Collaboration with Guardians – for the Child’s Sake

Guidelines for municipal preschools
17-08-2017
Good collaboration between preschool and home is a success factor for children’s learning and development.
Introduction
Children need adults. Adults who support and encourage. Adults who take responsibility and help each other. Adults who have positive expectations, and adults who set boundaries. That’s the basics of the guidelines we’ve developed in Uppsala’s municipal preschools for how preschool and home are to collaborate.

We know that good collaboration between preschool and home is a success factor for children’s learning and development. Preschool sets challenges for the children, big and small. There is knowledge to gain, problems to solve, conflicts to handle, and skills to develop, and interaction with others should be respectful. The children need adults who work together to help them with these challenges. Mutual intentions and willingness are necessary.

Really good collaboration requires clarity from the very start concerning what each person is responsible for, what shape things take, and what should be collaborated on. With that in place, we can collaborate – for the child’s sake.
Goals for Collaboration between Preschool and Home

• For preschool and home to work together to create the best possible conditions for the child to learn and develop at preschool.
• For preschool and home to have a joint vision and common understanding of preschool’s goals and mission.
• For preschool and home to support the child in their learning and development, individually and together, in the best way.
Responsibilities and Expectations
Preschool’s responsibility is clearly regulated by the Schools Act and the curriculum. The preschool head shall lead and delegate work. In Uppsala Municipality, we have an organisation in which the preschool head can delegate certain areas of responsibility to the assistant preschool head. Preschool makes decisions regarding how it is to be organised, how resources are to be allocated, and how preschool should work to reach its goals.

According to the Parental Code and the preschool curriculum, guardians are responsible for their children’s upbringing and development. Preschool shall be a complement to home, giving each child the opportunity to develop in a rich and multifaceted way. Preschool’s work with the children shall take place in close collaboration with home.
Preschool’s Responsibilities
• That learning is based on the goals and guidelines of the curriculum.
• That learning is varied and adapted based on the children’s different interests, needs and circumstances.
• That guardians gain knowledge about preschool’s mission, goals and ways of working.
• That guardians get support in their responsibility for the child’s upbringing, development and growth.
• That guardians are offered development meetings concerning the child’s learning and development.
• That guardians get information about changes at preschool that are significant to the child’s ongoing learning and development.
• That guardians are contacted immediately if needed.
• That guardians’ views are taken into consideration in operational planning and implementation.

Preschool’s Expectations of Guardians
• That they take responsibility for their child’s upbringing and development.
• That they participate in the meetings and conversations offered by the preschool.
• That they familiarise themselves with the information offered by the preschool concerning their child’s learning and development.
• That they ensure that the preschool has access to correct contact details for them.
• That they contact preschool staff concerning the child if necessary.
Methods and Content of Collaboration
In our collaboration with home, we have different forms of information and dialogue. With the help of these, we can take joint responsibility for a collaboration that benefits the child.

Information
Information about how the municipality is run and follow-up of preschools’ work are available on the municipality’s website: www.uppsala.se. Information about individual preschools is available on their respective websites. Information about current events and changes are given in the daily contact with guardians, such as through the weekly or monthly letters.
**Introduction Talks**
Introduction talks take place in connection with the child starting preschool. The purpose of the talk is for the preschool to find out what experiences the child has had, so that it can better meet the child’s needs. The purpose is also to create a good relationship with the family, to give guardians information about the preschool’s pedagogical practice, view of family collaboration, and information about practical issues in the child’s everyday life at preschool. Preschool initiates the talk.

**Development Meetings**
Development meetings are a forum to which guardians are invited to have a conversation about their child. The aim of the meetings is to have a conversation with the child’s guardians about the child’s welfare, development and learning, both at and outside preschool.

The development meeting contributes to increased knowledge for the pedagogues and guardians about each child, and forms the basis for pedagogical planning and development of preschool operations.

**Unikum, a Digital Platform**
In 2017, all municipally owned preschools will start using a joint digital platform called Unikum. The purpose of the platform is to make it easier to follow the child’s development and learning. It should also simplify communication and collaboration between preschool and home.
**Forum for Consultation**
At each preschool, there are one or more forums for consultation with the children and guardians. The main purpose of consultations is to be an arena where guardians can bring up suggestions and views concerning various issues. Issues that concern individual children, parents or staff shouldn’t be dealt with in this forum. Consultations can also be used to give information about upcoming decisions to those affected by the decision.

Examples of forums:
- Preschool council – giving information about upcoming decisions
- Information meetings/parent meetings – arena where guardians can bring up suggestions and views concerning various issues
- Activities such as “fika”, open houses, and parties, where there are opportunities to ask questions, give views, ideas, etc.
- Development meetings.

**Dealing with Worries and Complaints**
If guardians feel worried or have views of their child’s situation at preschool, they should, in the first instance, contact preschool staff, and in the second, the assistant preschool head. If the worry or views are to do with operational and organisational issues, the assistant preschool head should be contacted in the first instance, or the preschool head in the second.

You can also give views or leave complaints via Uppsala Municipality’s website, [www.uppsala.se](http://www.uppsala.se).
Follow-up and Development
Good collaboration between preschool and home doesn’t just appear because there is a will, a goal, a division of responsibility and standardised forms. These may need to be developed and improved. So it’s important that there is follow-up on how preschool and home feel about the existing collaboration, and that this follow-up in turn leads to measures aimed at development and improvement.
**Questionnaire for Guardians**

All guardians receive a questionnaire from the education department every year. The questionnaire contains questions about how guardians perceive their child’s situation at preschool, but also about how collaboration between preschool and home works.

The questionnaire is followed up and analysed internally at the preschool, which is also responsible for implementing any necessary improvement measures. The guardians get brief oral or written follow-up on the questionnaire in which the result, the analysis and any measures are summarised. The answers to the questionnaire provide a valuable starting point for preschool’s work with follow-up and development.

*Through good and mutual dialogue, we can give the children the best conditions for learning and development both at home and at preschool.*
The guidelines are partially taken from Södertälje Municipality, where they have been developed by the education office in dialogue with politicians, guardians and preschool staff.