

Cooperation between Educational and Psychological Service (EPS) and Kindergarten/School on competence development for inclusive practice

... an ongoing project 2018-2020 (→2022)

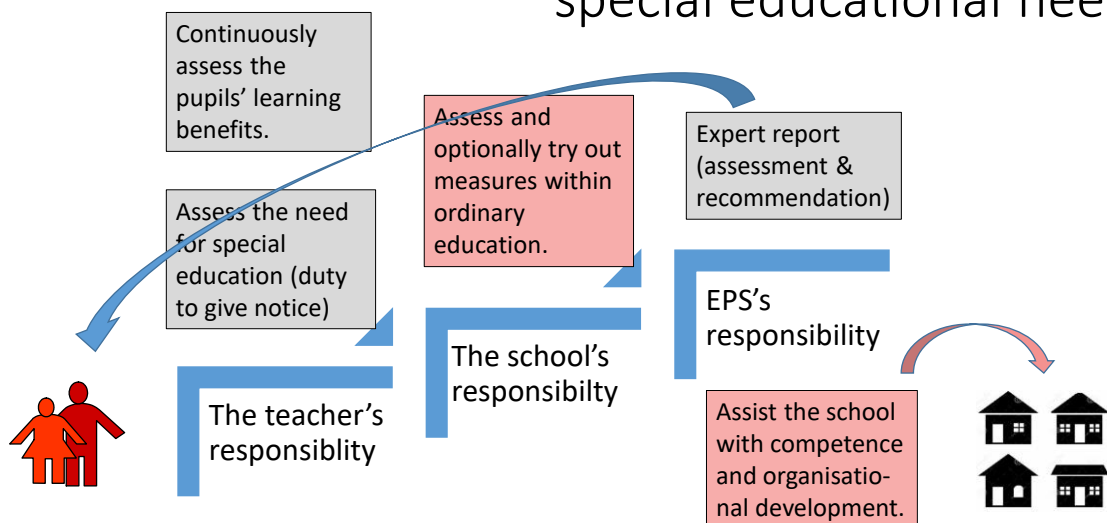
NERA Conference, March 2019

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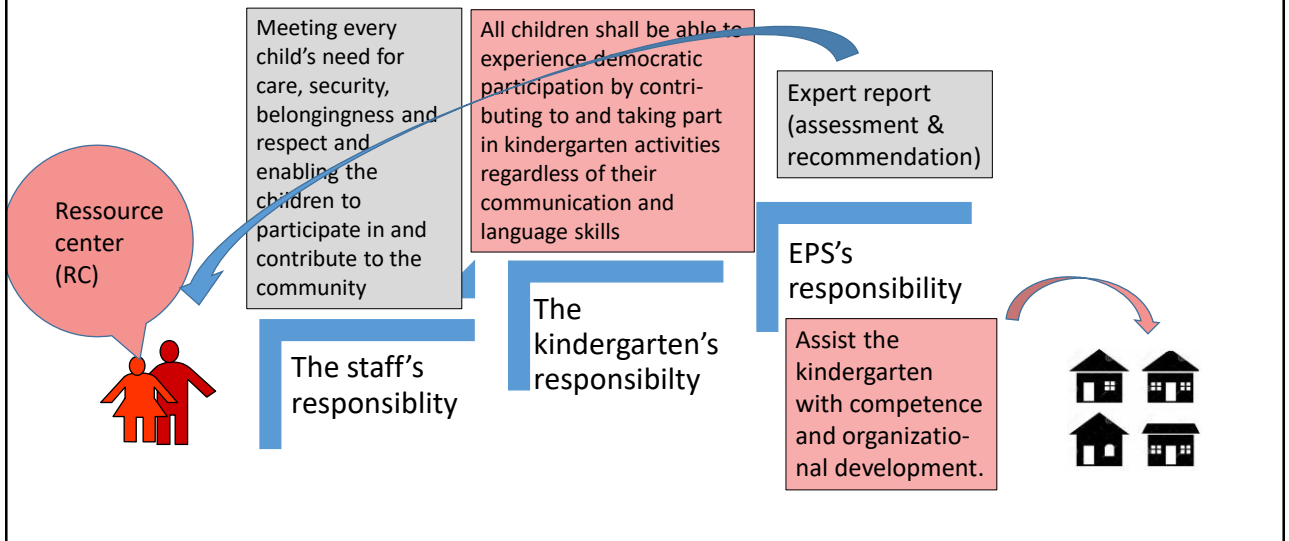
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The Norwegian chain of services in special educational needs



