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The Trust Imperative

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THE TRUST IMPERATIVE: CONCEPTUALIZING
THE DYNAMICS OF TRUST AND DISTRUST
IN PARENT-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

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ABSTRACT. This article develops a conceptual framework of the dynamics of trust between parents and professionals in early childhood education and care. In contemporary Western society, the heightened risk awareness with respect to early childhood has led to an increased focus on the collaboration between home and daycare. Mutual trust is a core aspect of this collaboration, resulting in a trust imperative. Drawing on Knud Eilar Løgstrup, Noomi Matthiesen, Paula Cavada-Hrepich, and Lene Tanggaard argue here that trust is a spontaneous, relational phenomenon rooted in practice and emerging in a normatively structured order. They develop a conceptual framework of trust that has two dimensions: a *basic dimension* and a *competence dimension*. The basic dimension is connected to the willingness of the other to do what is good and right according to the normative order, while the competence dimension has to do with the ability to do so. The authors contend that, while trust is a spontaneous and sovereign phenomenon outside of individuals' control, parents and professionals in daycare *perform* in ways that are recognized as more or less trust-worthy. They also perform in ways that signal they are trust-ful. However, these conscious performances can paradoxically reduce the possibility of spontaneous trust.

KEY WORDS. early childhood education and care (ECEC); parental collaboration; trust; risk; performance

INTRODUCTION

It seems fairly obvious that any form of cooperative activity, including the division of labor, requires the cooperators to trust one another to do their bit.

— Annette Baier¹

This article develops a conceptual framework of the dynamics of trust between parents and professionals in early childhood education and care (ECEC). As Baier points out in the quote above, trust is necessary for all kinds of cooperative activity, yet, as early childhood is increasingly being perceived as precarious and critical for success in life, trust between parents and early childhood professionals is especially important in contemporary society. Although trust is often used in a fairly commonsense manner, it actually refers to a complex phenomenon that has become an issue of attention and scrutiny in humanities and social sciences in the last forty years, generating numerous studies in and across different disciplines.² Mutual trust has been identified as crucial in parent-teacher collaboration,³ but only recently has this phenomenon received attention in early childhood

1. Annette Baier, "Trust and Antitrust," *Ethics* 96, no. 2 (1986): 232.

2. Ivana Marková and Alex Gillespie, eds., *Trust and Distrust: Sociocultural Perspectives* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2008).

3. Kimberly S. Adams and Sandra L. Christenson, "Trust and the Family-School Relationship: An Examination of Parent-Teacher Differences in Elementary and Secondary Grades," *Journal of School*

education,⁴ overlooking the specificity of this phenomenon in early childhood education and care.

Throughout this article we develop a relational conceptual framework of risk and (dis)trust in ECEC parental collaboration, which is developed through analysis of empirical material produced through an extensive qualitative study of the collaboration between parents and early childhood professionals in Denmark. The theoretical framework delineated in this article emerges from an integration of the theory of trust developed by the Danish philosopher Knud Eilar Løgstrup with our empirical material suggesting a tension between trust and risk in the relationship between parents and professionals in ECEC.⁵ This means that the theory of the relation between trust and risk presented here emerged from the empirical material based on a simultaneous empirical analysis and theoretical reading.⁶ As such, our proposed framework develops a theory of trust and risk as a relational phenomenon, situated in practice. Collaboration between parents and ECEC professionals are considered the key to managing the perceived risky and precarious nature of early childhood. Thus, trust emerges in the practice as a *mutual* demand necessary for collaboration and risk management. However, we argue that trust is also a spontaneous phenomenon, i.e., it is not a phenomenon that we have complete control over nor that we can force upon others. The practice of collaboration is thus charged with a paradox: namely, that the practice dictates that one *must* trust the other, yet no one is the master of trust. This results in a practice replete with

Psychology 38, no. 5 (2000): 447–497; Carol R. Keyes, “A Way of Thinking about Parent/Teacher Partnerships for Teachers,” *International Journal of Early Years Education* 10, no. 3 (2002): 177–191; Megan Tschannen-Moran, “Collaboration and the Need for Trust,” *Journal of Educational Administration* 39, no. 4 (2001): 308–331; and Megan Tschannen-Moran and Wayne K. Hoy, “A Multidisciplinary Analysis of the Nature, Meaning, and Measurement of Trust,” *Review of Educational Research* 70, no. 4 (2000): 547–593.

4. Annika Schweizer, Sebastian Niedlich, Judith Adameczyk, and Inka Bormann, “Approaching Trust and Control in Parental Relationships with Educational Institutions,” *Studia paedagogica* 22, no. 2 (2017): 97–115.

5. Knud E. Løgstrup, *Den etiske fordring* [The Ethical Demand] (Copenhagen, Denmark: Gyldendal, 1956).

6. Geoffrey E. Mills, *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2000).

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performances of trust-worthiness and trust-fulness that are connected to but are distinctively *not* trust.

Trust is connected inextricably to risk. Without risk there is no need for trust,⁷ while at the same time trusting implies taking a risk. The article therefore begins with a description of the increasing contemporary cultural discourse of early childhood education as precarious in nature. Collaboration between parents and ECEC professionals demands trust, and we briefly delineate a theory of the interconnectedness of trust and risk as a spontaneous, relational phenomenon rooted in practice. After describing the empirical study, we develop a conceptual framework of mutual trust in the collaborative relationship between parents and early childhood professionals.

RISK AND TRUST: EARLY CHILDHOOD AS PRECARIOUS

Modern Western society, characterized by Ulrich Beck as a “risk society,”⁸ is increasingly oriented toward reducing and managing perceived risk. This endeavor results in a contemporary culture that strives toward control of all aspects of life through knowledge, prediction, and mastery.⁹ Early childhood education and care has become a crucial site of investment and risk management. Over the past few decades, there has been an increased focus in education policy and practice on the potentials and associated risks perceived as ingrained in the early life of children, focusing on both early education and families.¹⁰ This increased focus on early childhood’s critical and precarious nature is based on the cultural narrative that has been termed “infant determinism”¹¹ — the belief that the quality of early life directly determines the quality of life in later years. This belief draws on the (pseudo-)scientific evidence and language aimed at stressing the importance of what is deemed appropriate stimulation and care to ensure later life success.¹² In more recent years, the discourse on the importance of early childhood has been fueled by research done by economist James Heckman, whose analysis shows the importance of “investments.”¹³ This connection between early childhood investments and life success has prompted an increased focus on early childhood from

7. Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

8. Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: SAGE, 1992).

