“You can’t play with us”
Intervention strategies to prevent and reduce bullying in preschools
A systematic literature review

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ABSTRACT

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Main title “You can’t play with us”: Intervention strategies to prevent and reduce bullying in preschools

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Bullying is a quite common problem. “You can’t play with us” or “we can only be two in this game” are examples on how bullying can present itself in a preschool environment. Bullying in preschools is a fairly new research field and the majority of the research done around interventions related to bullying is done on children over the age of six. Therefore the aim with this study was to identify interventions that are used or recommended in preschools to support children in need of special support in relation to bullying. Ten articles were identified through a systematic literature review. The result show that both the child who is being bullied and the child who bullies are seen as children in need of special support, both of these children need help with interactions. The identified interventions proved that bullying is created by a situation in a specific context; no specific child is the problem and therefore interventions can be directed at different levels. Furthermore, the teacher and the environment were seen as two key factors when it comes to interventions.

Keywords: bullying, preschool, intervention, prevention, environment, teacher’s role
Table of Content

1 Introduction..........................................................................................................................1
  1.1 Structure of this systematic literature review.................................................................2
  1.2 Aim.................................................................................................................................2
  1.3 Research questions.........................................................................................................2
  1.4 Key concepts................................................................................................................2
    1.4.1 Bullying....................................................................................................................2
    1.4.2 Children in need of special support..........................................................................3
    1.4.3 Environment and context........................................................................................3
    1.4.4 Prevention, promotion and risk.................................................................................3
    1.4.5 Intervention..............................................................................................................4
2 Theoretical foundations......................................................................................................4
  2.1 Teacher’s role................................................................................................................5
  2.2 Environment’s role.........................................................................................................6
3 Method................................................................................................................................7
  3.1 Pre-understanding.........................................................................................................7
  3.2 Search procedure..........................................................................................................7
  3.3 Selection process..........................................................................................................9
    3.3.1 Title and abstract screening ....................................................................................9
    3.3.2 Full text screening..................................................................................................10
  3.4 Quality assessment........................................................................................................11
  3.5 Data extraction.............................................................................................................11
4 Results................................................................................................................................11
  4.1 Description of the interventions ..................................................................................12
  4.2 Interventions directed towards the individual child......................................................13
  4.3 Interventions directed towards the group......................................................................14
  4.4 Interventions directed towards the environment..........................................................16
5 Discussion..........................................................................................................................18
  5.1 Interventions................................................................................................................18
    5.1.1 Role models............................................................................................................19
    5.1.2 Mentality................................................................................................................20
    5.1.3 Talking about bullying...........................................................................................20
    5.1.4 Home-preschool relationship..................................................................................20
    5.1.5 Anti-bullying plans..................................................................................................20
    5.1.6 Interventions directed at environment.....................................................................21
  5.2 Limitations ....................................................................................................................21
1 Introduction

In Sweden many children start preschool\(^1\) at the age of one for at least 15 hours per week. A total of 75.9 percent of children aged 1-3 years old and 94.0 percent of children aged 4-5 years old were enrolled in a preschool program 2015 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2017a). The preschool system in Sweden is developed and has its own curriculum (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016). Swedish preschools are relatively equal and go well with UNESCO’s goal to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO, 2017). There is a specific school law in the Swedish Code of Statutes (SFS, 2010:800), that includes the preschool and gives directives on the legislative the preschool is bound to. However, even though conditions for children who attend preschools in Sweden are relatively good and the Swedish preschool system is built on equality with a strong set of fundamental values (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016), there are behaviours (e.g. bullying) among children that creates a concern and prove that there is a need for support in the interaction between children.

“You can’t play with us”, “we can only be two in this game” or when one child repeatedly is left without a friend to hold with when going on excursion is examples on how bullying can be seen among preschool children. Bullying is quite common; twenty percent of Swedish school aged children have reported that they have been exposed to bullying during the past year (Friends, 2017a). Unfortunately there are no numbers to be found (thus far) how common bullying is among children under the age of six. However, social hierarchies start to form at the age of 3 (Macintyre, 2009). Even though Sweden has anti-bullying plans and a curriculum that encourage children’s compassion and empathy for the situation of others, bullying behavior still occurs and is seen in early ages. Which imply that the question of how teachers should act to prevent or reduce bullying from appearing, still remains. The majority of the studies that have been done around intervention and prevention related to bullying are done among school aged children; preschools tend to be left in the backseat.

Bullying in preschools is a relatively new phenomenon to research. Therefore, the focus mainly is on how bullying presents itself among preschool children (Macintyre, 2009; Repo & Sajaniemi, 2015). Research on interventions taken in preschools to prevent or reduce bullying in preschools and evaluation of the interventions are a new research area. This systematic literature review will therefore identify interventions that are used or recommended in preschools to prevent or reduce bullying situations.

\(^1\) Preschools in this thesis are defined as educational activities for enrolled children aged 1-5 years old. Preschool will be used as a word for all educational activities including childcare, kindergarten or similar programs.
1.1 Structure of this systematic literature review

First the aim with this review will be presented as well as research questions. Then key concepts that are relevant in relation to the aim will be defined (1.3). Thereafter theoretical foundations will be presented (2) with subcategories of teacher’s role (2.1) and the environment’s role (2.2). The next section (3) contains the data gathering and the analysis process. As section 4 the result from the data analysis will be presented. Section 5 contains a discussion and also includes subcategory of limitations (5.2) and future research (5.3).

1.2 Aim

The aim of this systematic literature review was to identify interventions that are used or recommended in preschools to support children in need of special support in relation to bullying.

1.3 Research questions

- How are the interventions described?
- How are the interventions directed; towards the individual child, the child group or the environment?

1.4 Key concepts

In the next section key concepts that are used in this systematic literature review will be defined. The concept is bullying (1.4.1); children in need of special support (1.4.2); environment and context (1.4.3); prevention, promotion and risk (1.4.4) and intervention (1.4.5).

