Organizing for sustainable professional development in early childhood education and care

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- The third largest city in Sweden with just over 330,000 inhabitants
- A young, growing, multicultural city
Early childhood education in Sweden

- An integrated preschool for education and care for children from 1 to 5 years old
- A national curriculum since 1998
- Provided at the municipal level
- 84% enrolment rate (95% of 5-year-olds)
- 41.6% of the staff are teachers with a university degree
Background

• Criticism from the Swedish schools inspectorate in 2011
• From 10 city districts to one early childhood education department in 2013
• A key challenge: providing education and care of an equally high quality for all children
The early childhood education department in Malmö

- 17,000 children
- 250 preschools
- 55 heads of preschools
Organizing for sustainable professional development: central aims

1. The pedagogical encounter between child and teacher is central. The focus of improvement efforts is the possibility for each child to have a safe, joyful and educative preschool experience.
Organizing for sustainable professional development: central aims

2. Preschool staff have opportunities for collaborative learning, access to support in their own practice, and possibilities to exchange knowledge and experience with other professions.
Organizing for sustainable professional development: central aims

3. Heads of preschools are engaged in the processes of professional development. They have opportunities for collaborative learning and exchanging experiences.
Organizing for sustainable professional development: central aims

4. Processes of professional development are designed with a purpose to gain a deeper knowledge, and to challenge pre-existing assumptions.
5. There is a clearly pronounced objective for the organisation. There is a trustful relationship between different parts of the organisation, where all parts rely on that everybody is striving towards that same objective, from their different positions and perspectives.
Questions to be addressed

• What conditions for the pedagogical leaders are needed to support professional learning?
• What methods for professional learning can be used to support sustainable, research-informed, context-based inquiry?
Preschool lead teachers

- Work closely to the head of the preschool
- A role model in the daily work with the children
- Facilitate local processes of professional learning
A collaborative learning forum for all heads of preschools

- Supports a transformed leader practice
- Different themes related to the pedagogical leadership
- Facilitators to support the process of collaborative learning
Research circles

• Shifting positions of power- an emancipatory perspective
• Collaborative knowledge construction based on what takes place in the pedagogical practice
• In research circles participants undertake empirical studies which are interpreted and discussed by all participants
Peer review through preschool visits

• The aim is to enhance the ability to reflect on the preschool practice
• Quality criteria based on the national curriculum
• Self review combined with peer review
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