



Efforts and Models of Education for Parents: the Danish Approach

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1 Introduction

The report examines the relationship between day care institutions, schools and so called “parents unfamiliar to education” as well as the relationship between the institutions.

With in Danish public and professional discourse concepts like parents unfamiliar to education are usually referring to environments, parents or families with either no or just very restricted experience of education except for the basic school (folkeskole). The “grand old man” of Danish educational research, Prof. Em. Erik Jørgen Hansen, defines the concept as follows: Parents who are distant from or not familiar with education, are parents without tradition of education and by that fact they are not able to contribute constructively in order to back up their own children during their education. Many teachers and pedagogues are not used to that term; they rather prefer concepts like “socially exposed” or “socially disadvantaged” parents or social classes or strata.

The report does not only focus on parents who are not capable to support the school achievements of their children, since a low level of education is usually connected with social disadvantage. Such parents are often not capable of understanding and meeting the demands from side of the school when sending their children to school. They lack the competencies or the necessary competence of action. For the moment being much attention is done from side of the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs (recently renamed Ministry of Welfare) in order to create equal possibilities for all children. Many kinds of expertise (directions, counsels, researchers, etc.) have been more than eager to promote recommendations aiming at achieving the ambitious goal: 2015 95% of all young people should complement a full education (classes 10.-12.). Research results are pointing out the importance of increased participation of parents. In other word the agenda is set for ‘parents’ education’.

It seems necessary to underline that Danish welfare policy has been changing rather radical. The classic model was an understanding of welfare as social assurance and/or as social distribution – based on social solidarity. The modern model looks like welfare as social service and/or social investment. This means that citizens are changing role – from user and/or citizen to consumer and/or investor. The Danish state is in correspondence with decisions taken by the government investing in a national future shaped by global competition. The new models of welfare – “service” and “investment” – imply severe changes in hitherto known concepts of family life, relationship between parents and children etc. As an example the investment model points at a new implementation of the relationship between social rights and the rights of freedom. The service model has demonstrated that weakness that the access to qualified services in the field of health or education is becoming more and more dependent of the private purchasing power. The weakness of the investment model is that it represents a sort of “The Winner takes it all” – since a political majority is enabled to

make agendas in societal fields former protected by the tripartite power and the rights of freedom of the citizens. The outcome of the Danish development seems to be an establishment of a political governed public service industry which on one side are capable of competing on market conditions and on the other are able being governed by contracts. This represents a new form of close linking of politics, economy and professional work. Attempts of controlling education, pedagogy and thereby the population are not a recent invention. In European history we could easily point at several such experiments. The real news is the linking between political priorities and exercise of public activities by economic incentives. By defining visible goals for the public servants, by introducing measurement of achievements and effects, and by implementing a new wage policy depending on achievements and/or effects a new system of accountability is manufactured.

The consequences are already perceptible. The government decides to do some special interventions concerning parents, children or youngsters, the public servants on municipality level are instructed to carry out their services by following a manual, and the parents are no longer protected by privacy. Protection of privacy and minority is no longer a valuable argumentation to prevent further interventions in people's life (health, food, school, etc.). The citizens are becoming objects of investment, also implying that people are investing in their own health, education, and family. This means that investments in changes of life style and development of competences go hand in hand. The below mentioned programmes are conditioned by this shift.

PART I

2 Programmes for parents

The Directorate of Social Services, an important branch of the Ministry of Welfare, is administrating a number of tasks concerning development of methods and implementation with in the field of children and adolescents. Those tasks are offering municipalities and suppliers of social services grants for developing new interventions. The Directorate has focussed on parental programmes, manifesting that the responsibility in fields of care and well-being of the growing generation belongs to their parents. The programmes are based on the assumption that parents are central actors in solving problems of the children. The latter are seen as an outcome of, how a family functions or not functions. Therefore, the programmes are oriented at strengthening parental competence or competencies and providing adults with self-confidence to take responsibility of the welfare of the family. One goal is the children get the appropriate support to development and good school achievements. It is viewed as decisive that parents feel responsible for their children in school and education as well as keeping children out of criminality.

In order to strengthen the parental responsibility the Danish government has launched an initiative divided in two parts:

1. An effort to develop methods and dissemination of experiences with such programmes, aiming at strengthening the competencies of the parents and their ability to raise and support their children. Parents should be dressed to give their children the possible conditions for well-being and development;
2. A bill aiming at ordering social authorities to give parents certain instructions. If parents are not completing the instructions, then the authorities might cut their welfare benefits. Added to this is a suggestion to change social benefits

for children aged 15-17, implying that only youngsters during educational activity receives the benefits.

2.1 “Ready for Children”

The programme consists of a course for parents aiming at the expectant parents to develop positive expectations to the child and their role as parents. The course is made up by four meetings – three of them before and one after birth. Experience has shown advantages of beginning the course in the 18th to 20th week of pregnancy, and the course is offered rather early in the pregnancy either by a doctor, a midwife, a health visitor or other professionals attached to the coming child. Several expectant parents from the local environment are put together during the course, offering the participants a possible mutual reflection and if needed and possible arrange a network.

The intention of the course is described in four points:

1. parents should be inspired to become and to stay family;
2. parents should have knowledge about babies and strengthen their feelings in relation to the child;
3. parents should work with own attitudes and beliefs in raising children and maintain family;
4. parents should get to know other parents in their neighbourhood and extend their network.

