

LUST FOR LEARNING

Child and Youth Plan

2008-2011 (a condensed version)

TO CHILDREN, PUPILS, PARENTS AND STAFF

This child and youth plan is the politicians' mission statement to all employees involved in different activities on behalf of the Department of Childcare and Education in the township of Askersund. In addition to working for knowledge and development, the local Childcare and Education Committee wants to create a good working environment with high quality, particularly prioritising the compulsory school for mentally retarded, improving the work with children who have special needs, as well as cooperating with the local Social Welfare Committee and County Council in a special Family Centre. The aim for this activity is to be able to at an early stage detect children with problems and prevent poor health by offering a program that supports and promotes good health for parents and children.

The task of the Committee is to challenge the Department of Childcare and Education and its programs through the perspective of the citizens of the town. The Committee makes decisions and outlines the prerequisites, which support the idea of a learning organisation. Politicians decide the direction and **what** will be prioritised and **which** resources can be used. The headmasters and the staff choose **how** they want to work to be able to accomplish the political mission statement.

The head of the Department as well as the administrative staff are there to support the overall operation and maintain communication with the politicians. The head of the Department has to create an environment, which supports both development and learning. On behalf of the Childcare and Education Committee the head of the Department is responsible for ensuring that political decisions are correctly implemented in the different activities.

Teachers and educationalists who meet children and pupils need to work closely in teams. In the team, the staff's acquisition of knowledge about children's and pupils' development and learning is central. Collegial meetings, pedagogical discussions and reflection time are being used regularly to challenge and improve the operation.

The pedagogical work must be planned and carried out based on each child's/pupil's unique personality, wishes and needs. The learning is organised in a social environment, where every meeting is marked by equality and respect.

Quality is being created in the meeting between the child/pupil/parents and representatives for the organisation. It is every employee's responsibility to create a pre-school/school with good quality and high level of fulfilment of the goals. The above view is a prerequisite to being able to realise our vision:

Our Vision

We have a pre-school and school for everyone

- ❖ where children and adults have influence
- ❖ where they feel they are needed and appreciated for who they are
- ❖ in a creative environment where we see to the whole person

On behalf of the Childcare and Education Committee,
Solveig Samuelsson, Chairman

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES

THE PARLIAMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- The School Act, ordinances.
- Guidelines for curriculum and syllabi.
- Objectives and guidelines for a national development plan for the school.

THE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Curriculum, syllabi and other school statutes.
- Distribution of available resources in yearly governmental budget appropriation document.
- Giving special assignments to the National Agency of Education and the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement.
- Quality programs for the school.

THE NATIONAL AGENCY OF EDUCATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Educational inspections.
- National follow-up and evaluations.

THE SWEDISH NATIONAL AGENCY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Support the principal organisers and local units' work with local improvements of the operation.

THE MUNICIPALITY OR TOWNSHIP IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- The School Plan/ The Child- and Youth Plan. (It is not compulsory for the township to have a child- and youth plan. The School Act and ordinances regulate the operation according to laws. Curriculum and syllabi are ordinances and therefore compulsory to be followed. The Child- and Youth plan will show what the politicians in the township of Askersund want to prioritise in accordance with laws and ordinances.)
- Supervising the school.
- The quality level of the operation by providing an economic framework.

THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- To lead and improve the department.
- The overall planning, steering and administration.
- Advice and support to the activities.
- To make sure the political decisions are carried out in the activities.

THE HEADMASTER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- The activities in pre-schools, after-school programs, schools and their development.
- Children's, pupils' and adults' working environment.
- That local work plans are written.
- Quality control report from each unit
- Continuous and reoccurring possibilities for parents, children and pupils to participate in the planning of the activities.

TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONALISTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Teaching and the pedagogical operation of pre-schools, after-school programs and schools.
- That children and pupils develop to the best of their ability and at the same time are stimulated to use and improve their ability.
- To help improve the pre-schools, after-school programs and schools.
- Work according to the intentions of the steering documents.

