



The Finnish day-care centre as an environment for learning social-emotional well-being

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ABSTRACT: Social-emotional well-being and its support are important for young children. In this research we describe how the educators of day-care centres meet the children's social-emotional needs during the everyday practices. The following question will be answered: How and where do the educators encounter children and how do they support children's social-emotional well-being?

The participants of the research were from four day-care centres in Kymenlaakso county and three in Päijät-Häme county. The data were gathered from the day-care centres through photographs and diaries written by the educators in Kymenlaakso and by the researchers' observations in Päijät-Häme. The data was analysed using phenomenological and content analysis. The reflected knowledge contains information about phases of social-emotional development, feelings and needs. The educators created knowledge in several places where they observe and monitor the children and are in interaction with them. According to results, there are still visible moments or longer periods when the educators do not encounter the needs of children. Quiet children may remain invisible and all the participants of the day-care centres do not always identify categorized gender norms.

Keywords: social-emotional well-being, knowledge-creation space, educator, day-care centre

Introduction

Combining theories of well-being with learning theories brings us close to the constituent questions of where, when and with whom children's learning of well-being should be studied (Taylor, 2009). The educators of day-care centres have an important meaning for children's well-being from the point of view of social-emotional support (Walton & Hibbard, 2017). Children are capable of representing their well-being (Honkanen, Poikolainen, & Karlsson, 2018), but more information is needed about how educators encounter children and how they support children's social-emotional well-being.

Work in the day care centres can be described as a multiprofessional teamwork where the teamwork affects interaction intensively. The encounters between day-care educators and children can be interpreted as situations for knowledge creation (Kirvesniemi, 2017). Therefore, we seek confluences of supporting the social-emotional development and emotional knowledge created daily. Knowledge of emotions or feelings is compiled in encounters and situations in day care and it includes interpretation of the knowledge and choosing frames for the action (e.g. Goffman, 1974; Puroila, 2002). Educators in day care use combinations of strategies with different means, such as directly modifying the children's activities supporting them in challenging situations and providing the children with different strategies to manage challenging situations themselves (Kurki, 2017). The educators are the socializers of young children, building their emotional competence. They also teach children how to cope with different emotions (Connors-Burrow, Patrick, Kyzer, & McKelvey, 2016; Denham, Basset, & Zinsler, 2012; Walton & Hibbard, 2017.) In this task, educators utilize emotional knowledge.

Emotional knowledge, or knowledge about emotions indicates the knowledge gathered by intuition, immediate sensations and fleeting feelings that are based on uncertainty and are difficult to verbalize. It differs from the rational, objective, general and verbalized knowledge of experts (Denham et al., 2012). The knowledge gathered in interaction or by observation is essential when perceiving the zone of proximal development of the children (Hakkarainen, 2010; Vygotski, 1982). If the day-care educators capture the knowledge of children's needs for development, it is possible to modify and rework education at an early stage of childhood education. The gathering and interpretation of emotional knowledge determine the role of the educator, the space and the situation for supporting social-emotional development (Kirvesniemi, 2017).

In this research we are not interested in the diagnoses, which are often interlinked to the concept of social-emotional well-being. Instead, we ask: How and where do educators encounter children? How do they support children's social-emotional well-being?

The day-care centre as an environment for learning social-emotional well-being

It has been stated that place and space are constitutive dimensions of children's lives (Duhn, 2012). Place often refers to a certain familiar physical place, such as home or a day-care centre. The concept can also refer to a sense of belonging, and a feeling of comfort and security. Here place means a recognizable, physical, built place which has clear boundaries that you can see or you know (Duhn, 2012; Poikolainen, & Honkanen, 2019). Space refers to a mental state, meaning emotions and senses, for example, experiencing social-emotional well-being in a certain place. From the pedagogical perspective we propose that certain places are spaces where children also learn well-being. So, it is important for the professionals of early childhood education to identify and to be aware of the factors, which affect children's behaviour. It is also important that the adults, educators, identify their own attitude and reactions in different situations (Walton & Hibbard, 2017). Thus, through self-reflection they are able to support the social-emotional development of the children (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012; Denham, Brown, & Domitrovich, 2010) and create knowledge.