Method

The course is offered as adult learning based on the precondition that parents adhere to and are made responsible as central persons in the child’s life. The course is to contribute to strengthening relations between child and parents, including developing definite tools to solve difficult situations and supply parents with knowledge about the child’s development. Furthermore, parents have to learn that seeking help is legal when having severe difficulties with children.

Principles

- focus on parents’ resources,
- both parents are informed that the course is open to both parts – having in mind that the focus of men and women differs,
- feelings – even undesirable – are legitimized,
- the course presents ideas on tools and actions,
- parents have to demonstrate that they are distinct adults to the child
- the perspectives of children and of parents are a part of the course

- parents are understood as competent – parents do their best, regardless of resources and background,
- parents are seen as two independent persons, focusing at their new common future as a couple,
- groups are put together in a way that opens for mutual reflection and eventually networking.

2.2 Parent Management Training

PMT is based on the assumption that parents due to their close knowledge of and emotional engagement in their child are fit to initiate a positive development. The approach is oriented at the resources of the family, and the training focuses on strengthening the parents making them able to solve difficult situations in family life.

PMT is constituted of a sequence enabling parents and PMT-therapist to meet once a week to train parents' abilities to create a constructive being together with their child – i.e. how to use encouragement, how to speak highly about their child, how to reward a child for his or her actions, etc., as well as how to confront bad behaviour by using minor consequences, which the child can foresee and understand. The intention is to develop a positive spiral based on the parents' abilities to gain results. If the parents succeed, they are contributing to diminish behaviour difficulties of their child and gradually develop its self-confidence.

The program is built upon principles of family therapy, using social learning and interaction theory to reveal how the family develops and maintain aggressions. Positive results are achieved by

- building positive relations between child and parents
- establishing cooperation between child and parents
- instructing parents based upon the resources of the family
- learning parents to use a problem solving approach.

The course lasts 25 weeks – at different stages parents have to do some homework. In addition to the sessions parents are staying in contact with the therapist by telephone.

The officer in charge at the Welfare administration and the parents are able to choose the PMT as solution of existing problems, or the method could be used as prevention in relation to groups at risk – f. e. when a child is assessed to become a child with behaviour difficulties. Treatment is often used in order to prevent, although the family is not yet a “case” of social work. The efforts are adjusted to the prevailing situation – e.g. in a kindergarten class with smaller problems, or a family with a child who is a burden on the well-being and coexistence of the whole family.

An optimal way of using the method seems to be a gathered solution, consisting of efforts in day care institutions, schools etc. By that kind of connected contribution all important persons in the daily life of a certain child are able to cooperation on a common solution.

Dissemination and documentation

The Ministry of Welfare has been testing PMT from 2004 to 2007. The Directorate of Social Affairs has been responsible for the implementation of the PMT-project. For the moment being PMT-treatment is offered in municipalities like Herning, Holstebro, Ikast, Ålborg, Kolding, Helsingør, Roskilde, Fåborg, Ryslinge, and Nykøbing Falster.

The Directorate has initiated a research study on the outcomes of the method in Danish municipalities. The method is documented in the US – while severe criticism has been developed against the documentation, because the documentation was made by PMT itself, not by outsiders or independent researchers. In general the method is evaluated as useful – e.g. diminishing aggressive behaviour. The efficiency depends on many considerations: the age of the child, the state of the problems, the extent to which parents are influenced by critical circumstances of the neighbourhood, and the quality of the treatment. The method has been used in families with children up to 12 years, while the best outcomes seem to be gained in family with children below 8 years.

“The Incredible Years”

This program has a preventive as well as a treatment perspective and is made up by three programmes aiming at securing children a positive life course. Originally Carolyn Webster-Stratton (Seattle, USA) developed the program, divided up in a parental guidance, a children’s program (incl. The Dinosaur School), and a program for teachers. The common denominator for the three parts is the use of video recording and teaching of participants by using a manual which are later disseminated during the sessions and instructions.

The parental guidance is aimed at parents with children aged 2-10 years. The intention is to promote parents’ competencies in order to develop a focus of praise and positive problem solving in the interaction with their children. The guidance or supervision is made up of group lectures (10-14 parents). Instructions are made twice a week and are run by a group leader who transmits the topics by video, role play, etc. Among the topics you will find: play, praise, reward, how to fix borders, and how to handle the child’s emotions. Every session has an agenda, evidenced in effect by earlier experiences. Participants are provided with “The Incredible Years”, a step-by-step textbook on the topics discussed during the course. At every lesson parents are provided with material offering ideas and examples for the work with the child at home.

The children’s program intends to treat very aggressive children and at the same time a preventive intention towards classes at school (Dinosaur School). Attention is aiming at developing children’s social and emotional competencies, by which children learn to communicate feelings and become better problem solvers. Aggressive children are participating lessons of two hours once a week, training them in groups of 6 by video tapes and written material. The Dinosaur School for a whole class is made up by 60 lessons within 22 weeks. Here the usual school teacher by use of video and open discussions helps and trains children in handling their aggressions.

It seems optimal when both programs are made simultaneously. This opens the possibility that parents use the last part of their lessons to prepare how to improve the outcomes for their children.

