



Multicultural parents and pedagogical  
partnership. Parents' views on  
municipal daycare in  
the metropolitan area.

"We learn from each other, everywhere and  
in every kind of situations."

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<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>This final project links to the Moniku project: Social empowerment in multicultural early childhood education in the metropolitan area. The aim of this study is to produce new and important information about pedagogical partnership and to offer concrete proposals on how to develop it. The focus group is the small ethnic minorities within municipal daycare services in the capital area.</p> <p>Qualitative research methods were used in the study: specifically I have used semi-structured theme interviews. The themes were based on different theories of pedagogical partnership, namely those developed by Kirsti Karila, Marja Kaskela and Marjatta Kekkonen. In addition, I took account of the writings from Iram Siraj-Blatchford and Priscilla Clarke, who emphasized the multicultural dimensions of pedagogical partnership and parental involvement.</p> <p>The study demonstrates that the presence of various ethnic backgrounds can be challenging for daycare. To lower the thresholds between home and daycare worlds is an everyday aim for both parents and daycare workers. The ethnic minorities attach meanings to cultural issues in their own distinctive ways, and I recommend that daycare workers approach these with open standpoints.</p> <p>Adaptation in a multicultural society is required from both sides, immigrants and other people surrounding them. These adaptation processes require time, possibilities and resources from all parties. In order for the authorities to implement suitably tailored integration plans together with the families, significant cultural competence is demanded also from daycare workers. The Finnish society as a whole gains from culturally sensitive approaches in early childhood education. It is most important to develop this educational basis, which serves all children and their families in Finland.</p>			
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<p>Tämän opinnäytetyön linkki työelämään on hanke nimeltään Moniku. Hankkeeseen liittyi keskeisesti sosiaalinen vahvistaminen pääkaupunkiseudun monikulttuurisessa varhaiskasvatuksessa. Moniku-hanke kehitti ja keräsi vuosina 2005 - 2007 yhteisiä toimintamalleja ja käsitteitä pääkaupunkiseudun päivähoitoon. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on ollut tuottaa uutta ja tärkeitä tietoja kasvatuskumppanuudesta monikulttuuristen perheiden ja kunnallisen päivähoiton työntekijöiden välillä. Kohderyhmänä ovat olleet pienimmät etniset vähemmistöt pääkaupunkiseudulla.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyöni on pääosin laadullinen tutkimus. Tutkimusmenetelmänä on ollut puolistrukturoitu teemahaastattelu. Haastatteluteemat pohjautuvat keskeisesti suomalaisten varhaiskasvatustutkijoiden teorioihin kasvatuskumppanuudesta. Lisäksi teemoissa on mukana monikulttuurinen ulottuvuus liittyen erityisesti kulttuurisensitiiviseen asiakkaan kohtaamiseen.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyöni osoittaa että monikulttuurisen perheen kohtaaminen ja palvelu päivähoitossa on haasteellista. Päivähoidon ja perheiden kulttuurisesti erilaisten ajattelutapojen kohtaaminen hedelmällisellä tavalla on jokapäiväinen haaste niin päivähoiton työntekijöille kuin asiakasperheille. Etniset vähemmistöt luovat omia kulttuurisia merkityksiä omilla toisistaan eriävillä tavoillaan, joihin tutustuminen on päivähoiton työntekijöille kannattavaa.</p> <p>Monikulttuurisessa yhteiskunnassa on esillä monenlaisia sopeutumisprosesseja, niin maahanmuuttajilla kuin valtaväestölläkin suhteessa toisiinsa. Sopeutuminen ja tutustuminen vaatii aikaa, mahdollisuuksia ja resursseja. Jotta viranomaiset voivat ottaa suunnitella kotoutumista monikulttuuristen perheiden kanssa, on myös päivähoiton työntekijöillä hyvä olla laaja-alaista kulttuurituntemusta. Suomelle on yhteiskuntana eduksi jos päivähoitopalveluissa sovelletaan monikulttuurista osaamista. Tällainen osaaminen on eduksi kaikille lapsiperheille Suomessa.</p>		
Avainsanat		
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The constantly changing situation of multiculturalism in the capital area daycare produces various challenges, and calls for various remedies. It is essential to explore the field of multiculturalism to reveal what a multi-faceted group of people with different language and cultural backgrounds now live in Finland. The meeting between immigrants and the Finnish society brings many challenges: innovative ideas, notions, new partnerships and entrepreneurship, but also uncertainty about the future, unemployment and possible discrimination (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Perhoniemi 2006: 9).

This final project explores one type of partnership that needs to be developed: partnership between multicultural parents and daycare workers. Laws and programmes already exist, but for the values they express to become reality a new administrative culture is needed among the policy makers and authorities of the state and municipalities (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Perhoniemi 2006: 9). My interest in choosing this theme derives centrally from my working life experiences. I will briefly present one such experience with a family:

*Autumn 2005, a kindergarten. A child whose family has fled war in Chechnya. The child hits other children in the group every day during the fortnight I work there. Other children in the group are scared, but keep coming and telling about it. I work as a substitute child-minder and tackle the violent situations with the skills I have. The violent child is also withdrawing and other children isolate the child. I feel the situation in Chechnya has hit me too. The fatigued and silent parent fetches the child in the end of the day and my responsibility is to tell that there has been hitting. A fellow worker informs me that the child is being moved to another kindergarten nearby.*

These events were among those which led me to ponder how relationships can be developed between caregivers, parents and children. In this study I explore what kinds of resources parents and daycare staffs have for developing such relationships. With the data from interviews, I will explore what is required when parents meet workers and information is exchanged in supportive and constructive ways. The theoretical frame of reference is pedagogical partnership, which can give tools to parents and workers for working together.

In this study the concepts of *multiculturalism* and *ethnic minorities* are used to depict the variety of native languages and ethnic backgrounds of immigrants in municipal daycare services. Immigrants in Finland are a very diverse people which consists of refugees, asylum seekers, returning migrants, exchange students etc., who some have needs and legal rights for daycare services. The word *immigrant* refers in general to a person who has moved alone or with family to Finland, either temporarily or permanently. Some immigrants apply for citizenship; some have no need of citizenship. Some immigrants have escaped their native countries for political reasons, some immigrants have specifically and free willingly chosen Finland for family, work or study reasons. For what reasons immigrants settle to Finland affects their adaptation processes. Different types of immigrant families are not specially differentiated in this study.

The language backgrounds of children in daycare age are examined in brief. Most immigrants have another native language than Finnish or Swedish and naturally diverse ethnic backgrounds. When immigrant families gradually with different steps adapt to Finland, they become multicultural families. These families can be also depicted as families with dual, even triple heritages (on dual heritage, see Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000: 7). The heritages that parents transmit to their children are influenced by the surrounding Finnish culture. Families and their members manage on different levels to adopt features of Finnish culture, which helps them build new both personal and family identities in Finland. Anthony Giddens (2001: 688) defines an ethnic group as one which members share a distinct awareness of a common cultural identity, separating them from other groups around them.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

This final project links to a working life development project named Moniku: Social empowerment in multicultural early childhood education in the metropolitan area. The Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare in Helsinki Metropolitan Area coordinated the Moniku project. This Centre focuses on the development of four areas: urban social work, family social work, services for the elderly and finally the area of this study: early childhood education. (Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare in Helsinki Metropolitan Area 2009.)

The Moniku project produced a strategy model and concepts to the capital area cities (Espoo, Helsinki, Kauniainen and Vantaa) in order to implement multicultural early childhood education. Moniku worked within 21 daycare units from the capital area during 2005–2007. These daycare units cooperated in collecting and producing working methods and tools for multicultural early childhood education. (Jauhola, Bisi, Järvi & Rusama 2007: 3.) The Moniku's strategy model consisted of four areas:

- 1) Organisation of multicultural early childhood education in municipalities and guidelines for implementation.
- 2) Pedagogical partnership and support of the child's native language.
- 3) Enhancement of social empowerment and the child's comprehensive well-being by especially the systemization of teaching Finnish as a second language.
- 4) Strengthening the know-how, knowledge and professionalism of workers in early childhood education in the area of multiculturalism.

Social empowerment in multicultural early childhood education meant in Moniku that parents have a possibility to cooperate and the personnel acts as a partner supporting parents' upbringing and teaches the child Finnish language and culture (Jauhola et al. 2007: 3–7). Moniku directed the final projects of pedagogical partnership specifically to Russian-speaking parents and/or Somali-speaking parents. The issues Moniku requested the Stadia students to focus on in pedagogical partnership are examined closer in section 6.1.

Stemming from the Moniku's relationship to working life and ethnic minorities, I considered that also service-user parents, "minorities within a minority", whose native language was other than Russian or Somali would be both an essential and substantial group to approach with interview requests. Niina Remsu notes that the smallest language minorities can be in a vulnerable and unequal position in municipal daycare because there are not necessarily workers who command the family's language [and ethnic background], even if the municipality could employ one. The families in capital area daycare services speak about 80 different languages (Remsu 2006: 20; 47). In multicultural projects it is vital to take notion of all ethnic minorities, whatever sizes the minorities are.

### 3. FEATURES OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN CAPITAL AREA

#### 3.1. Adaptation to Finland

The growth of immigrants in the capital area of Finland since the 1990s has been substantial. Finland is becoming more and more heterogenic; we are receiving people from more and more culturally distant countries. It has been estimated that in Europe every third person under 30 year's old has an immigrant background (Talib 2006: 5). In year 1980 0.7% of the population of Helsinki had another native language than Finnish or Swedish. In year 2008 the same group has grown to 9%. (City of Helsinki Urban Facts 2008: 15.) Also immigrants like refugees have tended to move during their first three years in Finland from their original locations to the capital area or Turku (Ahlgren-Leinvuo 2005: 37–38).

The native languages of habitants in Helsinki has been collected by age groups. By the end of year 2007, the largest ethnic minorities according to the native language in the age group 0–6 years were in size order: Somali, Russian, Arabic, Estonian, Kurdish, English, Albanian, French, Turkic and Vietnamese (City of Helsinki Urban Facts: 110). Some peoples have many native languages, like Finns have Finnish, Swedish or Lappish.

