

The Desirable Toddler in Preschool – Values Communicated in Teacher and Child Interactions

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This study explores how values are fostered by teachers and expressed through the everyday interactions between teachers and children in the context of Swedish preschools. The specific aim of this study is to examine observational data concerned with the values that teachers explicitly or implicitly encourage and how these values are communicated to children. Values of interest are those concerned with how to treat others and the virtues that children are expected to develop in early childhood education programs. An assumption is that values that are encouraged say much about the picture of the desirable child in preschool and about what kind of child the preschool seeks to constitute. According to the curricula, teachers' role is to consciously mediating and conveying fundamental democratic values of the Swedish society to children (Ministry of Education and Science, 1998). However, the meaning of these values can, within a pluralistic society, be interpreted in various ways. It is not certain that society's interests and needs coincide with those of individual teachers, thus, a critical discussion about how and what values are fostered is important.

Ontologically, the study is inspired by the way Jürgen Habermas (1995) views society from both a life-world and a system perspective. From a life-world perspective, educational processes are directed towards individuals' understanding and meaning making through communicative action while the system directs the same processes towards goals and successes for the overall society through strategic action. A communicative action is a co-operative action between individuals oriented towards mutual understandings which enable dialogue in a subject-subject relationship. Strategic action, on the other hand, aims at gaining the goals of one party – which makes the other the object of the action – rather than creating a dialogue based on intersubjectivity. Strategic action therefore leads to an objectification of fellow beings since people are used instrumentally to protect personal interests. In this study, these concepts have been used when analyzing the communication of values.

Fostering values in preschool

Previous research on fostering values in preschool provides three themes of relevance for this study. These themes are related to fostering values about *social order, care* and *democracy*.

Fostering *social order* in preschool has, in several studies, been described in terms of a faceless discipline through actions that regulate and direct through routines (Ehn, 1983; Henckel, 1990; Nordin-Hultman, 2004). However, the expression of this value to foster social order has changed over time from more open authoritarian forms of exercising power to more invisible means of exercising power which is directed towards children's self-regulation. Implicit forms of fostering social order may be embedded in the impersonal rules and routines of the preschool and not necessarily through the use of explicit power used by an authoritarian adult (Nordin-Hultman, 2004). According to Berthelsen (2005) early childhood teachers emphasise the importance of conformity and adherence to rules and routines. Governing children by encouraging them to follow norms, take personal responsibility, and to self-regulate their own behaviour has also been conceptualized by Bartholdsson (2007) as benevolent government. Play is another disciplinary technique in governing the child that was identified by Tullgren (2003). Tullgren concludes that in the teachers' governance of play their ideas about the future is realized and the "normal" child with the "normal" childhood is created. It is shown that certain games are not desirable (i.e. games that are experienced as violent) since they are expected to lead to "bad" knowledge while other games (i.e., family-games) are supposed to lead to useful knowledge to the child. Disciplinary techniques aim at homogeneity and to make children follow norms, to take responsibility, to regulate themselves and to make good choices.

Fostering *values of caring* is also evident in educational practice and is based on ideas about nurturing and motherhood (Florin, 1987). Most teachers are women who are most likely to base their work on an ethic of solicitude and an ideal of caring in their educational practices in the early years (Gannerud, 1999). According to Thronton and Goldstein (2006) early childhood teachers take the position of caregivers by protecting children, offering children affiliation and comfort, and by emphasising children's individual accomplishments. Markström (2005) found that, while caring is important in teachers' perspectives, their overarching goal is that the child should become independent and competent in caring for him/herself. Johansson (2002) identified that teachers encourage children to learn to share and respect others belongings, care for others, develop an understanding for others'

experiences and to show compassion. Teachers' strategies in fostering caring values were related to teachers' different ideas about how children learn moral values. Such ideas can exist side by side and are related to the specific context in which the value was communicated but also to the character of the actualised value (Johansson & Johansson, 2003).

Irisdotter (2006) has identified three parallel teacher discourses in teachers' talk about ethical aspects. While a *conventional discourse* reconstructs traditional power relationships between teachers, pupils and parents, a *market oriented discourse* accentuates a new liberal sight of humans, which find expression in a distant relationship towards the pupils and an instrumental and pragmatic attitude towards the role of fostering values. Pragmatic goals and fostering efforts are controlled by effectiveness and deal with fulfilling society's needs. Moreover it is also shown that these two discourses are challenged by a *communicative discourse* in which dialogues and changing perspectives become essential. In this discourse pupils are viewed as competent morally acting subjects with whom it is worth communicating and from whom one can learn.

Fostering *values of democracy* in preschool has been explored in terms of children's participation and opportunities to influence pedagogical practice (e.g., Berthelsen & Brownlee, 2005; Cowell & Howes, 2001; Emilson, 2007; Emilson & Folkesson, 2006; Sheridan & Pramling Samuelsson, 2001). These studies have identified that children's influence is limited; often as a result of teachers' attitudes, rules and their use of power. Emilson and Folkesson (2006) found that teacher control frames the everyday interactions in preschool. Strong teacher control restricts children's participation while weak teacher control can enhance children's participation on their own terms. Essential for children's participation is a teacher who creates meaningful contexts while being emotionally present, supportive and responsive. Emilson (2007) also found that children's influence increases when teachers' control over the 'what' and 'how' aspects of communication is weak. To stimulate children's influence, control can be exhibited by adopting a playful manner that requires sensitive responsiveness by the teacher that endeavours to come close to the child's perspective and the child's life-world. Eriksen Ødegaard (2007) has discussed children's participation as a matter of negotiation. She found that a shift in the locus of power between teachers and toddlers could occur through a child's engagement in a popular story. One of the boys in the toddler group introduced the story by repeatedly enacting it in play which led to the teachers' pedagogical

practices changing from ignoring this play to capitalising on this engagement with the story and the play that included the child's voice.

Values of democracy also refer to children's experiences of rights. According to Helwig (2006) experiences that allow children to exercise and develop their understanding of rights involve issues about how the child is allowed autonomy and given choices, as well as by involving children in complex social situations that require them to make decisions. Johansson (1999, 2007) found that the everyday activities in preschool, to a large extent, involve a variety of negotiations between teachers and children on rights - such as children's right to particular things; to share their worlds with friends; and to raise their voices. In this respect, teachers and children may differ in their assessments for children gaining rights. For instance, rights in the context of preschool seemed very restricted in the perspective of the children; however, the teachers meant that they assigned children rights in preschool. Johansson and Johansson (2003) found that while teachers highlighted children's right to speak, the children also referred to their obligation to be quiet.

