

Children’s movement according to the Norwegian framework plan: A document analysis

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Abstract

In this study, the use of the term *movement* in the *Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens* (hereinafter, the “framework plan”) was investigated. Movement is understood as crucial for the core values in the framework plan, as it creates the base for children’s play, exploration, learning, care, and formative development. Through a document analysis, this enquiry examined whether the use of the term *movement* in the framework plan supports the steering document’s focus on the intrinsic value of childhood. This enquiry was guided by the research question, “How is the term *movement* outlined and used in the *Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens*?” The analysis consisted of a word search, identifying how often, when, and in relation to what the term was used. Furthermore, this article discusses the implications of the use of the term for the underlying understanding of movement in children’s lives. We postulated that providing a clearer rationale for meeting, celebrating, and working with different approaches to movement in the framework plan could create a more substantial base for didactic designs and further research focusing on movement not only as motor skills but also as exploration, participation, communication, and a kinesthetic way of understanding oneself and one’s surroundings.

Keywords: *movement; ECEC; framework plan; document analysis*

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Background and introduction

The *Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens* (Ministry of Education and Research [MER], 2017), the steering document for Norwegian kindergartens, is based on the Nordic traditions for kindergartens (Hu & Ødegaard, 2019; Vallberg Roth, 2014; Weldemarian et al., 2017). This tradition has been an example of good practice, a model associated with high standards from an international perspective.

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The Norwegian framework plan shares several features with the Nordic curricula, which consider early childhood education and care (ECEC) as the first stage of lifelong education. Universal ECEC services are provided by well-educated staff (Hännikäinen, 2016). The tradition holds a socio-pedagogical stand that emphasizes the intrinsic value of childhood and promotes an all-around approach to children's development (Børhaug et al., 2018; Einarsdottir et al., 2015).

In line with the Nordic tradition, terms such as *play*, *exploration*, *learning*, *care*, and *formative development* are promoted as important matters for kindergartens in Norway (MER, 2017). However, these ideals are problematized in ECEC research. A large-scale study on socially engaged children showed that the open-ended pedagogical approach in Nordic ECEC curricula failed to provide equal social and intellectual opportunities for all children (Jensen, 2009). Borgen and Ødegaard (2015) attributed this to the paradoxes in the Nordic context of childhood. The core ideal of the Nordic welfare state model is the belief in equal opportunities for all children. A web of structural and relational factors and interrelated dynamics condition children's spaces for relative autonomy and self-regulation to provide conditions for children's bodily movement. "Agency" has been a key concept in the social studies of children and childhood since the 1980s. Research has scrutinized the relationship between social structure and the individual social actor (James & James, 2012; Uprichard, 2008). Later, interdisciplinary research showed a more specific interest in children as bodies (Bartholdsson et al., 2014).

Children's lives have many paradoxes when it comes to, for example, conditions for self-regulation and movement. Children are implicitly and explicitly exposed to cultural artefacts (Wartofsky, 1979). The framework plan is an artefact that affects young children's lives in ECEC in Norway. Norms for children's participation in educational institutions can be found in the steering document. A document analysis can reveal whether certain paradoxes can also be found in focus on bodily movements. This is the background for our interest in studying how "movement" is outlined in the framework plan.

Among the Nordic curriculum studies presented earlier, only the Norwegian framework plan presented the overarching concept of *Bildung* (*danning* in Norwegian, which is translated to "formative development" in the English version of the framework. *Danning* and *formative development* imply a growth mindset framework. Such frameworks include the recognition of ecological designs and nonlinear pedagogy; the teacher encourage co-creation, encouragement, and participation and wayfinding alongside children (Rudd et al., 2020; Ødegaard, 2020). Against this background, the Norwegian framework plan can be considered "ecological," but how ecological? Will there be wordings that imply paradoxical meanings? At the heart of ecological frameworks, we expect to find wordings that imply ecological dynamics and guidelines encouraging embodied and situated approaches to the constant, reciprocal, and interactive relationships between the child and what the environment (people, materials, and landscapes) affords the child.

