

«Day care institutions for Sami children in Sami districts shall be based on the Sami language and culture.»

The provisions of the Act dealing with aims for day care institutions' activity are described more closely and elaborated on in chapter 2 of the framework plan.

**Social change - the future**

We live in a society undergoing marked changes. This affects day care institutions. Planning of day care institutions' activity to the year 2000 and onwards into the next century will necessarily build on a number of uncertain factors. The following features of current development will probably remain in evidence for a long time to come:

Family life and pattern of life influence day care institutions. Families are small, and the family situation may change.

Gender equality and labour force participation among women have become an increasingly visible feature of the situation of parents of small children.

Greater requirements as to adaptation and flexibility are another feature. People live in more densely populated communities, move house, change schools and jobs more frequently. Changes in the world of work are accelerating and require rapid adjust-ment.

Unemployment is a major problem for some families with small children. At the moment little is known of the long-term effects on children of parental unemploy-ment. Day care institutions nevertheless have to adapt constantly to such changes in working and family life.

The knowledge explosion is among the most important instrumental factors in social change. If children are to be equipped to influence their future, they need to be receptive to new impulses and curious about their surroundings and the future. At the same time there is a danger that change may be overstimulated in today's high-tech, media society. Day care institutions must also give children an opportunity for assimilating impressions, for immersion and time for reflection.
Nature and environmental issues are growing steadily in importance both because of major ecological and environmental challenges and because we live in a consumer society in the grip of a use-and-discard mentality. Day care institutions can give children valuable lessons and sound habits in these areas.

Internationalisation is a prominent feature of modern society. Social, cultural, language and economic differences in the population mean that children come to day care institutions with differing ranges of experience. The day care institution is designed to support children's development based on their own premises. It should represent an environment that promotes respect for human worth and solidarity and the right to be different.

The day care institution is especially important for children who experience a deficit of care. The institution's role in terms of preventive child welfare is steadily increasing in importance.

Violence, crime, teasing and bullying and problematic behaviour in children and juveniles are also features of social development. The day care institution has an important task in imparting basic values such as a sense of community, care and sharing of responsibility.

Many of the social changes described here have also taken place in the Sami community and have created major changes in the conditions in which Sami children grow up.

**Parent - child - day care institution**

Parental responsibility for care, upbringing and their right to choose tuition for their children and the children's right to receive care from their parents are enshrined both in national laws and international conventions. Parents are in the first instance responsible for ensuring their children a secure upbringing, a context providing well-being and a feeling of belonging. The family is a natural and basic unit in the community and is entitled to protection from the community.

The family and the day care institution perform different roles vis-a-vis the child. The home is where the child's deepest emotional attachments lie. The strong emotional bonds which arise in the intimate dependency between parent and child are fundamental to the development of confidence, security, identity and independence. Interaction within the family strongly affects the child's interpretation of other experiences and events.
The day care institution represents a supplementary environment to the home and enables the child to test and develop the basis laid at home. Its perspectives are wide-ned, it can reap new experiences and develop other close relationships. Hence the child can gain experience that is not available at home.

Collaboration between staff and parents is a natural part of the work of the day care institution. It is a precondition for continuity between home and institution and for the institution's ability to base its activity on the children's individual experiences and conditions of life.

A particular challenge for the day care institution is to bring about good co-operation with parents belonging to linguistic and cultural minorities and to lay the basis for such parents to acquire the basis needed to participate in parents' councils and coor-dinating committees.

Preschool teachers have broad-based formal expertise in small children's development and needs. Assistants may also have a training providing this type of expertise. Bilingual assistants are especially well equipped to help provide a basis for day care institutions to provide good facilities for children and parents from linguistic and cultural minorities. All staff in a day care institution have experience and practi-cal knowledge gained from being together with children on a daily basis. The institution should enable parents who need and wish to do so to share this knowledge and experience.

Society is responsible for creating a setting within which families can perform their care functions. Society is also responsible for ensuring good and secure conditions for children to grow up in, which includes providing a sufficient number of day care institution places. The day care institution can also be seen as a voluntary part of the overall education system. The care and supervision, upbringing and training that day care institutions can provide is in addition to what can be provided by the home. Hence there is no contradiction between parental responsibility and the role of day care institutions. Together they can give the child the best conditions for a harmo-nious upbringing and development.

**Day care institutions in a childhood perspective**

It is important in a childhood perspective to realise that the interests of society, parents and day care institution staff do not always coincide with those of the child-dren. Children must have their interests looked after, at the same time as community rules have to be learned. It is important that day care institution staff, parents, the owner and society are aware of these contradictions and address them.
Childhood as a life-phase has a high intrinsic value, and children's own free time, own culture and play are fundamentally important. As a step in giving children the necessary support and opportunity to develop, the framework plan makes visible and elaborates the educational working method and content of day care institutions. This plan is a tool for adults. But there is a children's perspective which must be present throughout in all planning in day care institutions. It entails that the need for control and management of the establishment must at all times be weighed against the children's need to be children on their own premises and based on their own interests.

Children need to associate with both men and women in day care institutions. Since the great majority of children are in due course likely to attend a day care institution, it is worrying from a gender-equality perspective that day care institutions seem set to remain a women's environment. A broad awareness of this is needed, both on the part of staff and the authorities.

The day care institution plays a part in forming the childhood of people who in due course will take their place in society. At the same time the institution can impart to society greater insight into children's needs and the conditions in which they grow up. The institution has knowledge and experience which society can benefit from in the process of creating a good childhood environment.

In local communities featuring a large influx of newcomers and families with differing linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds, the day care institution has a particularly important task in terms of enabling contact between and being a meeting place for different cultures.

The neighbourhood needs children. Children should be in evidence and be seen and heard outside the day care institution too. It is important that day care institutions maintain open communications between themselves and the local community. A major challenge facing day care institutions in the future will be to counteract the compartmentalisation of children's everyday life by contributing to network formation in the neighbourhood.

Day care institutions' cooperation with the community at large is based in the Day Care Institutions Act. The Act with associated regulations and interpretations establishes principles for collaboration with parents, parents' councils, the educational-psychological service, child welfare service and the municipality. This underscores the day care institution's obligation to participate in co-operation with other agencies and instances that are involved with children in the local community.
The day care institution's premises and outdoor areas, its activity vis-a-vis both children and parents can be seen as a resource shared by the entire local community. The parents' council is a natural partner in discussions of practical initiatives to help to ensure that the day care institution and the local community can be to the mutual pleasure and usefulness of both parties.

Being a vehicle for imparting the Sami language and culture, the Sami day care institution is of special importance for Sami children and parents and for the Sami community. Sami culture is a minority culture and Sami children have to relate to the impacts of social change and to many forms of influence from the society at large. Hence a main objective is to lay the basis for a childhood in which two languages and two cultures can constitute an enrichment for children. The local culture is a natural basis for the activity of Sami day care institutions. Hence it is important to establish close collaboration between home, local community and day care institution.

