

KONFERANSEPROGRAM

HVORDAN BEDRE UTDANNINGSSITUASJONEN FOR BARN I BARNEVERNET?



FORORD



SOLVEIG HORNE

**BARNE-, LIKE-
STILLINGS- OG
INKLUDERINGS-
MINISTER***Solveig Horne*TORBJØRN
RØE ISAKSEN**KUNNSKAPS-
MINISTER***Torbjørn Røe Isaksen*

AV SOLVEIG HORNE OG TORBJØRN RØE ISAKSEN

SKOLE FOR LIVET

Noen barn har en vanskeligere oppvekst enn andre. For mange barn i barnevernet preger dette også deres skolegang og framtidsutsikter. Forskning utført i Norge viser at personer som har hatt oppfølging fra barnevernet i oppveksten, har et vesentlig lavere utdanningsnivå enn personer uten slik bakgrunn.

Skolen skal ha som mål å sikre alle elever grunnleggende ferdigheter og kvalifisere for videre utdanning eller arbeidsliv. Vi vet at mangelfull opplæring utgjør en alvorlig risikofaktor for marginalisering i arbeids- og samfunnsliv.

Skole og opplæring for barn i barnevernet er et viktig innsatsområde for regjeringen. Vi har et særlig ansvar for at barn under barnevernets omsorg skal få en god skolehverdag. For å forhindre frafall og motivere for videre utdanning, må det arbeides målrettet for å styrke elevenes skoletilknytning og sikre at de får et godt og tilpasset skoletilbud.

Det er viktig å få en oversikt over hvilke tiltak som fremmer læring og skoletilknytning for barn i barnevernet.

Denne konferansen har som målsetting å bidra til å gjøre skole og barnevern bedre rustet til å skape et godt læringsmiljø for disse barna. Konferansen vil gi forskningsbaserte anbefalinger om tiltak som kan styrke barn i barnevernets skolegang.

Vi vil rette en stor takk til deltakere, bidragsytere og arrangører.

Vi ser med forventning fram til å kunne trekke lærdom fra norsk og internasjonal forskning på dette viktige området.

INNLEDNING



MARI TROMMALD

DIREKTØR
BUFDIR

Mari Trommald



PETTER SKARHEIM

DIREKTØR
UTDANNINGS-
DIREKTORATET

Petter Skarheim

BEDRE OPPFØLGING OG TYDELIGE FORVENTNINGER GIR RESULTATER

AV MARI TROMMALD OG PETTER SKARHEIM

Det å mestre skole og utdanning er den enkeltfaktoren som ser ut til å ha størst betydning for å lykkes i voksenlivet. En god skolesituasjon gir barn og ungdom muligheter til å knytte kontakter, mestre utdanningsløpet og delta i samfunnet.

Resultater fra oppfølgingsstudier i Norge viser at barn som får hjelp av barnevernet ikke lykkes like godt i skole- og opplæringssammenheng som andre barn. Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet, Utdanningsdirektoratet og forskere har arbeidet tett for å finne effektive tiltak for å bedre barns skoleprestasjoner. Det er nødvendig å ha trykk på oppfølgingen både fra skole og barnevernet. Ofte ser vi eksempler på at skole eller barnevern vegrer seg eller gir opp arbeidet med oppfølgingen til tross for at barnet har rett på utdanningstilbud. På denne konferansen vil vi presentere en fersk kunnskapsoppsummering på feltet som viser hva som nytter og hvordan man kan arbeide for å øke mestring for barn og unge.

Oppsummeringen viser at det er nødvendig å ha klare forventninger til skoleprogresjon og skoleprestasjon. Dette sammenfaller med barn i barnevernets tilbakemeldinger om at barnets bakgrunn enkelte ganger brukes som en «unnskyldning» og man kommer inn i en spiral med manglende forventninger og oppfølging og deretter svakere prestasjoner. Anerkjennelse og oppmuntring bidrar til bedre skolegang, og kunnskapsoppsummeringen påpeker hvordan barnas omsorgspersoner og nettverk kan være avgjørende for å styrke motivasjon og læring. Strukturert veiledning eller ulike varianter av én-til-én-læring viser også positive resultater.

Gjennom kunnskapsoppsummeringen og presentasjonene på konferansen vil vi få inngående kunnskap om hva som har vist seg å være effektive metoder. Vi har lagt vekt på å belyse forskning både fra Norge og andre land som det er aktuelt å sammenlikne seg med. Vi har blant annet sett på om det er hensiktsmessig med fokus på individ eller struktur - eller begge deler - der man gjerne ser på tiltak på flere arenaer i en sammenheng. Kunnskapsgjennomgangen har også avdekket noen kunnskapshull. Dessverre vet man altfor lite om hva som virker for barn som bor hjemme og mottar barnevernstiltak, her har det vært svært lite forskning.

