



Brief

Kindergarten-leaders' understanding of their role in the implementation of a state-initiated process

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The article highlights the importance of management processes that take place in connection with the implementation of the state-planned competence-raising processes in Norwegian kindergartens. "The Competence Boost for special needs education and inclusive practice" is a planned process and involves a system-oriented collaboration between kindergartens and the Educational Psychological Service through competence development in the special education field. Kindergarten leaders play an important key role in this process, both in its roll-out and in the implementation of the interdisciplinary approach.

Research question: How does a sample of kindergarten leaders experience the process associated with the implementation of the Competence Boost at an early stage and how does trust and competence affect the handling of the process?

Sample and method: The sample is strategic and consists of kindergarten leaders in two regions of Norway. The method is qualitative and is based on interviews.

Preliminary findings: Our findings show that the leaders involved in the process have confidence with the Competence Boost-process. In this context, we see little reflection on the scope, content and goals of the work that has been initiated. The leaders' call for more formal competence from the PPT (The Norwegian Educational Psychological Services) and want closer cooperation on educational work. This may be an expression of the managers' confidence in guidelines and political-administrative management but can also be understood as an uncritical approach to political-administrative management that actualizes a discussion about the leader as the organization's gatekeeper. In other words, we see an

ambivalence in the material that is interesting to discuss relative to the theory of strategic and external management.

Conclusion: Kindergarten leaders function as gatekeepers in the implementation process connected to the Competence Boost in the kindergartens. The leaders' understanding for the arrangement, the commitment and involvement of the implementation is essential. The implementation is dependent on strategic leadership both as an external as well as an internal leadership function.

Keywords: *Competence Boost; kindergarten; management processes; trust-based competence*