



**Politics of  
belonging in different  
educational settings  
in the early years**

—  
Recommendations for policy and practice

# About the project

The project '**Politics of Belonging**' is funded by NordForsk and is a collaboration between researchers from Finland (University of Oulu), Iceland (University of Iceland), The Netherlands (Zuyd University), Norway (University of Stavanger), and Sweden (Linnaeus University).

The researchers explore how children, teachers, policy makers, and parents in early childhood education experience, interpret and create belonging.

## Contact:

**Linnaeus University:** Anette Emilson (anette.emilson@lnu.se)

**University of Stavanger:** Eva Johansson (eva.johansson@uis.no)

**University of Iceland:** Jóhanna Einarsdóttir (joein@hi.is)

**Zuyd University:** Barbara Piskur (barbara.piskur@zuyd.nl)

**University of Oulu:** Anna-Majja Puroila (anna-majja.puroila@oulu.fi)

# Recommendations for policy and practice

**Belonging is an existential question and a personal right for all children.**

- Children experience exclusion and rejection in (pre)schools.
- Belonging is not articulated as a core principle in the educational system.

**Educators should ensure that all children are included in peer groups.**

- Educators often take children's belonging for granted.
- Teaching for belonging is often an 'ad hoc' enterprise rather than an intentional goal included in the curricula.

**(Pre)schools must adapt to children regardless of their diverse backgrounds or needs.**

- Children are expected to adapt to the (pre)school practices.
- Not all children and families receive the support they need.

**Professional training should provide educators with competences in promoting children's belonging.**

- Educators and parents worry whether educators have competences for promoting all children's belonging.
- Teaching for belonging is a neglected area in professional training of educators.

**Politicians and decision-makers are responsible for conditions regarding children's belonging.**

- Curriculum guidelines do not provide frameworks for promoting children's belonging.
- Educators and parents are concerned whether the structures and resources of (pre)schools support all children's belonging.



Stensbergsgata 27,  
5th floor  
NO-0170 Oslo  
nordforsk.org

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