Det vil i etterkant av konferansen lages en rapport med anbefalinger til tiltak for å bedre oppfølgingen av tilbudet slik at barn og unge som får hjelp fra barnevernet får bedre muligheter til å mestre skole og utdanning.

PROGRAM

HVORDAN BEDRE UTDANNINGSSITUASJONEN FOR BARN I BARNEVERNENET?

KONFERANSIER / BØRGE TOMTER (seksjonssjef, Bufdir)

TORSDAG 14. NOVEMBER

- 09.30 - 10.00** Registrering og kaffe
- 10.00 - 10.20** Åpning ved statsråd Solveig Horne
- 10.20 - 10.30** God skole er godt barnevern ved Mari Trommald (direktør, Bufdir)
- 10.30 - 11.15** Samlede erfaringer gjennom lang tids forskning - Bo Vinnerljung (professor, Stockholms Universitet)
- 11.15 - 11.30** Kaffe
- 11.30 - 11.50** Resultater fra NOVAs kunnskapsoppsummering - Marie-Louise Seeberg (forsker, NOVA)
- 11.50 - 12.10** Barn i barnevernet. Hva viser nye data? - Lars Kristofersen (forskningsleder, NOVA)
- 12.10 - 13.00** Hva fremmer og hemmer skolegangen for barn i barnevernet? - Terje Ogden (forskningsdirektør Atferdssenteret)
- 13.00 - 14.00** Lunsj
- 14.00 - 14.15** Musikkinnslag
- 14.15 - 14.45** Fosterbarn som tar høyere utdanning - suksessfaktorer- Dag Skilbred (forsker, RKBV Vest, UniHelse)
- 14.45 - 15.15** Suksessfulle erfaringer med videre utdanning - Kristian Bredby og Tine Sveen (institusjonsleder og avdelingsleder, Brusetskollen barnevernsenter)
- 15.15 - 15.30** Kaffe
- 15.30 - 16.00** Positiv atferd, støttende læringsmiljø og samhandling (PALS) - Mari-Anne Sørli (forsker, atferdssenteret)
- 16.00 - 16.30** Losen - en ressurs for utsatt ungdom - Elisabeth Backe-Hansen (forsker, NOVA)
- 16.30 - 17.00** Paneldiskusjon med spørsmål til innledere
- KL. 20.00** Middag/Dinner

FREDAG 15. NOVEMBER

- 08.30 - 08.45** Opening
- 08.45 - 09.25** Maximizing educational achievement of youth in foster care and alumni: special attention to youth with physical and/or psychiatric disabilities - Peter Pecora (Professor, University of Washington)
- 09.25 - 10.05** The Letterbox Club - Rose Griffiths (Senior Lecturer, University of Leicester)
- 10.05 - 10.20** Short coffee break
- 10.20 - 11.00** «On the way home» - Alexandra L. Trout (Associate Research Professor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln)
- 11.00 - 11.40** Can tutoring help foster children to catch up in reading and math? Two randomized effectiveness trials - Robert Flynn (Professor, University of Ottawa)
- 11.40 - 12.40** Lunch
- 12.40 - 13.40** Young People in Public Care: Pathways to Education in Europe (YIPPEE) - Ingrid Höjer (Professor, University of Gothenburg)
- 13.40 - 13.55** Short coffee break
- 13.55 - 14.35** Education for children and youth living in residential care - Niels Rosendal Jensen (Associate Professor, Aarhus University)
- 14.35 - 15.15** United for learning - Toril Havik (Head of research, RKBV Vest, UniHealth)
- 15.15 - 15.30** Conclusions

FORELESERE PÅ KONFERANSEN

FORELESER #1

BO VINNERLJUNG / SAMLEDE ERFARINGER GJENNOM LANG TIDS FORSKNING



BO VINNERLJUNG

Bo Vinnerljung is a Professor of Social Work at the University of Stockholm. He's also been a researcher at the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) for a number of years. Professor Vinnerljung has extensive experience with research focusing on the development of socially vulnerable children, child care, and adoption, and he has made a great deal of publications on the subject matter. His work is mainly based on registry research and intervention studies within interdisciplinary research groups.