CHAPTER 2 AIMS AND VALUES FOR DAY CARE INSTITUTIONS

The framework plan is grounded in the Day Care Institutions Act and sets objectives for the activity of day care institutions. The objectives are intended to give direction to and room for local planning adapted to local conditions. They provide a starting point for formulation of aims for the particular day care institution as a whole, for groups of children and, in the event, for individual children. The wording of the objectives in the plan is intended to provide inspiration and encourage creativity and development. The owner of the institution can lay down guidelines for adaptation of the plan to local conditions. The individual institution's coordinating committee can specify the desired focus for its work in a given period in the institution's annual plan.

The day care institution's basic values

According to the Act, upbringing in day care institutions shall be in conformity with Christian values. This means that day care institutions are required to base their activity on the fundamental ethics of Christianity which are assumed to enjoy widespread support in the Norwegian populace. The ethical guidance given by day care institutions must take into consideration the children's age and maturity and their home environment. Day care institutions are also expected to mediate central Christian traditions as expressed in for example the major Christian festivals.
Both local cultural values and the national cultural heritage as reflected in the childhood environment must be represented in the activity of day care institutions. The Christian faith and the ethical values of Christianity are clearly grounded in our cultural tradition. It is important to see this entire cultural heritage as a whole if children are to gain an understanding of their own identity and a sense of belonging. Cultural values associated with religious traditions, festivals, artistic expression, social interaction, care and considerateness are part of the cultural heritage that children in day care institutions should come into contact with as a matter of course.

The day care institution must have regard to the individual child and the individual home’s orientation in terms of culture, religion or values. Its work must be organised in such a way as to promote a shared understanding of the institution’s policy and practice, and the integrity of the individual child and the individual parent must be respected. Children from different religions should be able to feel pride and joy over their own religious roots.

Basic values are a natural topic for parents' meetings, the parents' council and the coordinating committee. It is particularly important to create mutual understanding and confidence between day care institution and home in this area.

Upbringing in the home, day care institution and school must provide the greatest possible continuity. Continuity between day care provision and school is ensured by the fact that the same set of values is statutory for both.

**Day care institutions with a different objects provision**

Section 1 of the Day Care Institutions Act permits owners of private day care institutions and parishes of the Norwegian State Church to practise special provisions in regard to ideological aims («broad-based implementation of the objects provision of the Day Care Institutions Act»), while private owners can also reserve their position on the Act's Christian ideology. Any such reservation must be stated in the by-laws, in which case an alternative wording with regard to values may be employed. Where this is not done, the values and ethical norms of the parents and staff at the day care institution concerned will be those that are mediated.

**Shared values**

Day care institutions are required to provide an ethical upbringing in collaboration with the parents. If individual families have particular wishes with regard to the day care institution's content and method, the institution should
accommodate them to the greatest possible extent. However, the day care institution should also be a shared environment where a balance must be found between consideration for the individual family and consideration for the totality. The day care institution must base the values it imparts on shared values in the community: values on which the majority can agree. This means values such as respect for life, equality, tolerance and respect for persons from other cultures, tolerance and respect for people with disabilities, equality of the sexes, altruism and solidarity, justice, truth and honesty, peace and understanding, responsibility for conservation of nature and culture and responsibility for others.

PART II - AREAS FOR EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING

CHAPTER 3 THE FRAMEWORK PLAN TOTALITY AND INTERPRETATIONS

Basic concepts

Children

The framework plan is rooted in a comprehensive view of the child. The child's development is viewed as a dynamic and tightly meshed interplay between its physical and mental being. Interaction with other people - children and adults - is crucially important for the child's development. The child gravitates in its earliest years from close and intimate dependence on its closest family members towards encounters with new people and new environments.

Childhood

Childhood is a phase of life with its own intrinsic value. Infancy does not merely involve acquiring sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to participate in the adult community as rapidly as possible. It entails growth based on the child's own premises.

The adult community faces the challenge of safeguarding and developing an environment which benefits the child, and which is adapted to children's and adults' life as it is at present. At the same time children's «free space» must be protected to ensure that their lives are not totally controlled by adults.

Care and learning

Children learn through all experiences. The framework plan builds on a comprehensive concept of learning. This is in contrast to a view in which
education primarily involves structuring and imparting a specific body of knowledge in the course of a limited period of time.

Care of the child and interaction between the adult and the child in care situations is seen as an important area of development through sensory experiences.

Learning encompasses both formal and informal learning in the framework plan.

Formal learning features an organised framework where the object of the activity is self-evident. The daily assembly and thematic work are pertinent examples. Formal learning can also take place in day-to-day activities, for example learning to tie one’s shoelaces or good table manners.

Informal learning is more spontaneous, and is associated with more immediate and unplanned «here and now situations». Interaction between children and between -children and adults in care situations and in play is central in this context. However, immediate and unplanned events which provide important experience and learning frequently occur in structured learning situations too. Basic social skills can be acquired through informal learning processes.

Basic competence. In the framework plan the concept of basic competence denotes basic skills acquired by the child for life as an adult. Central to childhood is the development of the ability to communicate in the broad sense and of social competence, i.e. the ability to participate in play and interaction with others in a positive manner. At issue is the development of the identity and skills needed in day-to-day life together with other children and adults both in the day care institution and at home.

A model for the content of day care institutions

This chapter presents a model for the content of day care institutions. The model provides an overview of basic elements in planning and their interrelations.

The model shows the framework plan to be divided into three main parts:
- aims and background conditions
- content and working methods
- result and evaluation

The arrows connecting the three areas are in both directions, illustrating that all areas mutually influence each other and are interdependent.
The planning process can in principle start at any point in the model. However, the final plan must encompass all main areas and show how they interconnect.

Not all plans will be implemented. Many circumstances can prevent the realisation of a plan. However, everyone involved in a day care institution is obliged to do their utmost to ensure that the plan's intentions are translated into reality as far as possible.

Aims and background conditions
The plan states the desired aims for children's attendance at day care institutions. It also states what the day care institution as an institution should focus on both internally and in relation to the local community. The wording of the aims of the individual day care institution must be placed in the context of the general aims for day care provision. At the same time planning at the particular day care institution will be grounded in the «here and now» situation. The concrete plans made by the institution will invariably be the result of an interplay between consideration of the «here and now» situation and of the aims drawn up for the institution's activities.

Aims

The aims for the activities can be divided in two:

- general aims
- special aims or intermediate aims

The general aims are set out in section 1 of the Day Care Institutions Act. These paramount aims state the day care institution's overall function and form the basis for the long-term activity.

Special aims (intermediate aims) derive from the paramount aims, and are a concretisation and realisation of them. They are drawn up for a group of children and, in the event, for individual children within the group. Intermediate aims may refer for example to social interaction in the group or to progression in one of the five subject areas shown under «content and working methods» (detailed in chapter 5). Intermediate aims can also be drawn up for adults' interaction and professional development, or for the day care institution's collaboration with parents and others.

"Here and now» is influenced by three factors:

Social conditions: The local environment, physical and cultural factors in the institution's neighbourhood, parents' occupation and cultural background, housing situation, habits and values, are all important background conditions for planning.

