

Call for papers
Special issue of the Nordic journal *Barn*



Picture Books –
Learning Processes and Educational Journeys

This special issue seeks to examine how language work may emerge from working with picture books in preschool and the first years of primary school from a Nordic perspective.

Nordic picture books have the reputation of being among the best on the market. They are characterized by both experimental form and content. The work of their skilled illustrators, who elaborate visually challenging concepts, is recognized in the field of Children's Literature. However, very little attention has been paid to how these contemporary picture books might be a point of departure for cross-disciplinary work in preschool and primary school.

Barn is an important channel in mediating cross-disciplinary research on Nordic children and childhoods. The Nordic countries face great challenges when it comes to second-language learning in general, and language work with preschool children in particular. In stimulating children's language development, the usefulness of read-alouds is recognized. However, meeting literature and talking about what they have read also stimulates children's cognitive development. Children's literature allows children to gain insights into other people's thoughts and emotions, as well as life conditions that are different from the ones they already know. Thus, read-alouds have a potential for realizing the mission of democratic education that is stated in the curricula - education for inclusion and diversity.

Language development is prioritized in the curricula of all the Nordic countries. However, there may be variations in how we understand "language" or "literacy" in preschool or school settings, or in how activities are carried out.

We know that children's reading ability affects future equity in the educational system, and reading comprehension and vocabulary are significant predictors of academic performance. Children develop their reading interest out of curiosity and a desire to take part in the stories they encounter, and this creates a solid foundation for literacy development in later school years. In this special issue we direct a searchlight on the potential of children's literature as a point of departure for working with language and literature in Nordic education.

Despite a consensus about the positive linguistic and aesthetic outcomes of reading aloud, research indicates that read-alouds are not that common in Nordic preschools, and there is a lack of knowledge about *what* is being read and *how* reading is carried out. Therefore, we call for papers that shed light on, and critically discuss this research area. We welcome articles that focus on reading in preschool or early school years, with perspectives from fields such as Children's Literature or Education. Contributions from other theoretical perspectives, such as the disciplines of Childhood Sociology, History, Psychology or Cultural Studies, are also welcome.

- ▶ 1 October 2019: Deadline for abstract submission, 150-200 words, written preferably in a Scandinavian language or alternatively English.
- ▶ 15 October 2019: Feedback to potential authors about submission of article manuscript.
- ▶ 10 January 2020: Deadline for submitting article manuscript of max 7000 words, including references. *Barn* has a double-blind review process. For further guidelines for authors, see: <https://www.ntnu.edu/ipl/notes-for-contributors>
- ▶ Autumn 2020: Publishing

Please send abstracts to managing editor Ragnhild Berge: Ragnhild.Berge@ntnu.no

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

We look forward to your contribution!

Best regards

The guest editors

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