

# The Nordic Approach – History and Development

Tora Korsvold



QueenMaudUniversityCollege

OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

dmmh.no

# My presentation

1. The welfare state and universality
2. The Nordic vision of a 'good childhood'



# The history of the Nordic Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

## What makes the Nordic way unique?

- It's universal nature
- Children's rights
- The social-pedagogic tradition
- The role of play
- Nature and outdoor activities
- A holistic learning perspective



# Background and the role of the state

- Crèches - all day care for children of poor working class mothers
- Kindergarten - half-day service for middle-class children



# The state, population and childcare in the 1930s and 1940s

- Alva Myrdal (1903-1986)
- All-day childcare
- The responsibility of the state



# 1970s: The modern public childcare child

- The relationship between the welfare state, the labour market and families was (re)constructed



# ECEC of a universal nature

- Opening hours
- The age of the children
- Parents' religious beliefs and affiliations
- Children's and parents' languages
- Children's (dis)abilities





## 2. The Nordic vision of a 'good childhood'

- The Nordic welfare states have been a vanguard concerning children's rights
- There is a long history of laws to protect children





# The cultural value of 'Nordic Child-centeredness'

- 'A good nordic childhood' is a value-based category
- Child-centeredness and welfare programs

# The value of being outside and outdoor play

- The principle of outdoor activities as a cultural value
- Creating a robust child subject



# Concluding remarks

- Challenging the universal schemes
- Depends on quality in the institutions, and that for all children



**Thank you for attention and enjoy  
your stay**

*Early Childhood  
Education & Care*

THE NORDIC WAY

## Photos

P.2 <http://prosjekt.hib.no/barnehagepionerene/barnehagen/barnehagen/>

Photographer unknown

P. 4 Digitalt museum Photographer unknown

P. 5 eFolket Photographer unknown

P. 6 Universitetsforlaget Photographer unknown

P. 7 VibeFoto 1960 Photographer unknown

P. 8 Schrøder, Norsk Jernbarnemuseums samling Photographer unknown

P. 10 UiS Steinar Figve barnehage.no Magne Turøy

P. 11 Varden Tore Øyvind Moen