To summarize, the overview of the research indicated that fostering of social order in preschool may have changed from more open authoritarian forms to more invisible means of exercising power. Moreover, while caring seems of high importance in teachers' perspectives, values of democracy in preschool seem to have less priority. Research has identified that children's influence is limited; often as a result of teachers' attitudes, rules and their use of power. In the research discussed, no studies were concerned with the totality of the orientations on social order, caring, or democracy – how they might interrelated or how they were communicated to children. Such relationships and how these orientations are communicated to children are the foci of interest in this study.

Method

The data reported in this study is drawn from video observations of everyday interactions between teachers and children in preschool. The fieldwork took place with three different groups of toddlers in Swedish preschools. Forty-six children (aged 1 to 3 years) participated, as well as their ten teachers who were all women with several years of professional experience in early childhood teaching. The data consisted of 777 minutes of video observations, including 115 teacher and child interactions of different character and length. The first step in the analyses was to

focus on *what* kind of values teachers explicitly or implicitly communicated to the children in all of the 115 observed interactions. Both verbal and non-verbal communication, such as emotional expressions, glances, gestures and attitudes, were taken into account in the analyses. Next, all situations were summarized and written down and sorted out into different values. The norms and the competencies that the teachers appeared to encourage or hinder in their interaction with the children have been interpreted as values. The analysis resulted in ten values. These values were analysed in combination with theoretical inspirations from Habermas concerning *how* the teachers communicated the values when they interacted with the children. The concepts used are communicative and strategic action (Habermas, 1995). While a communicative action is oriented towards mutual understandings, which enable dialogue in a subject-subject relationship, a strategic action, aims at gaining the goals of one party, thereby the other (i.e. the child) becomes the object of the action. The dialogue results in a subject-object relation.

The next step was to analyse all situations within every value in order to choose situations that appeared to be typical, one representative for each value. To facilitate a deeper analysis these chosen situations were then transcribed in full. The transcriptions focused mainly on the characteristics of the value, but also how these values were communicated. Later on the ten values were analysed in order to find a new whole. Now three overall value dimensions were found which in their turn appeared to be differently socially oriented.

Below the result is summarized, but also empirically exemplified. Chosen situations represent the three value dimensions as well as different communication forms.

Results

The analyses resulted in ten specific values embedded in value dimensions of *caring*, *democracy* and *discipline*. These, in turn, can be differentiated into diverse social orientations - collective and individualistic. In Figure 1, the model identifying the values and their organisational relationship to each other is represented.

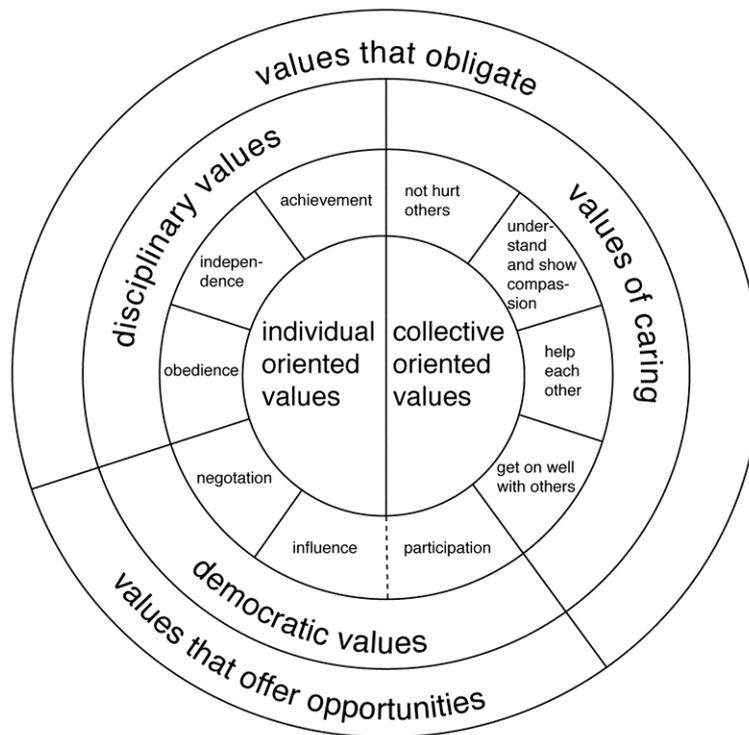


Figure 1. Values communicated in teacher and child interactions.

The figure shows the ten values that were frequently encouraged by the teachers when they interacted with the children. These values may be viewed to have either collective or individual orientations. They encompass value dimensions of caring, democracy, and discipline. The collective orientation encompasses value dimensions of care for others and democracy that accentuates participation in the preschool community. The individual orientation encompasses the value dimension of discipline, as well as democracy that was a value dimension also evident in the collective orientation. Care and discipline value dimensions reflect values and behaviours that obligate while the democratic value dimension reflect values and behaviours that provide offers for participation to children that afford opportunities for participatory behaviours in the preschool classroom.

When the teachers explicitly or implicitly encourage children to develop particular values, they use different communication forms, here interpreted as either communicative or strategic. However, a strategic action was more common when values in the disciplinary dimension were in forefront of the teachers' intentions, while the democratic dimension seems to presuppose a communicative action. A strategic action was more common when discipline was communicated, while a communicative action seems to be needed to mediate values within the democratic dimension.

Values connected to the disciplinary dimension, on the one hand, often take shape through demanding imperatives and thereby making the child an object of the action, whereas values referring to the democratic dimension, on the other hand, seem to diminish and give rise to another value if they are expressed through strategic action. The values within the dimension of caring are also communicated strategically although a communicative action appears as well. Interactions related to caring values come about both as subject-subject dialogues between teachers and children but also as acts for gaining the goals of one party (the teacher), and the child thereby becomes the object of the action.

The dimension of caring values

In the dimension of caring the values have a collective social orientation that supports the child's integration into the preschool community. These values obligate the child to *not hurt others, understand and show compassion, help each other and get on well with others* (See Figure 1). The analyses show that values within the caring dimension can be communicated differently; strategically as well as communicatively. From the examples described below we can learn how these different forms of communication impose on the content of the value.

Children should not hurt others

In the interactions the teachers strongly emphasize that the children should not hurt anybody else.

Steven (2:3) and Patrick (2:8) are playing with bricks in a corner of the play-room. Suddenly Steven throws a brick at Patrick's head and Patrick starts to cry. The teacher looks up and exclaims: *Steven!* She walks towards the boys and grasps Stevens' arms and says with an angry voice: *Look here! What have you done to Patrick?* Steven tries to get free from the teacher's grasp but she doesn't release him. She tries to look into Steven eyes and says resolutely: *Look at me! Don't do that. Look how sad Patrick is.* Patrick cries. Steven looks quickly at Patrick. The teacher holds Steven's arms and tries to achieve eye-contact. She exhorts Steven to give Patrick a pat on the cheek, but Steven looks like he doesn't want to. He lowers his eyes and looks at the floor. *And you... now you look at me,* the teacher continues. *You are not allowed to have these things if you are going to fight with them. You must not do so again. Don't do such things again,* the teacher says with an angry voice. *No-o,* says Steven.

