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Care, upbringing and teaching in 'horizontal' transitions in toddler day-care groups

Abstract

This chapter focuses on the fundamental notion of early childhood education as an integrated whole, composed of care, upbringing and teaching, in the context of Finnish early childhood education. These three concepts - care, upbringing and teaching - are addressed firstly, on the conceptual level, and then empirically by illustrative examples from day-care groups for one-to-three-year-old children.

Our main question focuses on how care, upbringing and teaching are implemented in small-scale 'horizontal' transitions children experience between events or activities during the day as part of the experience of day-care, and how these events might be evaluated from a pedagogical perspective. Empirical data of horizontal transitions were collected by observations and video recordings in three day-care groups. The illustrative examples selected and discussed are linked to everyday life transitions occurring in day-care centres.

Our analysis shows how horizontal transitions provide many opportunities to bring care, upbringing and teaching together into an integrated whole. These events are also important contexts for young children's learning. The chapter gives examples of good educational practices for supporting children's learning, development and well-being in day-care groups. Further, by raising awareness of less-known issues in early childhood education, it could offer pointers for teacher education and teachers' professional development.

Keywords: Care, Upbringing, Teaching, Transitions, One-to-three-year-old children

Introduction

This chapter takes a dual point of entry to everyday life in early childhood education for one-to-three-year-old children in Finland. It sheds light on the kinds of small-scale "horizontal transitions" (Kagan & Neuman, 1988, p.2) - such as moving

from one location/place to another or from one activity to another - that occur during daily life in a day-care centre but are often difficult to recognise. In addition, the chapter deals with the fundamental notion of early childhood education as an integrated whole comprising care, upbringing and teaching (Broström 2006).

In many countries early childhood education - or early education - is defined and understood as a pedagogical activity, which combines education and care (early childhood education and care, or educare). In other countries it is seen to include three interrelating dimensions, such as: *Betreuung*, *Erziehung* and *Bildung* in Germany; care, education and teaching in Finland; and care, upbringing and teaching in Denmark. In this chapter we make use of the last mentioned perspective, presented by Stig Broström (2006) in his broader analysis of the concepts related to early childhood education. We give specific attention to the notion of *upbringing*¹ since in many English-speaking countries this activity is largely understood as relating to the activities of parents vis-à-vis their children rather than as something which early years practitioners are engaged in.

Our rationale behind the chapter is to enhance discussion about the various small-scale events and situations during daily life in day-care centres that can be both fleeting and unplanned. When analysed in detail, however, these small-scale events form an important context for children's learning. In other words, by analysing care, upbringing and teaching in these events and situations, it is possible to gather evidence and examples of good educational practices for supporting children's development and well-being in day-care groups.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the concepts of care, upbringing and teaching, drawing on the research literature. Various types of small-scale horizontal transitions are then identified from observational data gathered in day-care centres and interpreted through the three lenses of care, upbringing and teaching. Our main questions focus on how care, upbringing and teaching are implemented in horizontal transitions and how these events can be evaluated from a pedagogical perspective.

Horizontal transitions in early childhood education

The literature on early childhood education and child development offers various definitions and characterizations of the concept of *transition*. In their review of the literature on early childhood transitions, Vogler, Crivello and Woodhead (2008, p. 1) provide a generic definition of transitions as "key events and/or processes occurring at specific periods or turning points during the life course." Transitions relate to a person's experiences and well-being in everyday life, as they are linked "to changes in a person's appearance, activity, status, roles and relationships, as well as associated changes in use of physical and social space, and/or changing contact with

¹ The Oxford Dictionaries Online define upbringing as "the treatment and instruction received by a child from its parents".

cultural beliefs, discourses and practices, especially where these are linked to changes of setting and in some cases dominant language” (Vogler et al. 2008, p. 1). In addition, transitions often involve major psychosocial and cultural adjustments for the individual (Vogler et al. 2008) and, in the case of children, for the whole family involved (Griebel & Niesel 2009).

