

Call for a special issue of the journal *Barn*

Children's rights in the Nordic context – 30 years with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and was ratified by the Nordic countries shortly thereafter. The Convention was in many ways a breakthrough. Unlike previous children's rights documents, children were given a special legal status with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Due to the participatory rights, children came to be recognized as autonomous and competent actors rather than passive recipients of aid, support and intervention. The child's view shall be taken into account in all decisions affecting the child, and its opinion shall be given due weight according to age and maturity. In this way, the participatory rights are meant to secure the child's citizenship in the larger society.

The Nordic region has in many ways been pioneer countries when it comes to ensuring children's rights. Social democracy and stable and strong national economics contribute to ensuring children good conditions for growing up. Article 3 states that the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions affecting children, and acts as a guiding principle in policy as well as in practice. Furthermore, children's participatory rights are strong with the family, in kindergarten and in school. There is also an increased focus on promoting children's voice within the child welfare system and in health care services.

After thirty years of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children's rights are still a highly relevant topic in the Nordic countries - not only in regard to participation, but also for children's right to protection and access to services. The UN Children's Committee has repeatedly criticized the implementation and rights practices of the Nordic countries. Increased socio-economic differences, child poverty and immigration have resulted in certain groups of children becoming more vulnerable. Due to various reasons, many children do not receive the protection and care they need and are entitled to.

Children's participation may challenge, and interests may differ and conflict with each other. Sometimes the child's opinion is in conflict with what parents, teachers, social workers, child welfare teachers, medical doctors or politicians consider as best for the child. One can ask if the child's perspective is sought after primarily in less important decisions, or if it is taken into account first and foremost when it corresponds with adults' views. Expressions such as 'child's best interest' and 'child's perspective' have a great symbolic effect, in politics, law, academia and practice. Nevertheless, it remains unclear what the expressions signify and entail.

In the forthcoming special issue, we seek papers on children's rights in the Nordic context with diverse theoretical, methodological and thematic approaches. The overall goal of the special issue is to learn more about and critically reflect upon the policies and practices related to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Nordic Region today. This includes studies on children's rights in everyday life: in the family, in kindergarten, at school, and in



their leisure time. Furthermore, it also includes a rights perspective on children's encounters with the public: within the child welfare system, health care services, immigration system and youth justice. Last but not least, it includes research on how children's rights are safeguarded at community level: in political decisions, law implementations and policy briefings.

We look forward to your contribution!

September 15, 2018: Deadline for abstract submission, 150-200 words, written preferably in a Scandinavian language or alternatively English.

October 1, 2018: Feedback to potential authors about submission of article manuscript.

December 15, 2018: Deadline for submitting article manuscript of max 7000 words, including references.

Autumn 2019: Publishing

Please send abstracts to our managing editor Karin Ekberg: Karin.Ekberg@ntnu.no. *Barn* has a double-blind review process. For further guidelines for authors, see:

<https://www.ntnu.edu/ipl/notes-for-contributors>

To read more about *Barn*: <https://www.ntnu.edu/web/ipl/journalbarn>

For questions regarding the special issue, please contact the guest editors.

Best regards

The guest editors

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