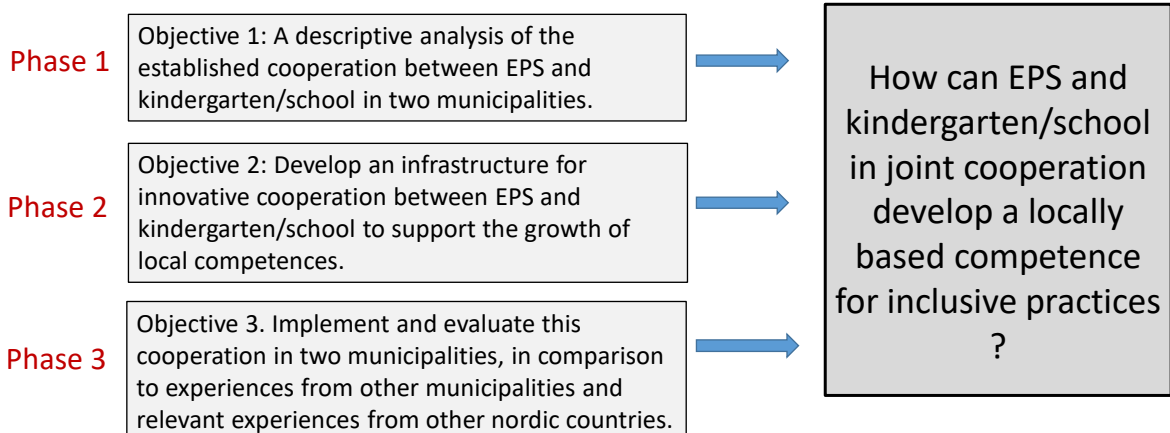
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The Norwegian chain of services in special educational needs



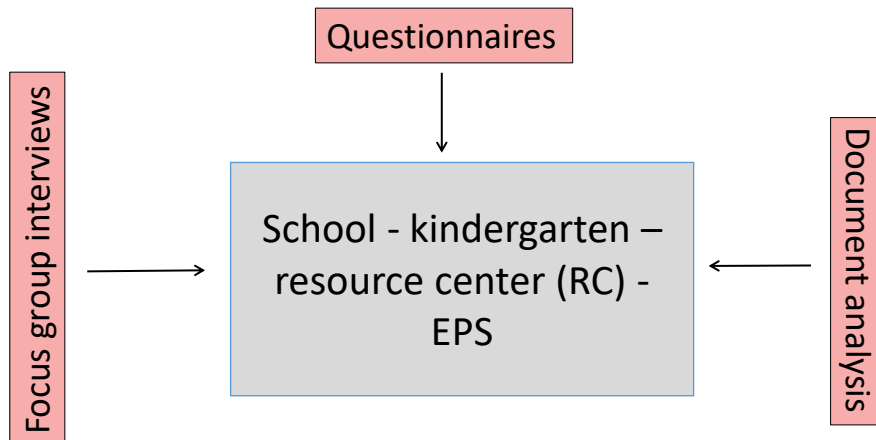
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The project's phases and objectives



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Phase 1: baseline survey in each municipality

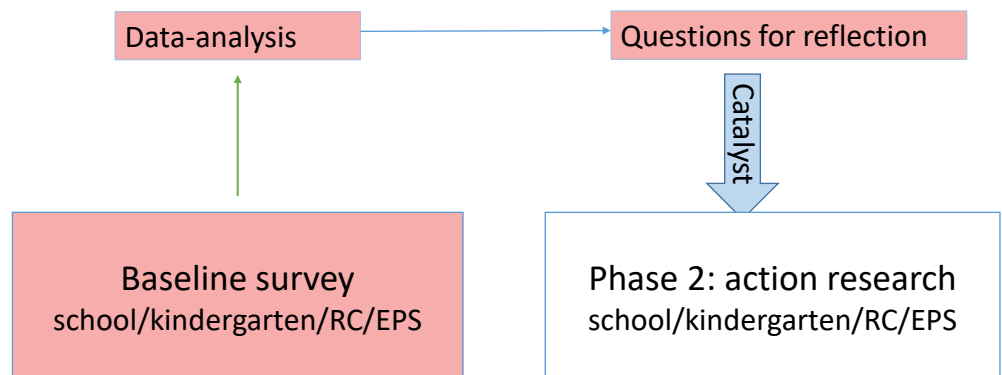


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Phase 1: Identification of themes for reflection

What seems to promote the development of inclusive practice?