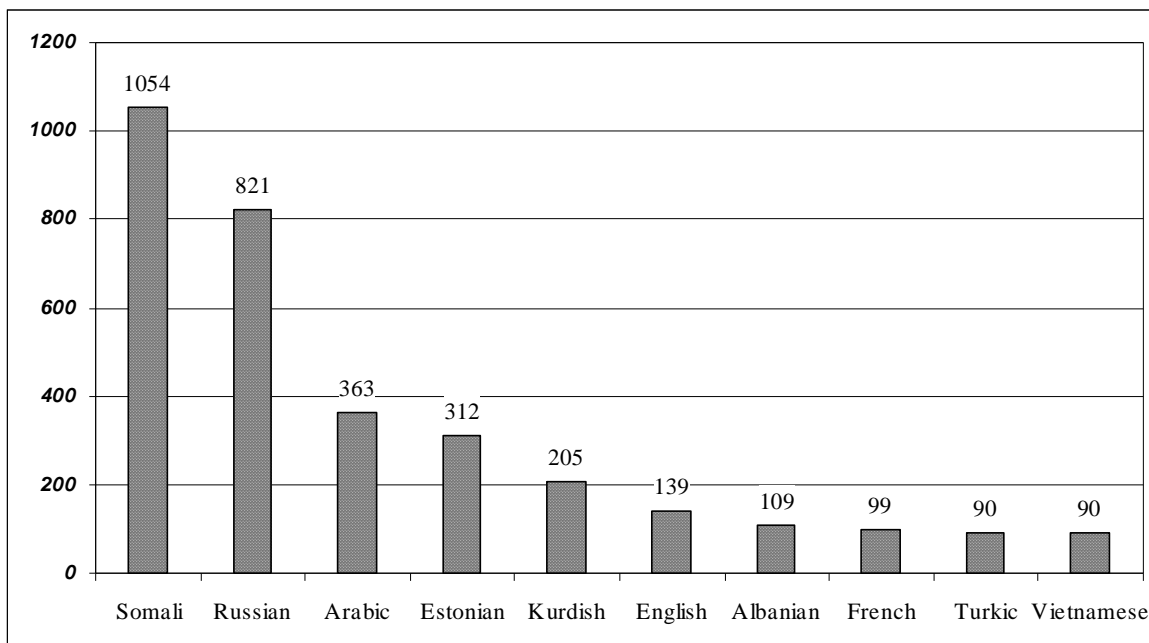


FIGURE 1. The amount of 0–6 years old children (daycare age) in the ten largest ethnic minorities in Helsinki 31.12.2007 (City of Helsinki Urban Facts: 110).



The ways various ethnic minorities adapt to the Finnish society influences also their entrance and usage of such public services like municipal daycare. Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti's and Riku Perhoniemi's (2006: 101–102) longitudinal study, covering years 1997–2004, show that ethnic groups can have very different kinds of problems in adapting to life in the capital area. Their study compared the experiences of seven ethnic groups: Russians, Estonians, Somalis, Arabs, Vietnamese, Turks and ethnic Finns from abroad (the nationality depicts their ethnicity). They remark that it is wise to pay attention to discrimination encountered by Somalis and Arabs, the relatively strong preference among Somalis to stay apart from the Finnish society, the rather frequent lack of social resources among Vietnamese, psychological stress among Russian speaking immigrants, risk of social separation from native Finns among Russian-speakers, poor linguistic self-confidence among Vietnamese, and a stagnation among Arabic speaking immigrants in learning Finnish.

In their study the factors which explain immigrants' underprivileged conditions are unemployment, economic anxieties, health problems and social exclusion. Psychological adaptation to the Finnish society is helped by employment, better economy, learning Finnish and getting involved in social networks. Experiences of discrimination disturb and complicate integration processes and can raise suspicions in the immigrants towards the majority population. (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Perhoniemi 2006: 95–96; 101–102.) It is essential to know each group's features and risk areas. The smallest ethnic minorities also have a risk to be left out of suitable and adequate support.

### **3.1 Ethnic minorities in municipal daycare**

By the end of year 2007, 6.5 % of children in municipal daycare in Helsinki speak another native language than Finnish, Swedish, Russian or Somali, which is a larger figure than the Swedish-speaking amount (6.1 %). Various minorities together with Somali-speaking and Russian-speaking minorities form 11.7 % of all the children in the Finnish-speaking municipal daycare. (Siukola 2008: 33.) In 1999 the corresponding figure was approximately 5 % and 2004 approximately 8 % (Remsu 2006: 9).

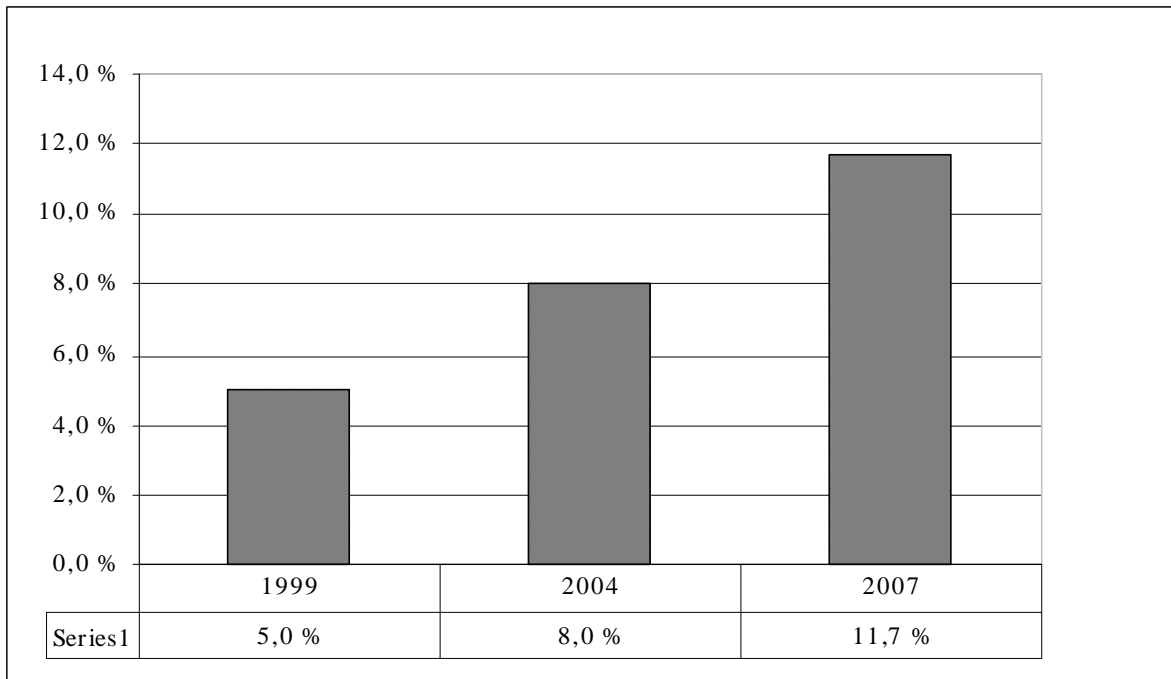


FIGURE 2. The growth of language minorities in municipal daycare 1999–2007 (Remsu 2006: 9; Siukola 2008: 33).

Recent figures about all ethnic backgrounds among daycare service-users than ones with Finnish, Swedish, Russian or Somali backgrounds are not available. However in 2005, Niina Remsu surveyed the multicultural situation in the capital area municipal daycare for the Moniku project. Within Remsu's (2006: 21; 35–36) survey all language backgrounds were mapped. The largest ethnic minorities, after Somali- and Russian-speakers, were: Estonian, Albanian, Vietnamese and English. In Remsu's survey the largest minorities in municipal daycare differ from the current Helsinki City Statistics where under seven-year-old Arabic- and Kurdish-speakers are larger populations than the same age Albanian- and Vietnamese-speakers (City of Helsinki Urban Facts: 110).

Recent statistics about children in municipal daycare in Helsinki reveal that 481 (2.7 %) children whose native language is Somali are in Finnish-speaking municipal daycare and 367 (2.1 %) children whose native language is Russian. In both groups clearly under a half of the age group are among municipal Finnish-speaking day-care services. (City of Helsinki Urban Facts: 110; Siukola 2008: 33–34.)

In Remsu's survey the smallest language groups form in Finnish-speaking daycare form 39 % of the minority language groups, after Somali-, Russian-, Estonian-, Albanian-, Vietnamese and English-speaking groups. The current situation may be different. As earlier mentioned, the Helsinki City

statistics show that the amount of Arabic-speaking under seven-year-olds (in or outside daycare) has passed the amount of similar age English-speakers and Estonian-speakers (City of Helsinki Urban Facts: 110). The multicultural situation in the capital area is interesting and exciting, as always, and requires regular and accurate documentation for purposes like the organisation of daycare services.

The four families who are representatives of ethnic minorities in this final project belong to the smallest groups. In all of the four age groups, 0-6 years, there are under 100 children in Helsinki whose native language is registered Hebrew, Japanese, Lithuanian or Urdu (City of Helsinki Urban Facts: 110). Hebrew-speakers in this age group may be in the official statistics Finnish-speakers, as well as other bilingual children.