9. Hartmut Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020).

10. Ellie Lee, Jennie Bristow, Charlotte Faircloth, and Jan Macvarish, *Parenting Culture Studies* (Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

11. Frank Furedi, *Paranoid Parenting: Why Ignoring the Experts May Be the Best for Your Child* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2002), 24.

12. Stefan Ramaekers and Judith Suissa, “What All Parents Need to Know? Exploring the Hidden Normativity of the Language of Developmental Psychology in Parenting,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 46, no. 3 (2012): 352–369.

13. Flavio Cunha and James Heckmann, “The Technology of Skill Formation,” *American Economic Review* 97, no. 2 (2007): 31–47; and Flavio Cunha and James Heckmann, “A Framework for the Analysis of Inequality,” *Macroeconomic Dynamics* 12, no. 2 (2008): 315–354.

a welfare state perspective — the rationale being that the better the investments in early childhood, the better the citizens, and hence a more economically robust society.¹⁴ The aim of policy and ECEC practice, therefore, is not to reduce and manage a *known* risk, but rather to reduce and manage *potential* future risks.

Closely connected to the cultural rationale of infant determinism is the contemporary cultural rationale of “parental determinism,” which assumes a close relationship between parenting strategies and their children’s life success.¹⁵ Parenting has thus increasingly become a matter of interest for educational policy and practice, increasing the demands and responsibilities placed on parents. Parents are themselves perceived as both a potential risk factor for their child’s healthy development and the agents wholly responsible for their child’s outcome in later life.¹⁶ There has subsequently been a change in the dominant models of “good” parenthood in modernity in which “parents” are assigned the duty of giving their child “the best start in life.”¹⁷

In Denmark since 2001, subsidized provision of daycare for children between the ages of twenty-six weeks and six years is guaranteed by law. Consequently, 71.7 percent of children under the age of three and 97.5 percent of children between the ages of three and five are enrolled in center-based ECEC, attending on average 7.5 hours a day.¹⁸ Daycare professionals have thus assumed significant responsibility of the task of childrearing — a process which has been termed “de-familization.”¹⁹ Furthermore, daycare professionals have become responsible for making sure that parents live up to their responsibilities. Professionals are increasingly positioned as the experts expected to give parents advice in a world of ever-changing expert knowledge, and expected to compensate for any perceived lack of parental competencies.²⁰ Moreover, daycare professionals have the legal responsibility to report any suspicion of child neglect and abuse, an obligation that requires a permanent scrutiny on family practice. Based on what Peter Moss has termed “the story of quality and high returns,”²¹ ECEC is increasingly becoming structured by practices

14. Lee et al., *Parenting Culture Studies*.

15. Furedi, *Paranoid Parenting*.

16. Diane Hoffmann, “Risky Investments: Parenting and the Production of the ‘Resilient Child,’” *Health, Risk & Society* 12, no. 4 (2010): 385–394.

17. Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *Reinventing the Family: In Search of New Lifestyles* (Oxford: Polity, 2001), 112.

18. European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, Eurydice Report (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019).

19. Anne Lise Ellingsæter and Arnlaug Leira, *Politicising Parenthood in Scandinavia: Gender Relations in Welfare States* (Bristol, England: The Policy Press, 2006).

20. Noomi Matthiesen, “The Becoming and Changing of Parenthood: Immigrant and Refugee Parents’ Narratives of Learning Different Parenting Practices,” *Psychology & Society* 11, no. 1 (2019): 106–127.

21. Peter Moss, *Transformative Change and Real Utopias in Early Childhood Education: A Story of Democracy, Experimentation, and Potentiality* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

of accountability, where daycare professionals are entrusted with the tasks of risk management and optimization of early childhood through appropriate investments. Consequently, Karen Dannesboe et al. speculate whether it is appropriate to use the term “pedagogue determinism” to denote the increased political and cultural valence placed on the efforts of childcare professionals for life-success.²²

In the Danish context, there has been a tradition of egalitarian collaboration between parents and educational professionals since the 1970s. However, the form this collaboration takes has evolved, as the increased focus on the perceived critical and precarious nature of early childhood has resulted in viewing this collaboration as a joint effort between institution and home to invest appropriately in the child’s first years. Parental collaboration is now considered the solution to reducing and managing risk.²³ This form of collaboration is based on a parenting style that has been termed “concerted cultivation,” where childhood is seen as requiring special attention, care, and effort to develop adequately.²⁴ Concerted cultivation collaboration between parents and daycare professionals in a culture that perceives early childhood as risk-filled and precarious requires trust between the collaborating partners. We will now turn to a brief description of a broad theory of trust rooted in a relational perspective before delineating a conceptual framework of trust in early childhood education.

A RELATIONAL THEORY OF TRUST

Dynamics of trust (and distrust) are a driving mechanism at the core of human relations in all spheres of everyday life in modern societies.²⁵ However, trust is “one of the most complex, multidimensional, and misunderstood concepts in the social sciences.”²⁶ It is thus a difficult task to delineate a brief theory of trust. We do not offer an exhaustive general theory of trust. Nonetheless, here we attempt to sketch the basis of a *relational* approach to trust and risk, rooted in understanding how trust and risk come together as highly contextualized phenomena. We argue that trust and its relation to risk has a *moral basis*, established in *interdependency* and the subject’s inherent *vulnerability*. We also propose that trust must be understood as emerging in a culturally rooted *normative order*.

TRUST AND RISK

All theories of trust stress that trust is inherently connected to perceived risk. Without risk, there is no need for trust. Trust must thus be understood as

22. Karen I. Dannesboe, Dil Bach, Björg Kjær, and Charlotte Palludan, “Parents of the Welfare State: Pedagogues as Parenting Guides,” *Social Policy & Society* 17, no. 3 (2018): 467–484.

23. Ibid.

24. Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2011).