The teacher's program aims at training teachers to improve social and emotional competences of the children. Teachers are provided with a manual and video tapes that have to be used later with the children. Furthermore, teachers are provided with "How to Promote Children's Social and Emotional Competence". The program is either organised as a seminar of four days or 14 lessons.

Method

Developmental psychology is the platform of interventions of the three programmes. Multiple risk- and protection factors like child, family and school are taken into consideration. Especially their role related to the rise of behaviour difficulties is part of the platform. The three programmes are using different handles and moves.

Among parents the main intention is to develop cognitive competences by reducing negative thinking and to develop abilities to handle own feelings concerning feeling competent as a parent.

The children's program aims at learning to know your own feelings. For example children learn to relax and find out that a situation can be perceived from different points of view.

The teachers' program underlines the importance of praise and reward as tools to develop positive relations in a school class. The teacher speaks highly about a certain pupil, and the pupils find out having pleasure about other children's successes.

Dissemination and documentation

This method is used in Holland, England, Portugal, Norway and Sweden. In a national context the cities Holstebro, Ikast, Herning and Ålborg have been supported by the Ministry of Welfare to test the method.

Our experiences show that about 40% of a full position has to be spent as group leader under certification. Later the percentage is reducible to 20-25% of a full position, roughly corresponding with 8-10 hours per week to a parental group of 10-14 persons.

The programme is oriented at maintaining systematic collection of documentation to secure measurement of quality and outcomes. A number of standardized, international recognised tools are used to follow up upon the outcomes of the treatment plus the validity of the methods of the therapists. Danish evaluations have shown a significant better behaviour among children and parents as well as the cooperation of teachers and parents (Egelund 2004).

"The Incredible Years" has been chosen to enter into the project "Blueprints for Violence Prevention" at the Centre for Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV), University of Colorado. Six randomized control group evaluations show significant results:

- Parents are using praise more often
- Children are meeting less critical and negative comments
- Parents become better in making rules at home without using violence

- Parents show lesser depressive feelings and are gaining increased self-confidence
- Family communication becomes better, and positive problem solving is increased
- Children are showing lesser behaviour difficulties
- Children are reacting more adequate to the requests of their parents.

PART II

3 Expectations of School – Parents prepared for School

The Social Democratic Party had parent upbringing on the program during the constitutional speech in 2007: “Parents also bear a responsibility for the outcome of pupil’s school education. Pupils every day school life is to a large degree dependant on the support given at home. This applies both to academic achievement and social skills.

5. Pupil is punctual, well rested and prepared to receive education.
6. Pupil learns the importance of social behaviour, in a manner that the result of project orientated teaching and other forms of cooperative work situations, which are becoming more and more common, are not worsened.
7. That Parent is also prepared to evaluate situations from two sides, among others in conflict situations.
8. That parents feel responsible for school bags are packed with books for the coming day, contact book and sharpened pencils, check school bag for notes and support the learning process by ensuring adequate time for homework, until the child has shown that they are capable independently.
9. That the school is recognized as a workplace for both pupils and teachers, and that the school is given the necessary priority in the child’s life.

Parents should be presented with clear goals and expectations regarding their readiness for school. But how do schools cope with the situation of socially vulnerable parents, which for some reason are unable to provide the necessary support, regarding academic support or support in more social issues? During the constitutional speech the Social Democratic Party also pinpointed certain aspects of how to act and respond: “schools must give clear demands to parents regarding their own contribution to a good school for their children. In schools with a large concentration of second language parents, Parent classes must be established, so parents can be aquatinted with school life, learn the Danish school culture, be introduced to the various subjects and teaching methods. If clear agreements and offers are not reached of how parents are introduced to the more informal side of Danish culture and education, school and home will remain two separate universes for second language children. (Constitutional speech 2007. “Every other pupil cannot read” Chronicle in Jyllandsposten 5. June 2007 by Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Christine Antorini and Mette Frederiksen)

Proposal about so called Family Classes was also part of Venstre Party’s program “equal opportunities for all children 2” Social issues spokesman, Hans Andersen, added the countries communes should be able to apply for public funding to establish family classes for children with academic and social difficulties. On Friday the 4th of June 2007 the Ministry of

Education held a pedagogic exhibition “equal opportunities for all children” focus was concentrated on how to secure that vulnerable and exposed children can be part of the educational community.

Minister of Education Bertel Haarder opened the exhibition. His opening speech took outset in the exhibitions good examples. “Exposed children’s teaching” focus has been on the role of the school in relation to Parents that for some reason are unable to provide the necessary support.

How can these parents become involved? “Family Classes” is one example.

In the above mentioned the continuous theme regarding support to exposed children is how to increase parent involvement. Politically there is agreement regarding the method to achieve this goal; support in the form of Family Classes / Schools.

Elsinore Commune is considered to be a leading example with regard to establishing Family Classes. In the following the project and experiences will be explained.

Elsinore Commune is considered the leading Danish Commune with regard to establishing and implementing Family Classes in public schools. Elsinore Commune has been successful in establishing family Classes in 10 local Schools with plans to establish more. Above and beyond this Elsinore Commune has established a Family Centre. The Globalization Council has chosen the project as one of the ten most innovative projects in Denmark’s public sector.