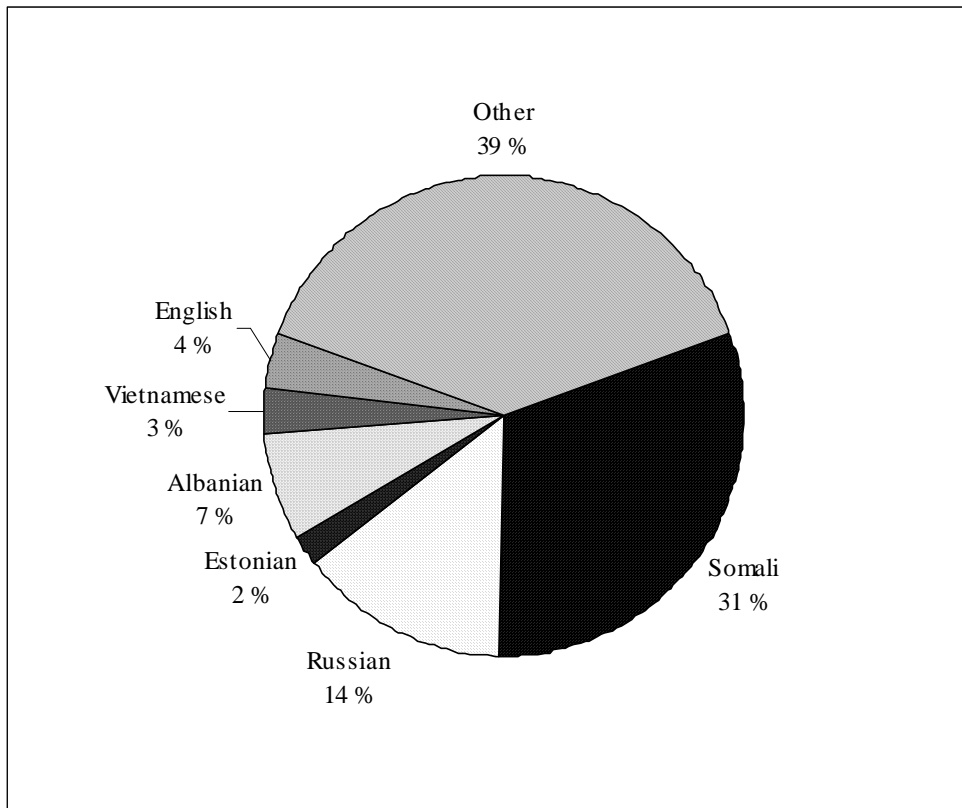


FIGURE 3. The proportions of language minorities in municipal daycare in February 2005 (Remsu 2006: 21; 35–36).

When a multicultural family is part of the daycare services, it is one of the routes by which family can integrate into the Finnish society. The daycare's services can present indispensable opportunities to an immigrant family for both children and parents, who may lack other supportive networks like relatives and friends. The children get to play with other children and learn Finnish, and meanwhile the parents may have an opportunity to study, work or enter other services. Multicultural parents have various resources and readiness to be involved with the daycare services already from the very beginning. The documents to fill in for daycare services can be difficult to understand even to native Finns (Jaatinen & Tillilä 2008: 6).

## **4. MULTICULTURAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

### **4.1 Early childhood education related guidelines**

Finnish law safeguards all ethnic minorities within social welfare and health care services and fosters equality. The law states that nobody may be discriminated against on the basis of age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics (Non-Discrimination Act 21/2004).

The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education (ECEC) in Finland sets guidelines for taking multicultural and diverse ethnic backgrounds into account. These guidelines state that education is linked to culture and constant change in society, which should be considered in the continuous assessment of the implementation of ECEC. (Stakes 2004: 9–14.)

ECEC guidelines set that children belonging to cultural minorities should be provided with opportunities to grow up in a multicultural society as members of both their own cultural communities and Finnish society. The guidelines state that ECEC activities require that staff should have a good cultural understanding to be able to discuss with parents the varying needs of children and parents' educational goals to be recognized on equal terms of reciprocity. The primary responsibility for retaining and developing the child's own language and culture rests with family. However, in cooperation with parents and different cultural communities, efforts are made to maintain children's cultural traditions and to

support their possibilities to express their own cultural background in the ECEC. (Stakes 2004: 33–34.) Each municipality and forwardly each daycare unit also have a curriculum that recognizes these guidelines (Kronqvist & Jokimies 2008: 9; Remsu 2006: 10–11).

United Nations Convention Rights on the Child state in Article 8 that governments should respect children and young people's right to a name, a nationality and family ties. Article 30 stipulates that children and young people have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of people in the country (United Nations Convention Rights on the Child 1989). The Convention also states that parents of young children have certain parental rights, which allow them to influence the quality of education and care their child receives. They should be able to acquire information about early childhood settings, choose between early childhood settings, and modify, express views about and contribute to their child's early childhood setting. (United Nations Convention Rights on the Child cited in Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000: 99.)

#### **4.2 Cultural awareness in daycare**

Cultural awareness belongs to everybody working in health care and social services. In early childhood education settings it is vital for the parent-worker -interaction that workers can understand children from ethnic minorities. This kind of cultural literacy can be assisted by parents and by education. Iram Siraj-Blatchford and Priscilla Clarke emphasize in their book *Supporting Identity, Diversity and Language in the Early Years* that diverse linguistic, family make-up, cultural and religious backgrounds ought to be valued and seen as positive assets, as well as bilingualism, to all early childhood settings (Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000: 70). A daycare unit can be an ideal facility to encounter and realise such diversity like multiculturalism fruitfully in favour for the whole of Finnish society.

Research in a variety of social and cultural communities have shown complex patterns of language use, socialization patterns and learning. Researchers state that home language and culture play a critical role in children's overall development and that people from different cultures have access to very different language socialization experiences. These experiences can result in different paths to second language learning. (Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000: 93–94.) It is a complex challenge to develop different tools for learning Finnish as a second language as the children's home backgrounds equip them with a variety

of readiness to learn Finnish. Children also have different levels of motivation and ability to acquire a second language, which can be enhanced by familiarising oneself with a child's way of learning and with the structures of the child's native language (Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000: 44–47). In the socialization processes of daycare, children can experience an alienating difference between home and daycare settings, and therefore can behave for example in a very restless way or be withdrawing. These kinds of issues can be discussed between daycare professionals and parents. Also family and daycare cultures can differ in their opinions and expectations towards a child's behaviour, and what kinds of standards belong to a child's well-being and upbringing.

As well as there are similarities across cultures; there are differences how children have been exposed to different ways of behaving already from an early age. Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke list that observed cultural and gendered differences include: differences in non-verbal behaviours, accepted turn-taking practices and definitions of leading and following, roles between adults, adult and child roles, cooperation and competition, non-acceptable behaviour and how rules are followed. (Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000: 91–92.) It is a challenge to any worker in daycare to be aware of various cultural (and gendered) differences and practically impossible to always be ready to confront various cultural backgrounds. A suitable aim could be to adopt a positive, open and unprejudiced stand-point, which would promote dynamic interaction and access to mutual understanding, sources of information and education.

## **5. PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIP**

Education happens in different contexts and between individuals and groups. It takes place in both private and public spheres, which affect each other. Education is a cultural phenomenon which appears variously in different daycare units. (Kasvatusvuorovaikutus 2006: 7.) Three perspectives are important in early childhood education, namely those of the parents, the caregivers and the children. These standpoints supplement each other. Quality in early childhood education can be defined as those kinds of features in the surroundings and those kinds of children's experiences which support a child's well-being, growth and development. (Kronqvist & Jokimies 2008: 11–12.) Parents and professional educators should work together to ensure this quality is achieved.

This final project explores the sphere of education and interaction where parents and professional educators meet each other, from the parents' perspective. This can also be conceptualized as a pedagogical partnership, which is viewed closer in the next three chapters. The multicultural dimension in the conceptual framework of pedagogical partnership is also considered.

### **5.1 The worlds of parents and daycare**

Kirsti Karila (2006: 91–92) defines pedagogical partnership as an interactive and equal relationship between parents and daycare professionals. The interaction is a link which connects a child's two different growth environments and micro worlds: home and daycare. Pedagogical partnership enhances the formation of a harmonious growth environment. An early childhood setting can consist of the both type of potentialities: the strengths of parenthood and the variation of services daycare can provide and inform about. Families can also make friends with each other in daycare settings and make ties to the community.

Karila (2006: 99) reckons that parents should probably have enough experiences of being heard in daily contexts before they become encouraged to participate in deeper partnerships. The formation of a satisfactory partnership provides time and opportunities to meet and talk. In the meetings it is not only how the issues are verbalised. The whole meeting situation is meaningful; how calm the atmosphere is, the time available, are the children present, is the other party busy or ready. In practice daycare workers can be very busy taking care of the groups, and it can also be challenging to find time with the parent who is rushing to bring or fetch the child. Officially, information is exchanged and aims documented and followed within the 'Education and development' -meetings which usually take place once or twice a year. In other words, the child's individual ECEC plan is monitored and assessed regularly among the staff and with the parents (Stakes 2004: 29). Parents and workers can have an opportunity to schedule extra time for discussions. Workers can encourage parents to speak Finnish and if necessary use language interpreter's or culture interpreter's (if available) services.

In pedagogical partnership the central areas where parents and workers have many kinds of thoughts are: what is a good childhood, what aims and methods a child's upbringing has, what kinds of responsibilities the parents and family have. These thoughts derive from different values and different life histories.

(Karila 2006: 95; Könönen 2007: 39) Also Marja Kaskela and Marjatta Kekkonen (2006: 39) define understanding as something shared. Various ethnic backgrounds produce unique variations of understanding, supporting and securing childhood.

When a multicultural family uses daycare services, their needs and obligations can be obscure for all three parties: the children, parents and daycare workers. Quality in pedagogical partnership eases the meeting, sometimes collision, of two micro worlds, home and daycare (Karila 2006: 91–92). As earlier mentioned (Chapter 3), immigrant families often struggle with issues like unemployment and mental health which touch the whole family. In addition, different issues touch children in home settings than in daycare group settings, which both parties could hear about.

It is a challenge for personnel and parents to keep up good pedagogical partnership in situations where workers' and parents' ideas of cooperation, upbringing, needs and responsibilities differ significantly. Also the maintenance of pedagogical partnership is important when the family or child needs extra help or support. (Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006: 46–47.) For many parents using daycare services is not always a choice but an indispensable need from the family's perspective which meets in reality some of the family's requirements. Issues which bring out the vulnerability of a child and/or family are sensitive issues to handle for both parties. Maarit Alasuutari (2006: 89) remarks that families usually want the discussions to be centrally based on the child or children, interpretations about the family can hurt the integrity of the family. When there is enough trust between a worker and a parent, it is more likely that the parent will raise sensitive issues about the family also. Family workers and specialists can visit kindergartens and join meetings and make additional plans together with the family and daycare workers. Thus pedagogical partnership can be supportively also specialised into multiprofessional teams. When one party understands the other's way of attaching meanings to issues differently from him/her, a lot has been achieved.

Parents can be empowered and encouraged to participate in the developmental procedures of daycare settings (Hännikäinen & Rasku-Puttonen 2006: 11). Parents have varied levels of readiness, motivation and strengths to participate. Parents (men and women from different cultures), as with daycare staff, have different ideas in which manners both parties carry their responsibilities and duties in the daycare settings. Participation and involvement means a deep process where an individual actively participates in a community's practices [like early childhood education settings] and builds his or her identity in



relation to these communities (Wells cited in Hännikäinen & Rasku-Puttonen 2006: 13). Kindergartens can give very different signals to parents in which ways to participate. A illustrating thought from an unknown early childhood educator: *"Wisdom which is produced together is more than own speech and knowledge"* (Kasvatuskumppanuus kannattelee lasta 2006: 30).