1.4.1 Bullying

Bullying is when a child is exposed to negative actions, repeatedly and over time, from one or more other children (Olweus, 1993). The harm or discomfort can be either direct (e.g. physical or verbal) or indirect (e.g. social ostracism) (NE, 2017a). Bullying always implies a certain imbalance of power where the victim has difficulties to defend him- or herself against the one who is attacking (NE, 2017a; Olweus, 2003). Children that bullies occasionally do it in an effort to gain status (Macintyre, 2009). Furthermore a child that bullies may feel inferior, uncertain or afraid (BRIS, 2017). The child that is being bullied is often picked on for very trivial or no reasons at all (Macintyre, 2009). Social hierarchies’ start to form at the age of 3, where some children may be more popular than others to play with (2009). At the age of 4 bullying behavior may appear where some children deliberately exclude or tease other children (2009). Bullying in a physical way (e.g. pushing, hitting and biting) is not to be confused with early childhood developmental stages, bullying is when a behavior is repeatedly seen against a specific child. To understand a situation where bullying exists, the situation needs to be examined from all perspectives (individual, group, organisation and society) and also look for invisible rules that may apply on different levels (Friends, 2017b).
1.4.2 Children in need of special support
In this systematic literature review the concept of children in need of special support is founded in systems theory, were everything (e.g. an interaction) is related to something else (Öquist, 2008). Systems theory views the entirety as a starting point, rather than examining the individual parts as separate components (2008). A system not only functions in relation to different components, but also in relation to different contexts (2008). In systems theory it is not a matter of cause and effect, but rather a circle in which everything goes around. In this review the concept of children in need of special support is viewed as a social construction, in which the need is related to both the child’s characteristics (e.g. the individual) and the characteristics of the childcare setting (e.g. the environment) (Mann, McCartney, & Park, 2007; Maxwell, 2007; Sandberg, Lillvist, Eriksson, Äkesson & Granlund, 2010). Therefore the need is seen as related to a specific context, which means that the need may not be seen in another context. Thus, difficulties can be temporary and almost all children may need support during some period of their life (Sandberg et al., 2010; The National Board of Health and Welfare, 1997). Regarding bullying it is common to focus on the child who is the victim of the bullying, but the child who is the bully is also in need of support (BRIS, 2017).

1.4.3 Environment and context
In this review environment is defined as the physical, psychological and social conditions that influences the life of an individual (Merriam-Webster, 2017a; NE, 2017b). The environment is seen as the surrounding in an everyday setting; for example environment can be the furnishing of premises in the preschool or the child group composition. Environment is external to the individual and is based on location and structures (both physical and social) (Batorowicz, King, Mishra & Missiuna, 2016). Interventions that promote children’s well-being can focus on the modification or enhancement of the physical, social or psychological environment (World health organization, 2007).

Context is defined as the interrelated conditions within which something exists or occurs, it is bound to a specific setting or moment (e.g. the situation in which something happens) and involves some sort of interplay or linguistic action (Merriam-Webster, 2017b; NE, 2017c). Context is a setting that includes activity, people, place, objects and time (Batorowicz et al, 2016; Inmms, Granlund, Wilson, Steenbergen, Rosenbaum & Gordon, 2017). Context is related to people’s experiences and involves physical and social dimensions (Batorowicz et al, 2016). It can refer to connections or relationships between people within a shared activity or place (2016).

1.4.4 Prevention, promotion and risk
To better understand where interventions should occur, it is necessary to address potential risk factors. A risk factor is something that will increase the probability of a negative outcome (NE, 2017d). For interventions, the number of risk factors can be more important than the individual the risk factors themselves (Garbarino & Ganzel, 2000; Sameroff & Fiese, 2000). Children to whom many risk factors are connected may be in need of special support to reduce those risk factors (Osofsky & Thompson, 2000).
the risk factor is to the child, the more the risk factor can impact the child. Risk factors related to development can be biological risks, socio-cultural risks and environmental risks (Garbarino & Ganzel, 2000). Bullying is a serious risk factor and negatively affects both the bully and the victim; it is likely that this behavior will impact the development of these children in a negative way (Eriksson, Lindberg, Flygare & Daneback, 2002; Rigby, 2003; Sourander, Ronning, Brunstein-Klomek, Gyllenberg, Kumpulainen, Niemelä & Helenius, 2009).

Preventive factors work toward preventing undesirable physical or psychological effects by identifying and retreating risk factors (Sameroff, & Fiese, 2000). Promotion factors on the other hand can be used without a risk factor being involved. For example buying a lottery ticket is an action of promotion (play to win), while taking a flu shot is a preventive action because there is a risk involved (play to not lose) (Halvorson & Higgins, 2013). In preschool, an action of promotion could be to prepare the furnishing in the preschool in a conscious pedagogical way that invites different kinds of play before the new child group arrives. A preventive action on the other hand could be to change the current furnishing in the preschool, if the teacher noticed a risk related to the environment that could lead to for example social exclusion in the child group.

1.4.5 Intervention

Intervention can be seen as a collective term of measures including both prevention and treatment (NE, 2017e), it can also include interference in a conflict with peacekeeping purposes (NE, 2016f). Dunst, Trivette and Deal (1988) have define interventions as “provision of support [...] from members of a family's informal and formal social network that either directly or indirectly influenced child, parent, and family functioning” (p. 5). The first step in an intervention should be to reduce the impact of risk factors (Wolery, 2000). Thereafter intervention activities should promote opportunity factors (2000). In some cases interventions are needed on a political or society level to reduce risk factors and promote opportunities (2000).

Interventions in preschool settings can be on an individual-, group- or environment level. Sometimes the intervention is directed at changes in the environment, but many times the outcome affects the individual child since the three levels are related to one another.

2 Theoretical foundations

In this section the theoretical foundations create a framework for this review. The foundations are based on theories about the role teacher’s and the environment play in a preschool setting.