Research aim and question

The use of the term *movement* in the framework plan was investigated to provide insights into kindergartens' formalized conditions for working with bodily movements as part of children's all-around development. This investigation was performed through a document analysis (Bratberg, 2018) focusing on the research question, "How is the term *movement* outlined and used in the *Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens*?"

Furthermore, the aim of this study was to highlight the use of the term *movement* in relation to the core values of the framework plan that imply an ecological framework. Part of the investigation was to examine whether the use of the term *movement* shows signs of a more instrumental or explorative approach or whether it holds several approaches at the same time. This can reveal potential paradoxes and how they can support and/or limit the expectations from teachers' work with movement.

The research question was designed to eliminate preconceptions about the research field. However, researchers carry certain preconceptions that affect the results of the studies. In this case, some of the preconceptions are related to the consideration that the framework plan must be read and understood in the context in which it was created and enforced. Therefore, it was analyzed in relation to its own core values and goals concerning childhood's intrinsic value.

Conceptualizing bodily movements

Bodily movement can be considered a crucial part of children's all-around development and is fundamental for play, exploration, learning, care, and formative development (Bartnæs & Myrstad, 2022). To address this, we found inspiration in an ontological view that accounts for embodied living and movement as a fundamental part of children's navigation and meaning making in the world and the importance of child-sensitive pedagogy through movement. The ontological view of phenomenology and ecological designs (e.g., Ingold, 2000, 2018; Sheets-Johnstone, 2013, 2016) has inspired and given direction to how we address and understand potential paradoxes and opportunities when it comes to the use of the term *movement* in the framework plan. Movement is perceived as a fundamental part of young children's navigation and meaning making in the world (Husserl, 1989; Ingold, 2011; Merleau-Ponty, 2012; Sheets-Johnstone, 2013, 2016). Humans have an inborn inclination to play, explore, experience, sense, and feel through movement (e.g., Ingold, 2011; Rudd, et al., 2020; Sheets-Johnstone, 2016). Children's exploration of their own and others' movements can therefore be considered a base for self-agency, empathy, and understanding of themselves and embodied participants in the world in which they live. In line with children's continuous processes of being and becoming, movement is a persistent part of their cultural formation processes (Ødegaard, 2019; Schei, 2013). Following this line of thought, Tim Ingold, an anthropologist who crosses the boundaries between anthropology, phenomenology, process philosophy (post-humanism),

post-Darwinism, and pedagogy (Ingold, 2018), writes that life is “lines of becoming” (Ingold, 2011). Life is not lived within a boundary space but along lines and “mesh-works,” a metaphor he uses for how life is lived along lines of becoming: emergent, indeterminate, contingent, historical, and narrative. All species, including humans, have their own bundle of lines. “Becoming” is what unfolds. Children move and, at the same time, are moved by what they encounter. This is demonstrated in relation to Gibson’s (1979) concept of *affordance* as the perceived possibility for movement in the environment and how children understand their possibilities based on earlier experiences. The conditions for children’s movements are hence important for their meaning making, how they act, and how they see and understand themselves and others now and in the future. Children’s possibilities for movement and how teachers facilitate, meet, and celebrate their inborn inclination to move and be moved are therefore important for their cultural formation processes in kindergarten.

In the present enquiry, the term *movement* is a translation of the Norwegian term *bevegelse*. Both *movement* and *bevegelse* refer to (among other things) the act of moving or a change or development (“Bevegelse,” 2021). The study examined movement as the act of moving one’s body. This can be approached in diverse ways in the field of ECEC. Movement is physical activity that involves skills of the body (running, jumping, climbing, or dancing). Movement is also exploration, communication, and expression (hugging, hitting when angry, singing when happy, or running away when scared).

