

## **The joint leadership of early childhood education in the light of contrasting discourses**

This article investigates the discourses behind the joint leadership of early childhood education (ECE). Joint leadership is seen as distributed leadership, where dialogue and a common understanding about the reality of the organisation are central. The aim of the study was to investigate the ECE staff's various discourses about joint leadership. The data were collected by e-mail interviews in 2017. The staff of each child group were asked to discuss the results of the leadership assessment in 2015 and to write a summary of the discussion. The data were analysed using discourse analysis. The positive discourse of joint leadership was found to be built on trust, which empowered the staff. A more critical discourse was connected to the theme of instability and uncertainty. The numerous organisational and staff changes emerged as reasons for dissatisfaction. The results of the study indicate that satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the leadership are related to viewing leadership as a holistic part of the organisational culture.