Human conditions are associated with the children, parents and staff at the day care institution. The children's interests and needs are central here, and the adults must be open and receptive to them. The staff's background, training and interests are important factors which must be taken into account in the planning process.
Practical conditions encompass framework factors such as finances, outdoor and indoor areas, equipment, staffing etc.

The last important condition listed under "aims and background conditions" is termed tacit knowledge. By this is meant the sum total of staff members' knowledge and current and past experiences. The individual usually no longer has an awareness of these factors, but they nevertheless greatly affect attitudes and actions in everyday situations.

In the planning process all these factors will be significant for the choice of topics and methods.

**Content and working methods**

The figure illustrates the day care institution's content and methods. Social interaction, cultural and curricular material and working methods are shown in conjunction in the figure. The framework plan defines everything that gives children an opportunity for learning and experiences as the day care institution's content. Hence no distinction is drawn between activities, experiences and curricular material on the one hand, and methods used on the other.

Everything children encounter in the institution, the topics dealt with, the examples used by adults, use of language, work and social conventions and the environment as a whole, are aspects of the content of the day care institution. The quality of interaction between children and adults is therefore an important aspect of the content, at the same time as it is a central aspect of the working method in the institution.

In the framework plan the curricular and learning content for day care institutions is grouped into five subject-areas. In the day-to-day life of a day care institution the subject-areas will very often be present concurrently in different combinations and merge into each other. In the figure the subject-areas are placed in the social context of day-to-day life in order to show that the learning process is usually an integral part of the institution's activity.

The shades of colour in the figure show smooth transitions between play and social interaction, and at the same time connections and overlapping between the subject-areas. Much informal learning takes place in formal learning situations, not least in terms of social interaction and attitudes. Children's play and self-chosen everyday activities also contain components from one or more of the five subject-areas, for example nature and physical activity in outdoor play and language and communication in play and social interaction.
The framework plan divides the content of the day care institution into two main parts: time-limited content (organised theme programmes) and continuous content (social interaction, play and day-to-day activities/care).

**Result and evaluation**

The results of the day care institution's work must be evaluated against the aims drawn up for the work, both at central and local level.

The circle in the figure is divided into two main parts to show that the results are on two levels:

- the benefit gained by the child from attending the day care institution
- the development of the day care institution as an institution.

The aim of the day care institution is that the child should benefit by attending. This encompasses basic competence, knowledge, skills and attitudes which it is desirable that the child should acquire in the course of its stay at the institution.

In addition to developing the above, the day care institution must be an important part of what may be termed a happy childhood. The learning processes that take place in the day care institution are fundamental to the child's development towards adult life. The child should be enabled to experience mastery of and joy over life.

The lower half of the result circle encompasses the institution's development in terms of its organisational set-up and in relation to the local community. Collaboration internally and externally is seen as an important area for organic development. This is not a goal in its own right but an important means for promoting the benefit gained by the child from attending the day care institution.

Evaluative work in day care institutions must encompass aims, framework, process and results. Evaluation involves self-reflection, and is a precondition for purposive change.

**Connectedness and progression**

The framework plan emphasises the importance of connectedness (continuity) and progression (development and progress) in the day care institution's content.
The youngest children need numerous concrete experiences that foster physical and language skills and a capacity for social interaction. For the oldest children these have to be further developed and, in addition, a greater focus must be given to varied forms of expression, for example through aesthetic activities. The older the children, the more time will be spent on adult-supervised, structured work in connection with the five subject-areas.

**The good day care institution**

The good day care institution gives children opportunities to develop basic skills through social interaction in the form of play and learning and through work on different subject-areas. By this means the children develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in central areas of life and knowledge. A good day care institution gives the children freedom, with an opportunity to manage their everyday lives themselves within limits to which they can relate based on their age and stage of development. The good day care institution does not have a rigid programme but is flexible in its use of the plans and opens the way for good experiences.

The good day care institution meets parents with an open mind, insight into their needs and wishes and understanding of their life-situation. It gives its staff pleasure in their work and opportunities for professional and personal development. A good day care institution undergoes continuous development: organisationally, educationally, in relation to the aims drawn up and, not least, in relation to the surrounding neighbourhood.

**CHAPTER 4 SOCIAL INTERACTION, PLAY AND DAY TO-DAY ACTIVITIES**

**Children's development and learning**

This chapter deals with the continuous content: social interaction, play and day-to-day activities. The day-to-day activities encompass all aspects of care of children.

Children's development and learning are discussed in detail with the focus on informal learning situations. Interaction, care and tacit knowledge are placed in a deeper context. In the comprehensive concept of learning, education and care cannot be viewed isolated from and independent of each other.

Care is an important part of informal interaction in the day care institution. Care often means care work, particularly all work associated with care of children. Moreover, showing care is connected with the quality of a relationship. Care in
such a context is associated with a capacity for closeness, tenderness, warmth, kindness, affection, attentiveness, patience and empathy. In the framework plan the concept of care is seen in an overall perspective as a relationship or a relation just as much as an act. The institution's tacit knowledge usually surfaces in everyday acts and in care situations. Tacit knowledge is discussed in this chapter as an important part of the concept of knowledge in the context of the day care institution's policy and practice.

A new development in this context is the focus on basic competence acquired by the children as a result of informal learning processes. Principles that adults follow in their direct interaction with individual children and groups must be evaluated on the basis of the experiences gained by individual children as participants in this inter-action. It is important to evaluate the quality of the processes in various forms of play, interaction, everyday activity and care situations in the light of the aims drawn up, in the same way as in the case of more structured learning situations.

Chapter 4 deals with the areas social and personal development and learning, the relationship between adults and children, and between the child group and the individual child. A section is devoted to handicapped children and children from un-stable and difficult family conditions. These children's learning and development must above all be promoted in the context of day-to-day social interaction.

Interactions between adults and children and within the child group provide the child with a basic experience of itself in relation to other people. Moreover, it is in this informal everyday interchange between children and adults and between children themselves that the basic development of language and ability to communicate takes place.

A large portion of the time spent in the day care institution is devoted to play. Important learning processes in early childhood take place in play, and play promotes development in all areas: intellectual, linguistic, physical, social and emotional. The child strengthens and develops its identity and self-esteem in play. Play constitutes a separate main section of this chapter which examines the significance of play, forms of play and what is required to ensure good conditions for play in the day care institution.

In close conjunction with the description of the place of play in preschool education stands a separate section on humour and joy, an area rarely found in educational plans.
Basic competence is defined in the framework plan as the development of social interaction skills, and the development of language and communication skills in the broad sense. The most important preconditions for children's acquisition of social interaction skills and the ability to communicate are determined by the day care institution's approach to social interaction, play and day-to-day activities, in other words by the continuous content and the working methods employed.

Social interaction skills and the ability to communicate are inextricably connected. Self-expression requires training. The individual child must have someone to express himself to and to compare himself with: Other children are important for enabling the child to gain language skills, make himself understood and to understand. Social interaction skills mean being able to understand other people's differing perspectives and roles, to make decisions and act in a team, evaluate problems and solve tasks. Children learn to relate to others when they meet face to face in play and other inter-action. Friendship has to be learned - in all those small situations that are encountered again and again. Relating to others is possibly the most essential lesson learned in childhood.