Research on the early childhood years has focused primarily on children’s ‘vertical’ and formal transitions in educational contexts, such as the first transition from parental care to out-of-home care (Dalli 2002; Dunlop and Fabian 2007). Both the challenges the transitions pose for children (e.g., Ahnert et al. 2004; Dalli 2002; Datler et al. 2012) and children’s own agency in constructing the transition have been discussed (e.g., Seung Lam & Pollard 2006). Children’s horizontal transitions are often less prominent in the literature, and less focused on in daily life, than the more predictable vertical transitions (see e.g., Kagan and Neuman 1998; Rutanen 2016; Vogler et al. 2008). Horizontal transitions are those movements that occur on a weekly or daily basis between various spheres or domains of children’s lives (Vogler et al. 2008), such as moving between educational institutions and home during the day. In this chapter, we focus on even smaller movements children experience within their early childhood education setting: small-scale horizontal transitions that involve moving from one location/place to another and/or from one activity to another. In practice, for example, the morning hours between breakfast and lunch may have already included various transitions of this type. Our empirical analysis starts by identifying the various types of small-scale horizontal transitions that conform to this overall definition. After we have identified diverse horizontal transitions from empirical data, we will analyse and discuss how the three dimensions of early childhood education, i.e. care, upbringing, and teaching (Broström 2006) appear in educational practices in these transitions.

Care, upbringing and teaching: three overlapping dimensions of early childhood education

According to the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (2004):

early childhood education is an integrated whole comprising the intertwining dimensions of care, education and teaching. These dimensions receive a different emphasis according to the age of the child and the situation. The younger the child is, the greater the extent to which interactions between the child and educators take place in care situations. These situations also involve education, teaching and guidance, being important for both the child’s general well-being and learning. (p. 15)

However, the guidelines do not describe how the care, education and teaching of children should or could occur in day-care groups. In addition, there is a clear lack of research on how these dimensions are realized in practice (see, however, Hännikäinen 2013).

Broström (2006) has approached this issue from both the theoretical and pedagogical perspectives by examining the concepts and contents of care, upbringing and teaching in relation to each other. *Teaching* is conceived by Broström (2006, p. 396) as “a conscious and systematic organization and guidance of processes that form the basis for children’s activities through which they construct and appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies.” This view offers children space to participate in and affect their own learning. To teach children requires an educator who is able to listen to and observe children sensitively and who notices children’s current interests and needs. Teaching, as defined by Broström (2006), includes the idea that the educator is able to capture children’s momentum towards learning (Brownlee, Berthelsen and Segaran 2009; Fumoto, Hargreaves and Maxwell 2004) and to utilize any teaching opportunity in a way that promotes children’s development (van Oers 1996). In practice, this is done by applying different strategies, such as giving advice and hints, explaining and questioning, repeating and rephrasing children’s utterances and modelling their activities (Hännikäinen and van Oers 2002; van de Pol, Volman and Beishuizen 2010).

Upbringing is also “a conscious and systematic organization and guidance of processes that form the basis for children’s activities through which they develop fundamental personal qualities such as will, character, morals, and norms, attitudes, consciousness, and behaviour” (Broström 2006, p. 296). This definition builds historically on the German concept of *Bildung* as personal growth, self-realization, and on the ancient concept of *Paideia* as formation of personality, behaviour and moral attitude through breeding, environment and culture. Referring to Løvlie (1984), Lillemyr (2009) has emphasized that in relation to children’s learning, upbringing can be analysed both from a moral and a strategic perspective. From the moral perspective upbringing offers the child the experience of being accepted and respected. Through this experience, upbringing impacts on the development of the child’s world of values. From the strategic perspective, upbringing offers children an opportunity to acquire knowledge about themselves and about the outside world, as well as to construct a relationship to, and communicate with, that world (see Lillemyr 2009, p. 60).

Referring to Diderichsen (1997), Broström defines *care* as “a specific relation between people characterized by the fact that one person focuses on another person and acts in a way which serves the other person and supports his or her wellbeing” (Broström, 2006, p. 396). In early childhood education, care is often understood as ‘*basic care*’, that is, as physical care, caregiving in daily routine situations. In addition to these practical activities, care is also conceived as ‘*caring*’, that is, psychological care, which takes an empathetic moral and intellectual stance towards children (e.g., Broström 2006; Goldstein 1998; McNamee and Mercurio 2007). Noddings (1992, p. 16-17) asserts that “caring is a way of being in relation, not a

set of specific behaviors (...)When I care, I really hear, see, or feel what the other is trying to convey”, with the result in the child feels loved, appreciated, understood, and connected with other people (Thyssen 1995).

