

The concept of «territoriality » and social inclusion as it is applied in Lyon (France)

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First of all, I shall begin by my professional background in order to make you understand my professional position and my tasks as an early childhood coordinator of Lyon Town Hall. For the local authorities, young children's education is a major challenge of social, economical, and cultural development of the city.

Since 2001, in order to better answer to the ever more diversified family needs and to adapt to the legal evolutions, Lyon, a big city of 463 000 inhabitants, has developed several projects aiming to improve the children's welcome quality from the collective and individual points of view.

In order to reach its targets during its term of office, the Lyon Town Hall has acquired an important reference tool: **The Social and Educative project for welcoming young children.**

It is meant to be :

- ♣ an integration tool,
- ♣ a tool of social cohesion,
- ♣ of fighting against all exclusion and inequality,
- ♣ of being part of the future citizens' education
- ♣ of supporting the parental "know-how".

This tool is based on concrete objectives in constant relation with the evolution of family needs.

Firstly, I shall expose to you its legal frame, then how we worked to carry it out and thirdly, the main work axes and the results.

Once I've presented the creation steps of the social and educational project that we've installed in order to welcome young children (I have largely committed myself in this project), I would like to tell you how interesting I find my evolution from former professional of young childhood to coordinator of young children.

Having a diploma of Educator of Young Children, I was in charge of several associations managing welcome establishments of early childhood. Ever since I started to work, my main concerns have been:

- ♣ to propose a quality welcome to the children and also to their families (considering concrete pedagogical projects),
- ♣ to take into consideration the social environment where the establishments are situated
- ♣ to offer professionals a stimulating and enriching work environment.

Afterwards, I attended vocational training courses for being manager of young childhood establishments. For four years, I was deputy manager in a social centre situated at the outskirts of the town; the population living in this village finds itself in a profound social distress.

The social centre I worked for managed almost all the services for the less than 6 year-old children proposed to families living in the area:

- ♣ collective welcome establishments offering a regular welcome to working parents,
- ♣ occasional welcome for the others,
- ♣ maternal leisure centres welcoming children on Wednesdays and school holidays,
- ♣ toy libraries,
- ♣ welcome establishments reuniting children and parents,
- ♣ event hand-over to maternal assistants.

Three years ago, the Lyon Town Hall organised again its administrative service managing welcome establishments for young children, the so-called "childhood management" and created eight jobs related to early childhood coordination.

These jobs were addressed to persons having a professional qualification related to early childhood field: experienced nursery nurses, educators of young children.

Former managers of early childhood establishments, they all know very well how welcome establishments work and what their limits are, the interest of working closely to families. They all want to value the work of professionals.



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Wishing to submit my skills to a large city, and interested in the early childhood project of the Lyon Town Hall, I had the chance of having one of these jobs thanks to my former professional experiences.

The general tasks of a coordinator are:

- ♣ to create a link between administrative services and the managers of all municipality early childhood establishments (the local councils or associations may be in charge of these establishments);

- ♣ to put into practice the political orientations of the Town Hall related to early childhood.

Since 2001 (when it came to power), the City of Lyon has privileged early childhood welcome. The political orientations are the following:

- ♣ an important evolution of the way local welcome establishments work,

- ♣ a wider opening offer to all families and a better offer-demand adaptation.

The town Hall has committed itself in the blueprint of its educative and social project for the following reasons:

- ♣ in order to match the new legal frame imposed by the Decree of August 1st 2000;

- ♣ in order to adapt to the new financing method proposed by the CNAF (National Fund of Child Benefit) thanks to the PSU (Unique Service Benefit),

- ♣ in order to offer a clear general idea of its early childhood politics.

Why a social project ?

To accompany a real politics of welcoming young children and their parents taking into consideration the social evolutions; the Decree of August 1st, 2000 (n° 2000-762 of August 1st, 2000) offers a legal, in accordance with the regulations, clear and up to date frame.

The most important innovations of this decree:

- ♣ allow relaxing working schedules of welcome establishments,

- ♣ to widen all kinds of welcome services (on a regular/occasional basis)

- ♣ to favour and strengthen the parents' place.

Its strong point is an opening principle to all families and children.