/ SAMLEDE ERFARINGER GJENNOM LANG TIDS FORSKNING

En lång rad svenska registerstudier har visat att dåliga skolprestationer är en stark prediktor för framtida problem hos alla barn, exempelvis för självmordsbeteende och narkotikamissbruk. Detta är dåliga nyheter för barnevernsbarn. De klarar sig mycket dåligt i skolan och i utbildningssystemet, rejält sämre än andra barn med samma kognitiva förutsättningar. Skolmisslyckande läggs ovanpå andra riskfaktorer som dessa barn är belastade med. De svenska registerstudierna visar vidare att dåliga skolprestationer förklarar (statistiskt) runt hälften av storleken på de mycket höga överrisker för framtida självmordsbeteende, kriminalitet, missbruk och bidragsberoende som barnevernsbarn har, jämfört med andra barn. Men skolmisslyckanden är en riskfaktor som kan påverkas med interventioner. De allra flesta evaluerade försök att (med systematiska insatser) förbättra barnevernsbarns skolresultat har gett positiva resultat. Exempel är tutoringprogram och de svenska SkolFamförsöken.

FORELESER #2

MARIE-LOUISE SEEBERG / SCHOOLING AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES: A LITERATURE REVIEW



MARIE-LOUISE SEEBERG

Marie-Louise Seeberg is a social anthropologist, and coordinates the research group for migration and transnational studies at the Norwegian Social Research (NOVA). She has in later years especially studied health and care worker migration into Norway and developed her interest in social theory, mainly complexity and systems theory. From 2013, Seeberg leads the IMISCOE research group "Contested Childhoods in times of Crises". Her main general fields of interest are nationalism and diversity, ethnicity and migration, and relationships of power and meaning, etc.

/ SCHOOLING AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

My talk presents our work on the literature review which has been part of NOVA's work on this conference. We initially decided on search terms and created a corresponding set of systematic questions based on the aim of our task, namely to review literature on the effects of interventions targeting the schooling and school achievements of children and youth in child welfare. These questions were divided into three groups: 1) About the children, 2) About the measures/interventions, and 3) About the publication. Our literature searches consisted of systematic searches in Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and English language/international library databases. We also conducted knowledge based searches for reports and grey publications, central publications already known to us, and special issues of journals. After two rounds of filtering and reading, we narrowed down the relevant literature from our original 350 hits to 16 plus 12 publications that are included in our review. 16 publications describe specific measures or interventions and discuss their effects; 12 publications provide more general, but relevant knowledge on our topic. The answers to the systematic questions were used to categorise the publications in a matrix. On this basis, a synthesis of the findings is provided in the conclusion. Main findings: Most systematic interventions seem to have a positive effect on learning; we may perhaps talk about an 'awareness effect'. Tutoring and other measures that increase adult attention stand out as particularly fruitful. Finally, interventions need to be implemented and carried through uninterrupted and, if possible, as co-ordinated interventions where several agents work together as a team. Stability in housing and schooling conditions is important for the efficiency of interventions. We also identified three possible areas for future research: 1) little is known about measures targeting the schooling of children/youth living with their parents while under child welfare protection; 2) few studies present and analyse how children and youth experience school performance measures; 3) we found no studies highlighting the situations for children and youth from immigrant background.

FORELESER #3

LARS KRISTOFERSEN / BARN I BARNEVERNET. HVA VISER NYE DATA?



LARS KRISTOFERSEN

Lars Kristofersen is a sociologist, senior Researcher and Research Director at the Norwegian Social research (NOVA). Kristofersen has a number of publications, and his fields of competence are listed as: child protection, child welfare, living conditions among children, user perspective, welfare services, evaluation, assistance measures, children mental health, and inter-agency (interdepartmental) collaboration.

/ BARN I BARNEVERNET. HVA VISER NYE DATA?

En rekke norske registerstudier har vist at unge voksne som tidligere har vært i barneverntiltak, har vesentlig lavere utdanningsnivåer enn andre unge voksne i tilsvarende aldersgrupper. Jamfør også de svenske resultatene som Bo Vinnerljung nettopp har gjennomgått. I de siste årene har NOVA-forskere arbeidet med SSB-data for 21-årsperioden 1990-2010 i prosjektet Barnevern i Norge 1990-2011. De longitudinelle registerstudiene følger de unge voksne mange år etter at de har vært i barneverntiltak. Tall vi publiserte i mai (Kristofersen og Sverdrup 2013) viser at vel 60 prosent av unge voksne i alderen 25-41 år (2009) i barneverngruppen ikke har gjennomført videregående skole, mot 20 prosent i sammenlikningsutvalget. I barneverngruppen har knappe 30 prosent gjennomført videregående skole pluss at vel 10 prosent har tatt fag på universitet eller høyskole. For sammenlikningsutvalget er de tilsvarende andelene henholdsvis vel 35 og vel 40 prosent. Forskjellene mellom gruppene har endret seg lite de seinere årene på tross av stort fokus på dette temaet her i landet etter at forrige rapport kom i 2008. Rapporten fra 2008 og tidligere studier viser også lave utdanningsnivåer hos foreldrene i barneverngruppene sammenliknet med andre foreldre. Foreløpig upubliserte tall viser at også de unge voksne som kun har hatt hjelpetiltak i hjemmet (den største barneverngruppen), fortsatt har lave utdanningsnivåer. Dette er identisk med funn publisert i 2008.