In early childhood education, the concepts of ‘emotional work’ (e.g., Taggart 2011) and ‘professional love’ are sometimes used to depict caring (Page 2011; 2014). Professional love means care on the emotional level, visible in reciprocal attachment, tenderness and closeness, but at the same time it involves reflection and decision-making based on a professional understanding of children’s needs, well-being and development (Jensen, Broström & Hansen 2010).

How are the three dimensions of early childhood education linked? Although care, upbringing and teaching can be differentiated, both theoretically and in research, in educational practice and in children’s experiences they are mingled. In the process of supporting children to construct and appropriate knowledge and skills, educators also influence children’s values and attitudes, while at the same time caring for them (Broström 2006). However, in individual situations, one of the three dimensions might be more dominant than the others, and in some cases only one of them might be clearly visible. In the next section we will dive into the empirical material to investigate how these dimensions exist and co-exist, particularly in the situations that involve horizontal transitions in toddler day-care groups.

Ethnographic data and illustrative examples

Data from two different projects (*(In)visible Toddlerhood? Global and Local Constructions of Toddlers’ Places in Institutions* and *Emotional wellbeing of the younger children in day-care groups: participation, social relationships and teachers’ role in joint activities*) were used to answer the research questions on how care, upbringing and teaching are implemented in small-scale horizontal transitions and how these events might be evaluated from a pedagogical viewpoint.

Both projects were carried out in Finnish municipal day-care centres. Methodologically, the projects applied a variety of ethnographic data collection methods, primarily paper-and pen observations and video recordings. The observations and video recordings covered different events during the day: teacher-led structured activities such as music sessions, routine activities such as meal times and child-initiated activities such as free play.

In the first project, data were collected from a day-care group that comprised of 13 children aged 18 to 34 months (in the beginning of the data collection) and three educators. The data were collected over a six-week period and included observational field notes and 130 hours of video recordings. The second project was carried out in two day-care groups. One group comprised 12 children aged 12 to 37 months and three educators, while the other was a sub-group of eight children aged 15 to 28 months and two educators drawn from a larger mixed-age group. The data were collected over four months, yielding 37 hours of documented observations and video-recordings.

The data were analysed by applying qualitative content analysis. Authentic examples, excerpts from the observations, from all three groups are given; they are not intended as generalizable, but as illustrative examples of different events.

Identification and analysis of care, upbringing and teaching during horizontal transitions

In all the groups, the video recordings selected for this analysis were made during the morning, after the breakfast hour and before the children went outdoors. Perusal of the data showed that it was possible to identify transitions from one location/place and/or activity to another. Some transitions were implemented by the educators after clear initiatives made by the children, and some were more clearly based on a prior agenda set by the educators. However, in practice, most transitions took place as an outcome of moment-to-moment interactions among the children and the educators, and hence it was impossible to identify a single initiator or initiative for the transition.

The transitions identified were labelled in one of the following six categories:

- 1) **NEED**, the child expresses a need to go somewhere and/or do something
- 2) **MOTIVATIONAL**, the educator assists the children to elaborate their play or other activities thus motivating them to extend their experiences.
- 3) **INTERVENTION**, the educator directs the child(ren)'s attention from one activity to another
- 4) **AGENDA**, the educator pursues a pre-planned activity
- 5) **ROUTINE**, the educator makes sure all the children engage in certain routine activities
- 6) **SPONTANEITY**, the educator suggests a new activity or another place for the children based on an unplanned idea

NEED – a transition based on explicit initiatives by children

Some transitions were implemented by the educator on the basis of explicit initiatives by individual children: the child expressed an interest to go somewhere or to do something (*need*). In the following example, Emmi has been playing with Silvia, Viktor and the educator Helen. Emma leaves the group and approaches the educator Hanna.

Emma (2:4) comes and sits down in front of HANNA. Emma takes HANNA's hands.

HANNA: "Oh, are we rowing?"

Emma nods. HANNA and Emma begin to 'row' by moving their bodies and swinging to and fro hand in hand.

HANNA sings: "There were two rowers in the boat, the waves roll the boat, will you come and row with me..."

Emma smiles, looking cheerful. Lily (1:4) comes to watch.

HANNA to Lily: "Would you like to join in?"

Emma gives her place to Lily. HANNA and Lily row, HANNA sings and Lily laughs.

Lily: "More."

Lily and HANNA row and sing several times. Lily stands up and stays close to HANNA.