25. Marková and Gillespie, eds., *Trust and Distrust*.

26. Robert Wuthnow, “Trust as an Aspect of Social Structure,” in *Self, Social Structure, and Beliefs*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Gary T. Marx, and Christine L. Williams (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 166.

inextricably interwoven with the lack of definite knowledge about a particular outcome: "All trust is in a sense a blind trust."²⁷ Parents do not *know* that their child will be appropriately cared for in daycare. They do not know this because they are not there, i.e., they are distanced from the practice and must rely on fragments of information.²⁸ Also, they do not *know* that their child will develop and learn in the way that they expect, because pedagogy is in itself inherently uncertain. We cannot engineer children and ensure predictable outcomes.²⁹ As Jack Barbalet writes, "Uncertainty, then, is not overcome with time but is a condition of time or rather temporality: the distinction between a known present and unknowable future."³⁰ In a risk society, the unknowable future is itself construed as risk-filled, giving rise to the need for trust.

Trust cannot be reduced to a mere "hope" in a positive future.³¹ Instead, trust must be conceived of as "a thread spun of weak inductive knowledge and faith."³² It is based on experiential knowledge (e.g., "others send their children to daycare and they seem fine") and on signs of trustworthiness (e.g., "they seem very caring") that are more or less weak evidential criteria of reliability. For instance, Anthony Giddens draws on Erving Goffman's description of "civil inattention" as strangers walk past one another on the street.³³ This is a cultural norm of "dimming the lights," i.e., looking away discretely, maintaining a subtle bodily posture and positioning of the face and eyes, that signals to the other that there is no intention of harm. These signs of trustworthiness (i.e., weak evidential criteria of reliability) are subtle, embodied, and mostly preconscious. They signal that we can trust the other to leave us alone and thereby care for our valued autonomy.³⁴ Every practice is fraught with these more or less subtle signals of reliability, indicating that the other can be trusted to act in ways that are considered appropriate and good. Trust is therefore closely linked to social expectations of what constitute benevolent and appropriate actions.

This aspect of "expectation" causes some debate within the literature on trust. Some conceive of trust as a matter of rational calculation, where the actor

27. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 23.

28. Dorte Kousholt, *Børnefællesskaber og Familieliv. Børns hverdagsliv på tværs af daginstitution og hjem* [Children's Communities and Family Life: Children's Everyday Life across Daycare and Home] (Copenhagen, Denmark: Dansk Psykologisk Forlag, 2014).

29. Gert Biesta, "Why 'What Works' Won't Work: Evidence-Based Practice and the Democratic Deficit in Educational Research," *Educational Theory* 57, no. 1 (2007): 1–22.

30. Jack Barbalet, "A Characterization of Trust and Its Consequences," *Theory and Society* 38, no. 4 (2009): 372.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Guido Möllering, "The Nature of Trust: From Georg Simmel to a Theory of Expectation, Interpretation, and Suspension," *Sociology* 35, no. 2 (2001): 407.

33. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 82.

34. Baier, "Trust and Antitrust."

rationally attempts to determine the costs and benefits of a particular course of action and whether the other can be considered trustworthy.³⁵ Others insist that trust is to be considered an emotional phenomenon that is rooted in expectation, and so cannot be based on rational calculation.³⁶ Most consider trust a hybrid of cognitive and affective aspects. However, drawing on Georg Simmel's work, it is often pointed out that the concept of trust needs an aspect of faith, i.e., an aspect that transcends rationality.³⁷ This is what Niklas Luhmann describes with his seminal notion of trust as a *leap*.³⁸ Regardless of the approach to trust, theories of trust tend to consider trust as a phenomenon that originates within the individual, either a rational calculation, an emotional response, or an active leap. Instead, we propose a radically relational approach to trust, drawing on the phenomenologist Knud Eiler Løgstrup's concept of trust as a spontaneous and sovereign expression of life.³⁹ We will now turn to a description of this approach.

LØGSTRUP AND TRUST

Drawing on Løgstrup, there are three aspects of trust that are important as a foundational sketch for our theory of the phenomenon of trust between parents and early education professionals: that trust has a moral basis, that it is spontaneous, and that it is rooted in a normative social order.

The moral basis of trust: Løgstrup's understanding of trust emerges from his theory of ethics, where he argues that in every encounter with another we hold a bit of their lives in our hands.⁴⁰ Human beings are interdependent, and consequently vulnerable. Every encounter with another is to a certain extent risk-filled. Every encounter thus requires trust. Løgstrup argues that to trust another is "to deliver oneself up" or to "lay oneself open."⁴¹ Trusting a person involves surrendering oneself in the expectation that the other will respond benevolently. Human interdependency, vulnerability, and trust are thus inseparable. Describing Løgstrup's theory of trust, Robert Stern writes, "When I trust someone, I am delivered up to the other person who may then decide what to do with this vulnerability — to respect it or abuse it."⁴²

Trust is relational in the sense that it has an ethical basis arising out of interdependency and the fundamental vulnerability inherent in every interaction.

35. See, for example, James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

36. See, for example, Barbalet, "A Characterization of Trust and Its Consequences."

37. Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

38. Niklas Luhmann, *Trust and Power* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979).

39. Løgstrup, *Den etiske fordring*; and Knud E. Løgstrup, *Opgør med Kierkegaard* [Breaking with Kierkegaard] (Copenhagen, Denmark: Gyldendal, 1968).

40. Løgstrup, *Den etiske fordring*.

41. *Ibid.*, 9 and 18.

42. Robert Stern, *The Radical Demand in Løgstrup's Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 11.

In Baier's words, trust refers to the "reliance on others' competence and willingness to look after, rather than harm, the things one cares about which are entrusted to their care."⁴³ The subject exposes herself by addressing another, thereby showing trust in the other's benevolence toward her and what has been entrusted. In the case of ECEC, parents are entrusting their children (one of their most meaningful persons in their life) to daycare professionals who they typically do not previously know much about and who they might meet briefly twice a day. Parents trust under the assumption that the professionals are qualified and want to do the best for their child's development, learning, and well-being. Trusting others thus implies taking a risk and becoming dependent on the other.⁴⁴

The most basic dimension of trust is consequently its moral basis, i.e., the expectation that the other wishes to act *well*. Like Løgstrup, Baier stresses this point. To illustrate this, she draws on an example of Immanuel Kant's regular habits: "Kant's neighbors who counted on his regular habits as a clock for their own less automatically regular ones might be disappointed with him if he slept in one day, but not let down by him, let alone had their trust betrayed. When I trust another, I depend on her good will toward me."⁴⁵ Trust is not merely the belief that something will happen, but also the normative expectation that the other *wants* that to happen and will do what she can to make sure that it happens.⁴⁶