FORELESER #4

TERJE OGDEN / WHAT INHIBITS AND PROMOTES SCHOOLING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES?



TERJE OGDEN

Terje Ogden is a Professor at the Department of psychology, University of Oslo. Here he works as Director of research at the Norwegian Center for Child Behavioral Research (Atferdssenteret). Professor Ogden serves as a referee and editorial advisory board member on a number of national and international journals and periodicals, and has an extensive body of research and publications concerning child welfare, behavioral problems in children, vulnerable children, school and child welfare, etc.

/ WHAT INHIBITS AND PROMOTES SCHOOLING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES?

Only a minority of children and youth in care advances beyond compulsory school in Norway, and an even smaller group completes the upper secondary school. Children with a long career in residential institutions and/or foster care are particularly at risk for failure at school. The schools report on student behavioral problems and the children about lack of schooling, inconsistent or irregular teaching, low expectations and a lack of motivational support. Individual causal explanations prevail to the effect that failure at school is caused by individual characteristics rather than low expectations, the lack of support and poor teaching. This presentation highlights the formal and informal challenges encountered by children and youth in long-term care. Within the formal framework of economy, organization and management, informal risk and protective factors may be identified. This is not limited to characteristics of the children, but also characteristics of their parents or other caregivers, and conditions at school, such as the quality of teaching and of the learning environment. Children and youth in care are often segregated and educated in separate groups, classes or schools. Several remediate measures are needed, but also more knowledge about who these children and youth are, what kind of education they are offered, and what their short- and long-term benefits are. There is a need for testing and evaluating flexible school and teaching interventions which also include support and follow-up at home. Individual interventions tailored and adapted to individual needs and qualifications, and implemented in an inclusive school setting, are also in demand.

FORELESER #5

DAG SKILBRED / FOSTERBARN SOM TAR HØYERE UTDANNING – SUKSESSFAKTORER



DAG SKILBRED

Dag Skilbred has a master's degree in Education, and works as a Researcher at UniHealth - Child Protection Research Unit, which conducts research and promotes knowledge within core areas of the field of child protection. Skilbred has several publications, and his main areas of expertise are: children in foster care, foster children and education, and cooperation and inter-agency cooperation.

FOSTERBARN SOM TAR HØYERE UTDANNING – SUKSESSFAKTORER

Både gode skoleprestasjoner og skoletrivsel har vist seg å være sterke beskyttende faktorer for barns langsiktige utvikling, ved at begge deler øker sannsynligheten for å oppnå et høyere utdanningsnivå og et selvstendig voksenliv. Flere undersøkelser viser imidlertid at plasserte barn har svakere mestring på skolen og starter voksenlivet med dårligere utdanning enn sine jevnaldrende. Målsettingen med prosjektet jeg vil presentere var å få fram kunnskap om forhold som bidrar til at fosterbarn lykkes i skolen, slik som fosterforeldre og ungdom som har vært i fosterhjem ser det. I undersøkelsen intervjuet vi unge som bodde eller hadde bodd i fosterhjem i minst tre år og som studerte eller nylig hadde avsluttet studie ved høyskole eller universitet, samt fosterforeldre som hadde eller hadde hatt fosterbarn som tok høyere utdanning. Intervjuene ble gjennomført ansikt til ansikt i halvannen til to timer. Det ble gjort lydopptak og alle intervjuene ble transkribert. Av de 16 unge som deltok i undersøkelsen var 12 kvinner og fire menn, og de fleste var mellom 26 og 31 år. Selv om det var varierende alder ved flytting til fosterhjem ble de fleste boende i det første fosterhjemmet de kom til, inntil de flyttet for seg selv. Vi intervjuet også 13 fosterforeldre, tre par, seks fostermødre og en fosterfar. På av fosterforeldre hadde selv høyere utdanning. To hovedområder pekte seg ut som sentrale for de unges skolemessige suksess. Både de unge selv og fosterforeldrene var enig om at de unges egne evner og motivasjon var den aller viktigste grunnen til at de lyktes med å ta høyere utdanning. Det andre hovedområdet som hadde positiv innvirkning var fosterforeldrenes innsats.