HELEN, Sylvie (2:2) and Victor (2:3) join the group. Sylvie and Victor sit down opposite each other.

HELEN helps them into the position of a rower.

HELEN and HANNA sing the song together. Sylvie and Victor are smiling and rowing more and more wildly and eventually fall down wild with joy.

HANNA: "Oh no, the whole boat was about to capsize."

Sylvie turns to HANNA: "Ämä-ämä-äkki."

HANNA: "Oh, hämähäkki [Incy wincy spider]."

HANNA and HELEN sing and play the song together. Sylvie and Victor play with them, Lily watches.

Lily: "More."

HANNA and HELEN sing four verses and children try to sing with them.

Lily laughs and seems to put her heart and soul into the game.

Sylvie comes closer to HANNA singing another song: "Hey, hey, HANNA."

HANNA laughs and responds singing "Hey, hey, Sylvie."

HANNA and HELEN sing the song substituting the names of Sylvie, Victor, Lily and Emma name.

In this example, the first horizontal transition initiated by Emma was about moving from one place, activity, educator and children's group to another. By taking the educator's hands, she expressed her interest in playing a game which she seemed also to have played earlier. The educator was attentive and understood Emma's wish: actions which can be characterized as caring. While singing the song, teaching also took place: the words and melody of the song were practised. The situation then changed when Lily came over to observe the game. The educator recognized Lily and invited her to join the game, thus communicating that she was giving her individual attention and care. The game was repeated a few times, and care seemed to be mixed with teaching, as the educator repeated the song various times making the content clear to Lily. In addition, the particular movements linked to the song were repeated in a very explicit way. Lily then stood up and remained an observer. This was the moment of Lily's transition from one activity to another and at the same time the transition of Sylvie and Victor, who came over with another educator, Helen. Helen understood their intention and assisted them to begin the game and also commented on their wild movements in a friendly way. Again the educator's actions can be considered to be caring actions. The episode continued with small modifications when Sylvie suggested other songs and the educators fulfilled her

wishes. It is clear that caring dominated in this situation, but there were also moments of teaching pertaining to certain skills, such as moving, singing or memorizing. The situation included also teaching about the social skill of turn taking. Upbringing, however, deals with wider areas than turn taking. In the interactions we have described upbringing is visible in the way the educators ensured that all the children had equal possibilities to participate and learn from each other, in other words, it covers a general attitude towards the other and the ethical stance of how to relate to the other. All the transitions emerged suddenly and were not systematic or pre-planned by the educators; hence, the teaching and upbringing actions of the educators included also spontaneous events arising on a moment-to-moment basis.

MOTIVATIONAL – the educator assists children to elaborate their activities

In the category of *motivational* transitions, we identified events when the educator suggested new ideas to the children for elaborating their play or other activities and thus motivated them to extend their activities. In the following example, the educator, Lena, deepens a theme that two girls had initiated.

Olivia (2:2) and Venla (2:4) are standing next to the couch, Olivia has a toy thermometer.

Olivia: “She’s fallen sick” She puts the thermometer on the couch.

Venla: “Open wide, open wide.” She takes the thermometer and proffers it to Olivia.

Olivia opens her mouth, Venla touches her mouth with the thermometer.

LENA is with Matias (2:1) at the other end of the room and shifts her attention from Matias to Olivia and Venla.

LENA: “Did Olivia have a temperature? Did she, Venla?”

Venla: “Yes.”

LENA: “Did she have high fever?” Venla answers (inaudible) and moves towards LENA.

LENA: “Shouldn’t you take care of her if she is sick?”

Venla: “I have this sort of money.” Venla proffers fake/toy money to Olivia.

LENA: “Give me the money, and go and take care of Olivia.”

LENA (pointing to the closet): “Should we get the medical instruments?”

Olivia and Venla: “Yes.” They move towards the closet with LENA.

LENA: “I wonder if there are any instruments we can use to take care of Olivia.”

The educator observed the children’s play and elaborated the theme initiated by the children. From a small gesture made by Venla, she interpreted that a nursing game could be emerging. She identified the focus of attention of these children, interpreted their viewpoints and in this way, expressed care. By adding a certain content to the game, namely, the idea of fetching medical instruments, she taught

the children that these are the tools that belong to a nursing setting. Upbringing was also involved when she suggests that they could or should take care of a sick person. An ethical standpoint was thus introduced into the game. The transition also became co-constructed, as the original theme was initiated by the children, but the change in the physical setting was elaborated and supported by the educator.

