

# 21<sup>st</sup>

EECERA annual conference

Education from birth : research, practices  
and educational policy.

Geneva, Switzerland, 14<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> September 2011

**Tim Rohrmann** (Chair)

## **More men in ECE: Strategies towards a gender-balanced work force**

Self organized symposium on the 21<sup>st</sup>. EECERA annual conference, 16.9.2011,  
Geneva/Switzerland

### ***Abstract***

What can be done for a more gender-balanced work force in ECEC? The symposium presents research focusing on the process of vocational orientation, on recruitment strategies, and on individual motivations, experiences and wishes of males entering the field of ECE. Although there have been discussions about rising the proportion of male ECE workers for more than two decades, the theme remains an issue.

Recently, research projects and international cooperations have put the theme on the agenda again. Several countries have started governmental funded programs for bringing more men in the profession of Early Childhood Education and Care. In Norway, the government urged action to increase the percentage of men working in kindergarten to 20 % among the staff members. The Ministry of Education and Research (2006) worked out an Action Plan for Gender Equality in nursery and primary education 2008 - 2010. In Germany, a nationwide coordination office for men in kitas (ECE centers) was founded in 2010, followed 2011 by 16 regional model projects funded with 13 million €. In Denmark, 2011 the Ministry for Equity started recruitment and information activities towards boys/men aiming at the care sector, especially to men seeking for new orientation (job shifters).

But even in the Nordic countries, where positive action towards more men in kindergartens has been on the political agenda for many years, gender balance is not achieved. Especially institutional care for infants remains dominated by female workers, whereas in families changes of parental roles have led fathers to take a much more active role.

At the same time, many men experience a general distrust against male workers when entering the child care field. Especially cases of pedophilia in educational institutions arouse debate in the media and among experts. Research presented in this symposium shows that discussions about males as potential abusers work against programs and initiatives for a more gender-balanced work force.

The research presented in the symposium aims at opening up the gender-segregated labour market towards a more gender-balanced work force, which is seen as a benefit for children as well as a chance for more diversity and professionalism in ECEC.

**Tim Rohrmann (2011)**

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Self organized symposium on the 21st. EECERA annual conference, 16.9.2011, Geneva/Switzerland

## **Contributions to the symposium**

**Ulla Wohlgemuth Gerner**

University College South Denmark

Kolding, Denmark

**Why do men choose to educate within childcare/care?**

**Kari Emilsen**

Queen Mauds University-College, Høgskole for Førskolelærerutdanning

Trondheim, Norway

**Recruitment of men to Norwegian kindergartens**

**Tim Rohrmann**

Coordination office Men in Kitas

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Berlin, Germany

**Does the fear of pedophilia prevent men to become childcare workers?**

## **Bibliography**

see bibliography in the presentations.

Links to the mentioned projects:

Denmark: <http://www.skiftjob.dk/>

Germany: <http://www.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/?L=1>

Norway: <http://www.menibarnehage.no>

Austria: <http://www.uibk.ac.at/psyko/forschung/elementar/index.html.en>

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