What seems to hinder the development of inclusive practice?



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«Inclusion is about all children. It is about participation and belong to the community of children - playing and learning. To have the experiences of being appreciated»

Phase 1: Identification of themes

1. Divergent understanding of inclusive practices
2. Complementary or contradictory competences and attitudes?
3. Differing cooperation issues
4. Challenges connected to the municipality's support system

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«I don't know how many years we have used the word inclusion without quite understand what it means. Maybe we too seldom take time to unpack the concept and discuss the implications for our group, frankly spoken: How are we going to do it in practice?»

1. Divergent understanding of inclusive practices
 - Consensus of the overarching vision of *inclusive practices*
 - Divergent understanding of the pedagogical implications
 - Dichotomy between ordinary and special education within the concept of inclusion

Challenge:

- Establish a common understanding on how to realize the ideology of inclusion for all children in practice

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«In the hectic life of a kindergarten, there is a instant need to: «Just tell me what to do!» (...) If the special needs teacher just removes the kid and do not understand the situation or the everyday life in the kindergarten – then it is a waste of time for those who have taken the time to sit down”»

2. Complementary or contradictory competences and attitudes?

- Respect for each other and their different competences and roles
- Assistant without pedagogical competence
- Call for more insight, adjustment and flexibility in guidance and use of resources

Challenges:

- To create a partnership that utilizes each partners specific competences
- Guidance based on familiarity with the context

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«In some kindergartens, EPS is met with an expectation of «fixing» the child. (...). We don't have the capacity to get familiar with all the kindergartens. It is a balance to get enough information in order to ensure that our services is perceived as useful»

3. Differing cooperation issues

- Cooperation on several levels
- Cooperation takes time
- On behalf of inclusive practices...?

Challenges:

- Commitment to inclusive practices for all children
- To clarify and adjust expectations and activities to each other
- To find the time...

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«I can see the potential for doing the ordinary educational practice inclusive and good for all children. Instead of, which sometimes has been the case, the resource centre or the support teacher takes over the responsibility for the child, "me and my child"...»

4. The municipality's support system

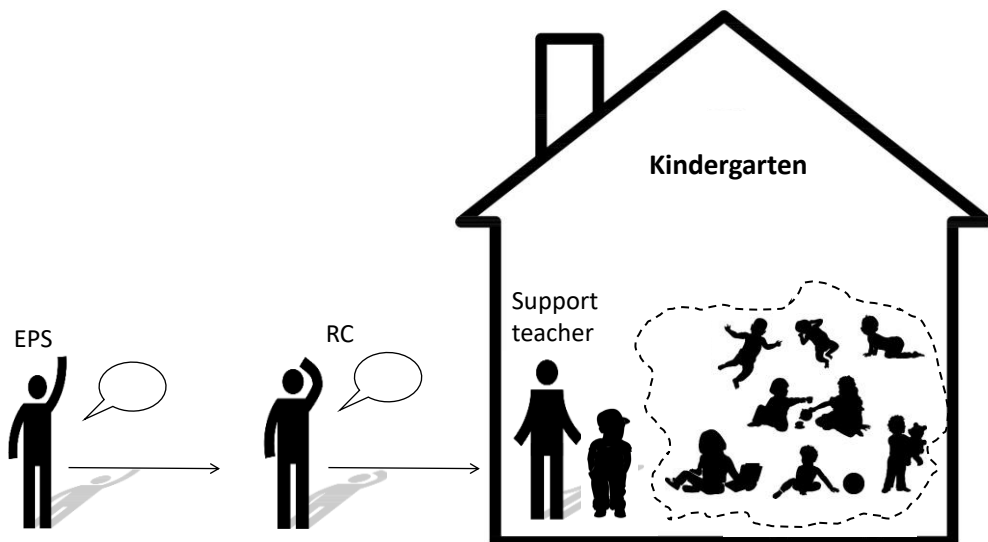
- Supports the kindergarten with competence and resources
- The importance of fast response and help is highlighted
- Focus on improving the ordinary educational practice