The framework plan requires the day care institution to contribute to the individual child's development of such basic competence:

The child should:
- be able to make and maintain contact with others
- develop a positive self-awareness and a positive attitude to his/her own learning ability
- develop independence, creativity and flexibility
- be able to identify with other people's situations and see a situation from several angles
- be able to collaborate, have regard to and show care for others
- learn, and contribute him/herself, to formulate positive standards for working with others
- develop good spoken language skills
- be able to communicate effectively on various levels

CHAPTER 5 CULTURE AND CURRICULUM

Culture and knowledge in the day care institution

The framework plan defines culture as our shared behavioural patterns, knowledge, values, attitudes, experiences and coherent thought patterns and modes of expression.
Transmission of culture

The day care institution is a vehicle for transmission of ideas, modes of expression and values from both the local and the national cultural heritage. Transmission of values and upbringing belong together. Culture cannot be transmitted without up-bringing, because all culture carries built-in values and nouns. Nor can we engage in upbringging without transmitting culture since culture entails relating to actions and attitudes that are culture-dependent.

The day care institution has an important function as a transmitter of tradition and should strengthen children's identity and ties with their home locality by acquainting them with local history, landscape, architectural traditions, local song and music traditions, etc.

However, culture is not only a question of heritage and traditions but of creating, vivifying, renewing and giving topicality. Cultural heritage inhabits the region between tradition and renewal.

The adults in a day care institution are cultural exemplars for children at a highly impressionable stage of life. This is a very responsible task in an increasingly multi-cultural society where there may be wide cultural differences between children's homes and also between the individual home and the day care institution.

Culture is also passed on and developed by children learning from children. It is a culture consisting of children's traditional rule-bound games, song and dance games, nursery rhymes and jingles, riddles, double entendres, jokes and stories that may have been passed on for generations. Play is clearly also a cultural and social pheno-menon.

The day care institution as a mediator of culture

Social interaction, play and everyday activities are an essential part of the day care institution's content. However, children's learning and development in the preschool period are not merely of an indirect nature. In the day care institution children also acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes through structured fortes of work where adult leadership of planning and implementation is of a more direct nature. This may be termed the day care institution's time-limited or periodic content.

Children's play and learning develop best in day care institutions where there is an even balance between activities supervised by adults and those initiated by children. Children employ in their play impulses that stemming from new experiences they may have acquired during the adults' periodic theme
programmes. At the same time they process and develop the new knowledge and experiences together with other children in play whose content and direction they decide themselves.

Children experience knowledge as a coherent whole, and their attention focuses on connectedness. Adults, however, may need to subdivide the content into subject-areas or areas for learning and experience in order to facilitate the planning and development of an all-round content with a clear-cut progression.

The framework plan divides this part of the day care institution's content into five subject-areas:

- society, religion and ethics
- aesthetic subjects
- language, text and communication
- nature, environment and technology
- physical activity and health

Each of the five subject-areas covers a broad area for learning offering preschool children opportunities for experiences, to acquire knowledge, learn skills and develop attitudes.

The model of the day care institution's content in chapter 3 shows the importance of the subject- or learning-areas' spontaneous presence in day-to-day life and in children's play and interaction, i.e. in the continuous content. The framework plan highlights the importance of play, creativity, joy and humour as factors permeating work in all learning areas.

In order to ensure an all-round content in day care institutions, the framework plan stipulates that all children must be exposed to content from all five subject-areas each year. But the plan contains by design no concrete objectives as to attainment of knowledge and skills within each area. Nor does it decide which parts of the subject-areas are to be included in defined theme programmes. The framework plan states that it is the learning-area itself and the working methods employed that the children are to be acquainted with. What adaptations are to be made to their age and stage of development, interests and the local culture must be decided by the individual day care institution and be incorporated in the institution's annual plan.

The greater the age-spread in the institution, the wider the angle of approach must be and the greater the variation in working methods. Many children attend a day care institution from the age of 1-2 years up to school age. Hence one of the day care institution's biggest challenges in terms of planning will be to foster progression and development in children's encounter with the subject-areas. This
requires long-term planning over several years. The annual plan alone will not suffice. The long-term plan must accommodate the need for progression in children's learning and experiences throughout their stay in the day care institution, in relation to both the continuous and time-limited content.

**Work on curricular content and development of basic competence**

Work in all the five subject-areas and the day care institution's transmission of culture is intended to promote children's development in all areas. The plan defines objectives for development of basic competence, i.e. social interaction skills and ability to communicate. The possibilities for learning and experience inherent in the framework plan's five subject-areas are also central aids in the development of children's basic competence in social and communication terms. This applies both when the subject-area is present in planned and unplanned learning situations. Play and creative expression should be central working methods in thematic work.

Objectives are formulated for children's development and learning for each of the five subject-areas.

**The day care institution's curricular content**

**Society, religion and ethics**

This area addresses children's development of identity and cultural belonging through interaction with people and the local neighbourhood. It means a lot to children that the day care institution is open to the local community and the people there, and that the local community is actively used as a key to insight into the makings and workings of society, both today and in previous times.

Children wonder about the fundamental questions in life - a wonderment that the day care institution has to relate to. Transmission of norms and values occupies a central position in the transmission of culture. The framework plan addresses thoroughly upbringing and transmission of values as an important aspect of the content of the day care institution.

Transmission of culture in connection with the major Christian festivals is a natural part of the content. The relationship to Christian faith and teachings in day care institutions is discussed.

The day care institution also has an important function in honouring festivals and traditions from other cultures represented there.
Aesthetic subjects

Aesthetic subjects address music, movement, arts and crafts and drama. They have both a perceptual and an expressive aspect and are closely related to culture, for example through transfer of knowledge about materials, tools and technologies. For children these subject-areas are important tools for perception, experience, thinking and communication.

However, the aesthetic dimension of life should not be seen as pertaining only to aesthetic subjects and art. The aesthetic area can be said to encompass everything that can be perceived and that makes an immediate strong experiential impression on us. Experiences of nature are pertinent examples here. The aesthetic dimension, which is part of every person's life, is associated with identity and quality of life.

Creativity and inventiveness are closely associated with acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes in the broad sense. All creative expression in the aesthetic sphere is also communication. Arts and crafts, music, dance, movement and role-playing are vehicles whereby the child conveys itself to the world at large.

The aesthetic subjects are often used as a means for attaining psychological, educational or social objectives. Development of social skills or language learning through artistic activity are pertinent examples. But this is not the central aspect of this area. By using a variety of approaches to the aesthetic subjects, the children are given varied possibilities for developing creativity, self-expression and personal growth.

Under the area «language, text and communication» the interests of children with impaired language development and children with a mother tongue other than Norwegian are specifically considered.

Media are dealt with in a separate section both here and under the area "language, text and communication."