The roles that physical activity and movement (should) play in children’s lives and policy documents in ECEC settings have been discussed in previous studies (Lu & Montague, 2016; Pedersen & Fusche Moe, 2020). On the basis of the research studies in the Norwegian context that focused on children’s movement/physical activity, such as those of Løkken (2000), Nilsen et al. (2019), Myrstad and Sverdrup (2019), Pedersen and Fusche Moe (2020), Rossholt (2012), Fjørtoft et al. (2018), Bjørgen (2017) and Sando et al. (2020), we can argue that an enlarged focus on young children’s movement/physical activity has more benefits than just the physical health aspect. Pedersen and Fusche Moe (2020) pointed out the World Health Organization’s (WHO) concern about children’s lives being increasingly organized and more sedentary than ever before (WHO, 2019). The United Nations’ Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013) reported a clear trend that emphasizes academic-targeted plans and actions steered toward modern knowledge societies. On this basis, they bring forth a concern for children’s lack of opportunities to play and be physically active. There is a concern that the preference for academic achievement in the early years may lead to less (focus on) movement (Bae, 2021; Pedersen & Fusche Moe, 2020). Pedersen and Fusche Moe (2020) identified signs that showed that even though movement and play are being prioritized in the agenda, they are often approached as instruments for improving children’s health. However, they argue that play and movement have intrinsic values, as children engaging in playful movements “discover who they are and how they can explore themselves and their surroundings

as embodied beings” (p. 69). They argued that playful shared movements in pre-schools need more attention and that a better understanding of this dimension is central to meeting children on their own terms, which is “crucial if preschool[s] are to be a place of growth and enrichment” (p. 69). Lu and Montague (2016) indicated that ECEC plays a proactive role in developing healthy lifestyles and that children will benefit from physical activities for their health and holistic learning. Both Pedersen and Fusche Moe (2020) and Lu and Montague (2016) argued that kindergarten teachers’ knowledge about physical activity and movement should be enhanced and that policy documents should account for physical activity.

The framework plan for kindergartens: Content and tasks

The framework plan is a 56-page document covering nine sections. The document has two substantial areas, one promoting the core values and pedagogical approaches and the other outlining seven learning areas (MER, 2017). The core values promote education for democracy, diversity and mutual respect, equity and equality, sustainable development and life skills, and health. The seven outlined learning areas are meant to be intertwined with the core values and built on matters promoted to be “of interest and intrinsic value to children of kindergarten age [which] shall help promote well-being, all-round development, and good health” (MER, 2017, p. 47). For this purpose, children’s rights to participation, exploration, and expression of opinions and the diversity of methods and activities are promoted as crucial. Play is emphasized as an important building block in different learning areas. Besides *play*, terms such as *formative development*, *exploration*, *learning*, *care*, and *development* are promoted as important matters for kindergartens in Norway throughout all learning areas (MER, 2017).

The current framework plan for Norwegian kindergartens was first implemented in 2017. The intentions were to make kindergartens’ responsibilities and tasks clearer. As the updated version has been implemented, several analyses of the framework plan have been performed. Some analyses were concerning the emphasis on Nordic kindergarten traditions and values (Eriksen et al., 2017), and some have shed light on a down-schooling tendency, leaning toward an Anglo-Saxon approach to education and ECEC, which means that a readiness-for-school approach is emerging in ECEC in Norway (Fosse et al., 2018). Even though several studies have highlighted the importance of an all-around approach to children’s development, we have not found analyses that focused on the emphasis on movement, neither in relation to analyses of the framework plan itself nor in relation to inquiries focusing on Nordic socio-pedagogical tradition and an all-around approach to children’s development. However, a recent expert report concerning the kindergarten teacher’s role (Børhaug et al., 2018) expresses a need for a greater focus on children’s embodiment and movement as conditions for development. Other than the framework plan, the hierarchical government control of kindergartens in Norway is weak (Børhaug et al.,

2018). Therefore, the framework plan must be viewed in relation to the teacher's autonomous work to create a picture of how movement is emphasized in Norwegian kindergartens. In this matter, what is emphasized often ends up being valued (Biesta, 2009). Despite the kindergarten teachers' autonomy, we can argue that the wording of the framework plan provides meaning to what is emphasized in the daily lives of kindergarten children (Lu & Montague, 2016).