In Sweden preschools are characterized by a holistic child perspective, which means that the preschool examines its own environment as well as the individual child to create the best possible learning opportunities (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016). It is strongly believed that a child’s need of special
support is always bound to the context and not to an attribute of the child; this need for support is related to how the child interacts with the teacher and the environment in the preschool. This means, for example, that a child may need support in their development in one environment but not in another (2017b).

2.1 Teacher’s role

The teacher is responsible for ensuring that the goals of the curriculum are achieved and that the preschool promotes every child’s development and learning (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2017b). In the teacher’s profession lays to determine how teaching is best conducted in relation to a specific child group (2017b). In article two of the Convention on the rights of the child (United Nations General Assembly, 1989) it is stated that every child shall have the same rights and shall be protected against discrimination. According to the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) “every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs” (p. viii) and in preschools it is the teacher’s job, as a professional, to inspire and raise each child’s differences as assets.

Bullying is a phenomenon and from a relational perspective, phenomena are at least two-tailed and can only be understood in relation to each other (von Wright, 2002). When we want to understand another person we cannot treat that person as an isolated being, rather we need to understand her and her actions in relation to the present context (2002). Questions and problems are managed as one phenomenon instead of single actions, behaviors or characteristics linked to individuals. For example from a relational perspective, one could say that “I’m not dyslexic, but I have dyslexia” where the focus is on a phenomenon that clearly emerges in some situations more than in others (2002). It is the same with problems that appears in a preschool; a child can have a problem but he or she is not the problem (Jenner, 2004). This is in accordance with the general advice by the Swedish National Agency for Education (2017b), which has stated that a child’s need of special support is always bound to the context and it is not an attribute of the child. Many children face difficulties, occasionally during their preschool years, and can be in need of special support for a short- or long period of time (2017b).

It is the teacher’s responsibility to systematically evaluate the daily work in preschool to improve the learning situations and to ensure that the necessary interventions are taken (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2017b). It is important that the work done by the teacher is followed up on and evaluated regularly, especially to verify that the desired outcome was achieved (2017b). It is also important that a relationship exist between the home environment and the preschool (2017b).

When focusing on the teacher’s role, the subject of power occasionally arises. Every relationship contains a certain amount of power (Einarsson, 2009). Power is not inherent; it is bound to the context. An individual’s position, the roles of all relevant actors, the context and dependency determine the power dynamic (Einarsson, 2009; Stensmo, 2007). Language, both verbal and body language, is an influencing factor (Einarsson, 2009). Furthermore, the relationship between a teacher and a student is an asymmetrical
relation that never can be equal (Stigsdotter Ekberg, 2010). Part of a teacher’s power originates from the fact that the teacher was formally selected (e.g. holds a formal position in a hierarchy) and also because he/she is an adult which the children are not (Irisdotter Aldenmyr, Gronlien Zetterqvist, & Paulin, 2009; Maltén, 2000).

“All children shall be able to experience the satisfaction that comes from making progress, overcome difficulties and being an asset to the group” [authors translation] (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2017b, p. 22). Children’s identities and self-esteem are developed in the interplay between adults and other children. Therefore it is important for an individual child that conditions are created to be included in relationships with other children (2017b). There are different ways to create situations that develops social interaction; one way is to use structured play were everyone can participate (Pramling Samuelsson & Sheridan, 2006). By actively participating in a play situation the teacher can support children in their development of the abilities necessary to maintain the play (2006). During play (both “free” and “structured” play) children explore, processing experiences and impressions and communicates with others (2006). Furthermore they develop and train their ability to interact with others and learn to follow social rules that exists within a group (2006).

2.2 Environment’s role

The design of the environment plays a significant role in the knowledge development of the children in a preschool (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2017b). The environment’s effect is important for all children in preschools, but especially for children that are in need of special support (2017b). If the environment is not adjusted to suit the children or if there is not enough space, problems can arise. The environment’s effect in a learning context is not a new phenomenon; many didactical thinkers have already noted its importance. For example Maria Montessori created her theory about children’s learning based on three important factors; the environment, the teacher and freedom (Signert, 2004). According to Montessori the environment should be adjusted according to the children’s development stages and needs, to provide the children with the possibility to learn and the freedom to manage as much as possible by themselves. The teacher should be a part of the prepared environment and should develop a sense to know when she is needed (2004).

In summary this systematic literature review views its theoretical foundations from a relational perspective, were a phenomenon (bullying) cannot be seen as a single action related to one individual. Instead it viewed holistically, where the interaction or situation in a specific context creates a risk factor or an action. Therefore, interventions can occur on different levels (individual, group and environment), depending on how one examines the situation. Moreover, this is related to special support and the teacher’s view of where the problem lays and therefore also where the intervention should occur.
3 Method

A systematic literature review was performed, identifying relevant studies on this topic. A scientific methodology was used to assess the quality of different studies and summarize the results (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2011). A systematic literature review provides a systematic transparent gathering of the findings and appraises the results on a specific topic, with the aim of minimizing bias associated with different types of studies (2011). By using inclusion and exclusion criteria on both the abstract- and full-text levels (Lyngegård, Donohue, Bornman, Granlund, & Huus, 2013), studies were selected for this systematic literature review.

3.1 Pre-understanding

According to Nyström and Dahlberg (2001), an individual’s pre-understanding can influence the way in which information is understood. Though awareness, a researcher can attempt to control this by avoiding projective interpretations. The author of this paper has a background in teaching at preschools and therefore also to some extent knowledge about intervention strategies against bullying used in Swedish preschools.