Language, text and communication

Language, text and communication deals with the acquisition of the spoken language as an utterly central area of the preschool child's development. Moreover, key aspects of culture transmission are associated with language, both written and spoken. The day care institution employs both story telling, handed-down text and children's own text-creation as they approach school age. Media are viewed as an important aspect of communication in modern society.
In the framework plan the area communication has been placed together with language and text, even though the communication aspect also occupies a central position in the aesthetic area.

Communication takes place in the interchange between receiving and interpreting messages on the one hand and transmitting messages on the other. The entire sensory apparatus - vision, hearing, smell and touch - are put to use in order to participate in feelings, experiences or knowledge. Non-verbal communication plays an important part in the day care institution. Children pay a lot of attention to how things are said, to physical posture and facial expressions. The extended-text concept also encompasses orally handed-down material, pictures and media products such as films and television.

Children needing special help in developing the spoken language, and children with a mother tongue other than Norwegian, receive special mention.

**Nature, environment and technology**

The day care institution has to contribute to familiarising children with plants and animals, landscape, seasons and weather. The ecological perspective is paramount. An objective is to develop children's love of nature, an understanding of the inter-play in nature and between man and nature.

Nature accommodates a multitude of experiences and activities in all seasons and in all weathers. Ample opportunities for play and learning are present in the outdoor areas and adjacent countryside. Learning and experiences associated with outdoor activities all year round must be included in the annual plans for all age groups. Outdoor life and experience of nature at preschool age are important both for children's overall development and with a view to promoting knowledge and attitudes to nature and the environment. Nature and recreation associated with outdoor play are part of the day care institution's everyday content and are therefore also dealt with in chapter 4.

Basic mathematics and technical aids in everyday life are areas which have traditionally been given little attention by day care institutions. They are brought to the fore in separate sections in the framework plan. The oldest preschool children are absorbed by simple phenomena within the subject-areas physics and chemistry. Moreover, familiarity with everyday technical aids is established at the preschool stage. The day care institution's content should support an incipient understanding of numerical concepts and numerical symbols.
Physical activity and health

In the course of the preschool period children acquire basic physical and motor skills in all the areas they have to master in order to lead an independent life. The importance of this can hardly be overstated.

This learning-area encompasses basic experience, skills, knowledge and attitudes that children acquire through sensory impressions and movement - by using their body. For preschool children, physical activity and movement are associated with the development of motor skills, bodily control, coordination of movements and mobility. Coordination of vision and hand movements underlies the development of central skills for one's entire life. As the body grows, children must train their control of arms and legs, balance and coordination of movements. In play they experience the body's possibilities, practise and try out their own skills. Rhythmics, dance and movement games are therefore an important aspect of the day care institution's content.

There is a close connection between outdoor play, children's bodily mastery and good health. Outdoor play is discussed specifically under this area. The relationship to handicapped children and to community and competition is considered.

The connection between culture and curriculum in the day care institution and the institution's everyday life

A leading principle for the model of the day care institution's content (chapter 3) is that children's learning is a continuous process, both in everyday life and in adults' more structured and directly planned activities. The younger the children, the larger portion of the subject-area and its formulated aims will be located in everyday life, and must be accommodated there. As the children grow older the five subject-areas will take up more room. But it will still be necessary to make good use of the possibilities for learning and experiences, also within the five subject-areas, that are inherent in everyday life and in children's play.

CHAPTER 6 SAMI LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Introduction

The Sami language and culture are a part of our shared heritage which Norway and the Nordic countries have a special responsibility for defending. Sami children grow up today as members of an ethnic and cultural minority in Norway. The objects provision (section 1) of the Sami Act (Act no. 56 of 12 June 1987 concerning the Sami Assembly and Other Sami Legal Matters) and
the provision of section 110 A of the Constitution, as well as several international conventions, state that the Sami culture must be safeguarded, developed and passed on to coming generations.

All children one or both of whose parents are Sami are defined in the framework plan as Sami children. Sami parents can choose whether to seek a place for their children in a Sami or a Norwegian day care institution. The majority of Sami are resident in the northernmost counties, especially Finnmark and Troms. But there are also Sami population settlements in parts of Nordland, North and South Trøndelag and Hedmark counties. Many Sami live in Oslo. There are wide linguistic variations and many different dialects within the Sami population in Norway. The Sami people belong to various trades and branches of industry and only 10 per cent of the Sami population are professionally involved in reindeer husbandry.

Sami culture

Children's identification with Norwegian or Sami culture is related to the relationship of parents and family to their cultural background. Many Sami children grow up with a feeling of security within their own culture, either as complete bilinguals with both Sami and Norwegian, or with Sami as their mother tongue and as the starting point for learning Norwegian language and culture. It is equally common for children to have to choose one identity and one social and cultural affiliation. When children grow up in homes where the parents themselves have experienced uncertainty in relation to their Sami background and where they to a greater or lesser extent have chosen to relinquish their language, culture and ethnic affiliation, it must be assumed that the children are socialised to take over these attitudes from their parents. There may be some larger or smaller degree of identification with Norwegian culture. Hence a main aim is to lay the basis for an upbringing where the two languages and two cultures are viewed as being of equal value.

In Sami day care institutions the children encounter material and working methods that enable immersion in Sami language and culture. The individual day care institution should impart knowledge of the languages and forms of culture that are represented in the local community. Sami history and Sami cultural expressions such as duodji (Sami handicrafts) and yoiking, folktales etc., should form part of the day care institution's content, adapted to the children's age and level of development.

Sami day care institutions
The Sami day care institution is of especial importance for Sami children and parents and for the Sami community as a vehicle for imparting Sami language and culture. The day care institution has a responsibility for laying the basis for Sami children to strengthen and develop their Sami identity and for contributing to make them secure as Sami. The Sami culture is a minority culture where the effects of social upheavals and many forms of influence from the society at large have to be faced.

The Ministry defines a Sami day care institution as follows:

"A Sami day care institution is one where the children in the institution have a Sami background - i.e. are Sami. The institution's aim is to strengthen the children's identity as Sami by promoting the use of the Sami language and by imparting Sami culture. The day care institution is headed by Sami teaching staff."

Aims for the work

The objectives should provide a guideline for organising day care facilities for Sami children, but at the same time make room for local planning adapted to local conditions. It is emphasised that the objectives in this chapter should not only be guidelines for the content of Sami day care institutions, but also guidelines for other day care institutions where Sami children are enrolled.

General aims:
- to provide care
- to have space for play, learning and development

Special aims:
To strengthen and develop the children's Sami identity by:
- strengthening use of the Sami language
- imparting Sami culture, way of life and values

The special aims are directed at day care institutions whose general content is accompanied by a content that caters for Sami children's particular cultural needs. Growing up and participating in several languages and cultures is an enriching experience. A secure footing in their own language and culture gives Sami children the best basis both for learning the Norwegian language and possibly other languages.

Annual plan

Chapter 7 deals with planning at various levels, above all annual planning at the individual day care institution. The premises for the planning process described here apply to all day care institutions, irrespective of the children's cultural
The annual plan in the Sami day care institution must in addition reflect specifically Sami cultural features. Moreover, it is stipulated that, in the same way as in other day care institutions, children at Sami day care institutions should experience the five subject-areas in chapter 5 in the course of one year.