FORELESER #6

KRISTIAN BREDBY OG TINE SVEEN / SUKSESSFULLE ERFARINGER MED VIDERE UTDANNING



KRISTIAN BREDBY

Kristian Bredby is a Child welfare officer, Family therapist, and has further education in Management. Bredby has a good deal of experience, being in charge of various child welfare institutions for more than 30 years. The last 15 years he's been head of "Oslo Sanitetsforening Brusetkollen" child welfare institution.



TINE SVEEN

Tine Sveen is a Social worker, with further education in Management. She's been employed by "Oslo Sanitetsforening Brusetkollen" child welfare institution for more than 20 years, both as a Milieu therapist and as Head of section. As of 2006, Sveen has had the managing responsibility of developing an aftercare section at the institution.

SUKSESSFULLE ERFARINGER MED VIDERE UTDANNING

Institusjonen har gjennom mange år arbeidet systematisk med beboernes skoletilbud. Alt for mange undersøkelser konkluderer med at barnevernsbarn får mangelfullt skoletilbud og dermed dårligere utgangspunkt for å klare seg godt i voksen alder.

Brusetkollen barnevernsenter har med sin ettervernsavdeling, Sophie, i perioden 2006 til 2013 hatt gleden av å samarbeide med 20 ungdommer i alderen 18 til 23 år. 16 av 20 ungdommer har i denne perioden fullført, eller er i gang med å fullføre videregående skole. Av de 16 unge er flere under høyere utdanning på høyskoler eller universitet. Vi ønsker å formidle våre erfaringer og dele noen tanker om bruk av metode for å inspirere til aktiv ettervernsinnsats for unge med bakgrunn i barnevernet. Systematisk arbeid, stor utholdenhet, tid og tette gode relasjoner er grunnlaget for å lykkes. Og ikke minst - voksne med tro på at ungdom kan lykkes er en forutsetning for at den unge selv kan få troen på at skikkelig utdanning er mulig å oppnå.

FORELESER #7

MARI-ANNE SØRLIE / POSITIV ATFERD, STØTTENDE LÆRINGSMILJØ OG SAMHANDLING (PALS)



MARI-ANNE SØRLIE

Mari-Anne Sørli is a researcher at the Norwegian Center for Child Behavioral Research (Atferds-senteret), and has among other things a higher degree in Special needs education. Sørli's field of interest and main focus when it comes to doing research is: children/youth and social competence, behavioral problems, and the effects of implementing various measures – primarily in the educational system. She also has a number of publications, including contributions on several textbooks.

POSITIV ATFERD, STØTTENDE LÆRINGSMILJØ OG SAMHANDLING (PALS)

I denne sesjonen beskrives grunnlaget for, og kjerneelementene i den skoleomfattende intervensjonsmodellen PALS (positiv atferd, støttende læringsmiljø og samhandling i skolen) hvor målet er forebygging og håndtering av atferds- og mestringsproblemer blant barn og unge i grunnskolealder. I PALS, som er en norsktilpasset versjon av den amerikanske modellen SW-PBIS (school-wide positive behaviour and implementation support), kombineres en system- og individrettet tilnærming. Et kontinuum av evidensbaserte og differensierte tiltak implementeres på hhv. universelt, selektert og indikert nivå - matchet til elevenes risiko- og behovsnivå. Hovedvekten legges på proaktive, positive, kollektive og inkluderende strategier.

Innsatsmodellen innbefatter i tillegg spesifikke skoleomfattende og feedback-baserte systemer/verktøy/ rutiner for sikring av vedvarende høy implementeringskvalitet, kompetanseutvikling og systematisk problem- og ressurskartlegging, samt for kontinuerlig evaluering av intervensjonsutbyttet i den enkelte skole. Eksempler gis. Det tar min. 3 år å implementere modellen og det finnes nå over 200 PALS-skoler og 54 aktive PALS-veiledere rundt om i landet.

Men svarer PALS til forventningene? Både norske og amerikanske evalueringsstudier viser at PALS/SW-PBIS kan ha betydelige positive effekter på flere områder, men effektene varierer. Optimale effekter avhenger særlig av høy implementeringskvalitet. Resultateksempler fra to norske effektstudier presenteres.

FORELESER #8

ELISABETH BACKE-HANSEN / LOSEN – EN RESSURS FOR UTSATT UNGDOM



ELISABETH BACKE-HANSEN

Elisabeth Backe-Hansen is a psychologist, and a Senior Researcher at the Norwegian Social Research (NOVA). She is currently responsible for NOVA's Strategic Institute Program within the area of child research. This year's winner of "The great psychologist award", due to her contributions in developing the Norwegian field of child welfare. She has extensive experience of child research in general; her work has focused on foster children and foster homes, residential care and aftercare, but also on methods in child welfare, children and youth in general and ethical child research. Backe-Hansen also has a comprehensive amount of publications to show for.