It requires **an establishment project** for all welcome institutions based on three documents:

1. its social project should present the social environment and the adequate tasks of the families living in the area;
2. its educative and pedagogical project should define the welcoming conditions of young children and the professional-developed pedagogy;
3. its rules and regulations should define the relations between professionals and family.

These are but tools expressing the thoughts of early childhood professionals and politicians related to the principle of adapting the establishment to the family needs.

Local Councils had to express clearly their position related to early childhood welcome and to define the improvement objectives so that all establishment managers could write their social projects taking into consideration the environment.

In order to put into practice the legal frame proposed by the decree, the CAF (the Social Security Office) has also proposed financing evolutions of early childhood establishments. That is why in 2002, a new Service Benefit was born: the Unique Service Benefit (PSU). It establishes an hourly pricing for parents by taking into consideration, as before, the familial quotient. A more flexible pricing for families paying only the daily and yearly care time. Before, families paid welcome establishments:

- ♣ for the entire morning and/or afternoon, no matter how much time the child spent in the institution;



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♣ on a monthly basis that did not take into consideration their holidays.

This measure has encouraged the institutions we formerly called “crèches” or “kindergartens” to evolve towards “multi – welcome” equipments, as the decree stipulated.

These new measures have largely changed the welcome establishments of young children.

Professionals are facing more and more and very diversified demands. They have to question their professional methods and their representations because of this diversity. A welcome establishment of young children can no longer work alone in its area; partnership has become a must in this field of work.

In order to answer to the ever more different evolutions, the Lyon Town Hall has stated its political orientations meant to develop the qualitative aspects thanks to its “social and educative project for welcoming young children”.

While they have their political mandate, an important qualitative section has been foreseen on their schedule, together with their objective of qualitative development stipulating that 700 supplementary welcome places will be created (therefore there will be 4211 places).

Diversity welcome represents the guiding line of all this reflection process engendered by this social project.

What does the diversity welcome represent to the Local Council?

It takes into account the following:

♣ the cultural diversity of the welcome population, thanks to organised meetings: discovering each other avoids loneliness and family isolation,

♣ the diversity of family models (married / unmarried couples, reconstituted families, mono-parental families) providing their abilities, but also their need for support, admitted, accompanied in a society where “being parent” requires a complex positioning, because the child’s place, the father’s and the mother’s role and place have evolved in our social and economical world.

♣ the diversity of welcome children: that means:

- to welcome different children, regardless of their chronic diseases, of their handicap and,
- to offer them a place of socialization and early-learning

♣ social diversity and parity: that means:

- fighting against inequalities while very young,
- preventing exclusion while very young,
- paying attention to welcoming unemployed parents, without affecting the welcome

quality, according to the 1998 law against exclusions. Social mixing also implies information access, working flexibility of establishments.

The Local Council wishes to diversify their welcome methods, and therefore welcome diversity, so that all the children living in Lyon could have a privileged and equal access to information.

♣ welcome diversity: that allows adapting to a variety of situations. The 2000 decree insists on the accessibility, diversity and flexibility of the welcome methods and encourages innovative methods. The PSU, founded on an hourly-based welcome, favours the multi-welcome, flexibility of opening hours, last-minute welcome. These are a few measures allowing to answer best to family needs and to protect the child’s well-being.

The social and educative project of young childhood establishments encourages a questioning reflection on:

- the child’s evolution in our society,
- the evolution of family models,
- women’s role in the economical and social fields.

How was it built?

It was based on a territorial proximity approach.



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Lyon is made up of 9 administrative subdivisions. Each administrative subdivision has its own demographic and socio - economic data. Their common point: a very high birth rate since 2000. If some of the administrative subdivisions have a very good property market and build, others have a precarious population, and others have a high-income population and families where both parents work a.s.o...

A coordinator has been particularly charged with applying all the necessary steps for succeeding in carrying out the social project of the City of Lyon. She worked on two main tasks:

1. **To establish a diagnosis of the existing**, that we could call “Who Are we? Who do we serve?”: it has allowed to draw up a precise welcome offer proposed by each welcome establishment in the nine administrative subdivisions every year.

a. To count the number of places and the type of welcome proposed by each establishment (the welcome on a regular/occasional basis; vacant places for last-minute welcome demands; vacant places for disabled children a.s.o. ...)

b. To count the number of welcome children and the number of days or half-days when children are present.

c. To define the population using the establishments : where the families live, who are the family members (from the social and professional point of view, too), their activity, their monthly income, the type of fund the Social Security Office (CAFAL) supplies for stopping to work temporarily or to pay a childminder or maternal assistant at home.