Social-emotional well-being

In this article the key concepts are social-emotional well-being and emotional knowledge. Children learn well-being when they interact with other people. Interpersonal relationships are important for children's subjective well-being (see Crivello et al., 2009). *Well-being* is an elusive concept, and it is open to numerous definitions and methodological approaches. Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead (2009) observe that "*Well-being is a socially contingent, culturally-anchored construct the changes over time, both in terms of individual life course changes as well as changes in socio-cultural context.*" In European countries, children's well-being has been defined and is studied using several indicators, for example, health, subjective well-being, personal relations, material resources, education, risk-taking behaviour, and the type of housing and environment. Such information has been gathered through several fact-finding systems. (Bradshaw & Richardson, 2009.) Here we lean on positive well-being which is based on the strengths. For example social-emotional skill can be taught, and these skills are needed when unpleasant matters and situations are met. The main goal of children's growth is optimal development (Lippman, Moore, & McIntosh, 2011). Children's positive well-being means psychic, physical and social equilibrium, which are based on the contexts of everyday life and social interaction, especially within a family but also in institutions, such as day-care centres.

Social-emotional well-being refers to sense of feeling well-being. To recognize different feelings and to cope with disturbing events children need guidance and therefore the educators need to be aware of the effects of emotions on well-being. Children need adults to act as their mirror in order to learn the regulation of emotions. Verbal and nonverbal instructions help children to clarify and link the expressions of emotions (Denham et al., 2012). Here a suitable concept is also social-emotional competence, which means the regulation of emotional expressiveness and knowledge of emotions (Connors-Burrow et al., 2017; Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010). The day-care centre is a place for children to learn academic tasks, such as maths, writing, reading etc. Further, it is a place for learning social-emotional well-being, i.e. learning how to play with other children and how to interact with adults. (Denham et. al, 2010.)

Home is an important place for learning how to cope with other people, but day-care centre offers usually wider possibilities to interact with many kinds of people and groups. The regulation of emotions needs practice: how to monitor and express emotions in a constructive way (Denham et al., 2012). A specific thing or event can be associated with positive, negative or neutral experiences. Socially skilled children are prosocial to peers, and that is a skill, which helps in many challenging social situations through lifespan. Emotionally stable people usually report fewer negative thoughts than emotionally unstable people (Luhmann, Hawkley, & Cacioppo, 2014). Therefore it is very important for children how they and their experiences are encountered. For example, the adults should teach the children how to cope with disturbing situations. The task is not easy. Emotional knowledge differs from the rational knowledge of experts (Denham et al., 2012). Emotional knowledge is constructed by intuition and therefore it is difficult to verbalize. If the employees of the day-care centre are trained to evaluate children's` social-emotional competences, they have possibility to support positive development of social-emotional skills (Connors-Burrow et al., 2017; Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010). Teaching those skills means also teaching and learning well-being. To gain and interpret emotional knowledge in daily encounters is a measure to find situations and places to learn social-emotional well-being. A more detailed account of emotional knowledge and knowledge creation is given in the following section.

Emotional knowledge as an outcome of knowledge creation

Early childhood education is based on the national core curriculum (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2017), so the work in a day care centre can be defined as target-orientated. Thus it is obvious that work in day care centre is based on knowledge, which originates from multiple sources. Primarily knowledge originates from one's` experience, consciousness and perceptions, which are converted into knowledge after gaining significance. Although knowledge creation is originated from individuals (Nonaka,

Toyama & Konno, 2000), in a work context it usually comes into existence in encounters with other people. Berger and Luckmann (1966) define knowledge and reality as social constructions. Kirvesniemi (2017) argues that day-care centre educators' experience and creation of knowledge affirmed the presence of such knowledge in the everyday activities of day-care centres. Such knowledge is qualitative, practical, workaday knowledge in character and is obtained from observations, interaction and documentation. In encounters with children, emotions are used in many matters, which can be seen as a basis for well-being learning.