## **5.2 Four principles for building partnership**

According to Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006: 32–39) pedagogical partnership can be depicted and explained by four key principles: Hearing, Respect, Trust and Dialogue. To become heard is a whole experience which takes place in a safe and positive atmosphere. For information to be exchanged, all parties must be present and willing to listen to each other. To become accepted and respected without conditions is a universal need. To build a respective relationship can be a challenge when confronting something different from own experiences: a different family cultures and/or different values. Giddens (2001: 23) depicts cultural norms and values to be deep-seated in people and that these norms and values change slowly. However, by hearing, acting and talking from a positive standpoint openly and honestly one can show respect to others. Trust is built from the principles of hearing and respect.

A key aim for pedagogical partnership is to create a confidential atmosphere for all kind of dialogue between workers and parents (Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006: 32–39). Both children and adults need different amounts of time in order to trust each others. Small and big steps are taken to build a satisfying relationship. Good beginnings and possibilities for pedagogical partnerships are established, if families sense that they are welcomed to daycare services.

Kaskela and Kekkonen consider dialogue to be meaningful when all parties become visible and equal. In constructive dialogue one can disagree, be frank and honest because the dialogue is based on hearing and respect. They link the concepts of hearing, respect, trust and dialogue together: so that respect needs hearing, trust requires hearing and respect and finally dialogue requires all three first mentioned concepts. A worker, in order to practice true dialogue, should also be stable with his or her thoughts, experiences and emotions. Through profound and most meaningful dialogue new perspectives are gained from others: learning processes around a child take place. This type of humble dialogue empowers both parties to discuss. Pedagogical partnership is also genuine and empathetic interaction

where emotions have a central place. (Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006: 31; 38–39.) In practice language barriers have to be crossed, with the aid of an interpreter and by encouraging parents' skills in Finnish. In all kind of pedagogical partnerships some levels of hearing and dialogue are present. Trust, respect and productive dialogue are relevant in deeper and more meaningful partnerships. These kind of profound pedagogical partnerships carry both parties on a mutual path of shared understanding.

### **5.3 Multicultural ethos**

Siraj-Blatchford's and Clarke's thoughts (2000: 98) on pedagogical partnership are similar to the previous ones from Finnish early childhood education researchers: “A working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. This implies a sharing of information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability”. They characterize their idea of active partnership, parental involvement and encouragement of parents in the following ways: First, workers should encourage parents to regular and effective communication and display a liking for parents. Second, workers should express willingness to share information with parents about both their child and the early childhood setting. Third, workers show parents that they can make their feelings, opinions and views known to the staff and these expressions will be dealt respectfully and seriously. (Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke 2000: 104–108.) These features of empowerment belong to their definition of a multicultural ethos.

Also non-verbal signs are important when there are language barriers: positive facial expressions and gestures are helpful in gaining the confidence of others. Educators can experience large pressures and expectations to be able to serve every kind of family equally well. In favourable circumstances, positive and open interaction lowers tension between different cultures. (Könönen 2007: 44; 46.) Unreasonable child-adults ratios and turnovers of workers do not necessarily ease pedagogical processes in daycare.

Neil Thompson also values diversity, variety and difference, as a valuable characteristic of social life. As well as there are visibly different ethnic groups, there are different identities, approaches and perspectives which can be a source of learning, variety, stimulation and interest. (Thompson 2006: 11.) Multicultural parent's perspectives do not reach understanding and knowledge on everyday level without encountering and reflective discussion which bases on being heard regularly and with sufficient

understanding. Mirja-Tytti Talib writes about the practice of mindfulness, which enhances and enlarges our capacity for empathy. Mindfulness cultivates an open curiosity and strengthens the ability to sustain a non-judgemental stance toward both ourselves and in relation to other's experiences. In her view it is challenging to fit our identities, culture, society and history with other cultures and their ways of living. She reckons that harmony cannot be reached by defending own cultures and likings. In fact, children inherit and copy patterns of hostility from adults which subsequently colours information and experience. (Talib 2006: 151–153.) Also ways to express liking and pass over prejudices are inherited, and these expressions and senses can fortunately be cultivated. Relationships between adults and children in early childhood settings are very meaningful ones in the realm of public services and form basis to many kinds of ways to think and act later on in schools, working life, leisure time and homes.

## **6. THE STUDY TASK**

### **6.1 The focus and research question**

The study takes notion of the Moniku project, the working life project of social empowerment in multicultural early childhood education in the metropolitan area. The Moniku project's cooperation agreement with Stadia meant that the students put emphasis on the phenomenon of pedagogical partnership between multicultural families and daycare personnel from the parent's perspective (in Helsinki area Moniku-units). The aim was to produce new and important information about pedagogical partnership and additionally concrete proposals on how to develop pedagogical partnership. Moniku's five question areas about pedagogical partnership were:

- 1) What are parents' wishes and expectations regarding daycare?
- 2) How do parents comprehend pedagogical partnership?
- 3) How are parents involved with the daycare activities?
- 4) What works and does not work in pedagogical partnership? Why?
- 5) How do the parents think pedagogical partnership could be developed?

I included within the scope of the study only the smaller language minorities since the largest minorities, since Russian- and Somali-speakers had been focus groups in other studies within Moniku and also

because other ethnic minorities require focus in a multicultural project. The theoretical frame of reference of my study is pedagogical partnership. The study task derives from the reality that in parent-worker interactions two micro worlds meet and certain levels of hearing and trust primarily take place. In more profound and participative pedagogical partnerships dialogue and respect become true if experiences of becoming heard and trust evolve enough in both parties. The cultural beliefs and thinking patterns of both parties affect the cooperation.

This final project's task is to focus on how these parents from small ethnic minorities have experienced their meetings with daycare workers in terms of pedagogical partnership and how are the opportunities to pedagogical partnership implemented from the parents' perspective. I also explored parents' notions of multiculturalism in the daycare context. The research question was re-focused after the data collection.

## **6.2 Qualitative perspective**

The nature of this study is qualitative. To enter into any kind of investigation involving other people is necessarily a complex and sensitive undertaking (Robson 2002: 6). I think that aspects of one's own child's upbringing and well-being in early childhood settings belong to sensitive issues, as well in terms of pedagogical partnership and multiculturalism. Qualitative research settings are unique and therefore qualitative studies cannot be revised without changes in procedures, findings and conclusions. Colin Robson (2002: 63) defines the research problem of a qualitative study this way: "In a [prominent] qualitative study the research problem is to specify the various enabling and disabling mechanisms operating in a particular situation, and the contexts relevant to their operation".

This study does not aim to explain how general something has been but to show how something in these cases has been present. The purpose of my enquiry is exploratory. Robson classifies the purposes of enquiries to be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. He depicts real world research like systems which are open in the sense that they can be entered and exited, both literally and figuratively, at any time. Robson argues that in flexible studies, in other words qualitative research, enquiries take place at particular times in particular places with particular people. (Robson 2002: 40; 59; 185.) The enquirer should be persistent, and have the stamina and alertness to proceed and stay focused with the research questions so that relevant data will come out in the enquiry. A qualitative study can respond accurately

to real-life, unique and changing situations.

### **6.3 Research method**

I found interviewing parents to an appropriate research method of carrying out the study task. The research method should suit the research topic and model within worked. David Silverman (2006: 114) writes that qualitative interviewing is a useful research method for accessing an individual's attitudes and values, things that cannot necessarily be observed in a questionnaire. During the study plan process I reckoned that specified opinions and experiences about daycare could not be revealed in questionnaires or telephone interviews which can be purposeful methods in other kinds of studies. Interviews are an ideal research method of gaining a detailed understanding of daycare experiences in terms of pedagogical partnership.

As a research method, interviews are relatively economical in terms of time and resources to obtain data. Another way would have been to explore parents' and workers' meetings and discussions by observation but then the study perspective would have took account of both parties' stances and both perspectives would have been available. Also the research focus and question would have been different. Silverman explains that the world never speaks directly to us to examine but is always encoded by recording instruments and transcripts. Even if audio or video recorders are used, what we hear and see is mediated by where we place the situation and the equipment. (Silverman 2006: 113.) If one wants to deal with the data and return to it, the data has to be saved. The use of tape recorder frees the interviewer from making notes and allows the interviewer to practice many types of roles.

#### **6.3.1 Interview method**

I chose semi-structured interviews, also called focused interviews or theme interviews (Hirsjärvi 2008: 47) for the interview method. As a formula semi-structured interviews can be closer to tightly structured

interviews or closer to open-ended, in-depth interviews which can be case studies. The interviews were primarily planned to be more structured ones but the actual interview situations processed them to semi-structured ones. I noticed in the first interviews that in order to proceed with the interviewee some question areas become more stressed than others. Thus the interviewee feels free to speak about those issues that matter most. As Sirkka Hirsjärvi (2008: 48; 104) mentions, the interviewer's mission should be to ensure that the issues dealt stay within the research question area, and to allow the interview to flexibly proceed around the key themes. Flexibility means that the interviewer can return to certain question areas during the interview or change the question order.

While planning the interview framework I pondered my stance as an interviewer. Experiences as a parent from three municipal kindergartens added with work experience from several kindergartens in Helsinki and Vantaa were meaningful learning experiences. So the common structures of municipal daycare were quite familiar to me. This information would support and have an effect on the discussions.

Interviewer's stance and data can be used to create both mutuality and confidence in the interviews by actively discussing about the topics. Silverman defines an open-ended interview as a flexible practice where it is important to be an active listener and maintain rapport with the interviewee. It is also most important and ethical that the interviewees know the aims and purpose of the study, especially when probing personal issues. (Morse & Richards 2002: 103–106; Silverman 2006: 110.) Although my interview method was not purely open-ended, I reckoned that experiences as a service user and parent could evoke confidence and openness in the interviewee, and support additional questions in the interview.

