



Brief

Interest in research and interesting researchers: the offer of research ethics to children who are participants in research

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Children's lives are studied both with a focus on the children themselves and in children's everyday environment, for example preschool. In these studies, there is also reason to be interested in how children relate to the ethical measures and strategies that researchers apply. The aim of this article is to investigate the ethics in research studies with children as participants and discuss how ethical measures and considerations can be understood in more ways than just protection for the participating children. Could participation in research also be understood as something meaningful and interesting? The starting point for the analysis is a research project in Swedish preschools with randomized control groups (RCT), aiming to investigate the outcomes of two different learning methods (Gerholm et al., 2018). The project was interdisciplinary with a range of research methods, which led to different ethical considerations. Central was an approach that can be summarized as the children and educators "helped the researchers to do research" (Frankenberg et al., 2019). A selection of the audio and video material from the study has been analyzed. The result shows that the strong emphasis generally put on protection and risk minimization, might lead to neglecting other aspects, which is why the participation's offer also needs attention. The research ethics in a study need to describe what experiences the children are offered to do and what learning the participation can allow. In this article, data from a preschool study with children as participants have been examined and the analyzes show that preschool children's interests and issues are to a large extent related to scientific knowledge in a broad sense. They are

interested in what researchers can do, what methods can achieve, and they feel responsible for data collection. Children's participation in research is often seen as sensitive and risky but necessary for the sake of research. It could also be seen as a well-motivated investment for the sake of future research.

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