Challenges:

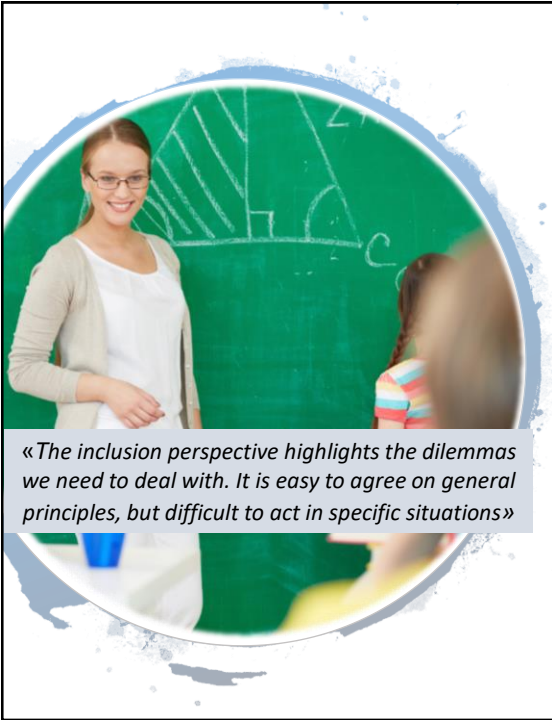
- To bring specialized competences closer to the everyday life in the kindergarten
- To emphasize the role of leaders at all levels in the pedagogical system

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The municipality's support system for kindergartens



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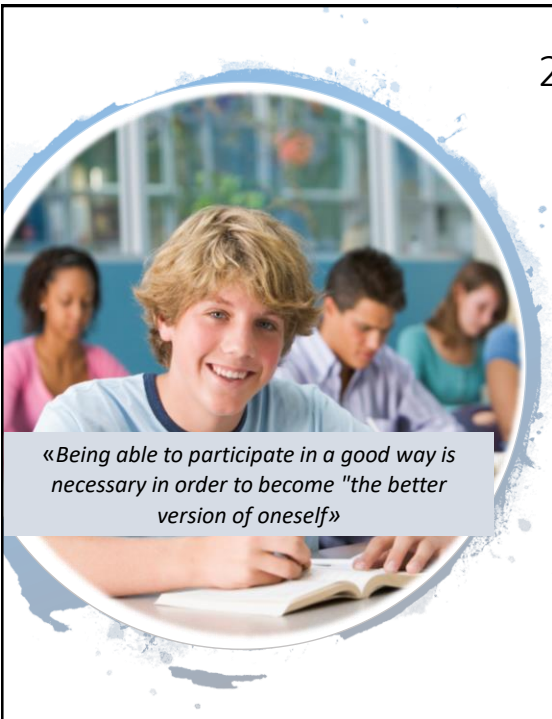


«The inclusion perspective highlights the dilemmas we need to deal with. It is easy to agree on general principles, but difficult to act in specific situations»

1. Divergent understanding of inclusive practices

- An inclusive school is positive for all pupils
- Challenges: when theory meets practice
- Threats: the municipality's ambitions for progress on national tests
- Unreasonable expectations?
- Segregate in order to include?

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«Being able to participate in a good way is necessary in order to become "the better version of oneself»

2. Complementary or contradictory competences and attitudes?

- Many documents that aim to lay down guidelines for quality development in the school
- EPS finds it difficult to get into position with the schools
- A great optimism and belief that special education competence together with general pedagogical competence form a good base for the development of an inclusive practice
- The special teacher mainly work with special education that takes place outside the class community