From a pedagogical perspective, this episode contains an interesting dilemma. While Lena was observing these girls and engaging with them, forming a care relation, she had to move her attention away from Matias who was next to her and with whom she had been interacting just a moment before. Thus, this interaction is also an example of an event where educators are faced with simultaneous initiatives and needs expressed by children.

INTERVENTION – the educator directs children’s attention from one activity to another

In events classified under the category of *intervention*, the educator proposes new activities to direct the children’s attention to something other than the events that have just taken place. This can happen, for example, in a conflict situation between children or after a minor accident. The next example is about resolving a conflict.

Olivia (2:4), Venla (2:2) and Matias (2:1) are sitting by the table cutting out shapes with play dough moulds. Olivia tries to grab Venla’s moulding spoon and starts to cry when Venla refuses to let her have it. Venla continues to mould the play dough smiling. Olivia tries to reach over to Venla, cries and eventually hits Venla. Venla screams, hits back, and continues moulding, still smiling. After a while, Olivia again reaches out for Venla’s tool, and Venla stops her. Olivia glances at the door and cries. The educators are dressing the other children in the corridor, but they can see what’s going on.

KATHY to Olivia: “Now could you Olivia come over to the bathroom and [then] we can go out.”

Olivia doesn’t respond to the invitation, but hits her head against the table. Venla throws a (moulding) tool that flies close to Olivia. Olivia cries louder and louder.

KATHY to Olivia: “Come and tell me what’s wrong.” Olivia stays where she is.

Olivia to KATHY: “Venla threw a fish (a moulding tool) at my head.”

KATHY to Olivia: “Tell Venla that it is not nice if a person throws a fish at someone’s head.” She also repeats the invitation to come over to the bathroom.

LENA to Matias: “Would you come over here to get dressed Matias, come over here.”

She goes over to Matias, picks up his play dough and puts it in a box.

LENA to Matias: “Let’s pick up these yellow bits here and put them in this box, like this ... yours is a nice one. But now, let’s try putting it away, yes, there.”

LENA to Olivia and Venla: “You can also soon start putting the play dough away in that box. Let’s (all) go out.”

The educators had their hands full: they were dressing the children in the corridor. Olivia and Venla were cutting out shapes with play dough moulds in another room. As it was time to go out, and as the educators also perceived the escalating conflict between the girls, they attempted to intervene in the conflict while also continuing with their task of dressing the children. In order to deflect the children from the conflict, they initiated a transition verbally, suggesting that it was time to go to the bathroom and put away the playthings. The educators were faced with a dilemma: whether to react to the fight between the girls or to continue dressing the other children. By intervening verbally they created a relation of care: they showed they had noticed what was going on and reminded the girls that they were present if needed. At the same time, they distanced themselves somewhat from the situation and allowed Olivia and Venla to resolve the situation in their own way. The educator didn’t ask for a detailed account about who started the hitting or throwing and why. The solution offered by her, in addition to a short ‘upbringing’ remark on how to express oneself to another person if the former acts in an unwanted way, was to invite the girls to take a break from what they were doing, that is, to suggest a transition to another activity. Lena was also teaching the children about what to do after a certain activity; she guided and assisted the clean-up and spent time with the children to collect the play dough and the moulding spoons.

AGENDA - the educator pursues a pre-planned activity

Agenda transitions occur when the educator has planned an activity in advance and implements it by inviting the children to participate in the activity. In the following example, the morning events cluster around the play dough moulding activity and the invitations the educator makes to the children.

In one room, a group of children are moulding play dough. The other children are playing in another room (play room) with LENA. Every now and then, RITA, who is responsible for checking that no child is left outside the moulding activity, goes into the play room to invite children to join in. The children who have done the moulding activity return to the play room. The invitations are given in a form such as:

RITA to LENA: “Someone could come now.”

(...)

RITA to Leo (2:1): “Come and do some moulding ...Come here and see.”

(...)

RITA to LENA: “I’ll send them [children who have done the moulding] to you.”

LENA: “Ok.”

(...)

The third educator, KATHY, arrives and RITA leaves the room where children are moulding. She invites four boys who have done their moulding to do gymnastics in a bigger hall.