THE PUPILS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Taking responsibility for planning and implement their studies and to have influence on both contents and learning strategies.
- Following the rules pupils, teachers and parents have agreed upon.
- Respecting and following the Equal Treatment Plan, other plans and documents which regulate the activities.

SCHOOL AND HOME:

- The school and the caregivers have a mutual responsibility for the pupils' education and creating the best possible environment for the children's and youths' development and learning.

MUTUAL STARTING POINTS

The pedagogical work within the Childcare and Education Committee's activities must be based on the values/code of conduct and pedagogical thoughts listed below. That means that the headmaster's steering and leadership, the educationalists' work, the pedagogical approach and choice of methods and strategies must clearly reflect the mutual values.

STARTING POINTS FOR THE ACTIVITIES

All activities must start from the healthy and positive within each individual. All pedagogical work must start from each child's/pupil's possibilities and knowledge – not from difficulties and things the child/pupil cannot do.

The pedagogical work must be planned and implemented based on each individual's unique abilities, wishes and needs. Each child/pupil must feel that the activities and the work are meaningful, understandable and manageable. This is a prerequisite for development, learning and understanding which makes the learning situation filled with lust for learning and creates a feeling of security. This way of looking at things, which requires a great variation in organising work and the methods being used, gives possibilities for development at the same time as it demands a great deal of professionalism and pedagogical skills.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (The Brundtland Commission's definition). The pre-schools, the schools for mentally retarded, the after-school programs and the schools are responsible for giving the children and pupils the possibilities to be able to improve their ability to critically evaluate facts and circumstances and to understand the consequences of different alternatives. Four main perspectives: the environmental, the historical, the international and the ethnical perspective shall always be present in all pedagogical work and together they are the base for sustainable development. Learning for a sustainable development is characterised by democratic work methods and process-oriented approach where children and pupils are part of the process and have real influence.

A LEARNING ORGANISATION:

The basic principal is that the headmaster and staff take action based on their own evaluations, and that they dare try different alternatives and have the freedom to choose the best teaching methods in every new situation, in accordance to the mission statement. In a learning organisation, a thorough understanding of the mission statement and a mutual vision is required for learning and doing. Children's/pupils' communication must be listened to by actively engaged educationalists who have the child/pupil in focus. In the school environment this means different ways for using the school day, using work periods with an appropriate timeframe and with an interdisciplinary content. In pre-school and after-school programs, it is important to have openness and flexibility, and to see the whole picture and not to limit one's view to just one's own program. In a learning organisation, all teachers and educationalists, who have a mutual responsibility for a group of children/pupils, are members in a work team. All the co-workers' different competences are to be used, and everyone meets the child/pupil based on their own existing abilities and work for a high fulfilment of the various goals. The headmaster is responsible for making sure that the working team has regular scheduled collegial meetings, pedagogical discussions and reflection about the development of the activities in reaching the stated goals of the organisation.

PRIORITISED AREAS

KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT:

All children in our pre-schools, after-school programs and schools must feel safe, get a solid knowledge base and be able to develop their possibilities for an independent life. The foundation for this is formed already in the pre-school. A close cooperation between children and adults is important in all educational activities so as to create the opportunities for communication and good language environments. In all situations the children/pupils must be met with respect and get opportunities to develop, starting from their own current situation. The pedagogical work must start from the healthy and positive side of each individual, with their participation and influence as well as with an emphasis on process orientation and an entrepreneurial approach. An important responsibility for a learning organisation is to continuously reflect over its experiences, learn from them and dare to try new ways of learning/ working. Each work team shall develop methods for mutual reflection and self-evaluation of its operation.

The organisation around the pupils who need special support to be able to develop is particularly important. All children and pupils are different and have the right to be met on their own level and to be able to participate in the way that works the best in each individual situation. A transition from the current system, with teachers working with extra aide persons (often without a collage degree), to a system where a work team with educated teachers take a mutual responsibility for all children, is necessary to achieve a high quality learning environment.