3.2 Search procedure

The database search for this systematic literature review was performed in February 2017 using ERIC, ProQuest Central, Medline, CINAHL and Taylor & Francis Online. ERIC, ProQuest Central and Taylor & Francis Online integrate information from the field of education; ProQuest Central also integrates information from the field of social science. Medline and CINAHL integrate information from the field of psychology. Table 1 presents a flowchart of the search procedure. In accordance with Jesson, Matheson and Lacey (2011) inclusion and exclusion criteria were established in relation to this systematic literature review’s aim and research questions (Table 2). The databases were search using search words related to this study.
Many pre-searches were performed using different combinations of words, with very little or way too many results (either 2 articles or 5000+). Thesauruses where used during the pre-searches, but to no avail. After the pre-searches were conducted, the decision was made to use the same combination of words in all databases to obtain the most relevant result. In all database searches the criteria for this systematic literature review were inputted using the advanced search tool before starting the search and included: “peer reviewed”, “full text”, “English” (language) and “January 2012 to February 2017” (articles published between these dates). This meant that of the articles found during the search procedure, the database had already made its selection based on those criteria’s to obtain the most relevant search result.

All five databases were searched using the advanced search tool. Several of the inclusion and exclusion criteria were inputted into the advanced search program and thereafter the search was performed using
the words “bullying AND (preschool OR childcare) AND (intervention OR prevention)”. A total of 8 articles were found in ERIC, 922 articles were found in ProQuest Central, 5 articles in Medline, 2 articles in CINAHL and 586 articles in Taylor & Francis Online.

Table 2

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for title, abstract and full-text screening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>Adults, children &gt;6y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Children age 1-6 years old</td>
<td>After school care for 6 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preschool</td>
<td>Not including the focus words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Not primary, secondary or high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bullying</td>
<td>Not primary, secondary or high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Intervention or prevention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preschool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publication type</strong></td>
<td>Abstract, books, thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Article</td>
<td>Not published in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peer reviewed</td>
<td>Published outside the inclusion dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Published in English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Published from January 2012 until February 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Full text available for free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study design</strong></td>
<td>Systematic literature reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Empirical studies</td>
<td>Articles not focusing on intervention in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Theoretical articles/theoretical frameworks</td>
<td>in relation to bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- focusing supportive intervention aiming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- to support children in need of special</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- support in relation to bullying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Selection process

The number of articles retrieved from the database search totaled 1523 of which 144 were duplicates and thus were excluded. Therefore, 1379 articles were used in the selection process. In the first step the articles were screened based on their title and their abstract. If the article was relevant, it was selected for the second step. In cases in which the title or abstract did not provide information that made it relevant for this systematic literature review, the full text was quickly screened to determine the article’s relevance. Table 1 displays the flowchart of this process.

3.3.1 Title and abstract screening

The title and abstract screening was performed on all 1379 articles. The abstract was read directly in ERIC, ProQuest Central, Medline, CINAHL or Taylor & Francis Online. When the title exhibited an exclusion criteria (e.g. preventing bullying among secondary school children), the abstract was not read since the title indicated that the articles was not relevant for this systematic literature review. The majority of the articles were excluded due to the sample used; many of the articles found concerned primary, secondary or high school children not preschool or childcare children. Furthermore, many of the articles related to preschools do not concern bullying. Instead, they include interventions strategies for other concerns related
to preschool aged children (e.g. intervention strategies for obesity or low social economic status). Several of the articles found focus on preschool teacher and their work situation (e.g. adult bullying). Therefore 1359 were excluded, which left the result of 20 articles for the next step; full text screening.

3.3.2 **Full text screening**
A full text screening of 20 articles was performed using a protocol (see Appendix A). Two conditions for inclusion of an article were studied closely in this stage; age group and intervention or prevention strategies towards bullying. Ten articles were excluded due to not providing information of intervention or prevention strategies for bullying, not focusing on preschool intervention or not focusing on preschool aged children. Three articles did not contain a clear method part, but all of them contained intervention strategies towards bullying in preschools. After consideration the decision was made to include the articles in this study as theoretical articles, since all three were published in peer reviewed scientific journals and contributed significantly to this systematic literature review.

During the full text screening a hand search was done by going through the references of five articles. This search resulted in five more articles that were added to the full text screening. However after the screening process all five of the hand searched articles was excluded due to the exclusion criteria of not contain intervention or prevention strategies towards bullying in preschools. This meant that after the full text screening was done, ten articles (Table 3) were used for the data analysis.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retrieved Study</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>INS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levine &amp; Tamburrino (2013)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostrov et al. (2015)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raisor &amp; Thompson (2014)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith-Bonahue et al. (2015)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rinaldo Priolo Filho et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repo &amp; Sajaniemi (2015)</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman (2013)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunamo et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalti (2016)</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Söderström &amp; Löfdahl Hultman (2016)</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All studies were done on preschool aged children and in preschool settings. The studies were from the United States (five), Finland (two), Brazil (one), Greece (one) and Sweden (one). In all articles intervention strategies could be seen; in the majority of the articles more than one strategy was presented. In several of
the articles interventions were directed toward all three levels, while in other articles they were only directed towards one.

3.4 Quality assessment

In addition to the inclusion criteria for this study, a protocol (see Appendix B) for quality assessment was used for all articles. The protocol was based on COREQ (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007) which is a quality assessment tool for qualitative studies and the quantitative research assessment tool (CCEERC, 2013) for quantitative studies. “The criteria included in the checklist can help researchers to report important aspects of [...] study methods, context of the study, findings, analysis and interpretations” (Tong et al., 2007, p. 356). The protocol was adjusted and thus, it contained both assessment checklists. For each of the 17 items on the quality assessment protocol, one quality point was assigned for conforming or reporting the requirement. The following scale was used: 15-17 points = high, 12 to 14 points = medium, 0-11 points = low. Two of the articles were rated high according to the quality points scale (article II and V), five were rated medium (article III, VII, VIII, IX and X) and three were rated low (article I, III and IV). No articles were excluded after the quality assessment due to the limited number of selected articles for the data analysis.

3.5 Data extraction

Data was extracted using a data extraction tool (full text protocol, see appendix A). Information such as authors’ name, title, year of publication and country of publication were extracted from the article. Details about the study design, setting, measurement tools and sample were also extracted. Information about interventions towards bullying in preschools was obtained, as well as preventive steps that were taken against bullying. An analysis was performed during and after the data extraction process.