Analyses of the situation of children growing up in a minority culture and the principles for stimulating their language development may also provide a guideline for the day care institutions' work with children from other linguistic and cultural minorities.

PART III USING THE PLAN

CHAPTER 7 PLANNING; IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Planning the day care institution

The intentions of the framework plan will become apparent in the practical activity of the day care institution that results from the institution's planning of its work, utilisation of the framework conditions allotted to it and through collaboration with parents, the local community, the owners and the municipality. The model explained in chapter 3 gives an overview and understanding of planning in day care institutions.

There is always room for improvement. The educational content will undergo continuous development to this end. A basis must nonetheless be taken in experience gained, and the relations between the intentions, plans and results of the work must be thoroughly evaluated.

Successful planning requires that the adults in a day care institution have a clear understanding of aims and content-areas both in the framework plan and in the owner's guidelines, if any, for local adjustment. It also requires staff to be able to envision how the various activities and methods at the individual day care institution and group can contribute to the objectives being attained and the content-areas being covered. Carefully weighed planning must be based on knowledge of planning, observation and experience. Good planning is a precondition for exploiting the human and material resources at the disposal of the individual day care institution.

Both the head teacher and the preschool teachers at day care institutions have, by virtue of their training and competence, special responsibility for developing the institution's activity in accordance with aims and content set out in the
framework plan. Hence they also have paramount responsibility for initiating and implementing the planning process. However, all adults must be drawn into planning, implementation and evaluative work. The institution's quality depends not only on the framework conditions given, but also on the staff's success in utilising the possibilities available and on their will to attain the objectives that society has drawn up for day care institutions.

**Various forms of planning**

All day care institutions are required to draw up annual plans. It is up to the individual day care institution to decide to what extent additional written planning documents should be drawn up for half-year or shorter periods. The plans should describe desired aims and the content of the activity for the period in question.

Activity planning in a long-term perspective, for example for a 3-5 year period, is also needed to ensure progression in the content of the institution in keeping with the children's growth and development. Organisational development and staff plans must also be viewed in a longer-term perspective than that permitted by a pure annual plan. The activity plan should also be seen in the context of municipal planning of the day care institution sector and of the entire childhood environment in the locality.

**Annual plan in the individual day care institution**

The coordinating committee has to draw up the annual plan on the basis of the framework plan and the owner's guidelines, if any, for adaptation to local conditions. This confers on parents substantive influence on the content of the institution.

The annual plan has two important functions:

- To be a basic document for the individual preschool teacher and other associates and for the entire staff as a team. It forms the basis for collaboration with the parents. The annual plan is intended to facilitate the management of the institution and the evaluation of its activity.
- To provide concrete and professional information about the day care institution's educational work to owners of the institution, politicians, municipal employees, outside collaborative agencies and other interested parties.
The annual plan is in this way an important link between day care institution and society. The annual plan must draw up objectives for the children's attendance, how the objectives are to be attained and how the work is to be followed up and evaluated.

The parents can be involved in planning the content and play an active role in various ways. Questions related to basic views on education, content and priorities should also be discussed by the parents' council, and by the coordinating committee as part of the work on the annual plan. The parents can also help to give the content a local grounding. It is important to facilitate a discussion with the parents about what they wish to participate in and in what way, not merely assign them tasks.

The children should also be involved in parts of the planning process. They will often produce new, spontaneous suggestions for the adults' already established plan. Children live for the moment and are better able than adults to see the possibilities there.

**Observation - a prerequisite for the activity**

Children of preschool age communicate largely through action and body language and less than adults through direct oral expression. Adults in the day care institution must therefore develop an ability to obtain information about the children's well-being and development by alertly observing and noting the children's patterns of reaction both individually and in groups.

It is especially important to direct attention to how the children relate to each other. Observation can help adults to improve their insight into children's play and social interaction and into the individual child's ability to interact with others. By analysing the social interplay among the children they can uncover circumstances such as conflict and isolation or communal play and friendship. Moreover, observation of the children is an important basis for collaboration on a professional basis with various auxiliary agencies.

**Implementation**

Implementation of the framework plan requires well thought out use of the resources at the institution's disposal.

In this chapter the framework plan looks more closely at the day care institution's framework conditions and how they can be utilised to the best possible advantage. Areas taken up are daily rhythm and use of time, the relationship between freedom and structure, the physical environment, and...
composition of the children on roll. Good implementation of the plan requires good collaboration between staff and parents.

**Staff collaboration**

The day care institution's staff constitute a team. In planning and implementation account must be taken of the various resources represented by the staff, and the individual adult's personal experience and special interests must be turned to account. Work should be apportioned taking account of competence, abilities and interests.

Through her/his position and training the head teacher is responsible for ensuring satisfactory planning, observation, collaboration and evaluation of the work. The head teacher is also the owner's representative in relation to the other staff in the day care institution. The concrete organisation and arrangement of the work must be done jointly by all adults in the institution.

The head teacher is also responsible for guidance of all staff. The preschool teachers are responsible for guidance of their immediate associates, in the first instance in cases where the latter lack training for the work they are doing.

**Parental collaboration**

The day care institution's head teacher has paramount responsibility for ensuring that collaboration with the parents functions as required by law and regulations. The parents must exercise influence on the annual planning and evaluative work carried out in the institution and on the institution's activities through the year. Contact with immigrant parents may require information to be given in their own language by bilingual staff or via an interpreter.

The day care institution's premises, outdoor area and its activity vis-a-vis both the children and the parents should be viewed as a shared resource for the entire local community. The coordinating committee is a natural forum for discussing practical initiatives for ensuring that the day care institution and the local community can be of mutual pleasure and usefulness. In local communities with a large immigrant population and containing families whose linguistic and cultural background is not Norwegian, the institution has a particularly important function as a venue for contact and a vehicle for cultural interaction.

**Evaluation**

Day care institution staff observe and evaluate their work daily. They observe and participate in children's activities and evaluate their own actions and the
institution's programme and activity on this basis. While this approach is important in the daily round, it usually provides little in the way of systematic and documentable information about the inner work of the institution.

Methodical evaluation entails systematic information-gathering by the staff with a view to contemplation of events. Evaluation entails describing, analysing and interpreting an initiative and its effects. The daily evaluation must be accompanied by a broad-based and coherent evaluation based to a significant degree on observation and documentation. The evaluation process must seen in relation to the annual plan's aims for the enrolled children as a whole, and, in the event, for individual children.

A concrete evaluation programme must form part of the annual plan: What is to be evaluated, criteria for evaluation, how information is to be compiled, who shall evaluate and when, and how the basis for evaluation is to be presented and discussed.

The evaluation should be coherent, comprehensive and encompass both the individual child's development and the functioning of the children as a group. The individual adult, the staff as a team, the relationship between the children, parental collaboration, the day care institution as an organisation and the external activity should be followed up and subjected to methodical evaluation.

Self-evaluation constitutes a major challenge to the individual staff group. Organisation development, staff development, parental collaboration and other aspects of the day care institution's organic development are, however, not objectives in their own right, but means for attaining the paramount goal: The children's well-being and development.