The spontaneous nature of trust: According to Løgstrup, we encounter each other *initially* with trust.⁴⁷ He exemplifies this by imagining that we are on a train and do not know what the time is, so we turn to another passenger and ask. When the other passenger responds, saying it is 4:30, we trust this answer immediately. Distrust, on the other hand, arises when there is a reason not to trust the other. If we embroider further on Løgstrup's example, we could imagine that the other passenger responds by first looking out at the sun, then smiling wryly before responding. In modern society we would expect the passenger to look at her watch, not at the sun. And the wry smile further raises our suspicion that this answer is not to be trusted, and that the other passenger is for some reason being sarcastic or untruthful. Our distrust is thus raised because we have reason to distrust, i.e., the passenger does not live up to the norms of the practice. If we reconsider Goffman's understanding of civil inattention, Løgstrup would argue that we trust the stranger in the street from the outset, spontaneously and without reason, not because of their appropriate trustworthy behavior of dimming the lights. Trust is our initial way of being in the world. However, as soon as someone displays untrustworthy signs (their eyes linger too long, their body displays aggressiveness, or their posture

43. Baier, "Trust and Antitrust," 259.

44. Marková and Gillespie, eds., *Trust and Distrust*.

45. Baier, "Trust and Antitrust," 235.

46. Paul Faulkner, "The Problem of Trust," in *The Philosophy of Trust*, ed. Paul Faulkner and Thomas Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

47. Løgstrup, *Den etiske fordring*.

signals furtiveness), we give way to distrust. This is described nicely by Kees van Kooten Nierker, referring to Løgstrup's theory of trust:

When we trust another person in our communication with her, we are normally not aware of this. It is only when something in our communication makes us suspect that the other is not trustworthy that we may become aware of our trust. Then we may consider whether we shall continue trusting her or make our trust guarded.⁴⁸

Løgstrup's perspective must not be understood as though trust is something we carry with us or as a particular mindset with certain stable characteristics.⁴⁹ Instead, Løgstrup conceives trust as a sovereign and spontaneous expression of life.⁵⁰ Other examples of sovereign and spontaneous expressions of life are mercy and sincerity. They arise out of the social fabric of existence, rooted in interdependency. While the *individual* is often conceived of as sovereign, i.e., living their separate existence, managing and determining themselves, Løgstrup argues that the very fact of interdependency gives rise to certain *phenomena* that are themselves sovereign, and thus precede thought and control.⁵¹ They are spontaneous other-regarding impulses that move the individual toward the other. Trust is thus something that we *undergo*, that draws us out of ourselves.⁵² The phenomenon of trust is not at our disposal, and consequently we cannot make ourselves trust others. It does not initiate from the individual's sovereign will, but seizes us, makes itself known to us, and indicates before our reflection and contemplation that it is right to trust. We cannot control trust. It comes instead to us in the encounter with the other. Distrust, on the other hand, invokes thought, reflection, and risk-evaluation; what are my reasons for not trusting, how should I manage the risk, how do I appropriately deal with the situation? Distrust hauls us back into ourselves by demanding reflexivity. Trust, on the other hand, arises initially and spontaneously without effort or premeditation.

Sovereign expressions of life are typically realized immediately, i.e., "the sovereign expression of life preempts us; we are seized by it. Therein lies its spontaneity."⁵³ However, although they arise spontaneously and are sovereign, we are not powerless against them. One can refuse to give way to them. One can choose to distrust. Trust, on the other hand, is not something that can be controlled, decided upon, or engineered.

48. Kees van Kooten Nierker, "Løgstrup's Concept of the Sovereign Expressions of Life," in *What Is Ethically Demanded? K. E. Løgstrup's Philosophy of Moral Life*, ed. Hans Fink and Robert Stern (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), 218.

49. Løgstrup, *Den etiske fordring*.

50. Knud E. Løgstrup, *Norm og Spontaneitet* [Norm and Spontaneity] (Copenhagen, Denmark: Gyldendal, 1972).

51. Løgstrup, *Opgør med Kierkegaard*.

52. Ibid.

53. Knud E. Løgstrup, *Beyond the Ethical Demand* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 17.

TRUST AND THE NORMATIVE ORDER

Trust is relational in that it emerges in everyday normatively ordered cultural practices. Trust can thus be considered a phenomenon rooted in an “expectation that others will act according to some mutually accepted normative order.”⁵⁴ Normative phenomena are phenomena that can be done more or less well. The normative order of a practice is therefore the social reality where some actions are considered good and appropriate while others are not.⁵⁵ Social practices have an intricate historically, politically, and socially produced set of norms that create the limits of legitimate action in the practice and determine what counts as evidential criteria of reliability. This normative order thus constitutes a power structure in which certain ways of speaking and acting are expected and considered signs of trust-worthiness, while others are not.

Trust cannot be treated as an isolated phenomenon but is embedded in the network of other social phenomena, their history, and their ever-evolving traditions.⁵⁶ It is within this normative order that behaviors, utterances, postures, etc., are perceived as signals of trustworthiness (and more importantly, according to Løgstrup, signals of untrustworthiness giving rise to distrust). While we have argued above that trust does not emerge based on a conscious evaluation and rational calculation, the cultural normative order structures our expectations about what is conceived of as appropriate interactions and adequate ways of taking care of the other’s vulnerability. The normative order thus produces the *content* of trust, i.e., what is expected of others in practice and what are experienced as dependable trust-worthy actions.⁵⁷ The cultural normative order thereby creates the relational backdrop for the emergence of (dis)trust.

Summing up, the phenomenon of trust is inextricably linked to risk in general, and to the inherent risk rooted in the vulnerability that emerges from the interdependency of human beings. This means that trust has a moral basis and has to do with the expectation that the other will do what is *good*, i.e., act benevolently. However, trust emerges in relations in social practices that are normatively ordered, replete with both explicit and more implicit moral expectations about what constitutes good and appropriate ways of being. This normative order thus gives the content of trust, i.e., what is expected of the other, and what is considered good and appropriate trustworthy action. Lastly, trust is sovereign and emerges spontaneously in relationships.

Drawing on this initial sketch of a theory of trust, we now turn to the study of the collaboration between parents and early childhood professionals. We develop

54. Bernd Lahno, “Three Aspects of Interpersonal Trust,” *Analyse & Kritik* 26, no. 1 (2004): 28.

55. Svend Brinkmann, “Sources of Normativity: Overview of Work in Progress,” in *Where Culture and Mind Meet: Principles for a Dynamic Cultural Psychology*, eds. Brady Wagoner and Kevin Carriere (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2021), 41–52.