### **6.3.2 The interview framework**

The interview framework was designed to benefit Moniku project and my study task. According to Robson interview questions should, first, be clear, that is unambiguous and easily understood. Second, the questions should be sufficiently specific which directs a specific answer too. Third, the questions

should be answerable, so a researcher comprehends what data are needed to answer them and how those data will be collected. Fourth, the questions should be interconnected; the questions are related in some meaningful way and form a coherent whole. Finally, questions should be relevant, meaning that they are worthwhile, non-trivial and worthy of the research effort to be expended. (Robson 2002: 59) In this manner, I aimed to plan the interview framework and proceed in the interviews.

The framework in interviews was designed to proceed from the general area to specific questions about pedagogical partnership and multicultural aspects. The latter questions can be interpreted as both more challenging and personal questions than the first ones. The italicized questions are additional questions, not all of which were asked. Also, other supportive and explanatory questions and remarks were made around the question themes in the spirit of a semi-structured interview. These are not listed here.

1 a) Parents experiences from Finnish municipal daycare?

1 b) Expectations and wishes to daycare?

*What kinds of thoughts do you have about daycare?*

*What activities are important?*

*What have you wondered about?*

2 a) How do you view (pedagogical) partnership between daycare and parents?

*How do you understand the concept pedagogical partnership?*

2 b) What works and does not work in this partnership?

2 c) How do you view that this partnership could be developed?

*What is cooperation?*

*Is there time for dialogue?*

*What makes you trust the daycare workers?*

*What is shared understanding?*

3 a) How is multiculturalism or families with dual heritage considered in daycare?

*Have they been interested in the mother tongue?*

*How can you see multiculturalism in the daycare? Are there flags or any signs?*

*How satisfied are you with this aspect?*

## 6.4 Process description

In the first effort I presented my final project plan by visiting six daycare units, and using the telephone, e-mail and postal services to reach the manager or the person in charge of Moniku project. I set three scheduled meetings, during the other three visits I delivered my brochures and explained my final project to a worker by random. Some workers remarked that brochures are not enough; the parents also need discussion about the purpose of the enquiries. I designed two separate brochures, named according to each unit to evoke both the personnel's and the parents' interests for this study. Each of the nine daycare units in Helsinki received the brochures at least by post. Two daycare units welcomed me to present my final project plan in an assembly where I went.

After contacts and waiting for replies, I re-contacted the kindergartens to find out if there were interested parents. In these time-consuming attempts the personnel seemed like gate-keepers between the parents and the interview requests. I came in contact with the personnel, but not with the parents. Apparently my final project plan did not appeal to the personnel and consequently to the parents. Additionally, most kindergartens announced that they had recently responded to similar requests, which can explain the passive response.

In the second effort I searched multicultural parents by using contacts from my studies and people who knew multicultural families. I selected the interviewees by avoiding personal contacts where I had met the parents before. I chose parents who all had different ethnic backgrounds. Before the interviews I used both telephone and e-mail to set the interview time and also to explain the topic and purpose of my enquiry. Parents were welcomed to come either together or alone. A precondition was that the families are customers of the municipal daycare in the capital area. One family evidently was from a Moniku daycare unit. The parent had seen my brochures in the kindergarten but responded to the interview request via their neighbourhood family who represented the same ethnic background. The interviews were both the first time I met the interviewees and the last time, except with one parent who returned me a digital video disc which kept their child(ren) entertained during the interview.

In the beginning of the interviews I revised the question themes to the parents and showed the Moniku project's aims with a chart (APPENDIX ). One interviewee asked me to e-mail the questions in advance. All interviewees agreed with the use of a tape recorder. The parents were informed that none of their



families' members or the daycare units in question could be recognized from the final project. The parents could choose the interview language to be Finnish or English. I collaborated with the interviewees so that they could choose the interview place. Six interviews took place, 1–1½ hours each (60 or 90 minutes tapes). In half of the interviews both parents were present, and in the other half the mother was present. In three interview meetings I was also introduced to their children. Two interviews turned out with data from several years ago and these two families' children were currently in school or in a private kindergarten. I decided to leave this data out of the study. These interviews were the first and third interview of six interviews implemented. However, these interviews left out of the study served as experience and practice in interview techniques.

To depict my sample, I asked some information of the family (TABLE 1). Two of the interviews took place at rather noisy and restless cafeterias. The other two interviews took place at calm and undisturbed home facilities. In one interview with one parent a correspondent was present who acted as a familiar link to the interviewee and also interpreted some of the questions from Finnish to Lithuanian. In both of the interviews where both parents were present in the interview, the other parent took strongly hold of the answers and comments. The interviewees were parents of all together seven children in daycare age. Three daycare units in question situated in Helsinki, one in Espoo. TABLE 1 presents data also about the interviews.

	<b>Interview 1</b>	<b>Interview 2</b>	<b>Interview 3</b>	<b>Interview 4</b>
<b>Interview language</b>	Finnish	Finnish	English	Finnish
<b>Both parents in interview</b>	x		x	
<b>Mother in interview</b>		x		x
<b>Language spoken to children</b>	Finnish Japanese	Finnish Hebrew	Urdu	Finnish Lithuanian
<b>Oldest child born</b>	2002	2002	2003	2002
<b>Oldest child began daycare</b>	2006	2006	2006	2005

TABLE 1. Information about the interviews and interviewees' families.

The material was transcribed from four interviews, which amounted to around 35 pages. Then the transcribed material was read several times and the relevant material according to the study task was selected. Around 20 pages were produced for the process of working out the categories, coding, reporting the findings and conclusions

## 7. FINDINGS

Following the study task the data linking to pedagogical partnership and multiculturalism is reported. I developed four categories which illuminate and organise the data and belong to the theories presented of pedagogical partnership in the daycare context (Silverman 2006: 402). The first three data categories: *Relationships of trust*, *Communication* and *Cultures meeting*, I assessed to be more or less apparent in an operating multicultural daycare relationship. The multicultural dimension of pedagogical partnership in daycare is specifically in the third category *Cultures meeting*. The data reported in the fourth category, *From participation to shared understanding*, I consider to belong to the most profound levels of pedagogical partnerships. The results of this study are strongly in this chapter. The consequent chapters, *Conclusions* and *Discussion* present some of these same issues analytically but briefly.

The findings are reported for the sake of readability and clarity in the same order as the interviews took place. The interviews are marked with symbols: IW 1, IW 2, IW 3, and IW 4. The daycare worker(s) or other parent is marked: X and the parent's child or children in question by: x. The gender of the parent is not revealed in the interviews with both parents (IW 1 and IW 3) and is marked like (s)he. In the one-parent interviews (IW 2 and IW 4) the parent is in fact the mother (TABLE 1). The italicized quotations I have aimed to translate from Finnish to English since only one of the four interviews was in English.

### 7.1 Relationships of trust

The parent in the Japanese-Finnish family said (s)he is satisfied with the children's daycare. (S)he mentioned that children make remarks about small things like what they had for lunch which means that

they do not have big problems in there. However, the other parent in the family thought that the daycare workers had been interfering in the parent's everyday schedules.

*“Okei, tää oli mulle uusi kokemus kun lapset ei ole ennen olleet päivähoidossa että ne niin kuin halusi puuttua mun ajankäyttö. Just kaikista syyslomista ja tämmöisistä, just sitä et mahdollisimman paljon lapset otettaisi aina kun on vaan joku lomapäivä niin aina niin kuin poies. Mä koin että ne puuttui mun oman arjen järjestelyihin.” (IW 1)*

The latter mentioned parent in the Japanese-Finnish family was satisfied that their children had a safe place where they get basic care. The parent thought that (s)he had no resources to demand for something extra like excursions (s)he thought they could make more. From time to time (s)he was a bit worried how their child would get on there with the bigger children if there were staff shortages, or if the personnel were stressed.

*“Mä olen ollut tyytyväinen että niillä on se perushoito. Kyllä mä tietysti välillä olen niin kuin huolissani just kun toi x on niin pieni vielä niin miten se siellä niiden isojen kanssa. Ja jos niillä on henkilökuntapulaa tai henkilökunta on stressaantunutta, kyllä se sitten näkyy noissa lapsissakin varmaan.” (IW 1)*

The mother in the Hebrew-Finnish family told that the big daycare facility had made a good impression: she was surprised to find a very calm atmosphere although there were many children. She liked the way all the groups ate their meals together. Also in the mornings all the groups would gather to the same place. Caregivers knew all children; everybody knew and trusted everybody else. She remembered that in her own childhood she was within only her own group and she did not know other groups' teachers.

*“Niin kuin mulle sanottiin et toi on vähän modernimpi päiväkot. Just sen ruokasalinkin puolesta että kaikki syö yhteisessä ruokasalissa.” (IW 2)*

*“Ja se hyvä puoli tuossa päiväkodissa on myös se että kaikki ryhmät on yhteydessä toisiinsa. Kaikki opettajat tuntee kaikki lapset. Et siinä ei ole sellaista et mä en tunne tuon ryhmän lapsia.” (IW 2)*

*“Mä olen nähnyt että miten he toimii siellä, että just kaikki pitää silmällä. Ehkä se avoimuus just että*

*kaikki on keskenään. Mun lapsuudessa meillä oli vaan se oma ryhmä ja kukaan ei ollut toisen ryhmän kanssa tekemisissä. Et koin sen itse etten mä tuntenut niitä muiden ryhmien opettajia.” (IW 2)*

The familiarisation phase with the younger child had been good. She had been able to be there as long as she wanted. She liked the way the younger child could go and eat with the older sister. She had been able to trust the workers and mostly they had been the same.

*“Tuossa ei ole sillee vaihtunut, on kuitenkin ne samat vakahoitajat.”*

*“Ne on ollut alusta asti, et se on ollut hyvä.” (IW 2)*

The parent in the Urdu-speaking family mentioned that it is the feedback from the children that makes them trust daycare. The parent also knew whom their child liked specially.

*“It’s the feedback from children. When they come back home and they tell what is happening there. About sleep, play, how they liked the food. It’s the feedback from children.” (IW 3)*

*“In my x’s group there are four, five workers. And my x likes all four of them, except one.” (IW 3)*

The Lithuanian mother appreciated the values of the child getting to know other groups and other caregivers.

*“Hyvä että samassa päiväkodissa eskari ja että on voinut leikkiä myös toisissa ryhmissä. Hienoa kun on tutustunut muihin ryhmiin ja muihin hoitajiin. Tietää kaikki”. (IW 4)*

The Lithuanian mother depicted a good caregiver as a loving character.