4 Results

The aim of this systematic literature review was to identify interventions that have been used or recommended in preschools to support children in need of special support in relation to bullying. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 3) ten articles were used for answering the research questions on how the interventions are described and how they are directed. In this section the result will be are presented in four sections. In the first section (4.1) the question of how interventions are described is answered. The next section (4.2) presents interventions aimed at individual children. Section 4.3 explores interventions aimed at the entire child group and section 4.4 explores interventions aimed at the environment. Section 4.2-4.4 will start with a table with an overview of the interventions, after each table follows by a written section.
4.1 Description of the interventions

Interventions are described in all of the articles that were included in this systematic literature review. The majority of the articles described interventions directed towards both the child who is bullied and the bully. It has been revealed that interventions can occur in the environment around the child group and examples on how to adjust the environment towards the child group’s specific needs were delineated in several of the articles (Table 5). Early in the full text screening process it became clear that all the articles recognized that the teacher is a key factor in interventions, since he/she has significant influence on both the children and the environment in the preschool.

The description of how to conduct a specific intervention varied depending on the article. A number of the interventions suggested in the articles was quite vague and diffuse, which the authors of article X have indicated to be a weakness since this means that there was no clear strategy for how to actually intervene in a bullying situation. The same authors further noted the importance of not losing the child’s perspective, which they found to be quite common when interventions were planned and executed. These two problems (vague descriptions and lack of the child’s perspective) were not mentioned in the other studies. However, in article IX the author acknowledges concern when the teacher is not acting in the child best interests. A possible explanation as to why this was only mentioned in two articles may be that the remaining eight articles described specific and direct interventions in a way that could be seen as didactic or method of action, while article X focused solely on the implementation of an action plan and the author of article IX discussed many negative interventions.

In nine of the ten articles (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, X), the interventions were described in a positive manner to help individual children and/or the child group. In these articles, the expected outcome of the intervention was a more harmonized and encouraging child group. In one article (IX) however, the interventions were described negatively and offered very little support towards the victim. In nine of ten articles (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, X) it was revealed that no one, especially not the children themselves, was to blame for the occurrence of a bullying situation. However, one article (IX) exhibited victim blaming tendencies. The author explains this as a lack of implemented directives from the government and lack of knowledge on how the teacher should act as a professional, and not make decisions only based on her/his personal beliefs when managing bullying situations.

In eight of ten articles (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII) interventions were mainly to reduce bullying, however neither promotion nor prevention were mentioned as a main factor when describing the interventions. The majority of interventions were described in a way that could just as likely prevent bullying situations before they occur (e.g. the use of I-messages, encourage positive behavior, use of structured play where everyone can participate). Moreover, many of the interventions described in the articles focus on strengthening social interactions or the social climate that reflects a child group, which can make the articles useful in many different situations and daily interactions in a preschool. One article (VII) described the
importance of not only reducing bullying, but also preventing exclusion for especially the bully. The authors of the article provided an example where bully is punished with isolation (e.g. have to sit by him/her self). The authors believes this to be negative interaction that signalizes to both that child that bullies and the other children in the group that it is “okay” not to include everyone. The authors of article VI addresses (as do many of the other articles) the belief teachers are role models and that their actions and behaviors transmit messages to the children on how to behave.

4.2 Interventions directed towards the individual child

In this section, the interventions towards the individual child are presented in Table 3, with the type of intervention on the left side and identification number of the study (INS) at the top (from left to right).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of intervention: Individual level</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge children when they use kind words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage positive behavior</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-messages</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace journals in pictures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage asking for help from a friend or a teacher</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use positive self-talk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing preschool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4 illustrates, four articles (I, III, IV, V) described interventions that directly concerned the individual child. In three articles (I, IV, V) the intervention concerned the child that are bullying, mainly with the purpose of strengthening the child’s social skills and encourage positive social interactions (e.g. acknowledge and encourage positive behavior and the use of kind words). Two articles (I, III) described interventions focused on the child who was bullied. These interventions encouraged the use of I-messages\(^2\), use of peacekeeping journals\(^3\) in which the child can express her/his feelings through pictures.

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\(^2\) Example of I-message: "I feel sad when you hit me, because it hurts can you please stop hitting me”. The words that are not bolded change depending on situation.

\(^3\) A book where the child can express its feelings through pictures or text.
encouraging the child to ask for help from a friend or adult, or encouraging the child to use positive self-talk⁴. As a last solution one article (III) suggested that the child who is bullied change preschools.

In one article (IV) teachers occasionally directly asked the bully to sit by him-/herself as a punishment for an action. This action was not viewed as positive by the authors, since it excluded the child who bullies when the child was not invited to participate again; there was no follow up or reconnection between the child and the teacher.

Three articles (I, III, V) revealed that the methods used for interventions on the individual level are methods that teachers can use when communicating with the children (e.g. I-messages), by part in being a role model for positive social behavior. Furthermore several strategies (e.g. asking a friend for help) can be used to create a more positive climate in the child group were children feel comfortable around each other (as a promotion strategy).

### 4.3 Interventions directed towards the group

In this section the interventions towards the child group are presented in Table 5, with the type of intervention on the left side and identification number of the study (INS) at the top (from left to right).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of intervention: Group level</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model pro-social strategies for the children</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of social dynamics and relationships in the child group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model respect and affection to everyone in the group with the outcome of more positive play (positive relationship teacher – child group)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help children see the best in each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage children to solve their own social issues</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ Example of positive self-talk: “I like my new glasses”.
Use activities that encourage corporation | X |
Encourage polite language | X |
Discuss bullying in the child group | X | X | X | X |
Acknowledge and encourage positive behavior in the group | X | X | X |
Mediate interactions between children | X | X |
Encourage goal behavior | X |

As illustrated by Table 5, eight articles (I, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, X) suggested interventions on the group level. Interventions on this level were directed toward more than one child or towards the entire child group; not only towards the child who was bullied or the bully. The interventions that were suggested could be used to both prevent and reduce bullying. The common factor among the suggested interventions on this level is the focus on the teacher and her/his actions towards the child group. In the majority of the articles the teacher played a central role in all interventions.