MENTORSHIP:

To be a mentor is to follow a young person's growth and together with that person create possibilities for learning and give support when the child/pupil wants it and needs it. Every member of the work team has a special responsibility to support a group of children/pupils in their development.

In the pre-school one often has children one is responsible for or is a mentor for. The mentor is responsible for the progress report and communication and the pedagogical documentation concerning the children.

In the school and in the after-school program the mentor shall meet his/her pupils regularly and is responsible for following the social and academic development in each individual. In work teams involving different categories of personnel, everyone must be able to contribute and share the responsibility of being mentors.

To be a mentor for a child who needs extra support means a particular responsibility to give that child hope for the future and to inspire it to handle the tasks waiting in the future. The mentorship also means a major responsibility for the individual development plan/portfolio and the pedagogical documentation. (Portfolio or folder where one collects samples of the child's/pupil's work. The idea is that the portfolio shall follow the child/pupil and show the development and/or different things the child/pupil wants to keep/show)

PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION AND PORTFOLIO:

In the pre-school, they work with pedagogical documentation/portfolio, where the educationalists in a systematic way follow up and document the individual child's

development and also how well the pre-school's activities are developing in relation to the goals it is required to strive towards in the curriculum.

In the school and the after-school program all pupils have an individual development plan (IUP), which shall include both the pupil's acquisition of knowledge and social development. It should not only be related to the results in the school subjects, but also describe the pupil's development in regards to the goals to be strived towards and attained that are listed in the curriculum.

In the school for the mentally retarded, it is even more essential that the plan describes development towards the aim of achieving the possibilities for an independent and rich adulthood.

For pupils who need extra support in their development the individual development plan is an important tool to help the pupil's social and academic development. With the help of the individual development plan the pupil and the parents can clearly follow and influence the development towards the goals.

GOOD WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Pre-school, after-school program and school are working places for everyone who is there. All rooms must be used efficiently and with flexibility. The working environment must be created so that it stimulates to play, learning and development, order and a peaceful working environment.

The play- and work environment must be safe and stimulate physical and psychological health. An outside environment, which stimulates children in their play and physical activities is important for all age groups. The educationalists' ability to inspire children/pupils to play and engage in physical activities both outside and inside is of great importance.

It is important that mealtimes are pleasant parts of the day with many opportunities for conversations. In the meal situation the educationalists are important role models for the children's/pupils' eating habits and behaviour.

The psycho-social environment must be marked by a democratic approach, girls' and boys' equal value, with a zero-acceptance for all kinds of negative social behaviour and/or racism. The children's/pupils' and staff's opportunities for influence and dialogue are of the greatest importance.

Based on the mutual starting points and prioritised areas the following shall be done:

THE PRE-SCHOOL

The day care centres with only one group demand more resources if they are to offer the same quality as the other pre-schools. Therefore the Committee strives towards ensuring that pre-schools have at least two groups. It can be a pre-school with two or more groups or a pre-school and an after-school program using the same facilities. To be able to offer a good balance between availability and demand in the different parts of the township, central Askersund and the northern parts of the township need more places for pre-school children. The Committee for Childcare and Education is striving towards improving the quality with fewer children in each group of children and hiring more staff with a college degree.

The pedagogical principles in the curriculum are based on the belief that care and pedagogics are interconnected. The basis for equality is centred on making sure every child's interests and needs are being met regardless of sex. Play, physical activities, music, drama, creativity and researching shall influence the operation. The children must have the opportunity to express themselves in different ways that stimulate language acquisition.

The Committee is all in favour of pre-schools developing unique profiles, for example a nature and environmental profile, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, etc.

CONDITIONS FOR ATTAINING THE GOALS: (The use of the term condition means a general factor which influences the organisation's possibilities to attain the goals which are politically prioritised/ the politicians' responsibility, and which often are influenced by economic matters.)