Firstly the teacher communicates that it is not allowed to fight in preschool. This is strongly marked by the teacher's serious attitude. Secondly she communicates that hurting others should be punished. Steven is presented an ultimatum, namely if he fights with the bricks he won't be allowed to use them. Furthermore it is communicated that a transgression towards others' wellbeing should be recompensed, which is why Steven also is exhorted to give Patrick a pat on the cheek. Outmost it can be interpreted as not hurting others contains an ability to control the body, the needs and the feelings.

The teacher's action is to be viewed as *strategic*, when Steven seems to become her fostering object. It looks like it is the teacher's taken for granted interpretation of Steven's immediate behaviour that decides how she is going to act, irrespective of his intentions or what might have caused Steven to throw the brick. With a grasp around Steven's arms the teacher exhorts him to look into her eyes. Her voice is angry and she seems to use both scolding and threats in order to correct his behaviour. Steven's way of acting is disqualified and he appears as guilty. One interpretation is that Steven offers a form of resistance to the teacher's reprimands; he doesn't look at her and he tries to break free from her grasp. Nevertheless the asymmetrical relationship makes his objections and attempts to escape ineffective. He surrenders the order by finally saying what the teacher seems to be waiting for, namely a *no* in the meaning: he will not throw bricks in the head of others any more.

Children should understand and show compassion

The teachers do not just seem to encourage the children not to hurt each other but they consider it desirable that the children are able to understand other children's perspectives.

Patrick (2:8), Steven (2:6) and one teacher play with water. The children sit next to a big bath-tub with just napkins on. They scoop the water with different vessels. Both children splash and pour the water. While Patrick laughs happily Steven seems to dislike when the water splashes. Patrick takes a big plastic crocodile to splash with. The crocodile hits Steven's hand and Steven starts to cry. Patrick looks at the teacher who turns to Steven and says with compassion in her voice: *Ow ow ow! What did the crocodile do?* Steven cries and Patrick looks at the teacher. The teacher continues with a playful voice: *Ohh what a crocodile. Did he bite you? Shame on the crocodile!* Steven becomes silent and looks wondering at the crocodile. Patrick returns to the play and splashes close to Steven. Steven tries to avoid the sprinkling water and at the same time he says: *Ohhhh*. His voice is whining. The

teacher asks calmly if it is too much splashing now. *Ye-es too much*, Steven answers silently. He holds his hands in front of his face when Patrick continues to splash. *Patrick you should not splash any more with that* (the crocodile). *Steven doesn't like it when the water splashes*, says the teacher calmly and with an appealing voice. *That crocodile has to swim a little bit more carefully*.

As in the previous example, this situation is also basically about not hurting others, but more specifically the teacher in this situation communicates the importance of understanding others and showing compassion. This value seems here to contain both an emotional and a cognitive aspect, where the emotional appears most explicitly by emphasizing the experience of the other. A cognitive dimension is also discerned when the teacher tries to explain why Patrick can't splash the water any more, which also implicitly communicates that Patrick is seen as capable to understand the meaning of the value.

The teacher's action is interpreted as *communicative* when both the teacher and the children appear as subjects. She takes up an intersubjective attitude and encounters the children in a dialogue where mutual understanding seems to be essential. The teacher oscillates between tuning in both children and being playful. Thereby none of the children appear to be guilty for what happened, which was the case in the previous example. Here the guilty one is the crocodile. Patrick continues to splash close to Steven and once again the teacher asks Steven if it is too much splashing. Then she appeals to Patrick to stop splashing the water and she directs his attention towards Steven's experience. It seems as though the teacher tries to encourage understanding and feeling for others by her own actions when she encounters both Steven's and Patrick's point of views with respect.

Children should help each other

The teachers often drew children's attention towards helping each other. According to the teachers' actions, helping others seemed to be related to the ability to understand and tune in to the perspectives of others, as well as the ability to cooperate.

Tom (2:6) sits on the floor and tries to take his zip-suit off. He has still got his boots on. Petra (2:9) sits next to him and watches what is going on. Tom whines and looks troubled, why the teacher asks: *What's the matter?* Tom exclaims: *Aaa Petra!* He groans at the same time as he now tries to take the boots off. When he doesn't manage he stretches his hand towards Petra and says her name. *Is Petra going to help you?*, the teacher wonders. *Yea*, answers Tom. Petra stretches herself quickly towards Tom as if to help

him. She stops and looks at the teacher and says: *I can't*. Then the teacher sits down beside the children and says: *Can't you? Shall we do it together you and me? If you pull a little... I'll help you*. The boots are bit tricky to get off but when the three together help each other, they manage. Tom laughs! *The sock slipped off, the sock*, Petra says happily. She picks up Tom's sock. They laugh. *The sock slipped off*, Petra says again. *Ye-es the sock slipped off*, laughs the teacher. *Now just the zip-suit remains*, says the teacher and helps Tom to get the overall over his feet. *Now Petra can help you*. Petra stands up and starts to remove the zip-suit.

In this situation, helping others seems to be based on the teacher's and Petra's ability to understand Tom's situation while he expresses frustration when he can't take off his overall and boots. Petra places herself next to Tom, and the teacher takes a place in the background. Both seem to be involved in Tom's situation. It is interesting that Tom chooses Petra in the first instance when he begs for help, by saying her name and stretching his hand towards Petra. The teacher supports the children's co-operation by asking if it is Petra who shall help him. Petra seems to understand Tom's intention and she tries to help. When she didn't manage to help the teacher supports the children to remedy the difficulty. This finally leads them to solve Tom's problem together. What is implicitly communicated is that the good and the right thing is to help others. The value contains co-operation and could be seen to contribute to a sense of community.

The teacher's action can be described as *communicative* when the interaction is to be interpreted as intersubjective. A correspondence between the adult's and the children's perspectives prevails. It is also obvious that the teacher takes the responsibility to acquire such correspondence by stepping into the situation on some specific occasions. When they start to co-operate the frustration, which Tom showed in the beginning, was changed into playfulness and fellowship. They are laughing as the sock slipped off and the team-work between the participants in the situation engenders confidence for them to continue to help each other.

Children should get on well with others

To get on well with other children appears as desirable and seems to be conveyed through verbal communications.

Morgan (2:6) and Mimmi (2:7) lie on mattresses in the restroom. Mimmi has got a pencil and a small blanket in her hand. Morgan stretches towards the pencil and tries to grab it. Mimmi protests loudly and doesn't let the pen go. Morgan looks at the door opening.

