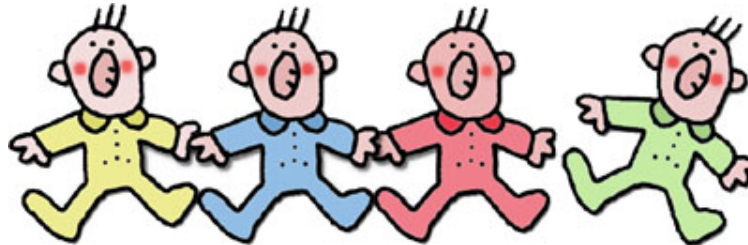


# *The Modern Child and the Flexible Labour Market: Exploring early childhood education and care*



International Conference  
Norwegian Centre for Child Research, NTNU  
Trondheim, 29-30 April 2009

This conference aims to shed light on new research related to the welfare state, child care policies and small children's everyday lives in early childhood education and care institutions (ECEC). Child care centres are constituted as spaces for children's identities through particular political and cultural understandings of the child and 'the good childhood'. While being regarded typically as 'natural', such understandings are part of child care practices and policies in modern welfare societies.

The conference takes as a point of departure a close connection between the labour market and work life and developments of particular care arrangement for small children. In Norway today, both the labour market and day-care institutions are partly influenced by similar concepts such as flexibility, neo-liberal approaches and user-orientation. As stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, young children's rights to participation in society is increasingly emphasised. An important question is how these trends influence pedagogical practices and children's lives in day care centres.

Neo-liberalism may also affect the ideal of equality as a crucial and traditional normative foundation for the Nordic welfare state. Thus, an important question is: Have the welfare states' policies towards small children come to a cross road, where welfare as a common goal and guideline has been replaced by an ideal of the individual's right to choose? It seems scientifically pertinent and politically highly relevant to address such questions in our efforts to illuminate these relationships.

Curricula in European kindergartens are to an increasingly degree reflecting an emphasis on a knowledge-based society. In light of recent changes in ECEC policy and various adult

constructions of (good) childhoods, one may ask how girls and boys together are working out identities like the 'active and participant child', 'the natural child', 'the flexible child' and 'the individual child'. Given neo-liberal trends in the welfare state, it has been argued that citizenship no longer seems to draw on the ideas of solidarity, security and welfare in a community, rather focus is directed toward issues about the subject's individual 'free choice' and self-realisation.

We welcome proposals for single papers and thematic panels (featuring three or four papers on a common theme). The conference language will be English. Potential topics may include:

- 1. Child care, welfare policy and working life*
- 2. Kindergarten, childhood and nature*
- 3. Young children as new citizens?*
- 4. Kindergarten as a space for play and learning*
- 5. Toddlers in child care institutions*
- 6. Material culture in child care institutions*
- 7. Gender, ethnicity and learning: inclusion and diversity*
- 8. Media, consumption and child culture*

## **Deadlines**

**January 15, 2009:** Submission of abstracts (for more information about the abstract format see below).

In the case of panel proposals, chairs should gather abstracts (3-4 per panel) and submit these with an overall rationale.

Information about where to submit your abstract and other information about the conference will be available on our webpage: <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/noseb/english/research/prosjekter/BHP/>  
We strongly encourage you to regularly click into this webpage to receive updates.

The conference will be held at the Britannia Hotel, Trondheim.

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NTNU  
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## **Format for the abstract**

Please confirm with the following guidelines:

### Language:

English

### First page:

Title of the abstract

Keywords (max. 7)

Choice of topic (see topics mentioned above)

Name of author(s)

Title of author(s)

Company/Institution

Address

Phone

Fax

E-mail

### Length:

Approximately 500 words.

The short bibliography and the first page are not included in the 500 words.

### Page:

A4 (210 x 297 mm).

Margins left and right 15mm.

Margins top and bottom 20mm.

1,5 line spacing.

Start at left-hand margin. One clear line after headings and between paragraphs.

### Font:

Text: 12 point, Times New Roman.

Title 16 point bold; first letter of each main word upper case.

### Underlining:

Do not use underlining, unless for a hyperlink (such as a URL web address).