

## **Embracing early literacy indicators: A socio-cultural story?**

This paper examines early literacy as a question of how to use indicators to conceptualize a connection between play-oriented activities in preschool and the formal reading and writing activities in primary school. Rooted in findings from the EASE project, this paper is drawing on Carr's (2001) Learning Story approach to documentation, continuing the movement towards a new paradigm in ECEC sketched by Broström (2006). Theoretical background of the study is a socio cultural approach to early literacy (Gee, 2008; Kress, 1997; Street, 1995). The drafting of the indicators was carried out in an action research inspired way. The teachers participating in the study was brought in to reflect on and try out various versions. The research was carried out with attention to democratic values as practitioners where involved in reflections on the research aims and methods. Voluntary informed consent was obtained from the participating practitioners and the families of the participating children. The paper argues that early literacy indicators can be problematic. Indicators can narrow down the pedagogical practices, as practitioners (and parents) might overly focus on the indicators being 'fulfilled', moving down the path of 'mechanistic pedagogy'. On the same time the practitioners expressed a need to somehow be able to identify early literacy if it was not the common sense reading and writing activities. The paper concludes by addressing practical implications (should every child get the same amount of learning stories?) as well as policy (how to prevent that indicators live a totalizing life on their own?)

### **Keywords**

indicators, early literacy, socio cultural, learning story, continuity

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