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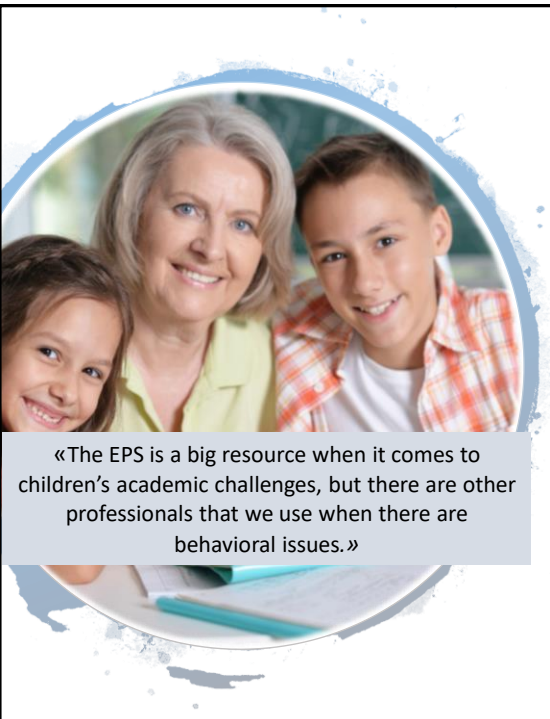


«I have a dream (!) – that one day, the school's contact person from EPS will commit herself to stay and follow the school for at least 3 years.»

3. Differing cooperation issues

- The teachers state that the EPS knows too little about the life in schools
- All the schools want the EPS to be more present at the school so they can get to know the culture and practice
- EPS has too little competence on how the support for pupils who struggle, can be given within the ordinary education
- School and EPS also have different understanding when it comes to what causing the need of special need education

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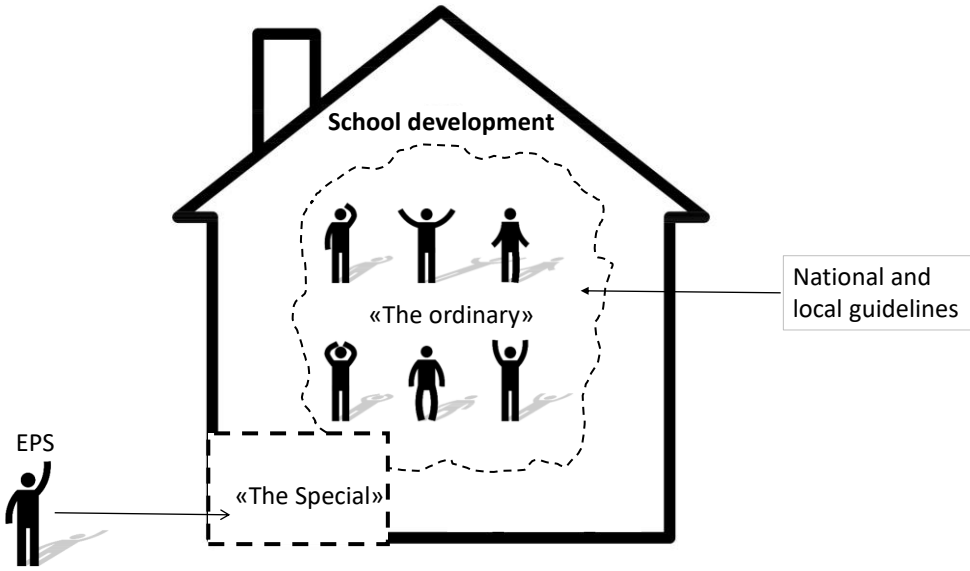
«The EPS is a big resource when it comes to children's academic challenges, but there are other professionals that we use when there are behavioral issues.»

4. The municipality's support system

- What type of support around the school that contribute to development of inclusive practices?
- The function of special classes and special schools
- Support for the children or for the teacher?
- The teachers sense of responsibility

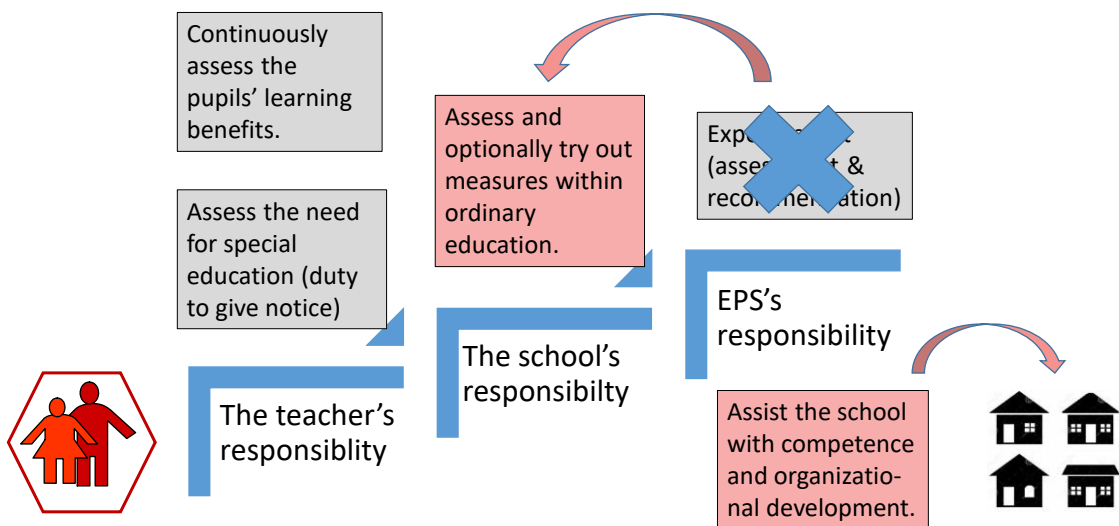
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The municipality's support system for schools



