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Every child has the right to...

Schools' responsibility for children and young people whose parents have addiction problems

Tisdagen den 30 maj i Malmö

Karin Alexanderson

Elisabet Näsman



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Skol-BIM

A research- and development project

- The aim of our project is to improve the ability of school staff to detect and provide support enabling school achievement to children and young people who have parents with substance misuse problems.
- 20 interviews with young people
- School documents



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Findings

- Most of the young people tell that they in early childhood understood that something was wrong
- Schools **did not know** about addiction problems of a parent for ten of the young people.
- The schools **have known** about the addictions problems for ten young people
- Six of these young people did not get any support from school-staff.



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Mats

Firstly, I have totally lost confidence in how the school works. That is, teachers, how I...just the school it... I have tried to trust the school so many times, but they have just turned their back on me.

För det första så har jag helt tappat förtroendet för hur skolan fungerar. Alltså lärare, hur jag alltså... bara skolan det...jag har försökt lita på skolan så många gånger, men dom har bara vänt ryggen åt mig



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Findings

- Most of the young people tell that they in early childhood understood that something was wrong
- We cannot see that the schools have known about the addictions problems as for in the case of nine young people
- A school knew about addiction problems of a parent as to 10 of the young people.
- Six of these young people did not get any support from school-staff.
- Remaining four got support from their mentor, school nurse or school counselor



Tony about the teacher/mentor

... she passed outside the system, or how to say it,. She took it a little into her own hands, she took the matter into her own hands because she felt, well that that was needed. And it really did.

... hon gick förbi systemet, eller vad man ska säga. Hon tog det lite i egna händer, hon tog saken i egna händer för att hon kände väl att det behövdes. Och det gjorde det verkligen.



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Toini about the school nurse

*And then when I felt that I
could trust her, then I started
to open up and talked about
some things.*

*Och sen när jag kände mig,
att ja jag kan lita på henne,
då började jag öppna upp
mig med lite saker(Toini).*



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- We cannot see that the schools have known about the addictions problems as for in the case of nine young people
- A school knew about addiction problems of a parent as to 10 of the young people.
- Six of these young people did not get any support from school-staff.
- Remaining five got support from their mentor, school nurse or school counselor
- Ten of the young people told about support at secondary school and
- Five of those had not got any help in earlier stadia's because the school did not know.
- Four of the young people do not get any help at secondary school while others had newly started or were about to start.
- Seven of the young people finished their ninth year at school without passing



What school documents tell

- It is not easy to get access to school documents
- Content on mental health/family problems is unsystematic, vague or non-existing
- Some problems were recognized:
 - poor achievement, eating disorder, self-harm, asthma, stomach-ache, anxiety, depression, truancy/absenteeism, trouble-making, mobbing, violence, vandalism, shop-lifting, drug abuse etcetera



Final comment

- Schools take measures to solve behavioral problems or poor school achievement, without exploring the causes.
- School professionals focus on the individual pupil and the school situation - rarely broaden the perspective to family troubles.
- This limitation is supported by the forms used to gather and document information from pupils as well as parents.
- There is a risk that children who fare ill at home but choose to put an effort into behaving and achieving well at school, will stay undetected and without support
- Even those who tell about family problems, risk not being helped.
- If children get help this happens late in their school career, to some as late as in secondary school, when they themselves tell about and can reflect upon their parent´s addiction problems.



Tony and Victoria

- *Take them aside and do not talk to them as if... as a teacher to his pupil or as a therapist to his patient, but talk to the person as another human being. Try to talk with them on their level so to speak. And... I believe you achieve more that way. Because I mean, when you are ten years old, it does not help with all fine words, you don't understand a bit then, Because I believe that it is a sort of. about talking in the right way,*
- *... maybe that you talk about it in fifth or sixth grade , that there are families which do not function and that you can get help, because they never talked about anything like that. I understand that it might be hard to listen to for some, but it may anyway even be good that they mention that "there are families who are not perfect. There are problems and it is OK to talk about it."*



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Thanks!

A simple black line drawing of a smiling face with its arms raised in a gesture of joy or gratitude. The character is positioned below the word "Thanks!".

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