Emotional experiences can produce emotional knowledge, for example, when considering success, unsuccessful or threatening factors. According to Myllyniemi (2004), emotional knowledge can be false but not dishonest. Bereiter (2002) outlines a concept of impressionistic knowledge when situations or ideas feel right or it does not feel right, even if the matter is unfamiliar. According to Bereiter (2002, 45, 142) these kinds of emotions are knowledge. Also, Takeuchi and Nonaka (2004, 4) base their knowledge-creation theory on the conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. In their conception, tacit knowledge consists of two dimensions. On the one hand, tacit knowledge is connected to practical work and know-how. On the other hand, it has a cognitive dimension, which includes emotions. Emotional knowledge is a matter of emphasizing intuition, experience, sense perception and fleeting moods as the basics to uncertain and intangible knowledge. It differs from expert knowledge, which is usually rational, objective, universal and verbal (Kääriäinen, 2003).

In a day-care centre children are learning to live together. Educators need skills to promote the social-emotional competence of toddlers and pre-school children. Daily events in the day-care centre provide copious opportunities for social and emotional learning. Therefore, it is fundamentally important that educators identify such moments and make the most of them (Connors-Burrow et al., 2016). Effective learning takes place in the group, both in children's active participation in events and by observation of the emotions and social interaction of others. In social and emotional events in a group of children, the educator has an important role in supporting their social-emotional competence (Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010). When an educator identifies such moments in daily events (e.g. in encounters or interactions) in a group of children, the interpretation is knowledge creation (Kirvesniemi, 2017). In this process, emotional knowledge is one contributor. Emotions convey crucial information that can guide interaction; an inability to interpret emotions can make the day-care centre a confusing place. Educators' emotional ability is related to their reactions to children's emotions. The awareness of an educator's own emotions contributes to perceiving or reacting to children's emotions (Denham et al., 2012). In this article we interpret emotional knowledge as knowledge

which, in this case, originates from encounters in day-care centres and retains the perception of emotions of both children and educators.

Work in the day-care centre

Work in the day-care centre can be described as *interaction work*. Early childhood education and care are mainly carried out verbally (Karila & Nummenmaa, 2006). Verbal guidance is more important the younger the children are. In the day-care centre, most interaction is directed towards children, but interaction with the parents and co-workers are essential as well (Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010). The core competences in work in a day-care centre are related to co-operation and interaction (Karila & Nummenmaa, 2001, 33).

Work in a day-care centre is multiprofessional. The kindergarten teachers have basic training about caring, social work or early childhood education. Pedagogical work should be planned according to the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care (2017), but still there are moments when operations in an instance and with intuition characterize pedagogical work. Work in a day-care centre is often described as teamwork, as the educator looking after a group of children work closely together. At its best teamwork makes it possible to value the viewpoints and know-how of all members, and so utilize the potential of multiprofessional work (Karila & Nummenmaa, 2001, 41).

When the day-care centre is examined as a physical place, the actual building is the centre of attention. The physical place usually involves a yard, which is surrounded by a fence. Early childhood education work is mainly carried out inside the day-care centre building and inside the fence of the yard. Occasionally, the group of children and their educators move outside the day-care building and yard (e.g. to forests, parks, a church or a library). So, the day-care moves to the other places (Paju, 2013, 79; Kirvesniemi, 2017). Paju (2013) describes the action of the children in the day-care centre as paths of time and space. These paths guide the children's movement and settling in different spaces. As a simile, the day-care centre educators related paths to the paths of an anthill when they described their work. The day-care centre, as a whole form, is a versatile educational environment. The physical environment can also offer opportunities to learn social-emotional well-being as well as providing opportunities for interaction between children and educators (Connors-Burrow et al., 2016).

Besides the verbal interaction and guidance, it is crucial to observe the action, playing, skills and abilities of children. Observation is a significant part of the work (e.g. when perceiving the zone of proximal development of the children) (Hakkarainen, 2010; Vygotski, 1982). When it comes to social-emotional well-being, the situations in groups of children are not necessarily easy to comprehend. According to Kögäs (2018), the

educators in a day-care centre can have difficulties in recognizing the peer culture in a group of children. In addition to observation, documentation is of great significance. On the one hand, pedagogical documentation in early childhood education relates to measuring the learning results (the Anglo Saxon tradition), and on the other hand, it represents the development and learning (including educational environment and processes) as holistic and guiding, (the sociopedagogical tradition) (Rintakorpi, 2018). Documentation is also linked to the knowledge creation in a day-care centre (Kirvesniemi, 2017) especially when it succeeds to capture completeness of children's everyday life including e.g. emotions.