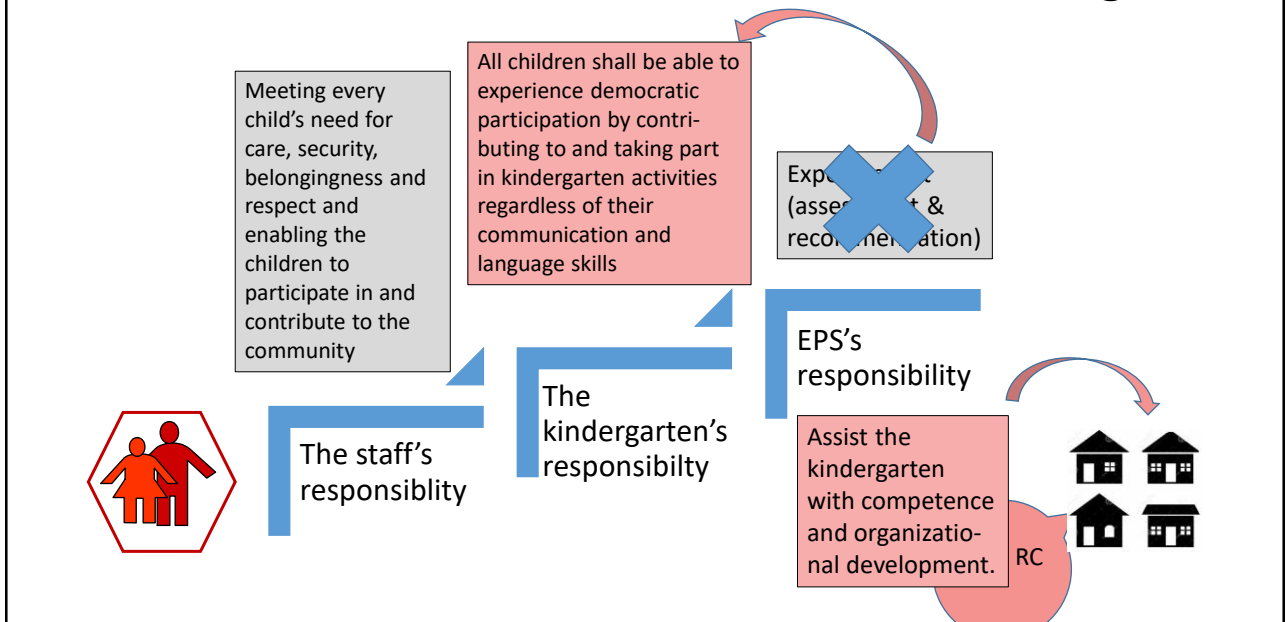
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Phase 2: innovation in school



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Phase 2: innovation in kindergarten



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Further research ... ???

- The project is in accordance with actual governmental guidelines:
 - Improvement of the system in general is crucial to enhance inclusion and learning outcomes for all children/pupils
 - Give priority to strengthen the quality in ordinary education
 - Reduce the demand for special educational support / special education and expert reports from EPS
 - Necessary competence should be available near the children/pupils
 - Researchbased knowledge must be contextualized in kindergarten/school by the professionals themselves

Nevertheless; it remains to see *if and how* a new infrastructure and more innovative cooperation between EPS and kindergarten/school can have a desirable impact on practice.

In this project, this primarily depends on the municipalities choices of actions!

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