Article IX did not suggest interventions on group level, although the article did slightly mention intervention strategies on this level. However, these interventions resulted in “blame the victim” (a negative outcome). In the article teachers suggested that the victim change her/his behavior (e.g. by not bringing toys to the preschool since it can provoke the other children) or the teacher would inform the parents but only to let them know that they had to do something to prevent the mockery. The same article (IX) also indicated that teachers would not interfere if they recognized signs of social exclusion in their child group, since it (as above) is seen as the child’s own fault. The author of the article has further explained that these teachers’ actions, due to the lack of official instructions provided in the country the study was conducted in, were the result of her/his personal beliefs and instincts reflect.

Many of the articles (III, IV, V, VI, X) encouraged the teacher to model pro-social strategies and to provide the children with pro-social strategies and tools (article III, IV, VIII) (e.g. the teacher exhibits positive social interactions and is a role model for the children). Two articles (IV, VIII) mentioned the importance of the teacher knowing the social dynamics and relationships within the child group to notice children who are at risk and therefore be able to implement preventive strategies as soon as possible. Three articles (I, III, V) suggested acknowledging and encouraging positive behavior in the group; meanwhile only one article (VII) encouraged goal behavior5.

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5 Example of goal behavior: Do a “high five” with the child when the child has achieved a goal that was set.
Four articles (III, IV, VI, X) indicated the importance of a positive relationship between the teacher and the child group, where the teacher model respects and holds affection for everyone in the group to achieve more positive play between the children. One article (IV) suggested using activities that encourage corporation. This is close related to what one article (IV) suggested, which is that the teacher helps children see the best in each other and sometimes put a positive spin to a child’s behavior. For example if a child deliberately destroys something another child has build, the teacher can say “I believe M wants to play with you” instead of blaming the child and therefore can act as a mediator.

Two articles (V, VIII) suggested that the teacher should mediate interactions between the children. Three articles (I, III, IV) suggested that the teacher should encourage children to solve their own social issues; e.g. step 1: “Please stop”, step 2: “Stop or I’ll tell”, step 3: tell a teacher. Four articles (I, III, VII, VIII) recommended discussing bullying in the child group and one article (IV) discussed the importance of encourage polite language. Furthermore, the importance of teaching tolerance and acceptance of one another was emphasized. Although the suggested interventions were formulated differently in the articles, a common factor can be perceived. The importance of the teacher having time and the ability to address and recognize conflicts in the child group to help children cope with their emotions and provide them with tools to tackle conflicts in a positive way.

4.4 Interventions directed towards the environment

The interventions towards the environment are presented in Table 6, with the type of intervention on the left side and identification number of the study (INS) at the top (from left to right).

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of intervention: Environment level</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform families of social rules at the preschool, promote same rules at home if possible</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use routines to built community and respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create environments that allow or limitative to number of participants in the room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of polite language: “I would like to play by myself, please” instead of saying “I don’t want to play with you!”
Use structured play where everyone can participate on a regular basis | X | X | X | X | X

Use picture books. | X | X | X | X | X

Daily check-in | X

Monitoring the room during free-play / closer supervision | X | X

Use of drama | X | X

Class-room rules against bullying | X

Create an anti-bullying curriculum / action plan | X | X | X

Create availability of materials | X

Common rules among teachers on how to intervene | X

Look at how adults norms and values are expressed in practice | X

As Table 6 indicates, eight articles (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, X) suggested interventions directed at the environment in the preschool. Three articles (III, IV, X) recommended to inform families of social rules at the preschool and for the families to promote the same rules at home if possible. This was suggested so that the children can have a sense of consensus, especially if one of them struggles with social interactions. Four articles (I, III, IV, VII) recommended using picture books and two articles (II, III) using drama (e.g. puppet show) to discuss and practice with social interactions to create a more positive climate between the children.

Daily routines were suggested by one article (IV), so that children could build community and respect (e.g. a gathering of all the children in the morning). Four articles (I, IV, V, VI) recommended the use of structured play where everyone can participate on a regular basis (e.g. teacher lead play situations). One article (I) also suggested having daily check-in (e.g. a board or a book) for all children in the preschool classroom (a similar routine was suggested for the individual level through the use of peacekeeping journals). One article (III) recommended having classroom rules against bullying, where the children are involved in creating these rules.

As a preventive or reductive step, one article (IV) recommended not using an “every one play”-rule since it can be counterproductive. Instead, the article recommended creating environments that allow or limita-
tive to number of participants in the room, so no one has to hear “we don’t want to play with you” then it is the environment that creates the limitation.

One article (V) mentioned the importance of providing enough materials, to reduce situations in which children feel insecure when conflicts appear over toys. Two articles (I, V) recommended that teachers should monitor the room during free-play (e.g. be present) to reduce social exclusion. One article (X) noted the importance of teachers examining their own norms and values and how they are expressed in practice, since it can affect the children around them.

The articles suggested several interventions that would help educate the teachers in their work against bullying. One article (I) suggested teachers use the internet as a resource for information. Two articles (II, X) suggested providing seminars for teachers to help educate them and discuss different actions that can be taken. Three articles (III, VI, X) recommended creating an anti-bullying curriculum or an action plan. One article (V) noted the importance of having common rules among teachers for how to intervene, which can be related to the action plan.

5 Discussion

In this section, the results are discussed in relation to the theoretical foundations and key concepts. The discussion of the results is split into the following subheadings: interventions as a general discussion in section 5.1 with six areas (section 5.1.1-5.1.6); limitations of the thesis (5.2) and suggestions for future research (5.3).