Participants, data and analysis

The participants of the research were the educators (e.g. kindergarten teacher, childminder, assistant) from four day-care centres from Kymenlaakso county ($N=12$) and three from Päijät-Häme county ($N=13$). We do not examine the data by professional groups therefore all employees in the daycare centre educate children and that is why we call them educators. Above all, from the perspective of the children, the educator's professional title or educational background is irrelevant.

The data was gathered by diaries (89 pages), written and photographing by the participants (in Kymenlaakso) and by observation diaries of two researchers (in Päijät-Häme). Different research methods draw a rich picture of the everyday life in the day-care centres. By combining different methods we can achieve a more accurate view of the research topic and the phenomenon can be examined from different perspectives. In this paper the day care centre as a well-being learning environment is viewed from the educators' standpoint and their experience as well as from the observer. We recognize the emphasized role of the researcher in the research process and the fact that as well as research context, the intentions and expectations of the researcher may influence the production of the observation data (Kirvesniemi, 2017). However, with help of the researchers' contribution, the interaction between children and adults may come more visible in different situation. Diaries as methods of data gathering is characterized participatory since in diary studies, people provide frequent reports on the events and experiences of their daily lives. These reports capture the particulars of experience in a way that is not possible using traditional design. (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli 2003.) In diary research the data is gathered in natural work context as well as characteristics of the work situation, which may fluctuate on a daily basis (Ohly, Sonnentag, Niessen, & Zapf 2010). Also, in this research the diaries form a rich data about participants and researchers' perceptions and thoughts. Photography as a research method is related to

autoethnographic orientation (Scarles 2010), and in this research it is a measure of self-documentation.

The participants gathered data during the everyday working situations. Questions in the diary opened the view of an educator to knowledge and knowledge creation to gain information about interaction between educators and children in different situations. The researchers pointed their interest on the same topics when they collected the observation data.

In Kymenlaakso, the data was gathered via probe consisting diary. The participants were also requested to take photographs during their workday. Twelve participants wrote a personal diary for two weeks. The diary included instructions for every day and contained 2–3 questions per day: what kind of knowledge the participants gained (heard, saw, observed...) in their working day or what kind of conversations the participant had with children, for example. The structure of the questions was open, and therefore, it was possible to describe one's experiences, viewpoints and thoughts quite freely, unprepared, in different situations during the workday. The participants were asked to write in the diary during the workday or at the end of it. One of the day-care centres was operating round-the-clock and the other during daytime. It was stressed that the researcher was interested in every educators' personal experience, viewpoint and thoughts, and it was crucial that the diary should be written independently.

In Kymenlaakso the educators were also asked to take photographs during their workday. The instruction was to photograph situations or places which the participant found abundant in knowledge creation. The qualifier abundant was not only quantitative. It aimed to further the participants to pay attention to situations or spaces which they experienced important during their workday from a knowledge creation point of view. The participants were asked to briefly describe why the situation or the space was chosen.

The research approach used to analyse the photographs ($n = 90$) was both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative analysis was applied to describe the different content in them. The content analysis was based on the apparent and literal meanings of the content seen in the photographs. This approach to analysis is defined as denotation (Emmison, Smith, & Mayall, 2012). The educators gave deeper meanings to their photographs like e.g. a shot from a hall had an annotation *"Here I got my first bit of knowledge of the day: Hey XXX! We are going to the trip to the forest."*

In Päijät-Häme observation was used to gather the research data. Two researchers observed the daily life of six children's ($n=115$) groups in three day-care centres, which were open during daytime. The targets of the observation were well-being and safety of the children, as well as functional and communal participation: What kind of

opportunities the children had to influence to the everyday life of the day-care centre? How the children could express their views and highlight the issues that mattered to them? How the adults enabled the children to participate and how the well-being and safety of children was taken care off?

Researchers visited four times in two day-care centres and five times in one. Both researchers used about 30 hours to observation and kept the observation diaries (20 pages, Calibri 11, row spacing 1) and took photographs (54 pieces) and videos (10 hours) to support the diaries. Observation with two researchers instead one strived to increase the reliability of the study. The limiting factor was that researchers did not have the possibility to make long-term observations in the day-care centres.