Moen and Rugseth (2018) indicated how learning about and with the body is central in physical education (PE) in Norwegian schools. A theoretically driven text analysis of the national curricula in PE in Norwegian schools and the bachelor's program in physical education and sport revealed how body emerged as both object and subject. The results of the analysis provide a broad understanding of the body but show that in the learning outcomes, it is "less clear that the body can be understood from different theoretical perspectives" (p. 154). They used this as a backdrop to discuss how "different perspectives on the body can establish an opportunity for developing PE as an inclusive subject which manages to meet and support learning and development, in a constructive way, for all students" (pp. 154–155). Even though the same terms such as *body as object* or *body as subject* were not used in the present research, their perspectives inspire a discussion of how different approaches to movement can support an all-around approach to children's formative development. Furthermore, we believe that this can help identify and overcome challenges and paradoxes and raise opportunities in kindergarten as an arena for formative development.

Document analysis and its implications

The research question was investigated through a document analysis (Bratberg, 2018). A content analysis provided insights into the research question through a systematic view of how often, when, and in relation to what the term *movement* or the other key terms are mentioned in the framework plan. As we were inspired by a phenomenological and ecological approach to children's movement, the enquiry holds a different emphasis and carries different results than it potentially would have if the vantage point were based on another approach. Hence, the results from the enquiry cannot be considered as end results but can be an attempt to highlight a dimension of the research and a contribution to the development of future framework plans.

The framework plan itself is not an end product. There are several stages in the "life" of a steering document, beginning with the ideas in the plan, the formal document, the perceived document, and the operationalized plan and resulting in the experienced plan (Goodlad, 1979). Therefore, it is not adequate to analyze parts when trying to understand the content fully. The perceived and operationalized plans will depend on the kindergarten and the teacher. The experienced plan depends on the child affected by it. Therefore, the assumption that the stages can be fragmented and criticized separately is not geared toward either policy makers or the plan itself.

Despite the existing research on movement and physical activity, concern about overlooking the embodied dimensions of children's being and becoming is increasing (Alexander, 2015; Bae, 2021; Ødegaard, 2006; Pedersen & Fusche Moe, 2020). Moreover, phenomenological theories on kinesthesia show a lack of focus on movement as fundamental for meaning making and navigation in the world, even in the phenomenology of the body (Sheets-Johnstone, 2016). Therefore, policy makers, teachers, or other users of the framework plan are not expected to know how to account for this dimension of children's being and becoming. The claim that policy makers are not accounting for this dimension of children's meaning making if they do not mention it specifically in their documents is therefore not necessarily an accurate claim. Policy makers might attempt to grasp all aspects of children's multifaceted development by referring to the intrinsic value of childhood. Within this attempt, elements may remain unaccounted for in words, as they are of a more pre-reflective character. The same can apply to kindergarten teachers, who in their daily lives might be working with all the elements described without putting them to words. It is therefore important to remember that the framework plan holds guidelines and does not necessarily depict the current situation in kindergartens in Norway. However, content analysis can help identify traces of a conceptualization of movements place in children's being and becoming.

Analysis procedures

The analysis followed a four-step process inspired by Fosse et al. (2018) and Nilsen et al. (2017). The process was partly planned in advance and developed as the analytical process progressed. Before the start of the analytical process, the word *movement* was conceptualized in relation to the aim of the study. As the term *movement* ("Bevegelse," 2021) can carry several meanings, an outline of movement as the act of moving one's body was made. Furthermore, terms and expressions that could describe movement were detected in Norwegian and English. These terms were found partly based on common sense, such as *physical activity*, and theoretical conceptualization about young children as moving bodies, such as *kinesthesia*, while some words such as *motor skills* were added to the search as they occurred in relation to movement in the initial search. Translations between Norwegian and English were checked at <http://www.ordnett.no> and in the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training Norwegian/English dictionary for terms used in primary and secondary education and training (<https://www.udir.no/verktoy/ordbok/>). The words included in the search as a first step of the analytical process were "bevegelse/movement," "bevege/move," "kropp/body," "kroppslighet/embodiment," "kinestetisk/kinesthetic," "fysisk aktivitet/physical activity(ies)," and "fysikk/physic." The search was both in Norwegian and English to strengthen the translation for the present article. The second analytical step was inspired by Fosse et al. (2018) and consisted of producing a table identifying an overview of the selected terms: where