5.1 Interventions

Nine articles (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, X) suggested interventions that proved that bullying is created by a situation in a specific context; no specific child is the problem. This was a positive surprise, since the theoretical foundations were based on Swedish values and beliefs, while the studied articles mainly were international. Thus, with regard to “who owns the problem”, the articles goes well with Jenner (2004), von Wright (2002) and the general advice of the Swedish National Agency for Education (2017b) in their suggestion of interventions that concern both the child who is bullied and the bully. Moreover, this strategy also makes it possible to change the conditions within a specific context and therefore also prevent or reduce the likelihood that a bullying situation will occur. One article (IX) held another perspective; this article exhibited signs of a “blame the victim” mentality, the author explained this as a lack of implemented directives from the government and lack of knowledge on how the teacher should act as a professionals. In this case, interventions on the political level (Wolery, 2000) may be necessary to reduce risk factors.

In all articles it became clear that the teacher is a key factor in the preschool environment and has the largest influence on how interventions occur and what strategies are used to both prevent and reduce bul-
lying. This was a positive result, since it is in accordance with what the Swedish National Agency for Education (2017b) has advised; it is the teacher’s responsibility to determine how teaching is best conducted in relation to a specific child group.

In two articles (VI, IX), the power that the teacher holds (Irisdotter Aldenmyr et al., 2009; Maltén, 2000; Stigsdotter Ekberg, 2010) was not used in a way that would benefit the children in need of special support. Instead, examples of teachers acting upon personal beliefs (article IX) or excluding bullies (article VI) were provided. Most preschool teachers have likely experienced a situation in which a direct action is necessary at least once. Hopefully, the child that was told to go away would be invited to participate again after a short period of time and would most likely talk with the teacher about why the action was taken. However as mentioned in article VI, the child who was excluded did not get invited to participate again. In other words, there was no follow up or reconnection between the teacher and the child; therefore it was not a positive intervention since the outcome for the child was negative. There is a difference between a consequence and a punishment; in this example not reconnecting with the child made this action a punishment (and not a consequence of a behavior). As was mentioned in all articles, it is important that the teacher should be a role model, which was not the case in this example.

5.1.1 Role models
Role models were mentioned in all of the articles and almost all of the articles suggested that the teacher should be a role-model in her/his actions. It was suggested that teachers for example exhibit affection and respect to everyone, encourage polite language and kind words, help children see the best in one another and teach tolerance towards others. Interventions like the ones mentioned will likely positively affect the interplay and climate within the preschool. Thus, teachers should teach strategies to help children interact with others and communicate in a way that makes others feel good, even if the result of the communication is not as expected. This is most likely what many children in bullying situations need help with, since both the child who is bullied and the bully needs help with social interactions (BRIS, 2017; Macintyre, 2009).

Several articles addressed the importance of mediating or supervising conflicts, which is closely connected to being present in the child group. Although a number of articles suggested encouraging children to solve their own social problems, one should not to leave children alone (rather the opposite) but teach them different strategies to manage conflicts and help them navigate social interactions. The teacher should have the time and ability to address and recognize conflicts in the child group to help them cope with their emotions and provide them with tools to tackle conflicts in a positive way. This can be seen as a way of reducing social risk factors and therefore also working to prevent bullying by encouraging children to talk to each other instead of using other methods.
5.1.2  Mentality
In several articles the mentality within the preschool was mentioned as important, the goal was to create a climate where everyone felt safe and part of the group. Therefore many interventions (e.g. help friends, encourage corporation, classroom rules) were suggested that affect the entire child group and not just the ones in need of special support. These interventions could likely be used preventatively to minimize risk factors.

Concerning mentality, it is worth mentioning that only one article (V/II) suggested interventions that encourage goal behavior (e.g. high five in front of the class). It was a bit of a surprise that only one article suggested this, but it probably depends on how goal behavior is defined. Sweden has goals in preschools that are not directed towards the child, but at the teachers and the methods used for teaching (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016). As the article reasoned it is important to highlight positive things, especially when there is negativity toward a specific child. It may not be goal behavior in the sense of competing with other, but rather reaching goals the child has set for her/him self.

5.1.3  Talking about bullying
One important thing that was seen in the articles was talking about bullying with the children. This can be achieved using books or drama. In the articles this was mentioned as a way of helping children think outside their own perspective, to try to see situations from more than ones perspective with the possible outcome of being more tolerant towards others and their feelings. The use of books and drama can be a method when considering differences as assets and discussing how children are different and have different needs as stated in Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994).

5.1.4  Home-preschool relationship
The home-preschool relationship was mentioned in three articles (III, IV, X) and is an important factor in the Swedish National Agency for Education (2017b). It was not the main focus of this systematic literature review, but since it touches the subject and the same intervention was suggested in three articles it is worth mentioning in this discussion. All three articles suggested informing families of the social rules at the preschool and promoting the same rules at home.

5.1.5  Anti-bullying plans
Anti-bullying plans were suggested in several articles, mainly to create common rules or a strategy on how to manage a situation when it occurred. However, a disadvantage of this in the articles is that many times the plans contain relatively vague strategies and sometimes the child perspective is not considered. Many of the anti-bullying plans studied in article X only contained preventive work and if a bullying situation occurred the plan may not help since the suggested interventions were diffuse and vague. This is an area that could be developed and investigated more closely.
5.1.6 **Interventions directed at environment**

Environment plays a significant role in preschools (Signert, 2004; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2017b) and this review indicated that many interventions focus on changes in the environment. The use of structured play where everyone can participate was suggested as an intervention (article I, IV, V, VI). Structured play can be a good way of including everyone in the play (Pramling Samuelsson & Sheridan, 2006) and making children work in different social constellations to appreciate their differences and other’s strengths.

Another intervention that was suggested was to examine the daily routines, which can encourage corporation and interaction. The daily routines can be seen in the same dimension as the teacher being present and structured play, since they are all connected to how learning situations are created and the preschool environment. Daily routines are a part of the pedagogical thoughts that reflect the teacher’s work (didactics) and are an important part of the preschool environment (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016). Intentional daily routines can reduce many risk situations.