Observation is one of many possible ways to gather knowledge about the everyday practices of day-care centres and the interaction there. For educators of the day-care centre, the presence of an observer, a researcher, requires readiness to let an outsider examine their workday and the ways of action of the day-care community. The participants were informed that the results of the observation could be utilized in the day-care centres if one wants to develop work practices reflecting of own work. At the same time, it is also a means of creating a working culture, which develops support and discussion. Observation is a useful method for gaining information about the interaction between an adult and a child in different situations.

The data produced by researchers and educators were analysed separately. Researchers' observation diaries were analysed with content analysis. Photographs and videos were used to support the observation diaries. For example notice "*preschool group does not get much encouragement or praise during the morning, instead more often, adults say instructions or bans*" could be verified from the video.

Probe research, as a method of collecting data, has a strong interest in the experiences of participants. The research was not purely phenomenological as the diary consisted theory-oriented questions, so the analysis of the diaries was carried out by interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and content analysis. Smith and Osborn (2008) define the target of IPA in order to examine it in detail and to understand how the participants perceive their personal and social world. Smith (2004) connects IPA (corresponding its name) to phenomenological research, and because the research subject is formed of the experiences of an individual and their meanings. The difference between these two research approaches is that IPA strongly recognizes the role of the researcher. IPA strives for decreasing the complexity of empirical research data and compressing the data via strict, thorough and systematic analysis.

According to Smith and Osborn (2008), IPA proceeds from the individual to the general. In practice, this means analysing through a diary of the studied time period and making preliminary compressions and interpretations, which are the basis for themes. In this study the analysis proceeded by first paying attention to the topics of the research questions, and secondly it examined what matters connect these experiences in relation to earlier studies. As the analysis process continues, these themes are classified into categories, which are general descriptions and can be interpreted with relation to former research and theories. The research materials were analysed utilizing inductive analysis, which is suitable for the analysis of many kinds of materials (Lawless & Chen, 2018). The written data was analysed first, and secondly the photographs.

Research ethics were respected during the whole research process. Research permissions were gathered from the authorities of the case cities, the participants of the day-care centres and parents (from parents only in Päijät-Häme). A few of the parents did not give permission, and these decisions were respected. The data was anonymised. (see e.g. TENK, 2018.) Because some parents did not give a research permission, this was taken into account when making observation notes and producing other data. As Lämsä (2016) has stated, in such a situation, it is essential to distinguish between what the researcher hears or sees to what material comes out as a research data. Only the children who had permission to participate the research were included in the observation diaries and other data. On the other hand, in these cases the child does not have the power to make a decision on the matters concerning themselves. Written research permission of the parents partly ensures research ethics, but can also be an obstacle, even restricting listening to the child's voice. (Honkanen, Poikolainen, & Karlsson, 2018.)

Results

In this research was developed out further an approach to social-emotional well-being and learning in the day-care centre. Knowledge creation occurs in the everyday practices, usually you do not recognise it. First, we represent how and where the educators encountered the children. Second, we analyse how they support children's social-emotional well-being.

Knowledge-creation places to capture emotional knowledge

In the diaries, the educators wrote that they received knowledge from children both as a group and as individuals. Knowledge from the group was about the action of a certain moment or before: how the action proceeded, if the children were motivated to participate in the action and what kind of atmosphere there was in the group. At the same

time, educators reflect on their own action and apply that information to a situation in a group of children. Knowledge from an individual child was received by listening especially to her or him in conversation or by observation of the child. These issues were also visible in the observation material.

The photographs reveal that knowledge creation within the day-care centre occurs in a number of physical contexts, such as in encounters and interaction with the children, their parents and fellow workers indoors, in the yard and in the immediate surroundings of the day-care centre. Twenty-four photographs were taken outdoors, from which 11 were taken in the day-care centre yard. The other outdoor photos were taken on trips in the forests or other surroundings. The yard was described as a very important place for knowledge creation. Observing children's play, movement and action is a crucial measure for knowledge creation. In some of the pictures, the educators were taking part in a children's café play. It is noteworthy that while the educators were playing with children, they were also having a conversation with each other and observing the playing of the children. As the photographs from the trips are examined, it is notable that these trips seem to bring out versatile and affluent knowledge from the children and their lives outside the day-care centre.

