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Partner auf Augenhöhe?

Forschungsbefunde zur Zusammenarbeit
von Familien, Kitas und Schulen
mit Blick auf Bildungschancen

Abstract

The opportunities that children and young people in Germany have to access education and participate in society are not equally distributed. If educational inequality is to be reduced effectively, empirical studies are needed on how it arises and becomes entrenched – especially at the intersection of educational institution and family. The ultimate goal of an educational partnership and, consequently, better cooperation with and inclusion of parents in early childhood education and care (ECEC) centers and schools is to improve children’s educational chances. That is the ideal, yet it has been the subject of very little research, especially in Germany. The empirical understanding of partnership, parental participation and cooperation is thus limited. This book is designed to rectify that situation, and it does so by treating the following questions: What form does this intersection take? What form should it take and which (inequality-relevant) consequences thereby result for the actors immediately involved, the teachers, educational practitioners, parents and children?

To answer these questions, the micro-level of social interactions is linked to macro-phenomena of social and educational inequality. In a first step, empirical observations are made of how the educational partnership is conceived and framed on multiple levels in Germany, i.e. in terms of legal requirements, educational policy management, and activities in the field. To that end, key documents are examined: the states’ laws governing schools; federal and state laws governing ECEC centers; the states’ educational plans; and practice-oriented publications for ECEC centers and primary schools. In a second step, more than 130 national and international studies examining parental participation, cooperation and partnership in ECEC centers and primary schools are systematized and analyzed. The international perspective allows for a consideration of findings and arguments that have been little received in the German debate until now. This provides a differentiated and more comprehensive understanding of how parental participation, cooperation and partnership take place at the micro level and to what extent they influence the genesis

and entrenchment of educational inequality. In addition, brief profiles are given of 50 national and international studies examining these issues, revealing the scope and multifaceted nature of the overall research on this subject.

Finally, the findings are used to derive implications for the legal framework, education policy management and activities in the field. Six problem and practice areas are then identified that reveal blind spots in the current discussion and research. This sheds light on future research requirements and the questions that remain open given the lack of research and findings, which are needed to determine how the interface of educational institution and family should be shaped in terms of policy and practice.