- Not later than spring 2008, all pre-schools have had an internal process-oriented in-service training in pedagogical documentation.
- Not later than spring 2009, two pre-school groups have been added in central Askersund.
- Not later than spring 2010, two pre-school groups have been added in the northern part of the township.
- Not later than autumn 2010, all pre-schools have at least two groups, alternatively a pre-school and an after-school program.
- Not later than autumn 2010, the pre-schools have an average of 5 children per full-time employee.
- Not later than autumn 2011, at least 80% of the staff in the pre-school have a college degree.
- Not later than spring 2011, there is a pre-school group offering evening/night hours in the township of Askersund.
- Not later than spring 2011, the pedagogical meals in the pre-school are free of charge.

GOALS TO ATTAIN FOR THE PRE-SCHOOL: (The use of the term goals means the politicians' mission statement to the operation/staff).

- Not later than autumn 2008, every pre-school has a written plan on how they implement the preventive health work based on the children's need for physical activity and healthy food.
- Not later than autumn 2008, each pre-school has formulated a plan on how to create good language environments.

- Not later than autumn 2009, each pre-school has worked out routines for making it easier for the parents to continuously follow their child's development by being part of the work with the pedagogical documentation/portfolio.
- Not later than autumn 2010, all pre-schools have a written plan on how they work with changing traditional cultural patterns and gender roles.

CHILDREN IN NEED OF SPECIAL SUPPORT - SPECIAL REMEDIAL SUPPORT

The percentage of children and youth who need extra support in their development has increased. There are several different needs, ranging from learning disabilities within one or more areas to problems with peer and/or pupil role or even pure physical needs, which demand extra help in the everyday life. All children and youth shall get the help they need to develop and feel good. Children who need extra support in their development need the best educationalists and are especially dependent on a secure environment and a learning strategy that starts from the healthy and positive side in each individual. By coordinating the resources and using flexible solutions the children and pupils with special needs for support measures shall as far as possible be included in the activities. Even the child's/pupil's caregiver might need extra support and advice about how he/she can support his/her child's development the best way. Development work is going on right now, involving the Childcare and Education Committee and the Committee for Social Welfare, to increase the cooperation and improve the work with early remedial support.

CONDITIONS FOR ATTAINING THE GOALS:

- Not later than autumn 2008, there will be a possibility to work in a small group in two schools, Närlunda and Sjöängen.
- Not later than spring 2008, a Family Centre has started in the township.
- Not later than autumn 2009, most jobs as aides have been converted to pedagogical jobs as a part of the basic staffing.
- Not later than autumn 2009, an educationalist/coordinator for the activities in the Family Centre has been hired full-time.

GOALS TO ATTAIN FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF SPECIAL SUPPORT- SPECIAL REMEDIAL SUPPORT:

- Not later than autumn 2008, all schools shall describe in their work plans how the work teams work with a mutual responsibility for all children.
- Not later than autumn 2008, all schools shall describe in their work plans how they work with developing the pedagogical approach around children in need of special support.
- Not later than autumn 2009, the Family Centre can offer an open pre-school at least 5 half days a week.
- Not later than autumn 2010, the increased basic staffing has resulted in that only pupils with great need for physical support have special aides.
- Not later than autumn 2011, each school can offer different learning environments depending on the pupils' individual needs.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM AND SCHOOL

The township has many school buildings in relation to the number of pupils and high costs for school buses, inter-municipal user fees and school meals. Kindergarten, after-school and the

compulsory school are very often in the same facilities. The after-school programs have activities before and after school hours as well as being included in the integrated school day.

Kindergarten shall be that bridge that leads from pre-school to school. It must help the children to get used to the school world, but should be run following the pre-school's view on pedagogics, play and lust for learning. The after-school program has a special responsibility to help the children discover and improve all sides of their personality. The school's mission is to encourage learning where each individual is stimulated to acquire knowledge.

Questions concerning life style, norms and values are always current in the day-to-day work in all different operations. To ensure a good foundation in the learning situation during the whole day, it is of great importance that there be a good climate in the groups and that the children/pupils feel secure. To enhance the motivation among the children/pupils the learning shall start from their own view of life and their experiences. Every child/pupil needs to understand why a certain job needs to be performed and what is involved in performing it. What they already know, what they need to learn about, how they best can learn, what their strong sides are and what they need to practice more.