Halls and mudrooms are places where the day-care educators encounter the children on a daily basis. Those are spaces in the middle of two worlds. Parents take part in undressing and dressing the children, but soon the day with the educators begins. The halls appeared as multifunction spaces. Besides dressing and undressing, the hall was space for playing. For example, the children might play hairdresser in the hall because there is a mirror there. A hall has been described as a place for the movement from one action to another. Often after resting time children get dressed in the hall. These situations can be peaceful encounters between children and educators presenting the opportunity for knowledge creation and gentle teaching and nurturing as was noted also in the observation data.

In a description of a photograph observing the children, playing was mentioned as a source of information. Conversations with the children while they were doing other things were recognized as sources of information as well. These kinds of conversation took place during meals, for example. There were more planned educational actions in the groups of children over three years old, and they were opportunities for educators to gain information about many things (e.g. the child's ability to concentrate, committing to action and potential needs for special education).

Bodily knowledge was included in photographs, although it was not mentioned in the descriptions of the photographs. Bodily knowledge appears in situations where the educator is playing with children or is holding them in his or her lap. Bodily knowledge

can relate to a child's emotions, relaxation or tension at that moment. For example, in a photograph taken by a kindergarten teacher, she is sitting on the floor and the children are playing around. One child is sitting on her lap, laid back. When analysing the photograph from a bodily knowledge point of view, the physical inconvenience of sitting on a hard floor combines with the warm togetherness of being with the children.

Outdoors knowledge creation places and places for undirected play or action offer many opportunities to observe children's social-emotional competences. Monitoring the children in educational places offer possibilities to notice the situations and needs for supervising (see Kurki, 2017).

The reflected knowledge contains information about the children's know-how, phases of development, feelings and needs. The educators monitor the children continually, and the aim seems to be to behave and think reflectively. The staff encountered many kinds of feelings of children during the day, and solved these together with children. There are still visible moments or longer periods when the needs of children are not encountered. Quiet children stay invisible and categorized gender norms are not always identified.

The following table 1 is constructed based on the main results, and in the following the results are opened up in detail.

TABLE 1 Encountering and social-emotional support in knowledge-creating places

<i>ENCOUNTERING STYLE</i>	<i>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT</i>	<i>KNOWLEDGE-CREATING PLACE</i>
Observation	Attention and consolation	Places for free play (outdoor, playroom)
Monitoring	Supervision	Educational places (action rooms)
Interaction	Chat	Hall, dining room

Observation: finding hiding, quiet children

The emotional, sensitive observation of children is important, and therefore, during everyday practices, many tiny acts are done to actually see the children. Adults pay attention to and console children when they are annoyed (also Kurki, 2017). For example, in our research, the crying child is picked up; attention is paid to the child by asking if something is distressing them; and the one withdrawing from the group is soothed.

One boy is crying. The nurse walks up close to him and starts to comfort him. The other children do not pay any attention to them, they continue getting dressed into clothes which are suitable for the cold weather.

(Observation extract 1)

However, some children are quieter and more invisible than others in the child groups, while the socially active children get more attention and space in the groups. Situations in which a child played alone for a long time without any contact from the adults or the other children were found in the groups.

In particular, quiet girls are sometimes left to play alone. For example, one girl stayed alone for longer than one hour. Occasionally she stared at other children who were playing and talking in the same room. She had some problems with speech and interaction skills, but she did not get any help to start to play with other children.

One girls stands 20 meters from other children. There is no interaction between the other children. Not one of the educators of the day-care centre tries to help her with the interaction. She stays alone for a long period.

(Observation extract 2)

It is possible that somebody remains alone because he or she wants to have his or her own play moment, but it is necessary to think that he or she may also be left alone when they do not want that. In the directed action, the adults try to choose children equally, so that everyone will be able act in their turn. In certain situations – for example, in a situation in which children are asked to answer questions or suggest what to play – both the adults and the children will first choose boys, as a rule. The girls seem to be more used to waiting for their turn. On the other hand, the gender roles are also seen when the children divide the boys' and girls' play.

