

# Patterns of Observed Child Participation and Proximity to a Small Group with Teacher in Swedish Preschool Free Play

**SND-ID:** 2022-89-1. **Version:** 1. **DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.57817/cavz-p910>

## Associated documentation

COP\_manual\_TUTI+PEPI\_20180830.pdf (754.29 KB)

Data Management Plan\_participation\_patterns.pdf (289.85 KB)

Questionnaires.zip (1.08 MB)

README\_2.0.pdf (79.17 KB)

variable\_list\_participation\_patterns\_n=453.csv (4.61 KB)

## Citation

Åström, F. (2022) Patterns of Observed Child Participation and Proximity to a Small Group with Teacher in Swedish Preschool Free Play (Version 1) [Data set]. Jönköping University. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.57817/cavz-p910>

## Creator/Principal investigator(s)

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## Research principal

[Jönköping University](#) - The School of Education and Communication

## Principal's reference number

2012/23021 samt 2013/361-271

## Description

Swedish preschool is a preschool for all children and free play is an important educational activity. The question is whether all children are participating (ie, are attending important activities and are engaged when they are there) to a sufficient extent in preschool free play? This study aims to explore children's observed participation based on quantitative observational data and a person-oriented method of analysis. A series of systematic instantaneous observations á 3 seconds ( $M = 19.50$ ,  $SD = 8.40$ ) of individual children ( $n = 453$ ) with a minimum age of 36 months, were carried out continuously for 1-2 full days in 56 preschool units in southeast Sweden. Only observations where the overall activity (activity setting) was free play (indoors and outdoors) were used in the analysis. The summed observations resulted in frequency data for four types of activities; pretend play, associative / cooperative interactions, proximity to a small group incl. teachers, and level of engagement (level of focus or effort in the activity) and were selected as important based on the Swedish preschool context and previous research. Proportions (divided by the individual's total number of observations in free play) of the individual activities were calculated. The four proportion variables were used in a series of cluster analyzes to find distinct and interpretable clusters or patterns of participation where the children in a cluster were highly similar in all variables, and at the same time were very different from children in the other clusters. The clusters were then compared based on child characteristics (age, gender, need for special support, receiving mother tongue support) answered by preschool staff, and preschool unit characteristics (number of children, number of staff, children / staff ratio, number of

children with mother tongue support, number of children in need of special support, number resource staff) answered by the preschool director / principal, to see if certain characteristics were more common in some clusters than in others.

The results identified eight distinct and interpretable patterns that could be arranged from higher to lower participation. Most interesting were two clusters of children that indicated low to very low observed participation, and with high and low proximity to a small group of teachers, respectively. The children in the cluster with a very low participation pattern and low proximity to a small group of teachers were more often children with another mother tongue, and more children came from units with more resource staff. It is noteworthy that few of these children were considered to need special support according to the preschool staff. The children also came from different preschool units. Children in the cluster with a low participation pattern and high proximity to a small group of teachers more often came from preschool units where more children had a different mother tongue. No significant difference between the clusters was noted in the number of children in need of special support, although trends could be discerned.

Data was collected with systematic observations with the help of manual-based instrument Child Observation in Preschool (COP), adapted to the Swedish preschool context. The observations consists of many snapshots of individual children across a preschool day, at least. Several aspects of the child's current activity are coded. Individual data is summed across the observations, and proportions of different activities (pretend play, associative/cooperative interactions, proximity to small group with teacher, level of engagement) were calculated. Frequency and proportionate data from the observations are available in the data set, as well as child and preschool unit background information.

**Data contains personal data**

Yes

**Sensitive personal data**

Yes

**Type of personal data**

Pseudonymised data, indirect identifiers, questions about special support, mother tongue support, health/psychological/behavioral data

**Code key exists**

Yes

**Language**

[English](#)

**Unit of analysis**

[Individual](#)

**Population**

Preschool children in Swedish preschool aged 3-5 years

**Time Method**

[Cross-section](#)

## **Sampling procedure**

### Non-probability

Data from 453 children from two different projects were used in the study. Different types of convenience sampling were used.