56. Marková and Gillespie, eds., *Trust and Distrust*.

57. Wuthnow, “Trust as an Aspect of Social Structure.”

a conceptual framework of collaboration between home and daycare institutions that emerges through the analysis of our evidence.

THE STUDY

During nine months of fieldwork in 2018, we carried out a qualitative study to explore how parents and ECEC practitioners experience and act in their collaboration toward young children's learning. The study was based on a social practice theoretical tradition that considers that human beings can only be understood in relation to their historical and material social life, as they are constituted by it and simultaneously constituting it through participation in practices.⁵⁸ Exploring this relation requires looking into the local institutional practices in which people participate in their everyday life.⁵⁹ Every institutional practice is considered unique, depending on their participants' characteristics, their material conditions, and the activities they organize in which people's actions take place. The exploration of a particular institutional practice implies paying close attention to what participants do and their interactions, as well as the norms and values that set the conditions for such actions. Tensions and conflicts are here regarded as particular situations that reflect how actions and relations between people are not purely a personal matter but are also highly informed by the collective local practice.⁶⁰

With these premises in mind, the study took place in eight daycare institutions and six childminders' houses in the mid-Jutland region in Denmark. These institutions reflected varied demographic and geographic configurations that provided insight into a diversity of practices and conditions in which parental collaboration takes place. Considering that parental collaboration is not an isolated interaction between parents and professionals, we designed a two-phase data collection process. On the one hand, the design aimed at understanding the structural conditions and the practice of collaboration in which not only parents' and professionals' perspectives were considered, but also those of children, daycare institutions, and childminders' leaders and municipality coordinators. On the other hand, we wanted to have an iterative process of analysis to validate and deepen the data interpretation. In the *first phase*, with the intention of grasping the nuances and complexity of their everyday encounters, we gathered in-depth data in three daycare centers and three childminders' homes. Here we had access to seventeen case studies constituted by the parents, the child, and the child's primary professional.⁶¹ Initial interviews with parents and professionals, independently, were followed

58. Dorothy Holland and Jean Lave, "Social Practice Theory and the Historical Production of Persons," *Actio: An International Journal of Human Activity Theory*, no. 2 (2009): 1–15.

59. Seth Chaiklin and Jean Lave, eds., *Understanding Practice: Perspectives on Activity and Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

60. Holland and Lave, "Social Practice Theory and the Historical Production of Persons."

61. Robert Stake, "Qualitative Case Studies," in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (London: SAGE, 2005), 443–466.

up with a full-day participant observation of the child in the daycare, as well as video-recorded observations of delivery and pickup situations. The video recordings afterward informed the video-stimulated recall interviews with parents and professionals. A third follow-up interview was held with those families and professionals who were experiencing difficulties or challenges of some kind. In parallel, interviews were conducted with the leaders of institutions and childminders and with the coordinators of municipality ECEC. The *second phase* included parents and professionals from the other five daycare institutions and three childminders, who were interviewed in focus groups on the basis of the preliminary analysis of the study cases and our initial insights. The interviews were conducted based on interview guides that included open-ended questions about parents' and professionals' expectations and their understandings of roles, responsibilities, and influence in the child's learning. Everyday experiences and practices were the guiding principles in these interviews. Thus, the specific themes of the interview guide emerged throughout the participants' description of a typical day for the child in the daycare. The respondents' participation in the study was voluntary, and all personal names and places used in this work are replaced with pseudonyms to ensure the participants' anonymity. The article draws on the analyses from this extensive study. Our intention here is not to report on findings in full, but to use the empirical material to highlight the proposed conceptual framework.

ANALYSIS: DEVELOPING THE ELEMENTS OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF TRUST IN PARENT-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION IN ECEC

There has recently been an increased societal awareness of the conditions of daycare where parents, grandparents, and professionals have expressed the need for more resources in daycares in Denmark, complaining particularly that there are too many children per professional. Despite this concern, parents in our study generally express a high degree of trust. In fact, they seem to engage trustingly with the daycare professionals more or less by default. For instance, one mother, Anna, said that when she asks about what has happened in the daycare, she gets an honest answer: "She [the professional] answers honestly, I assume (laughs). At least, I can't imagine otherwise." In the interview she seemed to realize that she has no way of knowing if the professional actually *is* answering her question honestly, but reflects further on this, and concludes that she has no reason not to believe that this is the case. This immediate trust, or *spontaneous* trust,⁶² seemed to permeate the general approach taken to collaboration by both the parents and the professionals. When asked about trust, they often struggled to articulate why they trusted the other — it was far easier to describe what made them *distrust*. And once they have started to distrust each other, this distrust seemed to become pervasive. One example of this was a couple who lost trust in the daycare professionals due to several experiences that created distrust. The father described how he judges situations with suspicion that may not previously have warranted such concern: "The picture I'm seeing when I am here, is that the picture when I'm not here?"

62. Løgstrup, *Norm og Spontaneitet*.

And if it is already a bit tense, it is easy to think that it is a positive scene made for the parents." His distrust thus gave rise to believing that what he saw might only be a charade. His distrust overwhelmed his initial and spontaneous trust.

In the following, we describe the dynamic of trust and distrust in parent-professional collaboration in daycare as it emerged in our observations and interviews. We argue that the collaboration requires a *mutual trust* that has two dimensions: First, there is the dimension of "basic trust" that both parents and professionals *want* to do what is good for the child (i.e., a moral dimension); second, there is a "competency" dimension, that both parents and professionals are in fact *capable* of doing what is good for that child. Both of these dimensions unfold in a normative order of cultural expectations and ideas of appropriate behavior, sustained by the *performance* of both trust-worthiness and trust-fulness.