This diagnosis work has underlined the identity of every administrative subdivision (or territory). At the same time, we have been able to find out what is missing, to enrich the contents of meetings thanks to concrete exchange.

2. **To organise territorial consultation among all the partners working in the early childhood field**

Drawing up the social project asks for consultation. The following professions met once a month during the 18 months necessary to build the project:

- elected representatives of each administrative subdivision who are in charge of the early childhood activities;
- the coordinators of territorial young childhood activities;
- professionals of Council of the Lyon Department who are in charge of naming the maternal assistants,
- the animators of Maternal Assistants Hand-Over,
- the associations proposing baby-sitting,
- managers of leisure centres working on Wednesdays and school holidays,
- the associations and schools proposing welcome before and after school time,
- medical-psychological centres,
- toy libraries,
- organisers of meeting places between parents-children.

175 meetings have been organised.

These meetings have allowed:

- a better mutual understanding ;
- to share experiences and on-going projects
- to underline and to exchange each one's experience,
- to define the territorial common issues,
- to see arising the objectives to decline in the social project of City of Lyon and in the social projects of each establishment,
- to define together the main lines of work for the months to come.



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The parents using young childhood establishments were also informed of the advancing steps of the project: a presentation was delivered at half way and an official presentation of the final blueprint was delivered in December 2004.

In order to conceive the social project, the City of Lyon has cooperated with people working in this field, thanks to the will and the political manifesto of the Lyon Town Hall.

This important and imposing partnership work has become real thanks to the objectives stipulated in the social project that I will present to you now. Two concrete examples will accompany this presentation.

- A social project open to innovation in order to be closer to family needs
 - A Welcome Point of Young Childhood Registering (PAIPE) and of an

admission committee: the Welcome Point of Young Childhood Registering is a unique welcome, information and subscription place. It centralises the parents' demands; the best welcome method may be advised.

In every administrative subdivision, welcome establishment managers do welcome duty offices. In order to do this, all the establishments should adhere to the project and belong to the same network.

The unique registering committee points out the assigned places of each establishment and uses common criteria.

The committee gathers every two months. The local elected representative of early childhood is the president; the other members of the committee are:

- all the neighbourhood partners,
- the neighbourhood coordinator,
- an user, who is also parent representing a city establishment.

The professional welcoming the family presents the file. Places are assigned according to unique criteria and neighbourhood vacancy.

Family Objectives :

- access to information,
- meeting a unique establishment interlocutor ,
- avoiding to visit too many organizations,
- making administrative procedures easier.

The admission committee allows:

- a treatment equality of all demands,
- a better openness on the admitting procedures of collective welcome establishments.

Establishment Objectives :

- activation of working in a network,
- improvement of institutional partnership,
- developing cooperation.

○ Innovating and trying out : proposing innovative welcome solutions for families who have irregular working schedules or who are weakened.

In 2005, a new establishment was founded; its specificity:

- open 24 hours per day, from Monday to Friday evening,
- 30 vacant places all day long and 12 vacant places all night long,
- opens at 5:30 am and closes at 10:00 pm

Children spending their night in this organization, can also stay until midday so that their parents could rest.



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A new organization, opened in December 2004, managed by the City Council, established in the place called « Cité Internationale » (International City) develops a project based on welcoming diversity. Based near a pole of economical activity: Interpol, several cosmopolitan or cultural organisations: cinemas, Contemporary Art Museum, Casino, Congress Palace a.s.o., its actions are centred on 3 axes:

Cultural diversity: welcoming children of different nationalities and respecting both their mother tongue and family culture thanks to a personnel of different nationalities and speaking foreign languages,

Cultural and artistic introduction : thanks to their partnership with the Contemporary Art Museum and the Park of Tête d'Or (Golden Head),

Welcome diversity: welcoming families who do not live in Lyon, but come for a congress, for a precise event, for tourism. They have a project of opening on Saturdays so that people can go sightseeing.