LOSEN – EN RESSURS FOR UTSATT UNGDOM

LOS-prosjektet ble igangsatt av Barne-, likestillings- og inkluderingsdepartementet i 2011, som et treårig prosjekt der i alt 15 kommuner i hele landet deltar. Gjennom prosjektet skal ungdom som står i fare for eller allerede har falt ut av skole eller arbeid, få en person å forholde seg til som sørger for tett oppfølging og hjelper dem med å mestre relevante tilbud. Tanken er at når ungdom som sliter får en person som følger dem tett, øker det sjansen for at de fullfører skolegang og deltar i arbeidslivet. Målgruppen for prosjektet er ungdom fra 15-16 år og oppover, ut fra kunnskapen om at unge som faller ut av videregående utdanning, ofte begynner denne prosessen på ungdomstrinnet.

Evalueringen startet omtrent da prosjektet startet, og målsettingen var å følge ungdommene i prosessen gjennom jevnlig kartlegginger som gjennomføres av losene i samarbeid med ungdommene. Per januar 2013 hadde i alt 378 deltatt i prosjektet, hvorav 244 fortsatt var under oppfølging. Av disse deltok 128 i evalueringen, like mange gutter som jenter. Siden evalueringen ikke er klar før i april neste år, vil vi konsentrere oss mest om prosessdata slik de ble rapportert til departementet tidligere i år. Data bygger på informasjon fra 22 losere samt ungdommen selv. To viktige stikkord om losenes relasjon til ungdommen er vekten på å styrke deres status som selvstendige aktører, og vekten på å bry seg og bry seg om ungdommen. Et viktig stikkord om ungdommenes bruk av losen er betydningen av detaljerte og konkrete målsettinger for prosessen de er inne i.

FORELESER

#9

PETER PECORA / MAXIMIZING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE AND ALUMNI: SPECIAL ATTENTION TO YOUTH WITH PSYCHICAL AND/OR PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES



PETER PECORA

Peter Pecora has a joint appointment as the Managing Director of Research Services for Casey Family Programs, and Professor at the School of Social Work, University of Washington. He has worked with a number of state departments of social services in the United States and in other countries to refine foster care programs, implement intensive home-based services, and design risk assessment systems for child protective services. He has several publications, both books and journal articles. Professor Pecora also has been-, and is presently serving as a member on a number of major national advisory committees.

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MAXIMIZING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE AND ALUMNI: SPECIAL ATTENTION TO YOUTH WITH PSYCHICAL AND/OR PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES

The challenges faced by the United States and other countries with respect to education are particularly acute with respect to youth placed in out of home care and alumni of foster care. After describing the number of youth in foster care in the United States and recent research on their outcomes, this presentation will describe what factors have been linked with educational success for these youth and young adults. Strategies for improvement discussed will include pursuing permanency to help youth find enduring mentors, maximizing placement and school stability, conducting strengths-based assessment, aggressively pursuing educational supports, and treating mental health problems that may act as barriers to classroom success.

FORELESER

#10

ROSE GRIFFITHS / THE LETTERBOX CLUB



ROSE GRIFFITHS

Rose Griffiths is Director of Continuing Professional Development, and a senior Lecturer at the University of Leicester's School of Education. During her career, Griffiths has taught in pre-school, primary, secondary, special and adult education, and her publications include many books for children, parents and teachers. She is a former foster carer, and her major research interests focus on raising the achievements of looked-after children, childhood bereavement, and mathematics education.

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THE LETTERBOX CLUB

The Letterbox Club provides educational materials directly to children aged 5 to 13, to encourage them to enjoy reading, number games and other activities at home. Most of our members are children in foster care. My talk will give you a brief outline of the history of the project, its organization, and its impact on children and their foster families.

We began as a small action research project, with just 20 children in 2003. We were joined by 50 more local authorities in 2007 and 2008, with government funding for a national pilot in England. Since then, the program has expanded into Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, too, with nearly 6,000 children and 123 local organizations taking part in 2013.

Children who are members of the Letterbox Club are sent a parcel of books, math's games and stationery each month for six months at a time. Each child can be a member four times: aged 5 to 7, 7 to 9, 9 to 11 and 11 to 13. The parcel is addressed to the child personally. Our aim is to entice the children and foster carers into educational activity.

Our evaluations have used reading and number assessments, questionnaires to the children and their foster carers, and interviews with samples of children and carers. The key outcomes are significant improvements in reading and number, increased engagement of foster carers in supporting educational activity at home, and, most of all, a great deal of enjoyment for the children and families involved.