3.1 Family classes

The following extract is from an article from the journal “Psyke & Logos” (Hviid et al. 2006):

Family Classes in Elsinore is a project that creates a sustainable change for pupils, who do not realize their potential within the school system. This is done by establishing a common learning environment, where parents are an important resource in the schools teaching process. This means that only two teachers are required in the family Class. Furthermore visitation is simple since it is only a matter of planning the teaching process. Nor is there a need for special facilities, only a classroom.

Outset and target is very concrete since it is taken from normal school practices that will strengthen and function in an inclusive way which means it is an offer for all and everybody can contribute to its functionality.

The family class ensures parent influence through an open dialog. It is the parents love towards their children which is the value family class’s use as the driving force to create change in the manner children go to school.

The family class creates meaning for the participants with regard to the school. It gives everybody opportunities to share their problems; it creates change through active participation where everyone is considered resourceful; and there are well defined goals for what the participants should archive.

Through creating solutions which gives the participants an experience of having opportunities and dignity, within all the participants in the family class a practice of social responsibility towards a concrete area the school.

Background

The Marlborough method has been developed at Marlborough Family Service (MFS) in London by Brenda McHugh, Neil Dawson and Eia Asen. In the school unit Brenda and Neil have developed this method during the past 23 years.

Since 1976 MFS has worked with developing treatment methods which has lead to multiple family therapies. The users of multiple family therapies are always in an environment with other families and work towards finding solutions to others problems as well as their own. Initially this therapy was called Family Day Unit – which comprised of a multi disciplined team. This for was given to families who was defined as multi problem families because they were struggling with several types of dilemmas or challenges. These dilemmas were often expressed in different forms of abuse, violence or abuse, mental or physical illness in connection with social or economic difficulties. The recognition that these families' difficulties were very similar was the basis for this form of treatment. In all simplicity the method was to use the families own expertise and every day competence to learn how to solve problems by participating in an 8 hour treatment process 5 days a week over a long period of time. In the centre the families were given the possibility of working with their every day problems in a therapeutic manner. The aim was that the families could develop new ways of dealing with their every day problems.

The structural family therapy (Minuchin 1978; Minuchin et al. 1998) was the basis for the method that later took inspiration the systematic family therapy. Analyzing the previous problems – story, was of no importance the wish was to change the behaviour within the family in a manner which produced solutions instead of problems. The family's social situation was recognized as being important which led to working with behaviour both inside and outside the centre through visits and common participation in activities the families needed to do such as going to the social security office, job centre etc.

The structural family therapy works towards implementing clear relationships within the family regarding the position of parents and children.

According to Minuchin there has to be within a family those who have greater power and authority than others. He believes that parents and children are on different levels of authorities. It is the parents who must steer. Minuchin considers maintenance of hierarchy system as important and correct.

A short description of the ideas within structural family therapy (Carr 2000) shows the central idea underlying structural family therapy is that problematic family organizational structure may compromise their capacity to meet the demands of lifecycle changes or unpredictable interfamilial or extra familial stresses. Structural family therapists join with families, come to understand their structure and the demands that the family are having difficulty meeting; facilitate enactment of their problem-solving attempts; and, through unbalancing and boundary making ,help the family to use its own latent resources to modify the structure so that it can meet the demands it faces.

The method of change comprises of the family deliver the problem or problems during therapy so they can be influenced directly there. It is of lesser importance that each individual tells their own history. The therapist will try to put the problem to rest in a way that the family can show the problem during therapy.

Just as the family tries to form a clear hierarchy, the therapist will have a particularly powerful position in this kind of therapy. This is not in itself a problem since the position will be used actively to change the balance within the family, i.e. the therapist may sit next to a family member, by this the family member will be made stronger within the families own inter action. But this power will be challenged through systematic therapy's insistence that it is the family who are experts in their problems and solutions to these problems (Dallos & Draper, 2000; Cecchin, 1992). This meant that multi family therapy is orientated towards a common reflection about the kind of problem and possible solutions. In this way the family will be strengthened through the process. This does not mean that the structural therapy's focus on the hierarchy is discarded, but underlines that the hierarchy must be in place, to give the parents sufficient authority to bring up their children in a loving and developing manner. It is not authority in itself which is sought after, but its meaning for a loving upbringing, which allows the child's potential to unfold. It is however important to point out, that in a time where parent authority is again being sought after, seen historically this has not always lead to anything good. Many studies describe situations where the "authoritative person" in certain times has been influenced by an extreme authoritative upbringing (Lavik & Sveaas 2005). It is therefore family therapy speaks of nurturing what is called the authoritative upbringing style, which is about creating a sense of security, which will allow the child to develop and unfold (a good overview of research work in this field can be found in Sommer 2003, chapter 4) Family classes in Elsinore have described this, only parents can bring up their children, because only the parents love the child in a way that the child will allow itself to be brought up.