BASIC TRUST

It is 7:30 in the morning. Carol carries Liam (18 months) from the car and into the entrance of the home of the childminder, Laila. As Carol helps him take off his jacket, we can hear the voice of Laila in the living room saying warmly to the other two boys, "Let's go and say good morning." As she appears in the doorway, Liam breaks away from his mother and runs to Laila. She is kneeling on the floor, with her arm around another boy, but reaches out with her free arm and gives him a big hug, saying, "Good morning, good morning," while she smiles and chuckles softly. (video-recorded observation, November 2017)

In an interview, Carol described Laila as "embracing." She described that she trusts that Laila will show care and love for her child in her absence. She thus had a general feeling that Laila wants to do what is good for Liam. Others described similar sentiments. When asked about their daycare institution, another mother Patricia said, "Absolutely fantastic. It is such a good daycare full of love for both children and adults. ... There are so many examples; the atmosphere, love, hugs from the adults [professionals]. We also get hugs! There is just joy and love." She added that the term "love" may seem inappropriate in a professional context, but she believed that it is the right word to describe the general atmosphere of the daycare. When asked why this atmosphere is important, she answered, "It creates an amazing feeling of peace of mind and sense that our children are thriving the whole day. ... I can sense it in Carry [her daughter]. She is a really positive girl. She thrives. I think it has something to do with the atmosphere that is so positive." Others explained similar experiences of professionals showing interest in them as persons (e.g., asking about their vacation, offering them coffee when they seem tired) or "going the extra mile" (i.e., doing more than what is expected in order to take care of the interests of the child).

The opposite is also the case. There are examples of professionals who did not seem to be genuinely interested in doing what is best for the child or for the parents. A father, Esben, described a daycare that his children previously attended, but which he and his wife decided to move their children away from:

We could come in the biting cold of winter and find our children outside almost without clothes; their snowsuits were not zipped up, they did not have on a woolen hat or mittens, and then there were three adults all completely bundled up. When I talked to them about it, I said, "Look at this, can't you help?" Then they answered, "Well they have to learn [to zip up

their snowsuits and put on a hat] because when they start school, no one will help them." ... So they were always on the defensive, and that was very uncomfortable.

This quote reflects two conditions that created distrust: first, according to Esben, the professionals did not show a basic desire to do what was good for the child (i.e., making sure that they were warmly dressed); second, the professionals did not show an interest in understanding Esben's point of view, responding with a defensive and dismissive attitude. They thus did not show a basic interest in the well-being of either the children or Esben, the parent, thereby creating a general sense of distrust. The most basic and pervasive aspect of the trust relationship between parents and professionals thus seems to be the moral aspect of *wanting* to act benevolently.

TRUST IN COMPETENCE

In addition to trusting that professionals are *willing* to do what is good for the child, there is the dimension of trust that the professionals are competent, i.e., that they are *able* to do what is good for the child. Many parents mentioned that professionals "have many years of experience," signaling that they have a lot of knowledge of the field. Patricia said, "They are professionally competent. They take their professionalism really seriously. They are rigorous about the learning plan. They use it a lot and they have monthly projects, where they use the development models [that the municipality uses], and you can tell that they have professional knowledge and reflection behind their actions." Distrust arises, however, when the professionals do not live up to the expectations of the parents. One mother described how she started to distrust the professionals' ability to look out for her child (age four) on the playground, because she often experienced that her child had wet himself while playing outside. She explained that she knew that the professionals were very busy and therefore did not necessarily have the time to look out for all the children when they were in a larger outdoor area. She thereby pointed out that trust in the professionals' competencies was not only about the professionals' individual abilities, but also their conditions and how they navigated them. Other parents pointed out that distrust arises when they got the sense that the professionals are worn out, i.e., that they do not have the energy to take proper care of the children.

While the examples described above all have to do with either the basic dimension of trust or the competence dimension, it also clear that these aspects of trust cannot be separated from the normative order of the practice. When Patricia exclaimed with enthusiasm, "We also get hugs! There is just joy and love," she was communicating that her understanding of a good and trustworthy daycare is one in which children are loved. In Esben's quote, describing his distrust emerging from experiences where his children's basic needs were not taken care of, he showed that he expects the professionals to make sure that the children are warm when they play outdoors. He also expects his point of view to be taken seriously when he discusses it with the professionals.

As described earlier in the theory section, the normative order is both the *context* for the emergence of (dis)trust (i.e., the social context in which the

relationship is lived) and at the same time also the *content* of (dis)trust, because our expectations are rooted in the normative order of the practice. What counts as good and appropriate actions, what is recognized by others as trustworthy behavior on both the basic (moral) dimension and the competence dimension, emerges in the normative order of the practice. This practice is historically and politically created, as well as socially (re)produced in the local context. These expectations of good and appropriate actions include expectations of behavior in the collaboration relationship but also in the educational practices both at home and in the daycare. The expectations are not the same for parents and for professionals respectively. Parents are expected to be open and honest and to listen to the expertise of the professionals, whereas the professionals are expected to have expert knowledge while also being caring and listening to the perspectives of the parents.⁶³ However, it is not enough that the parents trust the professionals. The professionals must trust the parents too; in other words, mutual trust is a condition for successful collaboration. We will now turn to this aspect of the (dis)trust relationship.

MUTUAL TRUST

So far, we have mostly been discussing the trust of parents in the professionals of the daycare institutions. Yet, as the introductory quote from Baier shows, collaboration requires mutual trust, i.e., parents must trust the daycare professionals to live up to the expectations of the normatively ordered practice, but professionals must trust that parents are living up to their caretaking responsibilities. As we saw in the section describing the cultural narrative of the precarious nature of early childhood, parents are increasingly held responsible for ensuring the positive development of the child, and daycare professionals are held responsible for making sure that parents are living up to their responsibilities.⁶⁴ In order to manage the risks of early childhood, it is considered necessary for parents and professionals to work together.

For collaboration to work parents need to trust that the professionals trust them, and the professionals need to trust that parents trust them. Trust thus becomes a double-trust in two ways.⁶⁵ First, it is a double trust in that it needs to be mutual, i.e., trust goes both ways. Second, it is double in the sense that one must not only trust the other, but also trust that the other trusts them. Both parents and professionals expressed the importance of the others' trust in them, and how uncomfortable it was when they felt that the other did not trust them. One mother said, "We sometimes get the sense that we are not good parents," explaining that the professionals seemed to question their competence as parents. Another father described a situation where he had picked up his child (aged eighteen months) early from daycare, while their child was still asleep. He had woken the child, but as he

63. Dannesboe et al., "Parents of the Welfare State."

64. Lee et al., *Parenting Culture Studies*.

65. Knud E. Løgstrup, "Emancipation og Solidaritet" [Emancipation and Solidarity], in *Skete der noget? En tidebog*, ed. Erik V. Jensen (Copenhagen, Denmark: Gyldendal, 1976).

was saying goodbye the professional reprimanded him, saying that it was not good to wake a small child. He felt that the professional was communicating that she did not trust his parenting competencies or that he was able to make good choices about what was best for his child.