FORELESER #11

ALEXANDRA L. TROUT / ON THE WAY HOME



ALEXANDRA L. TROUT

Alexandra L. Trout is an Associate Research Professor at the Center for Child and Family Well-Being at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Trout has extensive experience working with programs and interventions for Children and youth with-, or at-risk of emotional and behavioral disorders. This work also includes their families. She has spent the past several years in a research partnership with Boys Town, working to develop and evaluate programs to meet the aftercare needs of families and youth in out-of-home care. Trout's current research is funded by the Department of Education's Institute for Educational Sciences.

/ ON THE WAY HOME

Youth served in out-of-home care face several challenges as they depart care and transition back into the home and community school settings. Too often there are few supports or resources available to the transitioning youth and family; and barriers to communication and service provision hinder youth placement stability and short and long-term educational success. This presentation will describe the development and early outcomes of On the Way Home, a newly developed aftercare program for high-risk reintegrating youth. *Model Description.* On the Way Home involves three evidence supported interventions: school engagement/drop-out prevention (Check & Connect; Christenson, 1997), individualized parent training (Common Sense Parenting; Burke & Herron, 2006), and homework support. All interventions are facilitated by a Family Consultant who provides direct support to the youth, family, and school; is available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week; and serves as the liaison between the home and school settings. *Preliminary Outcomes.* The preliminary randomized controlled trial of On the Way Home involved 88 Nebraska youth in 54 schools across 27 districts. Two primary indicators of program effects, school stability and placement stability, were evaluated during the 12 months following departure from care. Findings revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) between treatment and control groups. Translated into odds ratios, these findings revealed that youth randomly assigned to the treatment as usual group were over three times more likely to leave school and over 5 times more likely to leave home than youth enrolled in On the Way Home.

FORELESER #12

ROBERT FLYNN / CAN TUTORING HELP FOSTER CHILDREN TO CATCH UP IN READING AND MATH?



ROBERT FLYNN

Robert Flynn is the director of the University of Ottawa's Centre for Research on Community Services (CRCS), and a professor at the School of Psychology. He is the driving force behind Looking After Children, a process for improving and monitoring how well children and adolescents are doing in foster care and group homes. Professor Flynn is currently a member of several committees and councils concerning child welfare. He received the 2005 Outstanding Leadership in Child Welfare Award from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. During the last years Professor Flynn evaluated the implementation, outcomes, and costs of looking after children, a new resilience-based approach to improving services for young people in out-of-home care.

/ CAN TUTORING HELP FOSTER CHILDREN TO CATCH UP IN READING AND MATH?

Two Randomized Effectiveness Trials

This presentation will describe the results of two recent randomized effectiveness trials of direct-instruction tutoring, that were carried out with children in foster care in the province of Ontario, Canada. The key research question that each study addressed was the following: Does tutoring help children who are residing in foster care catch up to their age peers in basic reading and math skills? Both studies yielded positive answers to this question.

The presentation will consist of four parts. *First*, we will review the need for effective educational assistance for many children in care, and the effectiveness of tutoring in the general population. *Second*, we will describe the first randomized trial, carried out in collaboration with nine local Children's Aid Societies in Ontario, and discuss the method of direct-instruction tutoring that we used. The children in the tutoring group made greater gains in reading and math than those in the wait-list control group; also, although both the girls and boys in the tutoring group improved, the girls made somewhat greater gains than the boys. *Third*, we will describe the second randomized trial, conducted in two Children's Aid Societies in northern Ontario with a sample composed mainly of Aboriginal children (80%) in foster care. As in the first study, the tutoring group made greater improvement in reading and math than the control group. *Fourth*, we will suggest how practitioners and researchers in Norway and other countries may collaborate in conducting and evaluating tutoring interventions for children in care.

FORELESER #13

INGRID HÖJER / YOUNG PEOPLE IN PUBLIC CARE: PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION IN EUROPE (YIPPEE)



INGRID HÖJER

Ingrid Höjer is a Professor in social work at the University of Gothenburg - Chair of the Section of teaching and research on families and children. Professor Höjer has worked with the Swedish study/part of the YIPPEE project. She is also a member of several research networks, both national and international. Professor Höjer's professional expertise is listed as: Social work with- and research on children and families, child welfare, foster care, and young people leaving care.