*“Tärkeintä rakastaminen. Suomessa ei saa lyödä lapsia, mutta hoitaja voi olla henkisesti kylmä.” (IW 4)*

The Lithuanian mother also appreciated the education level of children’s caregivers, and compared the situation with her native country.

*“Liettuassa voi olla lastenhoitaja ilman kutsumusta koska työpaikoissa vaihtoehtoja vähän. Liettuassa helpompi olla epäpätevä lastenhoitaja kuin Suomessa. Liettuassa kuka tahansa voi päästä hoitajaksi,*

*lastentarhaopettajaksi vaikeampi päästä. Kuulee että Liettuassa nyt paremmin mutta Suomessa tarvitsee enemmän kokemusta ja on yliopistoa.” (IW 4)*

## 7.2 Communication

The parent in the Japanese-Finnish family thought (s)he took too much of the worker's time. (S)he said (s)he set the times for the official development discussions

*“Mulla on vähän se vika että jään liian pitkäksi aikaa kyselee silloin kun mä haen. Tuntuu välillä että ne ajattelee että lähde nyt jo pois. Välillä liikaakin jututan niitä mutta se on vaan mennyt että kun on nää kehityskeskustelut tai kasvatuskeskustelut, niin ne mä aina sovin ja menen niihin sitten.” (IW 1)*

The same parent continues that that (s)he would have liked to know more about their children's well-being in daycare. (S)he thought the workers concentrated too much on explaining the activities; (s)he already knew each day has a certain theme, like drawing.

*“Mä oon kyl aika paljon joutunut niin kuin pumppaamaan niistä hoitajista sitä tietoa. Kyl mä joka kerta kun mä haen ne mä kysyn miten on päivä mennyt. Yleensä ne sitten aloittaa no että tänään on piirretty. Onko ollut mitään ongelmia, miten ne käyttäytyi, siitä tiedosta mä niin kuin enemmän olen kiinnostunut. Kyllä mä tiedän että niillä on kuitenkin joka päivä tällöinen teema tavallaan.” (IW 1)*

(S)he then talks when (s)he fetches the children. (S)he experienced that the workers had then more time. (S)he was a bit worried about taking other parents' time.

*“Me jutellaan siinä vaiheessa kun mä haen. Aamulla mä huomaan että ne on jo heti siinä vaiheessa stressaantuneita kun siinä on kuitenkin vaan yksi hoitaja kun mä vien sen lapsen. Mä huomaan että siinä kohtaa ei kannata ruveta kauheasti mitään. Kun mä haen niin jos mä huomaan että siinä ei ole muita vanhempia silloin, mä olen sitten aina silloin yrittänyt mutta välillä tuntuu että tulee liikaakin puhuttua. Siellä voi joku toinen vanhempi odottaa vuoroaan.” (IW 1)*

(S)he thought that the workers also ponder about children's issues together.

*“Mut kyllähän ne varmaan keskenäänkin pohtii.” (IW 1)*

Only the mother Hebrew-Finnish family had been present in the development discussions, because the other parent had a language barrier. She anyway knew that they had tried to explain about the day when the other parent had fetched their child(ren).

*“Koska kielen takia X ei ole pystynyt siihen. Kovasti he on yrittänyt kun X hakee tai jotain niin kyllä ne on selittänyt päivän tapahtumista ja sellaisista ja ottanut huomioon.” (IW 2)*

She appreciated that the kitchen had made additional enquiries about their diet.

*“Mä olen niin kuin antanut ohjeet ja sitten ne keittäjät on vielä itse pyytänyt vielä tarkempaa. Jos on jotain semmoista ruokaa mikä tulee valmiina tai sitten he tekee. On ne ottanut tosi hyvin huomioon kuitenkin.” (IW 2)*

The Hebrew-Finnish mother said that she had discussed a lot with the workers, and she also described a good caregiver as one who is able to talk about all kinds of issues.

*“Kauheesti me ollaan juteltu. Ei välttämättä sellaisia [sovittuja] keskusteluja. Kun ollaan satuttu tapaamaan että jos on ollut jotain uutta, ollaan sitten keskusteltu siinä. Ja mä olen kyllä halunnut tietää. Mä olen sanonut kanssa, että jos on jotain huolta heillä tai jotain on sattunut niin sanoo sen mulle heti.” (IW 2)*

*“Ehkä just semmoinen joka juttelee ei niin kuin vain niistä päiväkodin asioista. Saattaa yleisemmälläkin tasolla hyvin tulla toimeen.” (IW 2)*

The parent in the Urdu-speaking family said they had from the very beginning made clear their expectations from daycare, and were fairly happy with the daycare services.

*“We have meetings with the staff every now and then. And if we have some kind of comments to let them know, we tell them. Mostly we have don’t have very many complaints on services, no complaints. Because we said all the rules.” (IW 3)*

*“We belong to a Muslim family and I told them in the very beginning that our children do not eat pork so their lesson is to take care. And then we told them we need children washed after every toilet, so they should be washed.” (IW 3)*

The Urdu-speaking family also brought up the issue of language barriers.

*“For example my X, (s)he speaks English. There are four workers in my x's group, but one of them she does not speak English. So my X can not tell everything. This is one thing, language barrier between parent and teacher.” (IW 3)*

In the beginning the mother of Lithuanian-Finnish family knew about the formal development discussions, but did not go along. Work commitments prevented the father from attending. The caregiver had tried with English first and also their child had helped with the language.

*“Ensin mies hoiti enemmän, mutta nyt hyvä kun voin itse puhua. Minä ymmärrän hyvin joskus mutta en osaa itse puhua. Osaan tosi vähän englantia. Nyt helpompaa puhua suomeksi kuin englanniksi. Kaikki ovat tyytyväisiä että minä päästä töihin. Joskus x käänsi. Hoitaja sano äidille mitä tarkoitan. Lapsilla on erilainen kieli ja on paljon sanoja jota en ymmärrä.” (IW 4)*

### **7.3 Cultures meeting**

The parent in the Japanese-Finnish family had sensed that the workers at daycare thought their child has special needs because of the multicultural background. She said they had offered a special group without getting to know the child.

*“He varmaan heti ajatteli kun on kaksikulttuurinen tausta niin pojalla olisi tarvetta tällaiseen tukeen, semmoiseen kielelliseen tukeen tai tämmöiseen. Semmoinen fiilis mulla tuli heti. Mut mä tiesin mun lapsen. Et se ei todellakaan, et hän on niin kuin suomalainen, eikä ole kielellisiä vaikeuksia.” (IW 1)*

*“No joka tapauksessa tutustumatta he ehdotti. Onhan se ihan kiva että mainita että tämmöinenkin mahdollisuus on. Heti ensimmäinen ajatus oli että se ei varmaan niin kuin meille ole tarpeen. Kun ei*

*hän tarvitse mitään kielellistä tukea. Eikä mitään sellaisia tukitoimenpiteitä sinänsä.” (IW 1)*

The interview with the Japanese-Finnish family technically ended (tape ran out) as they were mentioning that the stone-paper-scissors game originates to Japan. They also said their child had been teaching some Japanese to other children at the kindergarten.

The daycare workers had asked about the Jewish-Finnish family's child(ren) joining daycare's Christmas and Easter festivities. Their children did not join the Sunday school (Pyhäkoulu) activities.

*“No ei [juutalainen] uskonto oikeastaan tuu esille. Meidän pojat on saanut osallistua joulujuhliin. Ne on esimerkiksi kysyneet että saako askarrella jotain tiettyä jouluun liittyen, esimerkiksi joulukoristeita. Ollaan annettu myös. Sitten just kaikki kun on ollut joulut ja pääsiäiset niin ne on ollut kyllä kauheasti kiinnostuneita miten saa osallistua.” (IW 2)*

*“Ja sen mä huomasin että kun somalit ei saanut osallistua joulujuhliin mutta meidän sai, ei siitä mitään haittaa ole. Mä sanoin tädeille että saa yleissivistyksen takia osallistua näihin. Mun mielestä se on parempi että ne tietää mitä muut uskoo, ettei kaikki usko samalla tavalla.” (IW 2)*

Their daycare worker had expressed to the mother how fine it was to have a Jewish child in daycare and that is her career's first Jewish child. The caregiver had understood that Jews as well as Romans take care of their children in their own circles. The mother knew many Jewish families in common municipal daycare.

*“Hänestä se oli just kauhean hienoa saada x tuonne. Ettei ole ikinä ollut niin kuin juutalaisia lapsia näissä päiväkodeissa. Hän sanoi että just toinen ryhmä on romanit, ne hoitaa kans lapsensa itse siinä omassa piirissään. Kyllä mä kuitenkin tiedän aika monta perhettä että lapset kuitenkin on tossa tavallisessa päiväkodissa eikä juutalaisessa päiväkodissa.” (IW 2)*

The Jewish-Finnish mother had been a bit worried in the beginning how the Muslim parents in daycare would take their child. Later on she noticed there was no reason to worry. Her child's closest playmate in daycare was apparently Muslim, and also the child's parents had been friendly.



*“Mutta silloin alussa mä ehkä ajattelin kun on paljon noita muslimivanhempia siellä niin miten ne ottaa sen. Kuitenkin me kuulutaan vähemmistöön. Ei se mua enää haittaa. Mutta ei sillä enää ole mitään väliä vaikka ne tietäisikin. Mut se mua huoletti just kun x meni sinne että kun on ainoa, ettei ole ketään muita juutalaisia.” (IW 2)*

*“Esimerkiksi x:n paras kaveri on muslimi. Mä en tiedä mistä maasta on mut tota mä tiedän kuitenkin koska hänen äitinsä käyttää kaapuja. Ja ei ole kyllä hänen isänsäkään osalta mitään. Aina ollaan ystävällisiä.” (IW 2)*

The mother mentioned that the daycare workers had encouraged her to speak more Finnish to her child(ren) so the child's skills in Finnish would improve. She disagreed with this somewhat, since the child(ren) hear so much Finnish elsewhere.

*“Mua on kannustettu siihen että mä puhuisin suomea että se niin kuin vahvistuisi. Mun mielestä se on kuitenkin tärkeää että x puhuu sitä hepreaa koska täällä valtaväestö kuitenkin puhuu sitä suomea.” (IW 2)*

When asked about multiculturalism, the Jewish-Finnish mother told me about an exhibition about of cultures from different countries. The kitchen had prepared food from different countries for another event. Her husband was interested in going to help prepare their cultures' food, but only the kitchen personnel are allowed to do that. The family's Jewish culture was not exposed in any way.