CONDITIONS FOR ATTAINING THE GOALS:

- Not later than autumn 2008, the basic staffing in the school will be 10.5 pupils per educationalist.
- Not later than autumn 2009, the basic staffing in the school will be 10.3 pupils per educationalist.
- Not later than autumn 2009, all educationalists have been offered an in-service training in learning strategies and methods.
- Not later than autumn 2010, the basic staffing in the school will be 10 pupils per educationalist.
- Not later than autumn 2010, the number of school facilities is adapted to the number of pupils.

GOALS TO ATTAIN FOR AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM AND SCHOOL:

- Not later than autumn 2008, each work team has a written plan on how they implement preventive health work based on children's need for physical activity and healthy food.
- Not later than autumn 2008, each after-school program and school has made a work plan to make sure the language environments are in accordance with the A-environments proposed by the National Agency of Education (The National Agency of Education has divided the environments for the reading- and writing process in A, B and C environments. The A-environment, which is the highest level, means in short a way of working where the pupil is more active, works with his/her own texts, is multi-faceted and with several receivers. One works with integration of subjects, open-answer questions and fiction. Compare with a C-environment which has, prepared tasks, each subject is separate, is steered by textbooks, is steered by individual work, is monotonous, using "fill in the space" books and has just one receiver).
- Not later than spring 2008, an increasing number of pupils in year 5 annually reach a passing grade in Swedish, Mathematics and English on the National Tests.
- Not later than autumn 2009, all pupils receive structured meetings with his/her mentor every third week. The meetings are documented and followed up later.

- Not later than autumn 2009, all after-school programs and schools state in the work plan how they work with improving the children's self-confidence and self-insight.
- Not later than spring 2009, an increasing number of pupils can read, write and do maths when they finish school year 3.
- Not later than autumn 2010, all after-school programs and schools have made a work plan to ensure that boys and girls exert the same influence and receive equal attention.
- Not later than spring 2011, all pupils who finish the compulsory school have fulfilled the prerequisites for higher education.
- Not later than autumn 2011, each school can offer different learning environments depending on each pupil's individual needs.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE GOALS

WORK SEQUENCE:

- The work teams follow-up the previous school year and write their quality report during May/June each year.
- The headmasters write their overall quality report for their school district during June-August. The report is handed to the chief of development no later than September 1st each year.
- The chief of development writes the report for the whole township and follows up "the conditions for attaining the goals" during autumn. The fulfilment of goals is reported to the Committee for Childcare and Education in connection with the yearly school report/organisational follow-up in February.
- The quality report will be sent in to the National Agency for Education not later than May 1st, each year.

Structure for the quality report

The structure for the quality report per school year, with a yearly school report per year, has been changed in accordance with *the ordinance of quality report within the school system*. The earlier practice of writing the quality report in accordance with the local Child and Youth plan, will cease to be in effect starting with this year's report.

According to the ordinance, the quality report should include an evaluation of what ways *the national goals* for the educational system have been attained and a report of what measures the township and the different activities within the school district will take to increase the fulfilment of the goals. According to the ordinance there shall also be a report of the follow up and evaluation of the Equal Treatment Plan in the school district.

The school district's prioritised goals and the evaluation of the fulfilment of the goals are to be reported in a table format, in accordance with a special document with outlines the overall criteria in the township. According to the text in the ordinance, the quality reports for school, pre-school and after-school program shall be written by teachers, other staff and pupils. Children in the pre-school, the caregivers and the pupils' caregivers shall have an opportunity to participate in the work with the quality report.

Facilities that include several activities, pre-school, Kindergarten, after-school program, compulsory school and school for the mentally retarded, report the evaluation of the fulfilment of the goals both separately for each program as well as a overall report that covers the whole facility. Family home-based day cares use relevant parts of the material. The

quality report does not need to be too detailed but should aim towards a clear description of the program's quality and need for further improvement.