/ YOUNG PEOPLE IN PUBLIC CARE: PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION IN EUROPE (YIPPEE)

This project was financed by the EU's seventh framework program. Five countries participated: Denmark, England (coordinators Sonia Jackson and Claire Cameron), Hungary, Spain and Sweden. The aim of the project was to investigate educational pathways after the end of compulsory schooling among young men and women who have been placed in public care, and to consider how their opportunities to access further and higher education could be improved. Initially a literature review was made, covering existing research in the area in all five countries. Secondary data was also collected, followed by interviews with managers from local authorities about policies and practices concerning children and young people in care and education. All in all, 170 biographical narrative interviews were performed with young people in all of the five countries.

Results from the empirical data were in many aspects very similar. The pre-care experiences of young people frequently included parents who had problems with alcohol and/or drug abuse and/or mental disorders. Most of our interviewees had also experienced disruptions and deficiencies at school, with little support from the school systems. Factors which worked as facilitators for education were stability of placement and schooling, being placed with carers who gave priority to education, access to someone who cared about them and their achievements, and having sufficient financial support and suitable accommodation to pursue their educational objectives. A strong motivation for a better life was also an incentive to strive for better educational achievements.

FORELESER #14

NIELS ROSENDAL JENSEN / EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH LIVING IN RESIDENTIAL CARE



NIELS ROSENDAL JENSEN

Niels Rosendal Jensen is an associate Professor with the Department of Education, at Aarhus University. Rosendal Jensen has extensive experience with research on social education, and vulnerable children. His latest research concerns expertise in teaching practice (ACP). The project has developed and tested an intervention strategy for children living in institutions, with the intention to strengthen the opportunities of children and youth at-risk, both through learning and social inclusion.

/ EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH LIVING IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

Education is seen as the most important means of improving the quality of life, and education has met considerable attention in terms of legislation, policy and practice. However, looked-after children and youth are still not performing well compared to their peers. The reasons why are contested terrain, ranging from family background to lacking encouragement. Emphasizing "origin" often implies a tendency to weight compensative efforts to overcome deficiencies of the past, while stressing the "destination" orients the efforts at the future of the looked-after children and youth.

When emphasizing "origin" the carrier of children and youth is neglected. For example the significance of schooling and personal school experiences is played down, although we have evidence showing that looked-after children and youth are facing severe social and academic problems attending school. Many do not feel welcome in school and are experiencing conflicts with classmates and teachers or experiencing bullying, etc.

With this knowledge we should not be surprised that looked-after children and youth do not pass final examinations of the lower secondary school, or are dropping out of upper secondary vocational or general education. Such facts should not work as a pretext for doing nothing. On the contrary, social pedagogues have to promote education of children and youth in care. Research evidences the significance of;

- Strong mutual relations between looked after children and pedagogues
- Needs of getting advice, counseling, etc. concerning education
- Needs of practical support (homework, etc.)
- Higher expectations on performance
- Recognition and confidence.

Even in secure units – a sort of hybrid institutions containing elements of both prison and youth's home – internal environments with more homely norms and a certain lifespan are necessary.

FORELESER #15

TORIL HAVIK / UNITED FOR LEARNING



TORIL HAVIK

Toril Havik is a specialist in clinical psychology, and is head of the Child Protection Research Unit at UniHealth (UniHelse). She has had responsibility for handling operations across a wide range of problems related to child development. Havik's field of expertise concerns child welfare emphasizing children's development in relief measures and foster homes, and also decision-making processes in child welfare. In recent years she has concentrated on issues related to foster initiative and has conducted research and published on the topic. Havik has led the research project called "SkolFam" - which focus on the important collaboration around the child/youth within the foster family.

UNITED FOR LEARNING

"United for learning" is a project within the research program "Foster-homes for Children's Needs", funded by the Bufdir in cooperation with the research institutes NOVA, RKBU-V, and Fafo.

Aim: The goals were to identify foster-children's needs for educational support and individualized interventions, to implement these interventions within the public school systems during a period of two years, to document the efforts to do so, and evaluate the effects of these interventions.

Study sample: A total of 44 foster-children living in Bergen and attending the first to fifth grades in a communal school, were eligible and invited to participate. 37 children were included in the study, together with their foster-carers, contact-teacher, child-care worker, school psychologist, and school health nurse.

Design: Cognitive level (Wechsler IV), mental health problems (SDQ), physical health, reading skills and mathematical skills were assessed at the start of the project and after two years. During these two years the participants should meet twice each term to review, discuss and support the child's learning. At each meeting they should work out concrete, obtainable goals and means to reach them, and on each the subsequent meeting evaluate degree of goal attainment.

Results: There was a small, but statistical significant improvement in cognitive level (WISC IV scores), and a tendency to better mental health as reported on the SDQ by the teachers - but not by the foster-carers. Most participants rated the child's reading- and mathematical skills, as well as the child's well-being, self-esteem and ability to control feelings and reaction, as improved.



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