PERFORMATIVITY

It is clear that evidential criteria of reliability spring from the normative order and the expectations of what is appropriate in a particular practice. This means that although *trust*, due to its spontaneous and sovereign nature, cannot be performed as such, *trust-worthiness* is performed. People participate (habitually or more reflectively) appropriately in a social practice, and thereby perform that they are *trust-worthy*. If we recall Goffman's example of "dimming the lights" on the street, this illustrates how appropriate minimal eye contact with strangers when walking down the street signals trustworthiness. This also means that by performing in inappropriate ways a person discloses that s/he is not *trust-worthy*. Performing trustworthiness is often done in embodied and preconscious habitual ways. The daycare professional, Karen, reflected on this more or less preconscious performance: "When you receive the children in the morning, the very way in which you meet them signals whether or not you really mean it [i.e., that you will care for the child], or if it is just something that you have to do." Karen was arguing that it is through the small gestures (the small performances) that she shows parents that they can trust her to *care* for their children, and that she is not acting out of mere duty, i.e., she is living up to the moral expectation of *wanting* to care for the child. This performance has to do with her embodied way of being in the practice, but one can also more purposefully strive to be recognized as *trustworthy*. For instance, she further said, "And then you can tell them [the parents], when they pick up their child, what they have done during the day. Just a few small fun things such as, 'he really enjoyed climbing today' or 'they had fun building a hideout by the trees today.'" She explained further that this shows the parents that she has paid attention to their child and is thus performing trustworthiness on the competence dimension.

The need for mutual trust in collaboration means that it is not enough merely to perform trustworthiness. It is necessary also, to some extent, to perform *trust-fulness*, i.e., to perform in ways that show that one trusts the other. For instance, this can be seen when a daycare professional had to tell a mother that her child had bitten another child during the day. In an interview, the mother, Susan, admitted that she worries that her child's habit of biting other children in some way reflects on her parenting. The professional sensed this and said, "When I tell her about the biting, I repeat several times that it is very normal for children [to bite] at this age. It is in no way her fault." In this way the professional was performing *trust-fulness* by communicating that she did not believe that the child's habit had to do with the parenting skills of the mother.

The performativity of trustworthiness and trustfulness is not identical to the phenomenon of trust. In fact, consciously performing "you can trust me, and I trust you" may be signaling that trust is vulnerable, i.e., no longer spontaneous, and that

there is a need to reassure the other that the mutual trust is appropriately placed. Yet the phenomenon of trust cannot be understood without a close attention to the performance as trustworthy and trusting actors. Every analysis of trust must therefore distinguish between trust as the sovereign phenomenon that arises spontaneously in the practice, and the (conscious or preconscious) *performance* of trust-*worthiness* and trust-*fulness*. The irony here is that the more overt performative efforts that need to be made to promote or protect trust, the more they can actually exacerbate doubts about trust; true trust does not need to be continually managed.

OTHER EVIDENTIAL CRITERIA OF RELIABILITY

We have argued that trust emerges spontaneously as the general approach to a collaborative relationship, but distrust emerges when there is reason for doubt, e.g., when the other does not meet one's expected performances. Parents and professionals note initially and pervasively evidential criteria of reliability, which assures them that their trust is not misplaced. Parents, when asked to justify their trust, can easily come up with indicators of the reliability of the professionals.

The parents explained that they have brief glimpses into the daycare practice that gives them some insights into its day-to-day activities. A father, Bernhard, said, "Oh, well, we don't really see how the day really is. But sometimes when I pick her up, they are sitting by the table drawing. So they probably do [creative things]." He explained that when he picks up his child, he gets a glimpse of the daily activities. In this particular case he is assured that they do creative activities. Others explain how products from artwork or projects likewise give a glimpse of everyday life that supports their trust in the competencies of the professionals. Daily written descriptions or photos have the same effect. A mother explained that when her daughter was upset when she left in the morning, the caretaker would send a photo: "On my phone, right, and she would write that everything was fine now." The picture has more power than the written word, showing that the child is happy rather than just stating that this is the case.

Carol explained that before her daughter started in the daycare, she spent a few hours there every day getting her child used to the new institution (a common practice in Denmark). She explained that the time she spent with the childminder showed her that she was trustworthy: "We had been there 4–5 times already and just sat there and Liam played. Well, it gave a sense of how their day was. I think it gave. ... I became calm. I thought, well of course I can send him here." So, although Carol did not know for certain that all days are like the ones where she attended, or that the childminder acts in the same way when she is not there, the glimpse into the daily practice by attending a few times gave her some knowledge through which trust emerged. Trust and distrust are thus also rooted in experiences. The more experiences of reliability (i.e., the fewer reasons to distrust), the stronger the trust, and vice versa.

Children's *happiness* is another sign through which parents evaluate that the professionals are trustworthy (for example, when they pick them up). Note the quote above, where Patricia said, "I can sense it in Carry [daughter]. She is a really

positive girl. She thrives.” She was pointing out that the child’s overall well-being and development is perhaps the most important criterion of reliability. Parents also rely on *material* signs of reliability. They look at the children’s rain clothes and shoes to see if they have played outdoors. In a Danish context (which is a particular normative order) children are expected to play outdoors, get fresh air and actively use their bodies, so when their clothes and shoes are dirty, it functions as a sign that the children have been active outdoors and that the professionals can be trusted to live up to this particular expectation.

There are many other criteria of reliability that are not pointed out in the interviews but become clear through observations. There are subtle, habitual ways in which the professionals and parents interact that either live up to their expectations and sustain spontaneous trust or that, alternatively, give way to distrust. The way the daycares are decorated with posters of the alphabet, pictures of songs, and artwork all function as signals of reliability, as they communicate that this is a place where your child will learn. Another more complex example is that all the changing-rooms for the younger children are fitted with large glass windows into the common-areas. This signals that the parents can trust that in these more intimate settings there is no opportunity to abuse the children. At the same time the windows are a subtle reminder of this risk, illustrating again that trust and risk are intimately connected.