LENA says to KATHY that she could read to Matias (2:1). KATHY suggests that LENA and Matias could go in the other room to read. KATHY then takes care of the moulding.

KATHY to Ilmari (1:8): “Do you want to go and do moulding?”

Ilmari: “Moulding.”

KATHY, pointing to the other room: “There, moulding.”

Olivia (2:4) loudly: “I want to go and do moulding!”

KATHY sighing a bit: “Yes...Let’s see what the situation is like in there.” She goes towards the door.

Olivia: “Me too!” Olivia opens the door to the room where the moulding is going on. Olivia and Ilmari go inside.

Olivia: “Yeee!”

In this example, various children went through a sudden transition from one activity and location to another, namely, from free play to a more structured activity in the other room. The educators had the leading role in deciding who went where and did what. Partially, the decision is made in advance, e.g., the children who were invited to do gymnastics were already known, as it was their turn that day. However, for some children this transition occurred suddenly, in the middle of their play with others. For some, it seemed to occur at a moment when they were not deeply engaged in whatever they were doing; it was for that reason that they were selected to move. Sometimes the educators asked who wanted to go next, as in the case when Kathy asked Ilmari. Olivia, on the other hand, didn’t wait for an invitation, but directly expressed her interest in going to do moulding. In another words, she managed to initiate a transition for herself.

Matias is also a special case in this pre-planned transition, as the educators had expressed concern about his language skills and thus had decided that they should read to him as much as possible. When Lena suggested that she could read to him, Kathy agreed and emphasized that they should have a private, more focused moment alone in the other room. Here, special attention was paid to Matias and both of the educators established a care relation to him: Lena by inviting him and Kathy by suggesting the special attention. In terms of upbringing, all these invitations and the flow of children from one place to another contained a message to the children: they could join in an activity with a particular educator, but not all at the same time. They were expected to take turns and respect others’ turns. In addition, all the children were expected to do the moulding activity that morning and no-one refused.

From the perspective of pedagogy with the youngest children, this transition, which was in the background all morning, is characterized by efforts to meet the challenge of encountering children on fair terms. As there was no clear plan about the order in which the children were to participate in the activity, the children were able to influence the educator’s decisions on this issue.

ROUTINE - the educator engages children in routine activities

In a *routine* transition, the educator makes sure all the children have followed the steps of certain activities that are not negotiable. The example below is about tidying, gathering up the toys on the floor.

Sylvie (2:2) is riding on a rocking horse. HELEN comes up to her.

HELEN: "It's Sylvie's job to gather up the Lego blocks as you're the one who's spread them out."

Sylvie does not react.

HELEN looks at Sylvie: "Sylvie, do you know what, you could start gathering up the Lego blocks, I can help you."

HELEN lifts Sylvia off the horse and sets her down.

Sylvie begins to gather up Lego blocks from all over the room together with HELEN. Sofia (1:3) comes and drops a cupboard from the doll's house into the Lego box.

HELEN in a warm voice: "Yes, thanks. The idea is good but its place [the cupboard] is in the doll's house over there."

(...)

Sylvie picks up the last blocks from the floor.

HELEN: "This was great, well done, thank you Sylvie."

Time has elapsed in gathering up the toys and it is now lunch time. HELEN and the children go off for lunch in another room.

Sylvie had been playing with the Lego blocks but then moved to another activity, riding on a rocking horse. The educator came over and reminded her of the rule that before you start a new activity, you must put away the toys you have just been playing with. Thus, her activity openly enacted upbringing. Sylvie pretended not to hear what the educator said and the educator repeated the request. When she promised to help, she also communicated caring: Sylvie did not need to do the chore alone. Sylvie accepted the change in her activity and got busy gathering the blocks.

Sofia, who had been wandering around, also tried to do her bit. The educator acknowledged Sofia's collaboration by thanking her and giving her advice how to do the job properly, that is, Sofia enacted caring and teaching at the same time. Finally, caring and upbringing are visible in the way the teacher thanked and praised Sylvie for her contribution to the tidying routine. The episode finished with a group transition to another place and another activity.

SPONTANEITY – new activity based on an unplanned idea

The category *Spontaneity* was used to classify events in which the educator suggests a new activity or another place for the child based on an unplanned idea. In the following example, the suggestion arises from situational perception.

Ida (1:2) is concentrating on playing with toy bricks on the floor.