The children also bring their needs into sight very differently (Kurki, 2017). For example, some children may not experience that they have been sufficiently chosen for the activities or had enough adult attention, and they express this clearly. Some children, however, withdraw and they do not actively express wanting the attention of the adults (see Connors-Burrow et al., 2016; Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010).

In the groups of a day-care centre, many of the outputs are created collaboratively. For example, simple food can be made together in the small groups. In these groups it is play; the plays enhances confidence and can also support the materialisation of team spirit. Long-term, common projects construct and strengthen communality. The feeling of togetherness is strengthened with rituals; for example, birthday play is repeated in a similar way every time.

Most educators pay attention to the children and comfort them when needed. These actions develop the children's social-emotional development as Connors-Burrow et al., (2016) have noted, too.

Monitoring: Actively supervising children

The educators of a day-care centre monitor the behaviour of the children. When supervising the children, they get information about the children's emotions. For example, they gain it when the adults give simple instructions: *Take the book, Do not go there, Do not push other children.*

Behave yourselves. Stay still. You are not allowed to talk now. Wait for your turn.

(Observation extract 3)

The children react to the instructions differently. In early childhood the key element is to learn to manage one's emotions (Kurki, 2017). On the other hand, sensitive adults can interpret the children's emotions (Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010). One finding of our research was, that the children get encouraging feedback, praise and hear observations. This especially happens in the young children's groups, instead of in the preschoolers groups where the amount of positive feedback decreases. The preschoolers already get considerably more instructions and prohibitions from the adults of the day-care centre.

The participants of a day-care centre get knowledge about the emotions or moods of the children while monitoring or interacting with them. During the workday, they meet a wide range of emotions and handle them with the children. Handling the emotions of the children is actually the core activity in early childhood pedagogy (Kurki, 2017; Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010). This appears in our research especially when something exceptional occurs in the child's life, for example, her or his parents' divorce or serious illness, the educators seem to focus their observation especially on this child. The educators described their observations of an individual child or the whole group of children as follows:

... what kind of mood the children are in or what kind of atmosphere prevails in the group of children.

(Diary 1)

The children very much liked to crawl, slide down the bench and jump on the mattress. They concentrated and were motivated on what they were doing. They were able to be active for 30 minutes.

(Diary 2)

A challenging situation: A small child is scratching other children.

(Diary 3)

On a trip to the forest, one of children got angry, so we had to come back via a shortcut.

(Diary 4)

Children's social-emotional skills and competence develop during supervision. The positive emotional climate in a child group is important for its educators, but maybe the children's voice could be attended to more sensitively in the day-care centres.

Interaction: Chat and discussions with children

Interaction seems to be important for all the educators – they encourage the children to do things together. For example, the educators ask which roles the children want to take when taking part in the activities in the day-care centre. These roles may allow them to join the play as a leader or follower. Also, they may decide in the morning assembly whether they want to tell about their feelings of the morning. Children may vote about what to play and when it is time for free play, where the children themselves decide where, how and with whom they play.

Educators have discussions or chats with children in several kinds of situations. The moments during a meal, during outdoor activities, when dressing before going out and undressing when coming in are situations when children talk to educators about matters and their subjects of interest. Children talk about occurrences at home as well, for instance, what they were doing the other night after a day-care centre day or what they will do when they go home.

Children tell about occurrences at home and in the day-care centre. They tell about their observations, emotions, hopes, joys, sorrows, fears and so on. I think that especially great moments for conversation are breakfast or afternoon snack time when, for some reason, awesome conversations arise about different matters, for example,. Why do tooth fairies need teeth? Are strawberries boys or girls? and so on.

(Diary 5)

After the weekend, almost without exception, the children tell about their doings. In private conversation I ask about their favourite activities, food, colours and so on. Often when we talk about favourite plays, the chat leads to friends and home.

(Diary 6)

The progress of the day can be flexibly regulated by basic needs (e.g. eating, sleeping), for example, letting some child move flexibly from outside to inside. Even though this changes the planned time schedule.

Children's social-emotional development is connected to learning. While the children learn how to cope with different feelings – such as sadness, anger and disappointment – these skills also affect their well-being (see Connors-Burrow et al., 2016; Kurki, 2017). Our research finding is, that chatting between the educators and children occurs often, sometimes even continually, but this depends on the conversation culture of the day-care centre.