The idea behind family classes at Marlborough Family Service in London came from multi family therapy; at the outset this was merely a school offer to the children whose families were receiving therapy at the day care centre. Brenda McHugh and Neil Dawson began using the school situation as a possibility to change the family's interactions which were creating their problems. It was often seen that the child's behaviour in school or the child's unwillingness towards school were often a central factor in multi problem families. Parents often had conflicts with teachers and described themselves as failed parent on this point. Often the parents could tell of their own problems within the school system and generally held resentment towards school and the education system. Parents experienced themselves as being stigmatised by the school system because of their children's behaviour, they described themselves as being isolated with their problems, and also in cases were special treatment for their children had been implemented. Within the family class, parents could meet a group of parents, who could describe similar experiences. Here parents and children participated in the schools everyday life, which in itself could break the resentment towards the school system; it could involve the parents as equal partners rather than being problem creators. Teachers function is to contribute through learning situations, towards creating new opportunities for the children to unfold their creative potential in a secure context, where parents are placed in a position of being competent participants.

Families in the Family school are often referred due to their children's behaviour. This means that families do not see themselves as a problem family, but see the child's behaviour problem in school as the main problem. Therefore the school context becomes the framework for treatment. Experience showed that families gained a great deal from meeting other families and that the best introduction to the family class was given by families who had been in the program for some time. Families expressed that felt supported just by seeing other families with similar problems to their own.

Target groups for family classes are children between the ages of 5 to 16 years old. Within this age group there is a useful dynamic, because parents from different stages of parenthood can learn from each other. Parents of teenagers have experience with younger children; the program ensures that this knowledge is passed on. Parents of the younger children are probably not older than they can remember their teenage years, and can mediate in conflicts within the teenage families.

Goals are one of the central instruments of working in the family classes. From the outset specific targets and goals for behavioural changes are agreed upon between the teachers, families, and children. These targets and goals are the framework from which observations and feedback will be made. Even though it may be the child's problems which are the focus point, discussions regarding the course of treatment will often result in a specific target for the parents, in this way the relationship between child and adult will become central. When problem behaviour appears, the teacher will make a suggestion that gives the child or parent an opportunity to try different ways of tackling the problem, child and parent must try themselves to what works best for them and in this way become part of a common learning process.

3.2 Family Classes in Elsinore

There is a "multi family intervention theory and model" (structural and here and now), this builds on among other things Salvador Minuchin's work with a solution focused method. What is special about this model is that the necessary work for change takes place in an educational context. Parents are coached in a manner that gives the parents strength and courage, together with their children to make the necessary changes in relationship to the schools social and educational everyday life. Focus here is not on reasons or motives but on different possibilities of tackling things, which gives areas of competence and make the hierarchy very, clear for the participants.

Who do Family Classes aim at?

The family class offer is aimed at all pupils from the grade 0 to grade 9, especially towards pupils who are not fully achieving their potential or competences. The offer is for a limited time period of 12 weeks, it is an educational offer and not a social pedagogic offer. Since it is an educational process there is no need for a lengthy visitation process. Parents and teachers simply need to be in agreement that the family class is a good idea.

Being referred to a family class is a quick and easy process: A teacher who has a pupil in the class who is not fully achieving their potential or competences (i.e. disturbs the class, is passive or too quiet, uses bad language, does not show respect to adults or their leadership); the teacher will contact the parents and explain to them what a family class can offer. If the parents are interested a visit to the family class will be arranged, here there will be the possibility for the parents to see and hear what happens in a family class, also from other parents and children.

If the idea appeals to the parents, a working meeting is quickly arranged, in most cases within a week. At the meeting the pupil's teacher and pupil will participate, teachers from the family class and the parents. It is the teacher's task to present the headlines regarding new competences and capabilities that the student must learn. From here concrete goals are made a maximum of 4 goals. Once the family class teachers have ensured that all parties understand the goals in full, a score table is made showing all the goals. It is then the pupil's responsibility to have the score table both at home and at school.

Since the project is an educational project, it does not automatically involve PPC (Pedagogic Psychological Consultancy).

Since the family class is open two mornings a week, pupils and parents do not experience a feeling of being marginalized or removed from their normal class. Pupils still follow their normal curriculum also in the family class.

What is a Family Class?

A family class is a place where pupils are given the opportunity to take a 3 months course aiming at becoming a better pupil, and where the parents have the opportunity to practice using their authority in relation to the demands placed on the pupil from the school/teacher regarding behaviour and accomplishments in the class. The parents get an insight into the teachers program and teaching methods as well as the opportunity to discuss with other parents how to cope with the everyday school life.

Pupils have the opportunity to experience that their parents and teachers are in agreement in supporting them, in new and more suitable competences with regard to school life. Teachers also have the opportunity to view parents as a resource, who can help to create a good educational environment in the classroom.

The family class at Rønnebær Allé School in Elsinore is situated in a normal classroom that can accommodate 6 – 8 children and their parents. The class is open twice weekly; Monday and Thursday fro 08.00am to 10.30am. There are two employees attached to the class, a teacher, and a pedagogue.

Every other Thursday the parent group meets without children being present, this gives the opportunity to discuss any issues or episodes they may wish. Pupils are evaluated in all subjects by their subject teachers, in the family class they are evaluated by the parent. At parent meetings the pupils are evaluated by the family class teacher. Pupils are evaluated on a scale from 1 – 4, were 1 -2 is not satisfactory seen by the adult, 2 -4 is satisfactory seen by an adult. It is important that the score card is not used as a pedagogic tool, but as real feedback to the pupil (and parents) in relation to the concrete goals that have been set.