KAARIN is reading a book to Natalia (1:6) who is sitting in her lap on the couch.

KAARIN to Natalia: “The book’s come to an end. Shall we go and build [with the bricks] with Ida, as Ida is all alone?”

KAARIN sets Natalia down on the floor and they join Ida.

This is a typical situation in day-care groups: the educator focuses on doing something with one child or a small group of children, but at the same time she attends to what is happening around her. In the above example, the fact that the book was read to the very end and that Ida was alone prompted the educator Kaarin to suggest a new activity for Natalia. By suggesting joint play, Kaarin displayed a caring attitude towards Ida who was playing alone. Further, through her suggestion she supported the development of the girls’ mutual relationship, thus, her educational activity could also be interpreted as one of upbringing.

Discussion and concluding words

The examples from daily life in early childhood settings which we have analysed in this chapter illustrate that everyday life in these settings is filled with various horizontal transitions. Some of these transitions are easy to recognize and identify—such as the transition from indoors to outdoors, or children’s arrival at the day-care centre (Vogler et al. 2008) - but the smaller-scale transitions, that include a shift in location and activity, can be more difficult to recognize.

The daily flow of co-constructed actions among children and adults is based on a continuous stream of initiatives and suggestions from different actors. Similarly, most of the transitions discussed here emerged as a result of interaction between child and educator: something about children’s actions or the situation itself led the educators to initiate the transition in question (cf. MOTIVATIONAL, INTERVENTION, SPONTANEITY). The children also initiated some transitions explicitly, and in these cases the transitions were not planned by the educator in advance (cf. NEED). Only a few of the transitions were clearly initiated by the educators following a previously agreed agenda (cf. AGENDA, also ROUTINE).

The analysis shows that various transitions were interlinked and occurred in parallel. The educators had their attention directed at various children simultaneously, and the suggestions for changes of activity were mainly linked to the educators’ spontaneous interpretations of what was going on in the situations and among the children. It is possible that these interpretations are susceptible to misunderstanding because one-to-three-year-old children’s nonverbal communication cues are based

on a mix of body postures and movements, gestures, facial expressions and vocalizations.

The care, upbringing and teaching dimensions that inform moments of transition are not always clear-cut and interpretable from the flow of actions. A single episode usually involved all of them. In our data, care and upbringing were clearly merged while teaching occurred in more short-term, situational moments.

Care, in the sense of a particular care relation to a child (Noddings 1992), was visible in most of the transition episodes. Some episodes clearly illustrate that educators need to form a care relation not only to an individual child but to a group of children: they need to observe and analyse events and initiate different activities or transitions taking into account the well-being of the whole group. In other words, the care relation exists simultaneously to many children, but in diverse ways.

The upbringing and teaching that were enacted in horizontal transitions we identified, contrary to the strong emphasis in the definition by Broström (2006), were seldom consciously and systematically done, that is, clearly planned or organized in advance. They occurred more on a moment-to-moment basis, as reflection and reaction to children's actions. Educators' pedagogical activity, whether it was care, upbringing or teaching, seemed to depend on their interpretation of situations as they unfolded moment by moment.

This analysis of the care, upbringing and teaching visible in small-scale horizontal transitions points to the need to pay attention to the multiple challenges that educators face in their daily work. Educators function amidst a broad spectrum of needs and initiatives expressed by the children they work with (see also Dalli 2012). The analysis we have presented shows how educators engage in silent reflection about the needs of the different children and of the priorities that need to be addressed in each situation, including which child(ren) to apply care to in a situation where several children's needs are competing for attention.

In general, our analysis shows how horizontal transitions provide many opportunities to bring care, upbringing and teaching together into an integrated whole in pedagogical practices. As horizontal transitions often include all these three dimensions of early childhood education, transitions are powerful contexts for young children's learning, development and well-being. This chapter presented empirical examples of good education practices that are not all based on clearly pre-planned and structured teaching and instruction, but often fleeting moments that emerge in the everyday life in the day-care centres. We argue that for professional and practice development it is important to further examine the role and the links of both routine events and practices, fleeting moments of change, and children's emerging initiatives that form the overall picture of the child's day. To have a reflective look into these processes is of crucial importance for the educators in toddler day-care groups. This critical examination, both in research and practice, provides insights into the complexity of educator day-to-day practices. This challenges the image of early childhood education with the youngest children as being solely a matter of basic care and caring.

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