## **Time period(s) investigated**

2014-09-01 – 2014-12-31

2015-09-01 – 2016-06-30

## **Variables**

53

## **Number of individuals/objects**

453

## **Data format / data structure**

### Numeric

### **Data collection 1**

- Mode of collection: Observation
- Description of the mode of collection: observations of preschool children
- Time period(s) for data collection: 2014-09 – 2016-06-30
- Data collector: School of Education and Communication
- Instrument: Child Observation in Preschool (COP) (Data collection guidelines) - based on systematic observations of preschool children, developed in the US, and adapted to Swedish preschool context
- Sample size: 453
- Number of responses: 3
- Source of the data: Events/Interactions, Communications

### **Data collection 2**

- Mode of collection: Self-administered questionnaire
- Description of the mode of collection: questionnaires to preschool directors/principals
- Time period(s) for data collection: 2014-09 – 2015-12
- Data collector: School of Education and Communication
- Number of responses: 56
- Source of the data: Research data

### **Data collection 3**

- Mode of collection: Self-administered questionnaire
- Description of the mode of collection: questionnaires to preschool teachers
- Time period(s) for data collection: 2014-09 – 2016-06-30
- Data collector: School of Education and Communication
- Number of responses: 45
- Source of the data: Research data

## **Geographic spread**

Geographic location: [Sweden](#)

Geographic description: South-east region of Sweden

**Lowest geographic unit**

Municipality

**Highest geographic unit**

Country

**Responsible department/unit**

The School of Education and Communication

**Contributor(s)**

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Eva Björck - Jönköping University, School of Education and Communication

**Funding 1**

- Funding agency: Swedish Research Council
- Funding agency's reference number: 2016-05555 and 2018 6995

**Funding 2**

- Funding agency: the National Board of Health and Welfare

**Funding 3**

- Funding agency: FORTE
- Funding agency's reference number: 2013-00163

**Ethics Review**

Linköping - Ref. 2012/199-31

Linköping - Ref. 2014/479-31

**Research area**

[Education](#) (CESSDA Topic Classification)

[Children](#) (CESSDA Topic Classification)

[Compulsory and pre-school education](#) (CESSDA Topic Classification)

[Social sciences](#) (Standard för svensk indelning av forskningsämnen 2011)

[Psychology](#) (Standard för svensk indelning av forskningsämnen 2011)

[Educational sciences](#) (Standard för svensk indelning av forskningsämnen 2011)

[General health and well-being](#) (CESSDA Topic Classification)

[Psychology](#) (CESSDA Topic Classification)

**Keywords**

[Preschool children](#), [Pre-primary schools](#), [Observation \(data collection\)](#), [Activity](#), [Language](#), [Involvement](#), [Inclusion](#), [Free play](#), [Cluster](#), [Participation](#), [Mother tongue](#), [Special support](#), [Person-oriented](#)

## Publications

Åström, F., Björck-Åkesson, E., Sjöman, M., & Granlund, M. (2020). Everyday environments and activities of children and teachers in Swedish preschools. Early Child Development and Care. Epub ahead of print. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2020.1754209>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2020.1754209>

**URN:** <urn:nbn:se:hj:diva-48650>

Åström, F., & Almqvist, L. (2022). Patterns of Observed Child Participation and Proximity to a Small Group including Teacher in Swedish Preschool Free Play. Frontiers in Education, section Special Educational Needs.

: not published

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.982837>

Granlund, M., Almqvist, L., Gustafsson, P. A., Gustafsson, B. M., Golsäter, M., Prozchowska, M., & Sjöman, M. (2015). Tidig upptäckt - Tidig Insats: slutrapport [Early detection - early intervention: final report]. Retrieved from:

<http://ju.se/download/18.7d241c5015334a41afbaaf9/1456998747634/TUTI+Rapport+till+Socialstyrelsen.pdf>. Jönköping University/CHILD

If you have published anything based on these data, [please notify us](#) with a reference to your publication(s). If you are responsible for the catalogue entry, you can update the metadata/data description in DORIS.

## Polygon (Lon/Lat)

10.986722, 69.0625

10.986722, 55.337112

24.163279, 55.337112

24.163279, 69.0625

10.986722, 69.0625

## Accessibility level

Access to data through SND

Access to data is restricted

## Use of data

[Things to consider when using data shared through SND](#)

## License

[CC BY 4.0](#)

## Versions

Version 1. 2022-08-25

## Homepage

[Early detection early intervention \(TUTI\) - CHILD](#)

[Children's participation in preschool - CHILD](#)

## Contact for questions about the data

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## Related research data in SND's catalogue

[Everyday environments and activities of children and teachers in - How children and teachers spend their time in preschool: systematic child and teacher observations in 78 Swedish preschool units](#)

## Download metadata

[DataCite](#)

[DDI 2.5](#)

[DDI 3.3](#)

[DCAT-AP-SE 2.0](#)

[JSON-LD](#)

[PDF](#)

[Citation \(CLS\)](#)

**Published:** 2022-08-25