

The possible inclusion of Education for Sustainability in Swedish preschool curriculum and education

Introduction

In 2019, the Swedish national curriculum for pre-school education (Lpfö18) was revised and for the first time is sustainability included in the curriculum. Education for sustainability (Efs) have been described as an overriding idea under the heading “Sustainable Development, Health and Well-Being” (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2018, p. 9). Previous research has shown that Efs was not present in the previous curricula. Teaching is also a new concept in the curriculum providing the opportunity for preschool teachers to develop Efs. Therefore, we choose to investigate whether and how the curriculum describes Efs, and how teachers address the new possibilities given by the new curricula.

Research Question

The aims of this study are to:

- Investigate how Efs has been made possible in the new curriculum for preschool Lpfö 2018 in Sweden and report how preschool teachers view teaching for sustainability.

Methodology

Using content analysis, we have analyzed how the concept of teaching has been addressed in the preschool curriculum in relation to education for sustainability. A contextual analysis was also conducted that involved an interpretation of the meaning of concepts. In addition, a pilot study has been conducted to explore how teachers view teaching for sustainability in preschool. We have used semi-structured interviews to investigate how preschool teachers view teaching for sustainability.

Findings

Our study shows that Efs becomes evident in the new Swedish curriculum, by descriptions of the preschool's activities. The curriculum used terms such as participation, challenge, experience, and development when describing learning and often using the word together in

the same sentence in relation to sustainability issues. These words show that children are supposed to be involved and challenged, in teaching, by practically creating their own understanding of what sustainability is and how they can do to create sustainability. The preschool teachers align to this and in the interviews by describing teaching methods for EfS that include, investigation, participation, games, and theatre. Practical activities they do with children can be recycling, plastic slimming and reuse.

Conclusion & recommendations for theory and practice and possible
References

Overall, the analysis provides a picture of change in the Swedish preschool curriculum that is in line with the intentions of international policy and research relating to a need for increased focus on sustainability and EfS. Interestingly, Swedish preschool teachers also seems to adopt to these teaching methods in the daily practices.

Keywords:

curriculum analysis, education for sustainability, interview, preschool, Sustainable development