The teacher shows up and wonders: *What is happening Mimmi?* Mimmi yells and Morgan tries to take the pencil. *Pencil*, he says and looks at the teacher. Mimmi says: *Preschool's*, as if to argue that the pencil belongs to the preschool. The teacher confirms Mimmi. *Ye-es it belongs to the preschool. You know what, you can go and put it on the table.* Mimmi starts to walk towards the door. Morgan yells and follows her with his arms stretched out. He whines and takes the teacher's hand and drives her out of the room in the same direction as Mimmi. Morgan sounds angry. When Mimmi sits down at the table, he rushes forwards and tries to take the pencil. Another teacher confirms that the pencil belongs to Morgan. Then the teacher sits down next to Mimmi and asks her listen to what Morgan has to say. Still Morgan's voice sounds angry and the teacher helps him to explain that the pencil belongs to him. The teacher holds her arm around Mimmi and says: *We can go and fetch you another pencil.* Mimmi is silent. Then she gives the pencil to Morgan. *Good*, the teacher says. *Now we can go and fetch you another pencil.*

In this situation getting on well with each other is communicated and encouraged. Conflicts must be resolved and everyone should be friends. It seems like this value contains the right to express oneself and to be listened to, but also a duty to listen to others and meet others' positions with respect. The value obligates, that is, it is morally good to get along well. The agreement process however, could be interpreted as an offer, as is the value that is presented later, negotiation (see p 15).

The teacher encounters the children in a *communicative* way by entering the situation with an open question about what is happening. Despite the open question which makes it possible for both children to express themselves, the teacher acts as if it is Mimmi who has the right to the pencil. This leads to Morgan protesting loudly. When his right to the pencil is confirmed by another teacher, he is affirmed. Then Mimmi is exhorted to listen to what Morgan has to say. When Mimmi understands that the pencil belongs to Morgan she agrees to give it to him. At the same time, she is promised another one. One interpretation is that there is a taken for granted assumption concerning the pencil that leads to Mimmi's voice being heard while Morgan's arguments are not acknowledged. When it becomes clear to the teacher that the pencil actually is Morgan's the circumstances changes. She is now anxious to let Morgan explain about the pencil so the children can come to an agreement. Mimmi is also acknowledged and offered an alternative.

So far, some caring values have been revealed. These values are directed towards how children should act towards the collective good in preschool. Thus the morally good preschool child that emanates from this analysis is a child who does not hurt

others, who is able to understand and show compassion for others, is open to helping others and gets on well with others. What these values have in common is the aim to teach the children how to handle the intersubjective life in preschool. Another collectively-oriented value is democracy. This means that the focus is shifting, from values that obligate the child to behave in certain ways, to values that in one or another way offer democracy.

The dimension of democratic values

Values referring to democracy can be both collectively and individually oriented. The value dimension of democracy, when it is collectively oriented, is about *participation*; while individually oriented values emerge as opportunities for the children, partly to *influence* pedagogical practice and partly to make themselves heard through a form of *negotiation* (See Figure 1). Democratic values seem to be based on a communicative action, and a strategic action is not to be found within this category. If teachers try to mediate democracy strategically another value will arise.

Children are offered participation

The example below communicates participation as valuable when it is encouraged and offered to the children in the form of opportunities to participate. Children are offered opportunities to make their own choices and take initiatives.

One teacher sits at a table together with five boys. They are working with clay. Patrick (2:8) comes and looks curiously at what is going on around the table. He has a sleigh-bell in his hand. *Here you come and play*, says the teacher with a happy voice. She looks like she invites him to join the activity by noticing his arrival with a comment and a smile. *Ye-s*, answers Patrick happily. The teacher turns to Steven (2:6) near by, and asks him if they shall make a snail with the clay. Steven nods and smiles. Patrick plays with the sleigh-bell. *Little snail*, says the teacher with an association to the well-known song. Steven watches and thumps with his hand at the table. He tries to take the snail the teacher is making to him. *Watch out....*, says the teacher with a happy voice. Still she associates to the snail song, but she doesn't sing. Patrick takes initiative to the next song line and says: *Watch out...* Patrick stops playing the bell and comes closer to the teacher and to Steven. He takes a new initiative by saying: *Snail*. He shows curiosity and looks closely at the snail the teacher makes to Steven. The teacher confirms Patrick's observation: *Yes, a little snail*. Steven objects and says: *I want a big snail!* The voice is resolute. *Ye-es*, says the teacher obliging. Patrick gives the sleigh bell to Steven who starts to play while he watches the

snail making. Also Patrick watches and laughs. Steven turns to the teacher and says: *Now I got the bell. Snail*, says Patrick. *Little snail*, sings the teacher.

The value of participation is social in its character. This pertains to being a part of something, to being engaged in what is happening, as well as being included and accepted. In this situation, both the teacher and the children appear engaged in what is going on. This might be interpreted as recognition that they are capable of participation as well as wanting to participate. Thus, participation seems to be dependent on the circumstances offered in the situation as well as on teachers' and children's wishes to participate.

Communicative action is shown when the teacher acknowledges the children as dialogue partners. She is not completely directing the communication, rather she gives the children opportunities to take own initiatives in the dialogue. Steven takes the opportunity when he enthusiastically expresses that he wants a big snail. It also seems to be of importance that the dialogue starts in something that is closely connected to the children's experiences. Snails are something the children can associate with in different ways, thus participation also can be interpreted as dependent on the teacher's ability to come close to the child's life-world. The atmosphere around the table can be described as pleasurable. All participants show engagement in the activity. An interpretation could be that both the teacher and the children participate on the same terms. The important thing is probably not to produce snails. It could have been as much fun to create anything else. Instead the important issue might be to share experiences with others. The teacher offers the children opportunities to be a part of a fellowship when she is responding and confirming everything they say and do. Moreover the teacher's playful manner and emotional presence seems to be essential. The children's interests to participate are thus maintained. Children's free choice seems to be central. The children are free to choose to participate or not. This might be a reason why participation appears to be an offer and not an obligation.

Children are offered opportunity to influence

According to the data related to this dimension, children are provided opportunities to influence pedagogical practice by making choices, taking initiatives, expressing their will and protecting their own integrity.