○ Last minute Welcome

While looking for a vacant place where to send their child, a family feels that is “urgent”. Because the number of welcome vacant places cannot answer to all the demands, we’ve thought of defining certain situations that are more “urgent” than others, so that professionals can have a closer look:

- working again,
- being accepted for a professional training,
- ending the existing baby-sitting system: ill grand-mother
- a maternal assistant who refuses to take care of the child all of a sudden,
- an exceptional family event: death, accident, hospitalisation.

These are a few situations asking for an urgent answer; therefore the admission committee does not have the time to organise a meeting.

Several neighbourhood establishments have vacant places for last minute welcome. This type of limited welcome allows families to choose an adequate solution for the future. Professionals guide, accompany, support families thanks to network partners who know one another very well; professionals have also worked on the notion of last minute welcome in their pedagogical projects.

The enrolling procedures and children welcoming should be easier, and at the same time quality steps should be maintained so that children could feel at ease, because they already face a stressing situation. If the vacant place for last minute welcome is not used (that is very rare), it is turned into an occasional vacant place for all the families.

The network of maternal assistants, and home-care associations also work on the last minute welcome.

We have been studying a device of centralising information so that we could have an exact look of last minute welcome places; professionals can access it on the Internet and families have a quick answer.

○ Welcoming disabled children

It is one of the steps of welcoming diversity. Respecting this difference implies respecting the fundamental rights and admitting that we are all equal. A handicapped child has the same access right in a quality welcome establishment as all the other children. However, difference cannot be denied: disabled children have special needs: taking into consideration all situations that may arise; therefore reflection and teamwork impose. Parents’s involvement is a privileged resource ; quality welcome is impossible without them. They have to participate to all the decisions related to their child.

Several objectives have to be accomplished:

Welcome Development in all the welcome establishments

70 out of 132 welcome establishments have welcome disabled children. When we started our social project, 50 children were present. At the end of July 2005, we had 135 children.



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*Allowing families to resource, having time to enjoy themselves and brotherhood
Adopting a responsible and thoughtful decision about this kind of welcome:*

- to study welcome and equipment match,
- to know partners,
- to clearly define possibilities and limits.

A Procedure of Individual Welcome was established by: parents, headmistress and the establishment doctor.

Offering a space of socialisation where initiative awakening may be possible ; there should be a therapy space, too. If supplementary specialised personnel are not compulsory, a network of care partners is.

Accompany and support families: to establish confidence and a space where parents are admitted as they really are, and not as a disabled child's mother or father.

To follow the actions of preventing and diagnosing the handicap.

In order to support professionals, theme meetings have been organised and a social project has been drafted. A support network was created: the Network of Difference and Young Childhood. The Association "A Green Mouse" is very active in the handicap field. This association also manages a young childhood establishment which opened 15 years ago; it welcomes 18 children; one third is disabled. This network proposes a documentary resource space, meeting workshops with handicap, training professionals. A quarterly newsletter addressing to professionals is published, debates open to all public are organised, too.

This network is very popular with professionals and families.

Coordinators are also very careful when it comes to supporting teams, to adapting the functioning system and asking for supplementary human forces when needed.

We have also been working on a communication project so that families should be aware of the evolutions of this type of welcome in traditional establishments.

- Relations with nursery schools: link actions, welcome in and out of the establishment.

Does welcoming 2 to 3 year-old children belong to the Young Childhood field or to the National Education field? This is an often asked question in France.

We also wonder whether or not welcoming in a nursery school 2 year-old children is pertinent or not. The social project was not drafted to answer these questions, but to accompany a common reflection to the two partners.

The action project making communication between establishments easier could be called "link action", "link device", "link class" is hoped for.

Objectives:

Organising a school progressive evolvement taking into account each child's development and parents' accompanying need.

A lot of establishments develop links with nursery schools existing in their neighbourhood: regular meetings; common activities; organisation of festive manifestations where families can participate, progressive introduction to the notion of nursery schools.

In other words, a transition should be established between family and collective life. Welcome spaces reuniting parents and children are also developing: a first socialisation space where both the parents and the child can get progressively accustomed to the idea of this necessary separation. The transition between the family nest and the socialisation place are better understood and felt.

Welcome less than 6 year-old children on Wednesdays and during school holidays (what we call extra school) and welcome before and after school (what we call peri-school) may be a problem many families face.

We have reached to the conclusion that welcome offer in centres of nursery leisure for the 4 to 6 year-old and peri-school welcome is insufficient in Lyon.