they were mentioned and how, how often, and in relation to what they were used. In the third step, the terms surrounding the key terms were considered in relation to the key terms. These surrounding terms such as “challenging and safe environment” (for varied movement experiences) were noted in a column next to the sentence to detect repetition. This analytical step was carried out to view how the relationship between the key and surrounding terms mediates ideas about movement in the framework plan. As an example, the expression “challenging and safe environment” in several cases indicated the importance of the environment to facilitate varied forms of movement. The last step was considering the emphasis on movement in relation to the framework plan’s core values and the Nordic socio-pedagogical approach that views childhood as having an intrinsic value (MER, 2017). This was inspired by theories about young children as moving bodies (Husserl, 1989; Ingold, 2011; Sheets-Johnstones, 2016). On the basis of the Nordic traditions’ values, the words “learning,” “(formative) development,” “exploration,” “care and play,” and “childhood’s intrinsic value” were added to the table in this step. Table 1 provides an example of the analytical process.

Table 1. The keyword search

Term	What is it connected to?	Sentence	Surrounding terms	Play	Explore	Learning	(Formative) development	Care	Childhood’s intrinsic value
Movement/ move	Core values: life skills and health	“Kindergarten shall be an arena for daily physical activity, and it shall promote joy of movement and motor development in the children” (p. 11)	Daily physical activity Promote joy of movement Motor development				(Motor) development		
Physical and physical activity/ activities	Learning area: body, movement, and food and health	“... continue to develop their motor skills, body control, coordination, and physical capabilities” (p. 49)	Motor skills Body control Coordination Physical capabilities			Learning	Development		

Results of the keyword search that were not relevant to the research question were excluded from the third step of the analysis. An example of this is how the search result for the word “physic” occurred in relation to the law of physics and was thus omitted.

Results

In the following section, the findings of the analysis are presented. Initially, we outline the research question of how the framework plan uses the term *movement*. Subsequently, the findings are discussed in relation to theories about movement as a fundamental dimension of children's multifaceted processes of being and becoming.

Move/movement

The framework plan mentions the word *move/movement* in different variations seven times in the English version and nine times in the Norwegian version. The frequency differed according to how *bevegelse* at one point is translated to “physical activity,” which directly translates to the Norwegian *fysisk aktivitet*. Meanwhile, “Gjennom arbeid med kropp, bevegelse” (MER, 2017, p. 49), which directly translates to “working with body, movement,” is translated to “by engaging with the human body” (MER, 2017, p. 49). Movement is mentioned in the sections describing core values, objectives and content, and learning areas. Under the section “Core Values: Life Skills and Health,” it is written that “kindergarten shall be an arena for daily physical activity, and it shall promote joy of movement and motor development in the children” (MER, 2017, p. 11). Movement/physical activity is thereby emphasized as a core value in the framework plan, and the joy of movement and motor development is proposed as important in relation to life skills and health. Under the “Objectives and Content” section, it is written that “the physical kindergarten environment shall be safe and challenging and give the children opportunities for engaging in varied forms of movement” (MER, 2017, p. 19). “Varied forms of movement” is translated from the Norwegian *bevegelseserfaringer*, which can also be translated to “movement experiences” in English. Hence, the framework plan values engaging in varied forms of movement/movement experiences and holds kindergartens responsible for providing content and conditions that facilitate safe and challenging environments that provide opportunities for children to have these experiences. This is found in a section of the framework plan that promotes care, formative development, learning, social skills, communication, and language to be viewed in context, and these “all together contribute to children's all-around development” (MER, 2017, p. 19). It is also emphasized that children should be allowed to play and explore their creativity, which indicates that conditions for different movement experiences can support an all-around approach to children's development and be viewed in relation to play, development, exploration, care, and learning.