The children are on their way out and most of them are putting their outdoor clothes on. Cleo (2:11) and Morgan (3:2) are still in the bathroom. Morgan stands on a stool in front

of the wash-basin and runs the water. With a washcloth he starts to scrub the wash-basin. The teacher comes and says: *How elegant, Morgan. It's nice of you to tidy up.* Cleo, who stands beside Morgan, looks at the teacher. Then she turns towards Morgan and watches what he is doing. Morgan puts liquid soap on the washcloth. Cleo also fetches a washcloth. The teacher walks away and the children are allowed to continue. Morgan turns the water on and off several times. Cleo laughs. Then he starts to scrub again. He takes more soap. *Not too much,* Cleo says, but Morgan takes even more. The teacher comes back and asks the children if they are ready yet. They are not, so she leaves. Also Cleo takes a place on the stool and the children scrub together. After a while the teacher returns. She places herself close to the children and watches. Cleo steps down and the teacher asks Morgan: *Are there still some stains left?* Morgan scrubs at the stains. It slides away. Morgan says and tries to catch the stain, which slides down outside the wash-basin. *Yes it slides,* confirms the teacher. *Does it slides down, where does it go?* asks the teacher. Morgan follows the stain. *It slid away,* says the teacher again. *There is a small stain left. Are you going to tidy up that one too?* The teacher points at a stain in the wash-basin. Morgan scrubs. *Now it is elegant,* says the teacher. She takes the washcloth and puts it on the wash-basin and tells Morgan that he can continue later. When Morgan continues to scrub the teacher says: *Stop.* At first, Morgan ignores the instruction but when she says, *Stop,* once again he stops without objections.

Besides the value of influence including opportunities to make choices and to take initiatives the interaction seems to contain trust and respect. Morgan and Cleo are allowed to make own choices and take initiatives and each one seems to have control over the activity, even if the premises differ. It is Morgan who mainly directs the activity, since it was his initiative from the beginning. Therefore he seems to have the right to the activity. It is obvious that the children influence the situation, which the teacher makes possible by her support. This situation points at individuality in which the child's own needs and interests are in focus. The emphasis is rather on the individual than on the collective and the public good.

Also here the teacher's action is to be viewed as *communicative*, when concordance and mutuality seem to be guiding. It is, for example, that she treats the children as communication partners. She asks open questions, like when she wonders where the stain has gone. It seems like she tries to encounter the children symmetrically by meeting them respectfully, with trust, and by coming close to the children's perspectives. She gives them more time to engage in the activity when they do not seem to be ready. However, it is the teacher who finally decides when the activity must cease. It might be interpreted as the teacher having the overall control but it

also shows that communicative action isn't without direction. The teacher says, "Stop," which is ignored at first by Morgan but when she marks one more time that the activity must be ended, he stops without objections. Partly, this can be interpreted as that he simply obeys an authority, partly that the activity is broken off in some form of agreement. For the moment, both parties seem to be agreed, perhaps because the teacher expresses that Morgan can continue later which she marks by showing him where she has put his washcloth.

Children are offered negotiation

Within the individually oriented values, there are situations where the children are offered opportunities to make themselves heard as a form of a negotiation. In the case below Anna has the opportunity to argue why she can't hang up her jacket.

Anna's (3:1) jacket lies on the floor. The teacher takes up the jacket and stretches it towards Anna and says: *But Anna, go and hang your jacket up in its right place.* Anna looks at the teacher, then at the jacket without taking it. The teacher drops the jacket in front of Anna's feet. Anna takes a few steps back. Once again the teacher begs Anna to hang up her jacket. Then Anna says with an engaged voice: *Cycle fast..., then the mosquito-bites come.* She waves her hands in front of her face. *Come the mosquito-bites,* the teacher wonders with a laugh in her voice. *Mm when cycle fast... today... at home,* Anna answers. *Alright,* says the teacher and strokes Anna's head. *But little Anna, you can take your jacket and your boots. Look!* The teacher sits down on her heels and stretches the jacket towards Anna. Then Anna draws her jumper up and shows all her mosquito-bites on her stomach. The teacher smiles and confirms that Anna has got a lot of bites. Still the teacher stretches the jacket to Anna and says: *Can you take it to your place now?* Her voice is friendly. Anna says: *A lot of hair...* She strikes her hair away from her face. *Oh yes, and in your mouth,* the teacher confirms. She laughs and says: *I think you should take this now.* *No,* answers Anna resolutely. *Oh yes, come on. Now we hang it up on your thumb.* The teacher tries to hang the jacket on Anna's thumb without success. *No-o,* says Anna again. *Then the little jacket has to be there,* the teacher says and starts to sweep the floor. None of them mention the jacket for a long while. Instead they talk about all kinds of things. A trolley with lunch shows up and the jacket is just in its way. Once again the teacher tries to get Anna to hang her jacket up in its right place. *Come on, hurry up, take it, take it, take it,* she says with an exciting voice. *You don't want to get a lot of meatballs in your jacket!* Anna looks at the trolley and then at the jacket without moving. Finally the trolley is pushed just beside the jacket. *What luck, it managed,* the teacher says. The teacher and Anna follow after the lunch trolley and the jacket is left on the floor.

Negotiations presume a disagreement which in this situation concerns whether Anna's jacket must be hung up in its right place, and if so by whom, or whether it simply can be left on the floor. What makes this situation a form of negotiation instead of obedience or adaptation is perhaps that the teacher acknowledges Anna as a negotiation partner. This offers Anna opportunities to both express her ideas and to be listened to respectfully. Thereby, negotiation seems to contain disagreements, arguments as well as opportunities for expressing oneself and to be listened to with respect in a subject-subject-relationship.

One understanding is that the teacher acts in concordance with a *communicative* action, when Anna is offered opportunity to have her voice heard. Anna is allowed to put forward, what here is interpreted as her arguments, for not being able to hang the jacket up in its right place. When Anna starts to talk about her mosquito-bites, as one argument, the teacher listens and confirms the child but, at the same time, she seems to suggest that mosquito-bites aren't reason enough for getting away with the action. When the teacher maintains that Anna must hang up her jacket, Anna starts to talk about her hair. She brushes it away from her face as if to show how troublesome it is. This might be interpreted as putting forward another argument. The teacher is respectful of Anna's initiatives in the communication. She listens, shows respect, confirms, gives response, laughs and makes jokes. At the same time, she continues to bring the focus back to the jacket. Perhaps her strategy is to come close to Anna's life-world and by that also get her to do what she is told. In fact, it is Anna who deliberates here. She is the one who has the arguments, while the teacher just maintains that she must hang up her jacket without further explanations. When the lunch trolley comes the teacher puts forward a concrete argument for why the jacket can not be left on the floor. In a humorous way, she says that she must hang up her jacket otherwise it might get meatballs on it. This can be seen as an argument but it can also be interpreted as a threat made covert by the jocular tone. Both the teacher and Anna laugh. Thus, the situation seems to be pleasurable for all parties. Maybe the challenge for Anna concerns how far she can go in her argumentation while the challenge for the teacher might be just to continue this particular conversation with Anna. The longer the situation goes on it appears that it less important for the teacher to get Anna to hang up her jacket. In the end, the jacket is left on the floor which means that Anna succeeded in her negotiation, in the sense that she got what she wanted. Furthermore, how Anna understood this situation may have been that norms can be challenged and deliberated.

