



## Brief

# The Kindergarten Teacher As Pedagogue – Meeting Expectations

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This article explores how kindergarten teachers experience and relate to expectations from varying parties. Kindergarten teacher's role is defined by expectations from children, parents, colleagues, the education system, owners and partners. I build on an understanding of pedagogy based on the pedagogical paradox. This perspective implies that pedagogical work is normative and based on certain values. My understanding of being a pedagogue is based on a hermeneutic perspective which implies that the kindergarten teacher is an interpreter, situated in kindergarten everyday life. The research question I explore is: How do kindergarten teachers relate to expectations? And: What can how they relate to expectations tell us about the kindergarten teacher as pedagogue?

The study is based on an empirical material from four focus group interviews. The participants were 18 kindergarten teachers from four different kindergartens. They were invited to discuss and reflect on their experiences from kindergarten everyday life and pedagogical practice, what they believe is most important to contribute to in children's lives, and how they experience expectations from varying parties. The analysis is structured according to where the expectations come from: Expectations 1) from children 2) expressed in government documents, 3) from colleagues, 4) from parents, 5) from collaborators and 6) from stakeholders and others. The analysis shows that the effort of interpreting, considering, and acting on those expectations is considerable, and based on the teachers' pedagogical, ethical, professional and value-based understanding.

The pedagogical perspective established, makes it possible to at kindergarten teachers facing expectations use judgement, professional considerations and pedagogical tact. When kindergarten teachers do not recognize expectations as valid, it is because the expectations

are based on other rationales and values than those of pedagogy. It also becomes visible that whether consideration of the child's dignity is made primary or not, has an impact on how the kindergarten teachers relate to the expectations. Kindergarten teachers' reflections on situations that require judgement and pedagogical tact show the importance of values. When pointing out connections between empirical material, kindergarten teachers' reflections, and overall pedagogical questions, it becomes possible to thematize and explore pedagogical core issues in kindergarten everyday practice.

**Keywords:** *expectations; judgement; kindergarten; pedagogy*