Chapters 4 and 5 of the framework plan set out aims in regard to developing basic competence and aims in terms of what children's attainment within the plan's various content-areas. Staff in the institution should through evaluation follow up and ascertain whether the individual child acquires the above basic knowledge, attitudes and skills based on his/her own premises. At the same time it must be realised that personal and social development are at issue here, and that the results of educational work cannot or should not be measured in a cursory manner.

Evaluation entails self-reflection and is a precondition for change and development of the day care institution's content. The ongoing evaluation must throughout be followed up by new measures and adjustments to the plans. The evaluation after the end of the day-care-institution year will be used when working on the next annual plan.
Who shall evaluate, and how?

All day care institution staff participate in the planning process, as well as in the evaluative work. The institution's head teacher has paramount responsibility for developing and implementing the evaluative work.

The children, staff and parents all have personal experience of the life of the institution that is important to put to active use. The users' experience and evaluations are necessary and interesting in their own right as a basis for professional evaluation. Children should be enabled to participate in evaluating their own play and learning environment and should see that their opinions are taken seriously.

The day care institution should have regular evaluation meetings at the end of the working year. These meetings should be attended by the head teacher and remaining staff and possibly by owner-representatives and parents. Written minutes should always be kept of the evaluation meetings. Since it is the coordinating committee that draws up the annual plan, this committee must always also be enabled to take part in evaluating its implementation with a view to next year's planning.

Information compiled in connection with evaluation can contribute to giving each individual group and the day care institution a more visible history at the same time as it can show the individual child's development. The information and documentation in itself is of less importance than the reflection and the discussions among the staff and with the parents to which the documentation can give rise.

CHAPTER 8 RESPONSIBILITY, FORMS OF OPERATION AND COLLABORATION

Responsibility for running the day care institution

Responsibility for the activity of day care institutions rests with the state, municipality, owner and the individual day care institution itself.

The Day Care Institutions Act outlines ideological aims in provisions governing the purpose and content of day care institutions, and sets out a framework for the approval, operation and supervision of day care institutions. The Ministry lays down regulations to the Day Care Institutions Act and provides interpretations of the provisions of the act and regulations. Moreover, the Ministry administers the arrangements for financial support to day care institutions and publishes
guidance material on various aspects of the development and operation of day care institutions.

The Storting determines in the government budget the annual size of central government financial provision for operation of day care institutions, including various special grants and funds for research, experimental and development work.

The county governor is delegated certain tasks by the Ministry and is the appeals instance in relation to decisions made by the municipality in its capacity as day care institution authority. Moreover, the county governor is responsible for supervising activities coming under the Day Care Institutions Act and for guidance of municipalities and owners.

The Sami Assembly was instituted pursuant to the Act concerning the Sami Assembly and other Sami legal matters (Sami Act) of 1987. The business of the Assembly is any matter which in the view of the Assembly particularly affects the Sami people. The Sami Education Council is a specialist advisory body to the government in matters of Sami schools and education.

In its capacity as the competent day care institution authority the municipality is responsible for approval and supervision of day care institutions in the municipality, both private and municipal. All day care institutions must be approved before going into operation. This means for example that the municipality must oversee that the activity is carried on within the framework of the approval decision, that the institution's by-laws do not conflict with the law and that its content is in conformity with the law and the framework plan. Supervision also entails a pro-active responsibility for guidance.

The municipality and others who own and operate day care institutions are responsible for seeing that such institutions maintain the quality required to ensure that their operation is in conformity with stipulated aims and plans for their activity.

The owner of the day care institution is the staff's employer and is responsible for training and guidance of the staff and development of the institution's policy and practice. According to the main agreement for the municipal sector, plans must be drawn up for staff training and skills development. According to the Day Care Institutions Act it is the owner who lays down by-laws for the institution.

According to the Day Care Institutions Act, the owner can adapt the framework plan to local conditions. The extent to which and the manner whereby the
individual day care institution can fulfil the framework plan's requirements will
depend on the institution's form of operation, opening hours, the children's age,
the number of enrolled children and the composition and availability of qualified
staff. Similarly, the institution's links with the local community will be an
aspect of the adaptation referred to. Adaptation to local conditions may be stated
for example in the municipality's framework plans for its day care institutions or
in the institution's by-laws.

Day care institutions operate somewhat varying regulatory frameworks. Certain
conditions are set out in the Day Care Institutions Act and associated regulations
and therefore apply to all day care institutions, while other conditions are up to
the owner to lay down.

Various modes of operation

The varied pattern of development allowing for adaptation to local needs and condi-
tions is a characteristic feature of day care institutions in Norway. The
framework plan's premise is that it should be applicable to day care institutions
with a variety of forms of ownership, organisation and operation and with
flexible opening and operating hours.

The various forms of operation may be short-time, half-day and day-long day
care institutions, family day care institutions, day care institutions based on
active parental participation and day care institutions which are open in late
evening or at night.

Framework conditions linked to the environment

The Day Care Institutions Act states that day care institutions must have
premises and outdoor areas suited to their purpose based on children's age and
the time they spend there and that the children should have opportunities for a
variety of activities in a safe environment. The owner must state the area
stipulated for play and other activities per child in the by-laws.

For children with impaired mobility or perceptual difficulties, accessibility is a
pre-condition for being able to attend a day care institution and a precondition
for active participation. Day care institution buildings and outdoor areas must be
adapted in accordance with the building regulations' provisions concerning
accessibility and in such a way that such children are enabled to make use of the
preferential right to a day care institution place to which the Day Care
Institutions Act entitles them.
Further it is important that the existing rules on indoor climate are observed. This is particularly important for safeguarding children against asthma and allergy ailments and for children with such ailments, but is of course of great significance for everyone present in the day care institution.

Requirements as to safe games and playground equipment are set out in the Product Control Act and associated regulations. Experience shows the necessity of preventive measures to safeguard against accidents at day care institutions. The institution's owner is responsible for ensuring the establishment of internal control. Many institutions have developed fixed routines for internal control and for allocating responsibility for ensuring a safe play environment. However, here too the need for safety has to be balanced against children's need for challenges and excitement at play. The institution's coordinating committee may be an appropriate forum for such discussions.

The Day Care Institutions Act does not lay down exact rules for overall staffing at day care institutions, but states that staffing ratios must be sufficient for staff to be able to carry on satisfactory educational activity. The Ministry has laid down regulations concerning teaching staff in day care institutions. The owner of the institution is responsible for ensuring that the institution's total staff have the knowledge and competence required to carry on satisfactory educational activity.

Staffing must be adapted to the institution's mode of operation, its role and functions and expectations as to the scope and quality of the institution's activity. Staffing must be adapted to children's age and the time they spend there. Small children are more dependent than older children on close and intimate contact with adults and on adults having time to give them individual attention.

A smoothly functioning substitution arrangement is a necessary means of accommodating children's need for stable contact with adults and a transparent everyday life.

The owner is responsible for admission of children to the particular day care institution and for the criteria for admission. Children with disabilities are entitled to priority admission. If the municipality provides financial support for the operation of a day care institution, the municipality may in return demand the right to stipulate admission criteria or to conduct the admission procedure.