The dimension of disciplinary values

Disciplinary values are individually oriented and deal with *obedience*, *independence* and *achievements* (see figure 1). These values lay claim to specific behaviours and are interpreted as values that obligate children to behave in certain ways. Discipline is almost always communicated strategically by the teachers, and below we will look closer at how such communication can emerge. The examples are selected because they illustrate how the goal of the teacher is in forefront of the communication. Through explicit authoritarian forms of communication the teacher tries to reach certain purposes and there is no room for the child either to question or to negotiate.

Children should show obedience

In several situations the teachers indicate that children shall do as they are told.

It's circle time. The children sit on the benches and on the carpet that frame the circle time corner. In front of the children the teacher sits on a low chair. Before starting the circle time the teacher tries to induce everyone to sit on the benches. Sofie (2:8) doesn't want to sit on the bench and looks at the teacher and says: *Carpet. Yes you sit on the carpet*, the teacher answers. *Sit here*, says Robin who is also sitting on the carpet. *Yes but you shall not sit on the carpet. You shall sit on the bench*, says the teacher. *Where is the bench*, she asks the children. *There*, says Sofie and points at the bench behind her back. *Yes, go and take a seat then*, says the teacher. Sofie doesn't move. *I sit*, says Sonny (2:4) and sits down on the carpet next to Sofie. Sofie and Sonny look at the teacher. *Well, the teddy bear and the rabbit won't come until you sit on the bench. They are waiting for you*, the teacher says. Sonny sits close to Sofie. She protests and looks at the teacher who says with an irritated voice: *Yes but go and take a seat at the bench then*. Sofie mumbles something about that Sonny must not shove, and the teacher once again tells Sofie to take a seat on the bench. *Well, then the teddy bear and the rabbit won't come. When you sit on the bench the teddy and the rabbit will come*, says the teacher. The children stay on the carpet and the teacher continues. *Then I'll wait until you take your seats on the bench*. Sonny crawls on all four towards the bench and immediately he is confirmed by the teacher who happily says: *Good Sonny*. Another teacher enters the room and says: *What... you should sit here... come on*. She drums with her fingers at free seats on the bench. Sofie mumbles: *Sit here. No on the bench*, the teacher answers and is still drumming with her fingers. *Sit there... I sit there*, says Robin and points at the carpet. *Robin, when there are lots of children, then you are allowed to sit on the carpet. But today we sit on the bench*, says the teacher who recently entered the room. She goes towards Robin and lifts him up and puts him on the bench. Thereafter she does the same to Sofie. Now the teddy bear comes and the circle time starts.

The teacher communicates that the children shall do as they are told without questioning or negotiating. What is to be understood from the situation is that the children are allowed to sit on the carpet during circle time when there is not room for them all on the benches. The demand to sit on the bench in this case might be interpreted as an adult decision formulated for the time being. It is neither motivated nor explained to the children. This seems to be confusing to them and they meet the demand with resistance by not taking seats on the bench. Finally this leads to the teacher simply lifting them up. The value of obedience, from the teacher's perspective in the situation, might be to maintain control. The idea refers to the adapted and formed child that is capable to take instructions and to do what she/he is told.

The teacher's actions are to be viewed as *strategic* when her orientation seems to be directed towards success. It looks like her intention is to reach a certain purpose, i.e. to get the children to do as she says, and by that the order is maintained. The way to obedience seems to go via strictness, threats and dominance. The teacher uses a strict voice and marks that the circle time won't start until the children have taken their seats on the bench. When the children don't do as they are told she uses another strategy, namely threats. Dominance is shown as asymmetry between the teacher and the child, which mediates that there is no room for negotiations and that objections are ineffective.

Children should be independent

An often encouraged value is that the children should be able to manage things on their own. Commonly this is communicated in routine situations. It deals with the abilities to dress oneself, go to the toilet, wash oneself as well as to take food and eat on your own.

Alice (2:0) is in the hall together with three other children and two teachers. The children try to put their clothes on to go outdoors. Alice already has her shoes on. Around her waist she has got a dressing-up skirt belonging to the preschool. *You can take the skirt off, we don't go outdoors with that on*, says the teacher. *Ye-es*, answers Alice. *Ye-s did you forget that*, the teacher wonders kindly. Alice begins to take the skirt off. It seems to be difficult and the teacher, who is next to her, asks if she is doing well. Alice pulls and the skirt falls down on the floor. The teacher holds Alice's arm when she steps out of the skirt. Her shoes fall off too. Then the teacher notices that Alice has no socks on her feet and asks her where they are. *You must have socks on your feet*, says the teacher and starts looking for them. When the teacher can't find Alice's socks they start to search for them together.

They find the socks and Alice sits down on the hall furniture and puts them on. Thereafter she takes one shoe. The teacher stands next to her. *The other foot Alice*, comments the teacher. *The other foot!* Alice changes foot. When she has managed to put her shoes on she stands up and says: *Jacket?* The teacher has put the jacket behind Alice on the furniture and when she catches sight of it she exclaims: *There!* She takes the jacket and tries to put in one arm. To facilitate this the teacher pulls the jacket straight. Then Alice tries with the other arm at the same time as she groans a bit. The teacher praises Alice several times for her trying. Finally she helps her to hold the jacket up so Alice can get it on.

Implicitly, independence seems to rest on an assumption that children are competent, that is, they can manage things on their own. This is communicated when the teacher initially is in the background and gives Alice time to try on her own. The intention might be interpreted as a future orientation towards autonomy, which means that the value contains an embedded goal to develop children as being independent individuals.

The teacher's action is interpreted as *strategic* when independence, in this case, appears to be goal-oriented which is typical for a strategic action. From this point of view the goal is formulated from an adult's perspective without taking the child's perspective into consideration. Perhaps Alice acts from what she thinks the teacher is expecting. The strategic part is in the way the teacher directs the situation. In spite of the confidence in the child's abilities she steps into the situation at several times just to tell Alice how things should be done. Thus, the opportunities for the child's own ideas and problem solving shrink. Moreover independence is not communicated as an offer here, rather as an obligation. It was shown in previous situations in this data that important characteristics for a communicative action, is the teacher's playful manner as well as her emotional presence. In this example, the tone is more objective than playful, which might lead to the value being interpreted as an obligation.

Children should achieve

In the data several situations illustrate production as something desirable. When children are encouraged to achieve, it seems to be based on the interests of the adult.