*“Oli sellainen näyttely ja sitten ne tavallaan meni pisteestä pisteeseen. Se liittyi eri maiden niin kuin kulttuureihin. Joku ryhmä noista Afrikan maista ne oli tehnyt kaikkei julisteita ja semmoista. Sit oli joku juttu että ne keittäjät teki eri ruokia eri maista. X oli kiinnostunut että se menee tekee sinne ruokaa. Mut ei se saanut mennä sinne. Tädit sanoi että vaan keittäjät tekee ruoat.” (IW 2)*

Although the mother was generally satisfied with the municipal daycare, the family had decided to move the child(ren) to a Jewish kindergarten to become more familiar with Jewish culture. The aim of having the child(ren) attend a Jewish school in future also affected their decision.

*“Uskonto ja just tavallaan toi elämäntilanne että vanhemmat on niin kuin tavallaan samanlaisia. Siis*

*tavallaan saa sen uskonnollisen pohjan. Se on mukana siinä jokapäiväisessä, x oppii ne kaikki kertomukset sieltä.” (IW 2)*

The Urdu-speaking parent had been annoyed by a certain daycare worker's lecturing about culture. The matter had been about their child's toilet hygiene, since they had found their child(ren) unwashed after a toilet trip. Where the worker conceived the matter as a cultural issue, the parent(s) saw it as a hygiene issue which they would not reconsider.

*“There was two staff members both ladies, Finnish ladies, and one of them was saying ok this is a mistake and we will take care of this but the other one was like saying that this is our Finnish culture and you should also understand that you are in Finland now and in Finland we do not wash, we clean only with the paper. Then I was upset that no, it is not about culture, it is about hygiene. It is the hygiene of the child(ren) and the hygiene of the other child he is playing with. One worker is lecturing to us that this is our culture, it was not very friendly. She tried to teach me that we should for example accept that in the future we do not wash. And later they agreed. Ok, the child should be washed. ” (IW 3)*

I discussed with the Urdu-speaking parent(s) what expectation they had from daycare. Also, we also talked about do their child(ren)'s possible attendance Finnish religious festivities.

*“Actually, we have not asked much from the staff. Only few things like we do not eat pork and they should be washed after toilet. Just two things. Other wise I do not stop my children. They can go to church, joululaulu.” (IW 3)*

I asked if the child(ren) attend daycare's Sunday school. The parent(s) considered evangelic Lutheran traditions in daycare to be good all-round education for their (child)ren.

*“Yes, pyhäkoulu, every thing. My children should learn it. They are in a Finnish kindergarten. I will not stop that.” (IW 3)*

They were happy about this activity for children, because it gives children additional exposure to Finnish. The daycare teachers had also followed the children's development of Urdu with the parents. The parent spoke too about the importance of the vocabulary of the native language in learning another

language.

*“It is called kielikerho. I am happy with that. This is a very good activity for children. So they get extra time for language.” (IW 3)*

*“Yes they have asked how well they speak Urdu and we tell them. The level was much higher in the meeting than how high it was one year earlier. The children have the mother language vocabulary higher than in the second language. Once a child learns Finnish in Finnish it is different. But when a child has another language one should have the vocabulary of the mother tongue.” (IW 3)*

The parent(s) describe multiculturalism in daycare as “children from many countries”. They had also made notions with whom their child/children play with and do not play with.

*“There are Somali children, from Bangladesh. And children, my children are playing with them and they don’t know difference. Except my x likes to play with the guy from Bangladesh. Though they don’t speak mother language together, but they speak Finnish together. My x likes to play with Somali children but my x does not like to play with Somali children. With Finnish children x is very happy to play with.” (IW 3)*

The Lithuanian mother told about a multicultural week where she brought a book. Finnish families could familiarise with the book so they could know where her child(ren) come(s) from.

*“Yksi kerta yksi juhla. Yksi viikko jos haluaa tutustua voi laittaa esille kirjaa Liettuasta. Kirja on pöydällä ja suomalaiset vanhemmat voivat tutustua. Yksi viikko monikulttuurinen viikko. Suomalaiset vähän tietää minkä maalainen lapsi on.” (IW 4)*

The Lithuanian mother said her child(ren) no longer attended Finnish lessons since there were so few children for this group. The child(ren) had attended it earlier when the suitable group was bigger.

*”Aamulla suomenkielen opiskelu [aikaisemmin]. Neljä ulkomaista on vähän, ei ole erilaista ryhmää. Ei ollut tässä päiväkodissa ryhmää.” (IW 4)*

## 7.4 From participation to shared understanding

The Japanese-Finnish parent conceived pedagogical partnership as follow.

*”Kai se on sitä että mä olen tietoinen siitä mitä siellä päiväkodissa tapahtuu. Miten mun lapset kehittyä ja ne koko ajan tiedottaa mulle siitä. Jos mulla on joitain ongelmia kotona niin mä voin taas kertoa heille niistä.” (IW 1)*

(S)he wished she could know more about how their children behaved in daycare; how different it was from home surroundings.

*”Kun ne on kuitenkin niin erilaisia kotona kuin siellä päiväkodissa. Mä olen monesti sanonutkin että voi kun mä voisoin olla kärpäsenä katossa niin mä näkisin minkälaisia mun lapset on muiden lasten kanssa. Siellä vieraiden ihmisten, vieraiden aikuisten parissa, onko ne hirveän erilaisia.” (IW 1)*

(S)he viewed that this pedagogical partnership is specifically comprised of the regular formal discussions. She thought she teacher in the group would have more psychological know-how than the care-minder, and was disappointed that she did not have the formal discussions with the teacher. (S)he also appreciated the daycare staff's plentiful work experience.

*”Mä oisin halunnut sen lastentarhaopettajan. Ajattelin että lastentarhaopettaja pystyisi paremmin näitä psykologisia puolia, hänellä on enemmän koulutusta ja pystyy näkemään. Joko semmoisen puoleen jolla on 20 vuotta kokemusta tai tämmöisen jolla on se peruskoulutus psykologisesta lapsen kehityksestä vähän syvempää tietoa.” (IW 2)*

The Japanese-Finnish parent had been very worried about some aspects of their child's behaviour, as (s)he had received critical feed-back from the day-care. Lately (s)he had sensed that they had also tried to be positive. However, (s)he had still remained worried and was not convinced about the ways (s)he and the daycare workers had managed to exchange information.

*”Tää on semmoinen hänen niin kuin huono puoli mitä ollaan nyt sitten yritetty jo saada paranemaan tässä parin vuoden aikana, mut en tiedä millä tuloksin. Mä pelkäsin että hän joutuu tämmöiseen*

*negatiiviseen kierteeseen siellä ja mä oon siitä puhunutkin heille, et he vois yrittää et kuitenkin niitä kehujakin sitten tulisi. Että ei niin kuin pilata x:n mahdollisuuksia. Mä yritän sitäkin vähän kuin lypsää niiltä, et sanokaa nyt jotain hyvääkin mun lapsesta. Ne on varmaan huomannutkin että mä kaipaen sitä tietoa, ehkä ne on sitten kuunnellut mua. Tuli semmoisia kauhu-, et ei ne ole niin kuin hälvennyt. Ei ne päiväkodin hoitajat kyl oo saanut mua ihan vakuuttuneeksi.” (IW 1)*

The Hebrew-Finnish mother saw pedagogical partnership as both parties trying to level with each other. Both parties come to agreement, and also state their views openly.

*”No kai se on sitä että yritetään olla samalla aaltopituudella. Samat niin kuin arvot. Kyllä me ollaan oltu päiväkodin kanssa samaa mieltä. Että ollaan sitten juteltu mikä on mietityttännyt, ihmetyttännyt.” (IW 2)*

The same mother had been well able to discuss their child’s special needs with the caregivers, and she had also received positive feedback about her own openness in raising issues with the staff.

*”Meillä on ollut sillee että x on niin sanottu erityislapsi. Mä olen itse ottanut kauhean avoimesti heti näitä puheeksi alusta alkaen. Ja siitä mä olen saanut positiivista palautetta että mun kanssa pystyy puhumaan niistä, että mä en lakaise maton alle niitä.” (IW 2)*

The mother had felt that she could share her worries with the daycare staff. She found them empathetic and supportive. The daycare worker had expressed that she was also working on the child’s special needs.

*”Kyllä mä olen saanut heiltäkin sellaista palautetta siinä alkuvaiheessa, että ei ole niin kuin ihan normaalia. Koska mä kysyin heiltä ihan suoraan mitä mieltä he on.” (IW 2)*

*”No oikeastaan mä olen niin kuin saanut tukea päiväkodilta ihan hirveästi kun mä olin tavallaan siinä aikaisemmin yksin. Kukaan ei oikeastaan ottanut sitä todesta. Joo, ne on tukenut mua ihan sataprosenttisesti. Mutta sitten kun alkoi tulla näitä ongelmia esiin, X paneutui niihin ja häntä huolestutti toi x ihan kauheasti. Viikonloppunakin yöllä mietti että mitä sen kanssa tehdään, hän oli niin paneutunut siihen.” (IW 2)*

The Urdu-speaking parents said that the daycare workers should visit children's homes. This way the workers could also familiarise with the children. Also, it would be a good experience for the children to see the daycare workers at their home.

*“They should come and visit our home that how children are behaving at home. How they spend time, are they more open at home. Do they throw their socks and shoes, are their toys everywhere. But in the kindergarten they have certain places to put them.” (IW 3)*

*“When they see once the teacher at home, they notice somewhere in their conscious or sub-conscious that adults can be receptive. Mother and father are saying something, sometimes the children are away and sometimes they are not away.” (IW 3)*

The Urdu-speaking parent mentioned that there should be more regular meetings with the parents and teachers. This way the teachers (daycare workers) would learn to know the their culture together with the parents. Also (s)he considered the parent-teacher relationship is very important which continues in school too. We talk how there should be more dialogue between parents and daycare professionals.