The environment and the pedagogical thought are connected, and risk factors can be reduced if changes are made to the environment (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2017b; World health organization, 2007). For example one article (I) suggested having enough materials to avoid conflicts over toys. Another article (IV) suggested that the environment should have a maximum number of persons allowed in a room; to reduce the risk factor that some children would be denied entry. Thus, the room would be a limitation, which would be the same for everyone (e.g. if four people were in the room then no one else was allowed to come in). In both of these examples, the environment is a pedagogical tool and can therefore also affect the child group that is present in the environment.

5.2 **Limitations**

This systematic literature review was not peer reviewed which is a limitation. Furthermore, only English articles were included; if the study was conducted again, Swedish articles could be included to widen the search results. Since the author of this review is Swedish, Swedish ethics are considered throughout the review, which is a limitation since it affects the discussion.

Moreover, it was difficult to find empirical studies that measure or evaluate bullying in preschools and focus on interventions. Therefore, the inclusion criteria were extended to include theoretical articles focused on supportive intervention aiming to support children in need of special support in relation to bullying. This review could have extended the time-framed dates (e.g. 2000-2017), but as stated in several articles (e.g. Macintyre, 2009; Repo & Sajaniemi, 2015), bullying in preschools is a relatively new phenomenon and therefore not much research has been conducted on the subject.
5.3 Future research

Three areas for future research were shown in this systematic literature review:

A study could be done comparing strategies between countries, since the preschool environment and learning context differ around the world it would be interesting to investigate if an intervention that works preventive and/or reducing against bullying looks the same. In this study it could also be investigated how common bullying is in preschool or childcare environments in different countries.

It would also be interesting to look at the teacher’s perspective of bullying situations in an international study using interviews and observations with the question of “who owns the problem?” or “where lays the problem?”, with a comparison between countries.

The last suggestion for future research is to look closer at anti-bullying plans. How are the plans written (in a preventive or reducing way)? Do they contain concrete strategies or general recommendations? Is the plans enough or do they need to be improved? This study could be done both national and international.

6 Conclusion

In all articles of this systematic literature review, it was illustrated that bullying occurs in preschools and that interventions are needed to both prevent and reduce bullying situations. In the majority of the articles both the child who is bullied and the bully is seen as children in need of special support. Through the suggested interventions it was revealed that the need lays in the interaction, but the intervention could be targeted at different levels. Therefore, the intervention may not be aimed directly at the child but the outcome would likely affect the individual child. Several interventions found, are built on interactions and require that the teacher is present and involved in her/his children. Likewise the teacher is seen as a role model and can influence the child group in a significant way.

The teacher is seen as a key factor in the implementation work of interventions. It is about didactics and how the teacher built routines and creates every day activities that help children in their daily interactions. Besides the teacher, the environment was seen as a factor with significant influence when doing interventions and can contribute to a context where bullying situations easily appear. Therefore, sometimes bullying situations can be avoided if the environment is adjusted in a way that reduce or limits bullying situations from appearing in the first place.

Many of the interventions found in this study can be used to both prevent and reduce bullying, but also as didactic methods in other situations since they benefit the entire child group.
References


http://www.ne.se.bibl.proxy.hj.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/mobbning (March 25, 2017)

http://www.ne.se.proxy.library.ju.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/milj%C3%B6 (April 30, 2017).

http://www.ne.se.proxy.library.ju.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/kontext (April 30, 2017).


Stigsdotter Ekberg, M. (2010). Dom kallar oss värstingar. Om ungas lärande i mötet med skola, socialtjänst och polis [They call us the worst teenagers – a study concerning young people’s process of learning during the interactions with schools, social services and the police]. Växjö: Linneus university press.


# Appendix A

*Protocol for full text screening*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Included? If so, report here:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Section 1: Sample</strong></td>
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<td>Age frame</td>
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<td>Preschool setting</td>
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<td><strong>Section 2: Study information</strong></td>
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<td>Study design</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Purpose/aim</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the article contain information on: Bullying in preschool and intervention or prevention of the topic?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3: Intervention</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are the intervention described?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the intervention preventive?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the intervention on individual level, group level or environment level?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix B

**Protocol quality assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Report data here:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title &amp; Authors:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 1: Study design</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Methodological construct and theory, was the information stated clearly?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Study design (qualitative, quantitative, other)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sampling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Method of approach (e.g. interview, observation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sample size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 2: Data collection</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Setting of data collection</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Presence of non-participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Description of sample</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Interview guide, questionnaire or assessment tool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Control group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ethical considerations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3: Data analysis and findings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Number of data</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Quotations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Data and findings consistent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Variable bias, could the result of the study be due to alternative explanations that are not addressed in the study?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Clarity of major themes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Clarity of minor themes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Based on COREQ (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007) quality assessment tool for qualitative studies and the Quantitative Research Assessment Tool (CCEERC, 2013) for quantitative studies.*
## Appendix C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Aim of research</th>
<th>Focus/Location</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levine &amp; Tamburrino (2013)</td>
<td>Identify bullying and how to it can be reduced</td>
<td>Intervention-programs /USA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostrov et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Prevent bullying</td>
<td>Study of an 8-week intervention program in preschool /USA</td>
<td>Empirical study</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rinaldo Priolo Filho et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Prevent aggressive behavior in preschool</td>
<td>Teacher strategies /Brazil</td>
<td>Empirical study</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeman (2013)</td>
<td>Literature as tool for prevention of bullying</td>
<td>Teacher strategies /USA</td>
<td>Empirical study</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunamo et al. (2015)</td>
<td>Preschool children’s strategies to handle bullying</td>
<td>Children strategies /Finland</td>
<td>Empirical study</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalti (2016)</td>
<td>Preschool teachers knowledge on how to intervene in bullying</td>
<td>Teacher strategies /Greece</td>
<td>Empirical study</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>