All results are counted and made visual in a graph; all results are discussed at a midway evaluation meeting after 6 weeks. At this evaluation other issues outside the concrete goals can be discussed, by teachers, parents and pupils alike. New revised goals can be discussed and made if deemed necessary. Family class employees write the minutes of the meeting which is forwarded to the schools leader who is responsible for distributing the minutes to the participants. Finally a date is set for the final evaluation meeting in 6 weeks time.

Some times the course finishes after six weeks, if the goals have been achieved; in this case the midway meeting becomes the final evaluation. At the final evaluation a diploma is given to the pupil and a flower for the parent, in recognition of their successful participation and working towards change.

Basic values of the method

The Marlborough method is a systematic model based on creating change and it is not an individual child focused model. Less weight is placed on past history; focus is placed on creating change in present and future tense. Together with other families localize and construct changes needed by each individual pupil.

Basic focus is to create a context where families can mirror themselves in each other. Families learn through the process of their relationships to others and from their observations of relationships in the other families, by receiving and giving feedback and by the feeling of being esteemed person in the group. When speaking of relationships it is the families inter relation to each other and not the professional's relationship to the families.

There is total transparency within the group as there are no meetings or other activities held without the whole group being present. The family class can participate with other cooperative partners invited by the parents. The head masters overall leadership and responsibility are recognized as is the teachers responsibility for teaching the individual classes. The parent's leadership and responsibility for what is going on at home with regard to their children and in the family class it is also the parents who have the authority and leadership in relation to their children.

In the family class parents have the opportunity to see how other families interact and give and take inspiration towards other ways of interacting. As well as receiving support to stand fast on decisions taken and receive good advise regarding homework and other normal challenges which many parents have difficulties with in various times in their life.

Parents who have participated in the family class can continue to participate in the parent group every other Thursday. Quite a number of parents use this possibility. There are a number of parents who has become so well versed with the family classes principles that the local commune employs them as temporary teachers in other family classes.

Clarity

The pupil works with concrete tasks which are within the schools normal framework. The structure is clear, the individuals work time, and internal communication at school and agreements with teachers and leaders is agreed. All agreements and meetings are in writing or written in the minutes so all involved persons can follow the development of each individual pupil. Both parents and school are always a part of decisions made regarding the students. All parties are both a part of solutions but also a part of the problem. Meetings are never held without the participation of the parents.

Pupils are evaluated lesson for lesson on a scorecard. In this way they receive a continuous feedback with regard to the goals set by parents, school and themselves. This gives the opportunity for parents and pupils to discuss the school day on a more qualified basis. This evaluation gives all the possibility to participate actively.

Relationship between the home room teacher/school teachers and the family class teachers

It is of great importance the work done in the family class also becomes an integrated part of the schools work. It is a place actively used, where dialog, reflection and development takes place. Other teachers at the school must know the value of the family class, have knowledge of the work done and recognize their role. It is important to continuously discuss family class work at staff meetings to give place for further debate and knowledge sharing.

The school leaders' role

If pupils with difficulties are to have the possibility to change their behaviour, it demands the school leader clearly points out the common responsibility of all implied including the leader own role.

- The leader must give the teachers time and possibility to be supported in having pupil/pupils in a process of change.
- The leader must focus on the positive changes and create time, framework and content for teachers/pedagogues, so they feel as an active part of the process.
- The leader must show ownership for the projects so it becomes a part of the schools everyday life.

A minimal project

Family class projects are minimal in many ways:

- Staff: As parents are regarded and used as resources there is only need for 2 staff members in the family class.
- Visitation: Simple and quick visitation process, with a minimal use of resources. Family classes are a filter with regard to an eventual treatment course.
- Economically: Family classes do not require special facilities, only a class room.

3.3 Family classes expansion and documentation

At the moment more and more family classes are being established, in an attempt to keep the resource demanding pupils in their normal school/class. Despite the newness of family classes there is already feed back that family classes makes a difference. Family classes have apparently had a positive effect on poorly functioning structures and interaction in families. As yet there has been no independent evaluation that can document the apparent success.

In present investigation it has been possible to localize about 50 communes through out the country where family classes have been established. Many communes have 5 – 10 classes. It can be difficult to separate the various offers; whether it is an offer for the parents or an offer for the family since a family class is an offer for both the parents and the children who participate.

3.4 What is the difference between a family class and a family school?

There is a large degree of confusion regarding what the different offers are called, what the name covers and what it takes to become a family school/class as well as what is the difference. “A family class is an educational context where parents participate to support a child in its academic and social development. Family classes are normally in schools and focus on academically and social development and takes its outset with the problems the pupils has in school. The pupils normally attend family class a few hours once a week at most three days a week. The outset is the school, teachers and their wish to create a change in cooperation with the family.

A family school is most often placed in connection with some form of family centre, but not always. Focus is on the child’s academic and social development but the outset is family dynamic/relationship development between the child and the important adults. The child is in school 2 – 3 days a week. This is more family work on the boundary to being family therapy, at the same time the multifamily therapy thoughts are used. The outset is the family and the relations within the family, and families/Childs wish for change”.

3.5 Exposed children's education

In the period 2004 -2006 23,8 million DDK was invested to improve the quality of education offered to exposed children. These funds have among other things being used to support local development projects.