The teacher has told Tom (2:6) and Peter (2:9) to sit down at the table where she has placed two big white sheets of paper. *I would like to... ask you something...*, says the teacher.

She leans towards the children when she speaks with a slow and formal voice. *You have had a sheet of paper*, she says and points at the sheets. *Sheet*, says Tom wondering. The teacher continues: *Could Tom and Peter each draw a bus!* She puts three dark coloured felt-tipped pens on the table in front of the sheets. The teacher becomes silent. *Draw*, repeats Tom. Tom looks at the teacher and hesitates. *Can you draw a bus*, the teacher whispers and smiles to Tom. *Bus*, he whispers to himself. Tom starts to examine a pen. He removes the lid and puts it thoroughly on the bottom of the pen. *Bus, the bus, the bus*, repeats Tom. His voice is wondering. *Yes*, says the teacher slowly. A long silence arises. The children look at their empty sheets. Finally Tom draws a short stroke on his sheet and exclaims: *There the bus!* He points at the stroke and looks satisfied. *Is that your bus*, the teacher says. *There bus*, says Tom again. *What does your bus look like? What does it look like*, the teacher asks. Tom points at his stroke and says: *There bus, look there bus!* *Ye-es*, says the teacher. A new silence arises. Tom draws strokes and the teacher takes photos and notes. Once again Tom points at his first stroke and says: *There bus, there bus*. Quietly the teacher asks him if it is the bus. *Tell me what does the bus looks like*, she says. Her voice is neutral. Then Tom starts to scratch with his hand over the sheet as if he wants to rub something out. *Take that away*, he says. After a while he stops and says: *There*.

Explicitly, the teacher communicates that she wants the children to produce a bus. She gives short instructions and Tom does not seem to quite understand what he is expected to do. He sounds confused and repeats key words from her instruction. The teacher gives no response as if she is afraid of influencing his picture of a bus. Instead, it looks like she is trying to find out how he thinks about a bus or perhaps how he is able to illustrate a bus. Even if Tom doesn't understand the instruction it seems like he tries to complete the task. In the beginning, Tom looks excited and he tries to convince the teacher that the stroke is the bus. Gradually his enthusiasm declines and, finally, he expresses that he wants to rub the stroke out, probably because of the lack of supportive comments from the teacher. For Tom to achieve something seems to be dependent on some form of supportive response.

The teacher communicates the value of achievement through strong teacher control and strategic action. She controls both *what* the children are going to produce, that is, a bus, and *how* they are going to produce it, that is, by drawing. The bus drawing activity does not seem to make any sense to Tom. One reason might be that the goals of the activity were formulated by the teacher in a way which did not take the child's perspective into consideration.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the values that teachers explicitly or implicitly demonstrated and encouraged in their interaction with children, as well as how these values were communicated. In this section, the values identified and discussed in this study are reviewed. Thereafter, the findings are discussed ontologically from the points of view of this study: a life-world perspective and a system perspective.

Caring, democratic and disciplinary values

In this research, three value dimensions were identified as caring values, democratic values and disciplinary values. One conclusion that can be drawn from the findings is that the desirable child in preschool is caring, democratic and disciplined. The caring child shouldn't hurt others; instead he or she should understand and feel for others, help others and get on well with others. These values obligate the child to act in certain ways. The democratic child, on the other hand, steps forward and influences everyday life in preschool. However, influence is not just taken; it is also given by the teachers. Partly the democratic child contributes to the public good by participating and engaging in the educational practice, partly he or she contributes to his/her own good by influencing and negotiating which sometimes leads to the child's own voice being heard. Democratic values appeared as more or less explicit offers to the children. This means that these values emerge neither as obligations nor as a necessity. The disciplinary value dimension referred to a child who should adapt to the prevailing order by obeying adults, being independent, as well as being able to take instructions and do what is expected. In other words, the values of caring and discipline require specific actions (i.e., the child is obligated to act in accord with these values) while the democratic value dimension offers opportunities for specific actions but the child is not required to behave in accordance with these values and can be engaged on his/her own terms.

The range of these values gives support to the three discourses exposed by Irisdotter (2006): the conventional, the market and the communicative discourse. The conventional and the market oriented discourses are most obvious within the dimensions of caring and discipline. In these discourses adaptation and efficiency are important. This refers to the dimension of discipline, and partly to the caring dimension, where we find similar reproduction of traditional values. Some traits from the communicative discourse come into sight foremost in the dimension of democracy but can also be found in values within the caring dimension. Here dialogues and negotiations are essential, which was recognised in the interaction in

the bathroom. The teacher treats the children as communication partners and it looks like she tries to encounter the children symmetrically. In one way, the findings of this study support the idea that disciplinary values aim to foster a self-controlled child who adapts the norms of behaviour without questioning (Berthelsen, 2005; Nordin-Hultman 2004; Markström, 2005). However, in this study it is also shown that control within preschool still has explicit authoritarian forms and that obligating values are common.

Moving between collectively and individually oriented values

The values identified in this study are directed either towards the collective or the individual, thus upbringing seems to alter between sociality on the one hand; to include and be included in preschool, and individuality on the other, which refers to becoming an autonomous person. The alteration might be seen as an ambivalence containing a child that on the one hand should be adaptable without questioning or negotiating and, on the other hand, should be able to step forward as a communicative subject who is expected to have something to say. We can also see a similar alteration in the teachers' actions. On the one hand, teachers try to regulate the child's behaviour and, on the other hand, they try to be responsive to the child's perspective by listening to, and interpreting, the child's intentions and expressions of meaning.

Strategic and communicative action

Values are communicated differently. When teachers act strategically they are communicating to the children, from their own ideas about what a child is and should be. The tone of the communication can be formal or sharp, and sanctions as well as threats may be presented. Such normalizing techniques are discussed by Tullgren (2003) who argues that these aim at homogeneity: to get children to follow norms, take responsibility, behave themselves, and make good choices. Johansson (2002, 2004) has shown that threats and punishment might occur when values of importance to the teachers are threatened. Therefore, there is a risk that teachers act in a way that creates distance from children's life-worlds and meaning-making. Similarly, claims for absolute obedience were sometimes expressed in this study, for example, in the circle time situation.

When the teachers are striving to be responsive to the child's perspective there is room for communication *with* the child instead of *to* the child. These actions can be described as *communicative*, which means that the child is ascribed their own way to both understand and be active in the world. The findings also give support to

previous research by Emilson (2007) and Johansson (2004) regarding teacher and child interactions in preschool. Both argue that a teacher's ability to come close to children's perspectives is an important issue for children's learning and participation. Closeness to children's perspectives presumes bodily as well as mental presence, playfulness and a kind of shared meaning-making.