Reflections and conclusions

The versatile data of this study indicates the several possibilities offered to the day-care educators pedagogical approach to promote social-emotional skills and well-being of the children. The places for creating knowledge, for example, knowledge about social-emotional issues, are situated around the day-care centre in which everyday life is lived. Informal physical places are suitable for chatting and in the gentle collaborative guidance of children; the attitude to work follows the culture and norms of the day-care centre. Early childhood education is knowledge-based expert work, and therefore it was surprising to sometimes observe or read the diaries of educators who were not aware of the importance of recognizing the encountering moments in which the social-emotional skills develop. When linking knowledge creation in day-care centre work to the knowledge creation spiral (see Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2004), the essential phase is socialization, when educators are working side by side with each other, encountering children and interacting with them. Furthermore, it is important that the knowledge created in socialization is shared with others in the phase of externalization. When it comes to emotional knowledge, in other words, to knowledge linked strongly to social-emotional themes, it is important to share the experiences with others. The observation of children's social-emotional skills produces knowledge, which can be used when planning interventions aiming to enhance children's emotional skills (Connors-Burrow et al., 2016). Sensitive educators learn children's ways of expressing emotion when they work in a group of children.

Emotions convey information: how to interact and interpret emotions. The educators should intentionally teach emotional skills. Adults' emotions give the children information about which emotions cause certain reactions (Denham et al., 2012). Supportive conversations are important, the children need to learn how to name their emotions (Denham et al., 2012). If the educators learn to understand emotions, they have a growing capability to regulate those. Several daily occurrences provide educators with many opportunities for sustaining the children's attention and supporting their social-emotional competence. These daily occurrences sometimes contain heightened

emotionality – these are profitable moments in which to learn. Whatever is learned during moments of heightened moments are retained well in one’s memory (Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010).

Studies have shown that social and emotional skills can include an important protective function, for example, among low-income children; children who have the ability to effectively handle their emotions and behaviour despite exposure to multiple risk factors are more likely to do better than their peers (Rosenthal & Gatt, 2010). At this point of view it is important to stress everyday situations, spaces or places in promoting emotional skills. These opportunities may feel rather trivial and momentary passing by quickly, so the crucial emotional knowledge will be unnoticed. Emotional knowledge may be hidden behind other observed skills, e.g. academic or motoric skills of the children. In this case pedagogical potential possibilities in social-emotional skills are not utilized (Conners-Burrow et al., 2016). Therefore we emphasize collective approach to creating emotional knowledge. Individual knowledge creation obtained from observations and interaction needs reflecting with other educators. According to knowledge creation spiral (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2004) this reflecting and sharing relates to tacit or personal knowledge conversion to explicit and conscious knowledge.

The conscious pedagogy of places can open and create new forms of learning spaces (Duhn, 2012). Learning does not only refer to academic issues; children need information about how to promote emotional ability and navigate everyday life in the day-care centre. When designing the pedagogical education of educators, social-emotional theories should be in the curriculum. Social-emotional well-being is, in some respects, related to peer skills or coping with others (see Lippman, Moore, & McIntosh, 2011). If educators observe and recognize critical social-emotional situations and supervise children in such situation, there is an opportunity to prevent such things as bullying (Laaksonen, 2014) or peer exclusion in the group (Pikkumäki & Peltola, 2017). Educators do not always encounter the needs of children. Particular attention should be paid on categorized gender norms and when acting with quiet children.

The research results are influenced by the theoretical background and research context (Poortman & Schildkamp, 2011). Here, the theoretical framework was based on research on the social-emotional well-being. We generalised qualitatively the findings of this research by comparing earlier identified theoretical constructs and research findings. We used multiple methods to gain the higher construct validity, and using a systematised approach to data production and analysis that was consistent with the research questions advanced reliability of research.

More research is needed about this topic. Also, additional training about social-emotional development should be aimed at all the educators of day-care centres (see Conners-Burrow et al., 2016; Walton & Hibbard, 2017) because they need be able to analyse the needs of the children and teach them the words and skills how to express their emotions (Conners-Burrow et al., 2016; Kurki, 2017). The task is not easy; therefore, macro-level cultural and structural processes produce learning spaces, which are culturally constructed.

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