In the rapport "Exposed children's teaching" show the results of the evaluation of the project during the period spring 2005 – autumn 2006. The evaluation is part of a larger evaluation: "Evaluation of the agreement of improving the law on the folkeskole", it takes its outset in a parliamentary agreement November 2002. One of the four main points of the agreement is that schools should secure capacity/space to include as many exposed children as possible within the schools normal education system and strengthen the efforts to break down the negative social inheritance.

Parent cooperation

Most projects in relation to parent cooperation take outset in: systematic appreciative pedagogic with focus on relations and awareness that both children and parents should feel both seen and heard.

Previously a mutual denial of responsibility should be observed in school – home cooperation with regards to exposed children. Work with parent involvement in the projects has given the possibility to change this towards a common responsibility and a school – home cooperation with this positive development for children in focus.

It is how ever important to follow up on results, so the positive development for children is not lost, and at the same time secure that the classes normal teachers has a feeling of responsibility to continuing support of the pupils individual development.

Some projects have established family classes where a group of children receive teaching together with their parents some hours a week, and remain in their normal classes the rest of the time. At the same time there is focus on the individual child's potential and results to gain the differentiated goals which are made under way. The method is inspired from the Marlborough Family Service and system therapy in a number of these projects. One of the problems is full time working parents have difficulties participating, since no economic compensation is given. But results are good, and evaluation points out that more children can remain in the normal system if not all. Another problem is to avoid children going back to their old ways after the course has ended. Here it is important that the class's normal teachers have focus on and a feeling of responsibility to continue the support of the pupil's development. As it is expressed in one of the self evaluations regarding the answer to the question difficult challenges: "cooperation with the school (teachers): some teachers have great difficulties with keeping or not keeping the contracts/agreements they make with the family class. It is the old phrase that pops up "solve my problem. Take it away and do not come back until it is solved!"

The projects a long way represents a new way of thinking in how to tackle parent involvement. It has also been a continuous challenge throughout the projects to involve surrounding people. It has not been difficult to motivate directly involved professionals nor have we experienced difficulties motivating parents. On the other hand it has been often difficult to involve indirectly involved teachers. A number of projects point out the importance of involving all parties in the process as quickly as possibly in order to give

everyone a feeling of ownership for the project. In other words thorough preparation is necessary to reflect upon the values, ideas, methods and needs of all involved parties.

PART III

4 Family Group Counselling

Family Group Counselling is seen as a model of decision. Since 2000 the Danish state has supported such initiatives. Counselling is a meeting, gathering the family with friends and relatives. The meeting is used for discussion and planning the efforts needed to better the situation of children or youngsters. Group Counselling aims at developing a plan which is the base of the cooperation on changing the situation of the child. Therefore, it is not a kind of treatment or therapy, but a form of deciding or a frame of processes of decision. The idea is originated in New Zealand, directly rooted in family traditions of the Maori people.

The actors are

10. the primary family – parents, child/children and sisters or brothers – with the child as the most active part in the varying phases of counselling (depending on age and development);
11. the enlarged family – encompassing members of the family of father, mother etc., neighbours, friends, colleagues, and peers
12. initiator – the one who initiates an offer on counselling to the family and later implements it; might be a public servant, especially a person in charge of public administration
13. the coordinator – the person in the public administration who is preparing and carrying out the group counselling
14. informers who are initiators and other professionals (teachers, pedagogues, nurses, foster parents etc., who informs about the child during step 1 in the counselling.

The counselling is built upon four corner stones

First: the enlarged family. Second: the family and the family alone consider answers to the questions of the counselling and are making plans for the child or youngster, based on the answers. The principle is that the family is taking part as a responsive partner. The competencies of the family are equated with those of the experts; a family possesses resources, it is capable of mobilising resources to the benefit of the child, and it is willing to accept a responsibility to develop a plan and make a decision which improves the situation of the child. Third: the independent coordinator who helps the family in planning and since carrying out the counselling session. The coordinator is a mature, human and neutral functioning person especially educated to do such tasks. This role is unique and not known from other forms of social work or family work. The coordinator informs about and mediates the will of the public system to hand over responsibility to the enlarged family as well as underlining the trust of the system in believing that families are capable to decide in favour of the child. Fourth: the reflexions and discussions of the family ends up in writing a plan for the child which the social worker of the public administration has to examine and decide upon. The plan is to be accepted if not turned against the well being of the child.

The model consists of 3 phases: preparation (questions asked, frame decided, coordinator involved, and network identified); counselling (carried out in three steps) plus implementation and follow up. Phase 2 is carried out in 3 steps: 1. information, 2. family counselling, and 3. decision. It is a precondition that consensus is obtained on information, suggestions, and decisions. During implementation it seems to be second to none that the authorities are not showing any kind of 'slow' case work, because any hesitation seems to spread de-motivation and disempowerment in the family. Evaluation has been made since 2003. A description is given by Jytte Faureholm (in Kreuzer/Rosendal Jensen 2005).