In the learning area “Body, movement, food, and health” in the framework plan, *movement* is mentioned four times, of which two were in headlines. The two remaining

times that *movement* is mentioned were in relation to promoting how kindergartens should provide and introduce children to safe and challenging movement environments and provide opportunities for engaging in varied forms of movement both indoors and outdoors, within and outside the kindergarten grounds (MER, 2017, p. 50). The repeated focus on this underlines how “staff shall design the physical environment so that all children are given the opportunity to actively participate in play and other activities” (MER, 2017, p. 19). This shows not only a concern about varied forms of movement and physical environment but also a requirement to meet all children and groups of children (MER, 2017), indicating that inclusion is an important matter in kindergarten. Furthermore, joy of movement and varied forms of movement, sensory experiences, and physical play are emphasized as experiences and opportunities that kindergartens should provide to children. However, these hold far less emphasis on the sections about movement than on those about physical environment.

Physical activity/activities and physic/physical

The terms *physical activity/activities* and *physic/physical* are used in relation to or as translations for *movement* several times. *Physical activity/activities* is used three times, and *physic/physical* is used 10 times in the English version of the framework plan. In the Norwegian version, *fysisk aktivitet/aktiviteter* (physical activity/activities) is mentioned one time and *fysisk/fysiske* (physic/physical) is mentioned nine times. On page 49, *kroppslig* (embodied) is translated to “physical”; *bevegelse*, to “physical activity”; and *bevegelseserfaringer*, to a “variety of physical activities.” The use of the terms *physical activity/activities* and *physic/physical*, as well as the term *movement*, highly emphasizes the physical environment. Kindergarten is promoted as an “arena for daily physical activity” (MER, 2017, p. 11), and “children shall be included in activities in which they can engage in physical activity [Norwegian: *bevegelse*], play and social interaction and experience motivation and achievement according to their abilities” (MER, 2017, p. 49). The terms *play*, *development*, and *care* were all used in relation to these matters. *Play* is mentioned twice regarding kindergartens’ responsibility to introduce children to varied forms of physical activity and play (MER, 2017), and physical activity (movement), play, and social interactions are linked. The connection to *development* is made, as challenging movement environments are promoted to introduce children to sensory experiences and physical play (*kroppslig lek* in Norwegian) and motor development. In the present enquiry, the focus on physical well-being and physical (and mental) health is understood as care, although this is not necessarily linked to the act of moving. However, it is relevant in this discussion, as it might point to the earlier emphasis on joy in movement and the development of motor skills as parts of life skills and health. Staff should “meet the children’s need for physical care, including their need for quiet and rest” (MER, 2017, p. 20). This might not be traditionally connected to movement, but it can be an important part of being responsive toward the act of moving one’s body,

which is a part of moving that is not found accounted for in the framework plan (MER, 2017).

Body/embodiment

Body is mentioned five times in the framework plan (two in headlines). It is presented, at one point, under the section describing the objectives and content of kindergartens in relation to how kindergartens should promote learning: “the children shall be able to use their entire body and all their senses in their learning processes” (MER, 2017, p. 22). This is mentioned after the sentence, “Children shall be able to explore, discover, and understand correlations, broaden their perspectives, and gain new insights” (MER, 2017, p. 22). Hence, the body is understood as connected to exploration and learning. *Body* is also mentioned under the learning area “Body, movement, food, and health,” promoting that “by engaging with the human body, food and health, kindergartens shall help the children to get to know their own needs, explore the human body and develop good hygiene habits and a varied diet” (p. 49) and “continue to develop their motor skills, body control, coordination and physical capabilities” (p. 49). In relation to an instrumental view of movement, the latter quote is most interesting and relevant. However, awareness of one’s needs and exploring the human body are relevant for a more explorative approach to movement. *Embodiment* (“kroppslig/kroppslighet” in the Norwegian version of the framework plan) is not mentioned in the English version of the framework plan, but *kroppslig* is mentioned under the learning area “Body, movement, food, and health” to promote that “by engaging with the human body [...] kindergartens shall help the children to evaluate and master risky play through physical challenges [Norwegian: kroppslige utfordringer]” (p. 49). The emphasis that children should continue to develop motor skills, body control, coordination, and physical capabilities indicates that the framework plan acknowledges that children are already engaged in this dimension of their development. However, exploration is not mentioned in relation to this, and body language or bodily communication is also not mentioned in the framework plan.