*“Once in a month we could sit together. Parents and teachers. They would learn more about our culture. The teachers could come with coffee and spend some time with parents. Teachers and parents together, that’s it. Absolutely, we learn from each other. Every where and in every kind of situations.” (IW 3)*

*“Teacher is the person who is spending six, eight hours with children, when parents are not. Parent-teacher -relationship becomes very important also in school, not only in kindergarten. ” (IW 3)*

The same parent also discussed how this partnership could be developed by multicultural courses. (S)he also pointed out that both parents and workers have rights and duties.

*“They should go to different courses like multicultural courses. I have been there in working situations. And of course it is both sides; not only staff but parents also. If the staff is demanding something from parents, so parents should also cooperate because it is their children. It is their duty also, it comes from both sides. It’s rights and duties. What are their rights and duties, and what are our rights and duties.”*

(IW 3)

The Lithuanian mother stressed that cooperation between parents and workers is important. She thought that parents are more important to the child, but daycare professionals are also important since the child spends more time there than home.

*“Se on totta koska on päiväkodissa enemmän aikaa kuin kotona. Totta kai tarvitaan yhteistyötä. Vanhemmat voi enemmän antaa lapselle, mutta totta kai päiväkodin hoitajat tärkeitä.” (IW 4)*

At a separate occasion, I asked if a language interpreter had been within any of these families' discussions in daycare. They all answered that there had been no talk about interpreter services. The Urdu-speaking family was a bit different from others because the other parent was a language interpreter him/herself.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

### **8.1 Pedagogical partnership**

In three of the interviews the parents stated that they were pleased to have no cause for complaint. As the interview proceeded however, their views became more multi-faceted and they all evidently felt freer to express themselves on issues related to their childrens' daycare.

The starting phase in daycare is important for the parents. If they are encouraged to participate in this stage, new relationships are more likely to be established on a solid ground. Also the facilities, as how much space there is for children, can evoke trust in the parents. Some parents remarked that there were little staff turnovers among the daycare personnel.

Parents differed in their readiness to make demands on the worker's time by discussing how their child or children were getting on there. One parent thought the workers were so stressed and busy that it

probably affects their child(ren) too, and prevents them from communicating with parents. In the other three interviews no mention was made of daycare workers being overworked or stressed.

Parents compared the daycare to what they had experienced during their own childhood, or to daycare arrangements in their native countries. Such comparisons produced interesting information about how the parents valued the group cooperation, and how the workers can be familiar with all the children in different groups. This togetherness which can be expressed in daycare can make the parents trust their children's daycare in general.

Language barriers came apparent in all interviews. As the parent's command of Finnish improves the level of interaction rises significantly. In all four interviews language, to some extent, prevented one or other from participating in the discussions with the workers. In one case the child had been used as an interpreter. Interpreter services should be considered more in daycare services, and it is the daycare service management's responsibility to take care of these kinds of arrangements.

In all the families interviewed, the parents also listened to their children on matters relating to their children's well-being in general or to daycare. Although this final project does not take the child's standpoint into account, this is usually more familiar to the parents than to the daycare workers and can affect the parental views of daycare.

The workers' education level was brought up in two interviews, though I did not specially ask about it. The other interviewee hoped that the worker with the teaching qualification would have contributed to the formal discussions. This interviewee also pondered that the workers must also discuss together and share information this way. The other interviewee appreciated the high education in daycare compared to her native country.

All interviewees expressed that the workers should have an affectionate relationship to their children, most strongly this was expressed by the Urdu- and Lithuanian-speaking parents. Also the Hebrew-Finnish -speaking parent had sensed that the daycare teacher had extensively pondered her child's special needs. Parents clearly have expectations that the daycare professionals have an affectionate and highly interested relation to their children.



Small language minorities can be quite vulnerable since there are few, or no, other children who speak the same language. Even when there are other children who speak the same language, they can come from the same family, and they may be in different groups at the kindergarten. In one interview came out a total lack of separate Finnish teaching, although there had earlier been a group.

In one interview came out a deeper level of pedagogical partnership, where the workers and parent had exchanged information about the child and the parent had very much experienced support from daycare. In one case the parents and workers had followed the children's development in the native language together.

In only one interview were proposals how this partnership could be developed. The parent would have liked to meet the teachers in peace more often and would have liked them to visit their home. They thought these home visits would have made their children feel more comfortable about the differences between home and daycare surroundings and that also the teachers could more familiarise this way with their children. In this interview they also recommended multicultural courses to the daycare workers.

## **8.2 Multicultural aspects**

The interviewees attached meanings to cultural issues in their own distinctive ways. Questions of issues like linguistic interaction, religious festivities, church visits, diets, hygiene can be interpreted in many ways. Immigrants can feel hurt if a daycare worker asks or even demands them to re-consider their cultural traditions and habits.

The Lithuanian- and Urdu-speaking parents both compared Finnish daycare settings to their native countries' ones. These comparisons did not touch on the areas of pedagogical partnership, but nonetheless their comparative standpoints were interesting.

Multiculturalism can be exposed in many ways in kindergartens, like in exhibitions and happenings. Multiculturalism could be also exposed to all children and service-users also on everyday level. Many daycare service users have special wishes regarding daycare that they consider to be their children's best interests. However when one decides to take a child to daycare, usually a parent can feel that something

homely and familiar to the child will be missed. It is vital for a daycare worker to think through what wishes from the families are practically impossible to carry out. To lower the thresholds between home and daycare worlds is an everyday aim for both parents and daycare workers.

## **9. DISCUSSION**

One should keep in mind that what an interview produces is a particular representation of an individual's views or opinions. An enquirer can recognise already in the interview that no experiences are more or less 'authentic' than others but they are all narrated in ways that are open to lively investigation. (Silverman 2006: 117; 395.) Additionally, Robson (2002: 185) argues that people, information and all other aspects of the situation are likely to change in ways that may or may not have anything to do with the focus of our investigation.

In other words, interviews do not tell us directly about people's experiences but instead offer indirect representations of them (Silverman 2006: 117). To attain a more comprehensive picture of the reality and outcomes of the partnerships, one could interview the other party of this partnership, the daycare workers. One interviewee actually proposed this during the interview. However, these parents' viewpoints are important and meaningful as such.

Since my interview sample was small and the four interview unities represent four distinct cultural backgrounds and heritages, the question of generalization is ruled out. And since there is much variation in both the interviews and the interviewees, the point of saturation was not reached. This could have been possible in a more comprehensive amount of data obtained from numerous interviewees. In this study I have however aimed at providing an interesting multicultural perspective, a spectrum of multiculturalism, on how pedagogical partnerships have been established from the perspectives of these parents.

The Moniku leadership did not work out as a link to the parents from the smallest ethnic minorities. The question of how to search interviewees came out in the very beginning of this project. Using personal contacts is not necessarily the best option, as it can give rise to such research problems like bias and lack of objectivity. Immigrants' own associations, such as parent's clubs could produce an open-minded and

welcoming response to an enquiry. Researchers Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke (2000: 107) also note that advice can be sought from community leaders and specialists on how to establish effective communication with groups like minority ethnic groups. This kind of aid could have been used in the search of suitable interviewees.

Multiculturalism in the daycare services can be exposed to all children and service-users also on everyday level, not only in separate happenings and exhibitions. Multiculturalism should show in the curricula and be also exposed visually in the daycare surroundings (like as maps and flags). Daycare workers can be sensitive to bring out issues about diversity in the formal tuition situations, and also in the informal situations like in children's dialogue and disputes.

Also parents can express their views about multiculturalism, which the daycare workers can confront in various ways. The families within a single daycare unit can be encouraged to meet each other in the daycare facilities, by arranging parents' meetings and also happenings for the families. Different families can bond with each other and also strengthen their children's friendships, and consequently everybody's social networks. The separate daycare units in the capital area have their own input to the community's well-being.

Doing this final project taught me that the implementation of any multicultural project or research provides good knowledge of the multifaceted population of different ethnic backgrounds. To approach a multicultural group in Finland with no focus on a certain group was quite a challenging task. To achieve a comprehensive grasp of the variation of multicultural identities in the context of early childhood could require also an extensive quantitative study approach.

Questions can be also raised about what kind of access different ethnic minorities have to also other sectors of public services. Addressing this question requires extensive quantitative and qualitative research.

Parents in these interviews had all about two year's experience of daycare. By focusing on specifically preschool parents, I could have heard more experiences from a longer period within daycare services. In addition, the parents could have felt freer to express their opinions in a situation where their family's at least one relationship to daycare was reaching its end.

The interview question themes could have been more focused. For example: What kinds of opportunities have parents had to discuss with workers? How have their experiences been with the daycare workers? What sorts of interaction had they experienced with the workers? How would they assess this interaction? What do they appreciate in the daycare workers? What kind of experiences of multiculturalism have they had in daycare contexts? And also more questions about the principles of pedagogical partnership; listening, respect and trust.

The multicultural outcomes in daycare could have been studied additionally by a questionnaire. This might have left more time to talk about the partnerships. None of the interviews took place at a day-care surrounding which could make the parents feel freer to express their views. I could have been more active in presenting a calm public place for interviewing and avoid noisy surroundings that disturb the interviews.

Articles from publications like *Monitory* or *Pakolainen* could have been used as references. Thus more inclusion of immigrants' voices and views could have been beneficial for the study. Preliminary interviews or simply more practice in conducting interviews could have eased the way to the actual interviews, and also made the interviews and data handling more structured.

Qualitative research can be also carried out in comparative methods. In a research immigrants could compare the Finnish services and with the knowledge they have from their native countries. Interesting development ideas could appear which could contribute in the progress of ethnic-sensitive social services.

Adaptation in a multicultural society is needed from both sides; immigrants and people surrounding them. These adaptation processes provide time, possibilities and resources from all parties. So that the authorities can make suitably tailored integration plans in collaboration with the families, extensive cultural competence is required from the workers in all social services. In other words, the authorities working in all sectors of social services need multicultural education, which is also enhanced if the attitudes and values in the whole Finnish society are discussed and reflected.

The Finnish society, in general, gains from culturally sensitive approaches in early childhood education. It is most important to develop this educational basis for all children and their families in Finland. The celebration of multicultural diversity may be utopian in today's Finland, but it is a worthy aim.

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MONIKULTTUURISUUS PÄÄKAUPUNKISEUDUN VARHAISKASVATUKSESSA TOIMINTAMALLI

APPENDIX. The aims and strategy model of the Moniku project 2005–2007 (Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare in Helsinki Metropolitan Area 2009).