Day care institutions vary both in terms of mode of operation and of children's daily hours of attendance. Each individual child must be ensured stability in terms of the children it meets and plays with in the institution. Small children need to feel that their surroundings are reasonably transparent and predictable.
Collaboration

Parental collaboration and inter-staff collaboration is of particular significance for quality in day care institutions. The framework plan in its entirety also addresses collaboration between the day care institution and other important authorities in the local environment: collaboration at municipal level with the educational-psychological service and in the event the social security office and the children's toy and game lending centres as regards children with disabilities and children with special needs and their families, collaboration with the child welfare service, mother-and-child clinics and with schools.

Another important part of day care institution development is staff collaboration with other authorities in the local community that share responsibility for the conditions in which children grow up and live: local cultural bodies, voluntary organisations and church parishes.

According to the Day Care Institutions Act, preschool teachers and day care institutions are obliged to provide practice-teaching facilities to students undergoing pre-school teacher training. Hence colleges that offer preschool teacher training are an important partner, also when it comes to support for programmes for in-house development initiatives and refresher training.

The Sami Educational Council and the Sami College are important partners both for municipalities that have Sami day care institutions and for such day care institutions themselves.

The municipality and private day care institution owners

It is important that the municipality prepares sound routines for collaboration with private day care institutions. The municipality and other day care institution owners should endeavour to supplement one other in relation to location, form of operation and opening hours in order to provide a broad-based and flexible facility for families with small children in the municipality. Collaboration will also be dependent on whether or not the municipality gives financial support to the operation of private day care institutions. A municipality that provides financial support has a basis for imposing conditions with regard to operation.

The owner and the individual day care institution

If the aims and intentions for the day care institution are to be attained, staff at the institution must be familiar with them at all times. It is also important to be kept informed about decisions which directly or indirectly affect the work of the
individual day care institution. The owner should therefore ensure good and open inward lines of communication to the day care institution and its staff.

Information also passes out from the institution - first and foremost to parents. Clear and familiar outward channels for this information are necessary both for parents and staff.

CHAPTER 9 DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAY CARE INSTITUTION

Organisation development

Organisation development of day care institutions may be viewed as a systematic and methodical focus on self-analysis, analysis of plans and renewal. The aim is that the institution's activity should evolve in the direction indicated by the framework plan and the owner's guidelines for adapting the plan to local conditions. Organisation development grows forth in the interplay between the aims and intentions of the activity and the needs and ambitions of the staff in terms of renewal.

Whereas responsibility for initiating and furthering organisation development rests chiefly with the head teacher as the person responsible for the institution's educational policy and practice, the owner and the municipality in its capacity as supervisory authority are co-responsible for ensuring the progression of the individual day care institution.

In-house development initiatives

Educational development entails working systematically on aims, content, working methods and organisation in the day care institution in order to develop the activity. Development work can involve brief renewal processes in a day care institution as well as larger projects extending over longer periods and possibly involving several day care institutions.

Municipalities should set aside funds for local development work which can be applied for by day care institutions wishing to undertake changes in a planned and systematic manner. Development initiatives should relate to areas highlighted in the framework plan and should contribute to implementing the framework plan in the institution's day-to-day work. Local development work provides day care institutions with opportunities for developing their activity in a more systematic and purposeful manner. Moreover, focusing on development work entails a focus on quality in the institution.
All aspects of the day care institution's work are important, including interaction among children and between children and adults, collaboration with parents and utilisation of special possibilities offered by the immediate neighbourhood, and application of the institution's framework conditions and resources. Hence it is necessary to delimit and prioritise and to set concrete and realistic objectives for development work.

Development initiatives must form part of the institution's everyday work and be made visible through the annual plan. If they are incorporated into a long-term plan in which a small number of delimited tasks are earmarked for each year, major portions of the institution's activity can be renewed in due course.

Parents should from the outset be enabled to follow development work by ensuring that it is taken up by the institution's coordinating committee, by the parents' council and at parents' meetings. The head teacher is responsible for this being done.

**Competence building - refresher training - guidance**

The day care institution's most important resource is the people working there. The importance of staff competence, their enthusiasm for their work, commitment, ability and will to develop their work in the everyday context can scarcely be over-stated. No material resources can replace this. However, lack of sufficient material resources can effectively prevent staff from applying effort and abilities where they should be applied: to creating a sound environment and a happy childhood for the children.

The Day Care Institutions Act requires head teachers and teaching staff to be trained preschool teachers, with possibilities for dispensation if trained personnel are unobtainable. Through her/his training, the preschool teacher will have gained competence in meeting, guiding and bringing up children. She/he will also have developed competence in relation to collaborating with adults.

In addition to preschool teachers, day care institutions have assistants. A number of them are trained children's nurses, and in time more and more will be trained as children's and youth workers at upper-secondary school or gain a qualification pursuant to the Apprenticeship Training Act. This means that in the long term assistants at day care institutions will have better professional qualifications than at present and that day care institutions overall will have better qualified staff.

Staff at Sami day care institutions are required to know the Sami language and culture. In institutions attended by children whose mother tongue is not
Norwegian, bilingual assistants are often appointed. These assistants support the children in their integration into the day care institution and otherwise assist the institution in its contact with the parents. It is important that bilingual assistants are staff members on a par with the institution's other employees when it comes to planning and implementing operation. At institutions with children needing special assistance it may be necessary to strengthen the institution with special educational expertise or other extra help.

It is important that all employees are aware of the opportunities that exist for further personal development at work. Competence building primarily involves creating an environment at the individual day care institution that promotes learning and development in the daily round. Training of a more organised nature is an important adjunct to this. Training may take place internally at the workplace or externally at courses, seminars and the like. Competence building should be viewed as a continual process encompassing both staff and organisational set-up.

Development work, refresher training and guidance should be planned for a period of several years. The individual day care institution owner should therefore draw up long-term training plans for his/her employees. The plans should be linked up to the institutions' annual plans in order to ensure continuity between the institution's educational work and work on competence enhancement for staff.

Consideration should be given to coordinating training plans at municipal level and to strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration in the municipality. The day care institution has lessons to learn from, and lessons to teach, other institutions. The day care institution sector's training measures should be considered in conjunction with training measures for other agencies working with children's conditions in the municipality. In order to utilise the resources as well as possible, the municipality and the private day care institution owners should develop collaboration on joint training measures.

Intermunicipal collaboration should also be discussed with a view to developing refresher training models adapted to local conditions and to establishing positions for instructors in the day care institution field. At regional level the county governor can give advice and in various ways assist with refresher training. Colleges offering preschool teacher training also represent important regional groups of specialists which the municipalities and day care institutions can benefit from in their own competence building. The municipalities should signal their needs for refresher training to the colleges.
Competence building entails challenges. Skill, experience, time and not least personal responsibility and interest in developing an activity are required. However, the municipalities and the private day care institutions are also responsible for laying a basis for training and development in the day care institution environment, not least by making time and financial resources available for training measures.