However, communicative and strategic actions do not exclude each other. Instead educational practice holds both types of actions. Hence, dichotomy thinking should be avoided. According to Habermas (1995) it is of importance to understand that the forms of communication are rational in different ways and lead to different consequences that must be professionally considered. In the next section, such consequences for upbringing in the context of preschool will be discussed. These two types of actions will be put into a wider context and the communication forms will be linked to the concepts of the system and the life-world.

Fostering of values in preschool from the perspective of the system and the life-world

Values within caring and disciplinary dimensions seem to be deeply rooted in preschool upbringing. This has been established by Gannerud (1999) who suggested that preschool developed a fostering discourse in which caring is given priority. Several other researchers argue that disciplinary values and discourses are also more, or less, taken for granted (Markström 2005; Nordin-Hultman, 2004). It is within these caring and disciplinary dimensions we can find one important aspect of the cultural reproduction of upbringing. This specific reproduction is probably established in both societal systems as well as the every day life in preschool. This reproduction maintains the values that together constitute the picture of the desirable child. From a system perspective, the reproduction might be understood as an effective 'forming' or shaping of the child in a given direction. This direction might be taken for granted in preschool culture but is also a direction formulated in terms of goals that are found in the curriculum (Ministry of Education and Science in Sweden, 1998). These goals express, for example, that each child should develop openness, respect, solidarity, responsibility, consideration, helpfulness, and an understanding of equality. The goals are formulated within the system to guarantee a particular nurturing and maintaining of order in the name of society. In this way, teachers represent society's interests and their commission is to mediate these specific values.

From a system perspective, teachers act in accordance with a goal-oriented rationality. This means to act in a manner in which the prescribed goals can be

reached effectively. When such a goal orientation is prevalent, there is a risk that teachers act strategically with an objectification of the child as a consequence. This is evident in the data of this study. However, it must be emphasized that a goal orientation neither presumes strategic action without anchoring in children's perspectives, or a strong teacher control with authoritarian elements. Curriculum formulated goals do not advocate a reproduction of the culture of order and obedience; rather these goals imply that children are active competent co-constructionists. Hence, it is reasonable to suggest that the system can contribute to new experiences that can reconstruct ideas concerning values. This appears in data when the teachers act communicatively and when they take a starting-point in children's perspectives. It is shown in the data that a communicative action is not without direction. Teachers can both allow room for children's initiatives and choices and, at the same time, direct their attention towards a goal. This was shown in the example where the children were cleaning the washbasin.

From a life-world perspective, the reproduction of values changes focus, moving from a goal orientation towards an orientation of understanding, in which the child's own perspective becomes a central issue. Hence the reproduction seems to be more flexible and dynamic when the child becomes an actor in their own integration in preschool. This is exemplified in the situation that communicates the value of participation in which Cleo and Morgan both were engaged in a meaningful activity. The conditions for the children's participation related to the teacher's orientation towards understanding and being able to do this from the children's point of view. However, this is not enough. Another condition is that the teacher must believe that children both are, and can be, active subjects, providing them with opportunities and offers to be active.

Intersubjectivity - mutuality and playfulness

When a teacher's actions take their starting-point in children's perspectives some essential qualities in the communication of values emerge. What is most striking is the playfulness that seems to permeate these situations. A characteristic feature is that the participants are laughing and joking. It looks like nurturing contains an intersubjective dimension here, in which the teacher acknowledges the child as a dialogue partner. Such communication create an encounter in which both the teacher and the child become subjects, and the relationship seems to rest on a mutual curiosity of the perspective of each other. From a life-world perspective, the reproduction might be widened so a production of values within the democratic dimension might be included. Above curiosity, the communication needs to be

directed towards a specific content – a democratic value to obtain mutual understanding about the focus of attention.

Mutuality and power – a problematic relationship

Questions of democracy have been stressed by educational thinkers for many years and are highlighted in the curriculum. According to Lindahl (2005) a child's right to a democratic upbringing is still a new focus in the everyday life in preschool. In such upbringing communicative action with the aim to obtain co-operation and mutual understanding is of importance (Habermas, 1995). Sometimes such mutuality occurs in teacher-child interactions but still the concept remains somewhat problematic.

The question is whether the relations between teachers and preschool children admit mutuality. In contrast to children, adults possess power, responsibility and a completely different opportunity to survey situations and actions. Symmetry in these relations is almost impossible. In several examples it is difficult to say whether there is an agreement between teachers and children or whether children just are adapting to the adult's viewpoint, even if it appears that teachers and children are agreed. Does Morgan for example agree with the teacher when he, after the teacher's explanations and commands, finally stops his activity with the wash-cloth? Of course we can't say why he acts as he does but he looks satisfied and he does not protest any longer. Perhaps his actions are grounded both in a feeling of an agreement (he is promised to be allowed to continue later) and an adaptation to the teacher's authority.

One can ask if values of democracy are a form of implicit control; a way for teachers to maintain power. What appear to be values of democracy in some of the interactions presented could also be expressions of a new and more implicit control of children that is described by Nordin-Hultman (2004). Allowing children express themselves and involving them in decisions is not necessarily just an expression of democracy. It might be a goal-directed strategy whereby protests and conflicts are avoided with the purpose of controlling children or encouraging obedience. Johansson (2007) has questioned the rhetoric of democracy in preschool pedagogy since reflections on the power relations between teachers and children are often missing. Preschool children do not have real influence over their own situation or over their preschool activities. Instead, they are always dependent on an adult's good will, which might mean that rights can be given to them but also easily taken

away from them. Thus, adults have the responsibility to both defend and work for children's rights in early childhood education (Johansson, 2005).

In summary, we have found that the desirable preschool child is caring, democratic and disciplined. We have also found that these values can be communicated differently and that the 'what' aspect of the communication (the value) is interrelated with the 'how' aspect of the communication. In other words, how teachers communicate influences sometimes change the communicated value. If the intention, for example, is to communicate democracy, a communicative action seems to be needed, otherwise another value arises. Intersubjectivity, including playfulness and curiosity, is found to be a central aspect in the teacher's communicative actions. However, one conclusion is that the different communication forms generate different values. On the other hand, if certain values are essential to the teachers this sometimes leads to strategic action. The dilemma that occurs is that the values communicated can counteract the values that the teachers want to emphasize. Therefore it is important to be aware of the consequences that follow from the two types of action. It then becomes possible for teachers to more consciously consider how to act and when an action might be rational. The values discussed in this study can all be seen as more or less important. In the Swedish curriculum, however democratic values are explicitly expressed and emphasized as well as values of care. To promote these values, this research has shown that a communicative action is needed. Nevertheless, the point is not to reduce the communication to either communicative or strategic, but rather to realize when the different types of actions are justified.

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Figure 1: Model representing the organization of the values evident in the teacher-child interactions