

The Great World of Books

Førresfjorden barnehage is a municipal early childhood education center for children (age 1-5) living in the neighborhood and for children of refugee families from a local refugee center.

Every child attends the early childhood center for at least one year in order to get a flying start for their language learning. We have employed specific language educators responsible for the language teaching and they work together with many multilingual assistants in our ordinary staff.



Even though our personnel represent several cultures and languages, we are not able to cover all the children's languages. The key question is: *How can we offer every child good reading experiences according to their age level? How can we promote and stimulate the children's mother tongue without personnel that speaks their languages?*

Our answer to this question is:

We have to use the parents as partners. This idea got elaborated further within the project "Du store verden for en bok" = "The Great World of Books".

We created book boxes. A book box contains a picture book with props related to the story of this specific book. When these objects/props are used together with the reading of the text, the children can get some extra support to understand the story. The children can watch the figures enacting the story alongside with the story reading.

We use these book boxes for several purposes:

- We use them to teach Norwegian for children with another mother tongue
- We use them in circle time for all children
- We use them in reading groups for all children regardless of mother tongue

Our goal is: In our kindergarten all children, regardless of age and mother tongue, shall have access to good literacy experiences in accordance to their age.

We have created 16 different book boxes. In total we have 4 picture books for the 2 year olds, 4 books for the 3 year olds etc. We got these books translated to all the languages represented in our kindergarten.

The parents are crucial collaborators when we introduce new books. We copy the book, get the text translated in the family language (we use professional translators), fill in the translated text, laminate the pages and tie them with metal rings. We hand out the translated picture book and ask parents to read this book for their child at home. Parents are delighted to get these books and when we read the books in the kindergarten, the children tell proudly that they have read this book at home.



Thus we ensure that all children get the books we are concentrating on in their mother tongue. Furthermore the children have listened to the story in their mother tongue before we read the same book in Norwegian in the reading group.

We arrange regular reading groups for children from the same age group in which we use these book boxes in Norwegian (national language). In addition the book boxes are also used in reading groups led by language assistants or bilingual staff in the different family languages. This means that some of the children may listen to the same book in a reading group in Norwegian, a reading group in their first language and at home with parents.

Our goal is to offer each child positive reading experiences. When children understand the stories, the book becomes meaningful and children get interested in the realms of books. Our intention is to ensure bilingual language development by reading and talking about the picture books both in the kindergarten and at home.

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