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The new measures of Unique Service Benefit of the Social Security Office have led to frequentation decrease in early childhood establishments on Wednesdays and school holidays. Several establishments propose now to families a welcome solution for the above-mentioned periods for less than 4-year-old children. Older children cannot have a quality welcome because the establishments are no longer adapted and teams are not professionally ready.

A large number of establishments show a vivid interest in including this mission in their social projects. A pedagogical reflection adapted to this age bracket is going to be conceived.

- Match working schedules on day time but also all through the year

In order to improve answers to families, welcome offer has to be improved, too. Ever since the social project was written, every new opening establishment has tried to match its annual and daily working schedule to the working schedules of the neighbourhood establishments.

We've made sure that in every arrondissement, there is an establishment opening at 6:30 am and another closing at 7:00 pm or even 7:30 pm.

The City Council also promises to families 100 vacant welcome places in August, a traditionally "inactive" month in France. To guarantee welcome manned office in August also can mean to prevent family situations from getting worse. This is a step to parenthood support.

Professionals' capacity to adapt to change may be one of the reasons why the objectives of the social project are not accomplished on time.

In order to support and accompany professionals to change, the Lyon City Council, managing 46 welcome establishments, has organised a very important training programme. It is structured on 3 levels:

- A proposition of refreshing the training of child-care assistant, that is 300 persons.

The work axes are: working with families how to match welcome diversity and quality welcome; how to have a new look on the new tasks that do not emerge of the acquired abilities of the initial training.

- Management support in order to make them understand better their new assignments; we also help them write the social project of their establishment

- Welcome diversity training of the 20 young childhood educators and of a team working in the most important town establishment (90 places). ESSSE proposes this training that lasts 24 months; this school informed us of the positive impact this training had: professionals succeeded in finding their place and answering to family needs and improved the children environment. Thanks to this training, professionals were able to see differently the parents having children in an establishment. They learned how to match their role to that of the parents; they also analysed the early childhood rules of the Lyon City Council. Experience is questioned; questions are asked; perception exchanges between professionals can be debated in order to find the right and useful compromise to the parents and children.

Professionals assert: it is a new way of working:

- allowing everyone to find a suitable place
- creating confidence and serenity, because families and professional teams are no longer competing, but cooperating to improve the child's well-being and education.

Conclusion

All this work, together with the City Council reference document of the social project was finished and officially presented to social partners and parents in December 2004.

The work and the will to develop projects have not ceased ever since.

Internal organisations of the structures, pedagogical projects are continually questioned according to the following criteria:

- changing its work objectives,
- working on the opening spirit of families,
- matching the City Council missions and to those of the nearest establishment.



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If these objectives are the starting point, each establishment, has built and written its own social and pedagogical projects, independently of the Lyon City Council.

The teams are working now on applying the above-mentioned objectives; to do so, they build the necessary evaluation tools. This social project is regularly checked in order to evolve. When it comes to applying these objectives, the role of coordinators is crucial.

I myself, together with another coordinator, accompany now teams to the application of the social project. Partners have confidence in me thanks to:

- * my young childhood work experience,
- * my knowledge of the associative field,
- * my work experience with families.

Even if I represent an institution, being more than a “genuine” administrative agent reassures and creates links between management and organisation spaces and what we commonly live on the field.

Professionals and parents that I have met appreciate that my speech is based on my experience and real accomplishments and takes into account the functional reality.

We contribute to several work groups together with our social partners, families willing to develop projects in order to better take into account the child and the families living in the neighbourhood: parent-children welcome places, link devices with schools, child-care development...

After several months without meetings when everyone could work on her/his project and organise the everyday life of her/his establishment, my colleague and I have organised meetings in every administrative subdivision. We can now see the first impacts of the social project objectives. We have recently presented one of the first evaluations to the elected member of the Lyon city Council who is in charge of young childhood and education.

Several objectives developed in the document of the social and educative project of the young child have actively been applied. We can but congratulate professionals and all the partners for their dynamism and will to adapt their way of working to answer to family needs. Others have been regularly been adjusted, looked over; they will be questioned if found useless.

When the August 2000 decree was published, the term of social project appeared as “hazy”, because we did not see its concrete shape. This term can no longer be ignored now, because the welcome of young children and their families cannot be organized without.



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