SUMMING UP: A THEORY OF TRUST IN PARENT-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION IN ECE

The first aspect of our conceptual framework of trust is thus a *basic* dimension. This dimension is a moral dimension and includes a sense that the other wants to do what is right and good for the child as well as for the adult. Another dimension is the *competency* dimension, which has to do with trusting that the other is capable of living up to the expectations. Importantly, trust in the collaboration needs to be mutual, and it is not enough only to trust the other, but also to have a sense that one is trusted. In order to understand both the basic and the competency dimension of the trust relationship, it is necessary to understand the social normative order of the practice, which creates the context for what is considered appropriate and good — i.e., trustworthy behavior. While trust seems to emerge as a pre-reflective spontaneous phenomenon in the relationship, distrust emerges when the other does not live up to the expectations of the normative order.

DISCUSSION: THE TRUST IMPERATIVE

Throughout this article, we have argued that early childhood education and care is culturally understood as a risk-filled endeavor, intensifying the need for trust in the practice of parent-professional collaboration.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the collaboration between parents and professionals is considered the main solution to managing risk in early childhood. In order for the collaboration to work, parents and professionals *must* trust one another. The risk-filled nature of ECE

66. See Dannesboe et al., “Parents of the Welfare State.”

enhances this imperative. As Max van Manen points out, professionals are *in loco parentis* — they are fulfilling the role of parents in their absence.⁶⁷ Consequently, parents must trust the professionals, or it would be irresponsible to leave their child in their care. At the same time, the professionals must trust the parents to live up to their responsibilities as parents. Without this trust the collaboration would be compromised, and one of the perceived primary tools for dealing with the risk thought to be connected to early childhood, would be weakened.

Spaces of contact between parents and professionals (when parents are picking up their child, at meetings, or through digital communication) can be conceived of as arenas of trust work. Performing trustworthiness and trustfulness in these arenas is not the same as trust. As we have argued using Løgstrup,⁶⁸ trust emerges spontaneously in relationships in normative ordered practices. But the more or less conscious performance of trustworthiness and trustfulness are irrevocably connected to trust. While trust may be a default approach to the collaborative relationship, distrust springs from the lack of what is conceived of as appropriate behavior. It also clearly springs from previous experience or from preformed conceptions based on available discourses in the practice.

This also means that there are unequal possibilities to live up to the norms of trustworthy actions, as well as unequal power to define what constitutes appropriate actions. For instance, migrant parents may have less ideal conditions in which to live up to the norms of the practice. For example, they may not have the language skills necessary to participate meaningfully in parents' meetings, the economic resources to send adequate clothing in changing weather conditions, or the like.⁶⁹ This means that they may not always perform in ways that are recognized by the professionals as trustworthy — a perception that, clearly, can overlook the actual care and concern those parents have for their child. Parents, on the other hand, have the power to remove their child from daycare, if their trust disappears. However, the power to do so is also unequal and closely connected to the socioeconomic status of the parents. If they do not have an alternative, they may persist with the available option, but *not* because they have trust in it.

Mutual trust can be strong or weak or can disappear entirely, giving way to distrust. This is a dynamic phenomenon, in which trust emerges through participation in practices and might change in time. As such, it must not be conceived in terms of stable or quantifiable “amounts” of trust. As the practice demands trust (conceived of as a way to manage risk connected to ECE), there

67. Max van Manen, *The Tact of Teaching: The Meaning of Pedagogical Thoughtfulness* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

68. Løgstrup, *Norm og Spontaneitet*.

69. Matthiesen, “The Becoming and Changing of Parenthood.”

seems to be a constant wariness on the part of both professionals and parents. It may be the case that practices that *demand* trust create an enhanced need for more conscious performances of trustworthiness and trustfulness. A parent who experiences that professionals do not trust her may increasingly intentionally and reflectively try to perform in ways that are recognized as trust-worthy in an attempt to create trust. For instance, ethnic minority parents seem to consciously strive to perform in ways that are recognized as adequate.⁷⁰ Paradoxically, this exaggerated effort may in fact quench the possibility for spontaneous trust, as the focus of interactions become directed toward monitoring one's own behavior, striving to live up to the conventions of the normative order, rather than being directed toward the other. As Løgstrup writes, "The sovereign expressions of life [i.e., trust] are engulfed by conformity, are drowned in a life where the one individual imitates the other."⁷¹ Trust may thus be undermined by the conscious attempts to perform in ways that are recognized by others as trustworthy.

CONCLUSION

We have argued that early childhood education and care has, in conventional Western society, become a critical site of investment and risk management, based on the cultural narrative that early childhood development is significantly linked with life success.⁷² This means that the collaboration between home and daycare is increasingly considered a crucial practice for reducing the precarious nature of early childhood. This creates a mutual trust imperative; parents *must* trust the daycare professionals and the professionals *must* trust the parents in order for the collaborative relationship to succeed. However, certain ways of participating in the practice of collaboration are considered signs of trustworthiness while others are not, resulting in an unequal division of who is trusted and who is not. And, as we have seen, this dynamic can be exacerbated in contexts of strong cultural difference, blind spots, and bias.

We have also argued that we cannot control trust. Instead, it comes to us in relations. This creates a paradox, where parents and professionals may attempt to perform both trustworthiness and trustfulness in order to live up to the trust imperative, which draws their attention to their own performativity and evaluation of the other. But the spontaneous and sovereign experience of trust emerges relationally in ways that draw one out of oneself and into the practice, engaging the subject in a way that changes her, as her attention is drawn outward. Trust goes unnoticed; it is an unquestioned background condition. Consequently, the *demand* to trust, drawing the attention to

70. Katrien Van Laere, Mieke Van Houtte, and Michel Vandenbroeck, "Would It Really Matter? The Democratic and Caring Deficit in Parental Involvement," *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 26, no. 2 (2016): 187–200.

71. Løgstrup, *Beyond the Ethical Demand*, 54.

72. Furedi, *Paranoid Parenting*.

one's performativity of trustworthiness and trustfulness, may very well impede spontaneous trust.

In conclusion, we suggest that every study of trust in educational practice should therefore ask the following questions:

1. What is the normative order of the practice?
2. What are the evidential signs of reliability regarding both the basic and the competency dimension of trust?
3. In which ways do parents and professionals perform trustworthiness and trustfulness? Which actions and interpretations give way to distrust?
4. What are the conditions for being recognized by others as trustworthy? Which inequalities are there in these conditions?