Motor development/motor skills

“Motor development/motor skills” was included in the word search, as the phrase showed up as a surrounding word during the keyword search for *movement*. The two places where it is mentioned promote that kindergartens should “continue to develop their motor skills, body control, coordination and physical capabilities” (MER, 2017, p. 49) and “be an arena for daily physical activity, and it shall promote joy of movement and motor development in the children” (p. 11). Again, this shows that the framework plan accounts for developing movement skills, although it does not emphasize what these skills are, why they are valuable, or how the development of motor skills or joy of movement can be achieved, nor does it mention fine motor skills in any variation. This can be related to an instrumental approach to movement.

Kinesthesia

“Kinesthesia/kinesthetic” was included in the keyword search, being the sense through which an awareness about the qualities of one’s own and others’ movements arise (Sheets-Johnstone, 2016). According to Theorell (2021), children perform a kinesthetic musicality, meaning sensitivity, and sensuality toward what the children encounter when being in places, forces, media, and play impulses. Kinesthetic musicality contains transducing processes where children transform and renew energies, as for example seen in children’s war and battle games. Despite its relevance to young children’s development, it is not mentioned in the framework plan.

Summary of the results

The term *movement* and/or the related key terms used in the search show that focus on movement as moving one’s body/physical activity (or other key terms) is mentioned 27 times in the English version of the framework plan. The Norwegian version holds the same number of mentions but focuses on different key terms. The themes that occurred during the analysis focused on the physical environment for movement and the facilitation of motor and movement skill development and sensory experiences. Risky play and the joy of movement are also mentioned as aspects that should be facilitated by kindergartens. However, it is unclear how movement, the act of moving one’s body, is understood through risky play, joy in movement, development of motor skills, or sensory experiences. There is no clear conception of what type of movement is valued in these settings or of why movement is valued at all. Communication through movement is also not mentioned.

Discussion

In the following section, the key elements of the findings are outlined and discussed in relation to how children explore and undergo existential and formative experiences.

The framework plan’s emphasis on movement

The document analysis revealed a high emphasis on kindergartens’ physical environment and children’s possibilities for varied movement experiences. Kindergarten staff are encouraged to introduce children to varied challenging movement environments, sensory experiences, and physical play, both indoors and outdoors, within and outside the kindergarten. In relation to a turn to sensory experiences (e.g. Thyssen & Grosvenor, 2019) and Gibson’s (1979) notion of affordances and how children perceive their possibilities based on the environment, this emphasis is in line with an all-around approach. From a phenomenological perspective, such as shown in Merleau-Ponty’s (2012) “phenomenology of embodiment,” the movement experience becomes a part of a child’s understanding of self and others. The affordances (Gibson, 1979) available can therefore be meaningful for how children act and understand their possibilities in the present and future. This can be considered in

line with Pedersen and Fusche Moe's (2020) focus on how playful shared movement is likely to increase children's opportunities for growth. It can also lead to a change to more than an increased frequency of organized and sedentary activities (Pedersen & Fusche Moe, 2020). A high focus on the physical movement environment could promote embodied exploration. It could also promote that different environments can support the development of various movement skills and a child's perception of how to move in different environments in the future. However, in these settings, there is no clear conception of what type of movement is meant or valued and why. On the basis of the further emphasis on movement skills (body control, coordination, and motor skills), the framework plan could lean toward an understanding of movement as the development of skills, more than an inborne explorative navigation in the world. In line with research that promotes physical activity as important for health, learning, and all-around development (Lu & Montague, 2016; Stodden et al., 2021), both aspects will become crucial focal points for children's development, and several aspects are meant to be considered at the same time.

Movement and children as being and becoming

One could question whether clarification of the use of the framework plan is necessary, as the cultural formation processes will happen regardless. Important matters of all-around development can be present in both an instrumental approach to children's movement (as healthy for their bodies) and an approach leaning toward embracing playful and explorative movement. From this understanding, it can be challenging to categorize an activity, or even more so, a term in a written document (in this case, *movement*) as holding to a specific approach.