4.1 Parental network

Responding upon a beginning marginalization of the consultant on cooperation between school, social work, and police in Fakse carried out a developmental or experimental work, the main pillar of which consisted of establishing a parental network amongst the parents involved. This network looked like a social group work offering parents opportunities to discuss the problems of their children as well as their possibilities as parents to help their kids get out of those problems (drugs, alcohol, contacts to local Rockers). The network opened a platform of mutual discussions on experiences, negotiations and mutual decisions. The principle was to respect that no decision was taken that any of the involved parents were not able to implement at home. The intervention of the consultant aimed at challenging the parents' prejudgements and at introducing them to new or other methods of tackling the problems at home. The method and the outcomes is documented and discussed (see Pedersen & Rosendal Jensen 2003). The description and presentation of the model is a combination of a case study, the consultant's detailed report plus a generalisation based on a post evaluation with the youngsters involved.

4.2 Full-time-education

In Danish legislation the concept is usually "full-time-school" or "whole-day-school", but in fact the activity is much broader – not only using well known forms of school, but also drawing upon the traditions of kinder gardens and after school recreation centres. As about 99% of the children are taking part in class O or 'kinder garden class' (from the age of five) there has been much attention to develop the content and the didactics of school in early childhood. As about 90% of all children are using after school activities, this has meant that the soil was mature for the increase of a school oriented from of activity – reducing kinder gardens to 'preschool preparation' and reducing after school institutions to deal with pupil's homework only. 17 municipalities have been an active part of an experiment in this field: When establishing a full time school, what would be the outcome then? The experiment has been concentrated on literacy, mathematics, and social behaviour in classes 1 to 3. For some years this has been developed in a selected number of schools of the municipalities opening school at 7 and closing at 17. This seems to become a sort of a very long day in institutional care – but very much in correspondence with the participation of females and males at the labour market. In practice many schools have provided lunch, afternoon tea and fruit plus other special offers in order to meet the needs of the children.

The 17 municipalities have further more concentrated on children from homes with relative few experiences of education: Migrant kids, children of the lower social segments, etc. In general the schools participating in the intervention are showing good results: children become able to read and write. Children get competencies in mathematics, and generally children are behaving much more social than before. The outcome is based on evaluations of teachers, children and parents.

Such schools are not only stressing cognitive competencies, but also putting weight on common social activities like playing or simply doing physical activity in a group or class. This implies that such schools are combining learning by doing or playing. The overall picture is positive, and many of the schools would like to extend this form to classes 4 to 7 in order to continue what they experience as a better kind of school.

PART IV

4.3 Summing up and conclusion

In accordance with many studies with in the two last decades we are able to identify a movement from subjectivising to subjectivation, from receiving a role to role identity. This movement could be described as moving from a context, in which the subject receives him self, to a context, in which the subject gives him self to him self (Schmidt 1990). The movement mentioned is observable in many societal fields:

The employee has to be taking responsibility, not only and not any more just having responsibility. The employee must see his or her tasks in an organisational frame of totality; he or she should be enterprising and self managing on behalf of the organisation. He should also take responsibility of his own development and he can increase his safety by changing him self in order to remain employable. The number of tools is large: agreements on competence development, team building, courses in personality development, conversations on employee development etc. are new forms of practice (Andersen & Born 2001).

The pupil has to take responsibility for his own learning. Project work, personal logs, social plays and contracts with pupils are examples of new practices. The individual pupil has to formulate the goals of his personal learning, as well as for bettering his own ability to learn. This is called to develop your social and personal competencies (Hermann 2003; Andersen 2003).

The unemployed must be active and make plans of actions aiming at the development of his work life (Jensen & Born (2001), and *the social client* must become an active citizen (Järvinen et al. (2002). Modern social policy has nothing to do with releasing clients from their problems. To act in favour of the client's problem is to make the client dependent. This means that social administration and social workers have to "see" together with the client, not "seeing at the client" any more. The aim is not to release the client from problems, but to create or build up that self who is capable of creating him self and his destiny.

The consumer must become a political consumer. The consumer is no longer a victim; he should be an active political consumer who defines him self as consumer and is aware of his purchasing power on the market. New sorts of information and focus group surveys are parts of that development.

The patient has to become his own Minister of Health (Hydle 2003). First of all it is about prevention. And not only aimed at the body, but much more intensified at the life style. Bodily diseases have becomes symptoms of diseases connected with life style. All of us are potential patients, and we have to anticipate our selves as such by doing preventing managing of risks (Svendsen 2004).

The point seems to be that we are no longer just facing a development with in the framework of one discourse, but rather facing a regularity across a huge numbers of discourses. Thereby

we conclude at this spot that this is not only a new discursive regime or a new self technology or a new discourse, but primarily a new thorough regime putting the self in the centre. This observation looks like a pure banality, and exactly this fact should serve as a wake up call.

Summing up we are dealing with new forms of practices, aiming at developing or motivating a new person to be born. The guideline is that every adult essentially is responsible, but now and then needs to be meet with demands and motivation in order to secure the adult's rebirth as a mature, responsible person who is taking care of him or her self and the family.

As documented above these forms of practice are divided in at least two main categories: on one hand practices are developed from the authorities and implemented top-down by using experts and carried out with the paradigm of functionalism. The idea is that the expert knows best. On the other hand practices are developed button up by drawing on people's own resources and carried out with in the paradigm of radical humanism and/or interactionalism (for both paradigms – see Howe 1987).

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Thorning-Schmidt, H., Antorini, C. & Frederiksen, M. 2007: Hvert barn kan ikke læse. Kronik i Jyllandsposten, 5 June 2007

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