This complexity of children's lines of becoming (Ingold, 2011) is important to consider when analyzing and/or criticizing the framework plan. Still, we argue that the analysis can raise awareness about how acknowledging all aspects of being human, including non-verbal, emotional, and expressional aspects, is significant to seriously consider the whole human. The framework plan promotes that kindergartens should continue to develop the motor skills, body control, coordination, and physical capabilities of children and promote the inclusion of all children and child groups (MER, 2017). However, it does not mention movement as a form of communication or expression of feelings through toddling and singing. To meet the all-around approach to children's development and to include all children, create a space for different age communities, and promote the intrinsic value of childhood, we argue that one must account for these elements of movement as well. This is a natural part of kindergarten teachers' work, although the focus of the guidelines may also receive more focus in the practical work (Biesta, 2009).

Teachers' movement practices

Teachers' movement practices are not mentioned in the framework plan. To leave autonomy to teachers is in line with the intentions of the document and Nordic

tradition (Børhaug et al., 2018). A lack of outlined responsibility and acknowledgement of explorative non-verbal movement practices can also mean a lack of a decent or fulfilling language for this. We view teachers' movement practices as crucial for children's understanding of themselves and others, as moving with others is a crucial part of navigating in the world (Sheets-Johnstone, 2013). By illuminating different approaches to understanding and working with movement in steering documents, we suggest that teachers' movement practices can be examined. Meanwhile, it can encourage both explicit and implicit work with movement as a means for better health and physical being and being expressive, communicative, and explorative, either at the same time or through specific activities. One can argue that providing space for open-ended activities in which children explore with and through their bodies is meaningful and is a base for self-agency (Sheets-Johnstone, 2017). In line with Jensen's argument (2009), we can argue that a less open-ended pedagogical approach wherein one accounts for special activities, whether it be motor skill training, expressive, explorative, or a combination of these movement forms, can create pedagogical practices that might be more inclusive and offer more equal opportunities for all. Particularly for young children who have not yet learned to master verbal language, it is crucial to also shed light on a non-verbal dimension (explorative movement, touching, pointing, hitting, caressing, or dancing) of being and becoming (Hännikäinen, 2016; Ødegaard, 2006, 2020).

The use of movement in the framework plan offers examples of paradoxes in the expectations of teachers' work. Kindergartens are expected to offer movement environments that are challenging and safe. They are also expected to meet and celebrate the intrinsic value of childhood, although movement as expression, which is the only way of expression for some children, is not mentioned. An openness in how movement is emphasized in the plan can hence offer great potential for teachers' autonomous work but can limit the dimensions of movement practices if awareness of this emphasis in the framework plan is lacking.

Concluding remarks and impact of the study

The findings of this study raised the critical question of whether the framework plan leans toward an understanding of movement as the development of skills rather than as an inborne explorative navigation in the world. Paradoxical wordings were identified. Against this background, we suggest that a clearer emphasis on the different dimensions of movement can offer a meaningful contribution for understanding and accounting for children's being and becoming in ECEC. Furthermore, we raise the question of whether a clarification of different approaches can contribute to an understanding of how the different approaches can be (and potentially already are) intertwined and hence lead to new ways of understanding the meaning of movement in ECEC. Movement has been described as an inherently important part of young children's being and becoming in the world (e.g., Gradovski et al., 2019; Ingold, 2011; Ødegaard, 2020; Sheets-Johnstone, 2020; Stodden et al., 2021;

Theorell, 2021). It represents a viable means for integrating health, well-being, play, and education during the early years, but movement competence and physical development as ECEC quality indicators are generally lacking (Pesce et al., 2018) and more interrogation on conceptual work is needed for a more complete understanding of the scientific borders and bridges between crucial concepts in early years, such as movement, play, and exploration. Therefore, future studies with research and didactic designs are warranted to better promote and capture these important aspects of children's lives and development. Following this critique, we suggest that the body and movement must be considered in ecological frameworks and non-linear didactics. This could imply that researchers could adjust their focus between seeing the body as a movement competence (Pesce et al., 2018) and as a subject, with an emphasis on kinesthetic navigation and understanding of themselves and others.

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