

The Family Meeting model - an interdisciplinary model emphasizing a meeting between the children and their parents at the Barnahus Oslo after an investigative interview

Frode Syringen, Ingrid Kjølstad Næss and Marte Heggli

Introduction

Since establishing the Norwegian Barnahus model the need has emerged for developing the service. “The Family Meeting model” is an interdisciplinary model developed by the Barnahus Oslo, Oslo Police District and the Child and Family Services involved. The model aims to facilitate an improved caretaking of children and parents after the investigative interview at the Barnahus, by better organized and clarified interaction between the agencies involved. The model emphasizes a facilitated meeting between the child and their parents at the Barnahus. By inviting the suspected parent in the ongoing criminal case to the Barnahus, we introduce a whole new practice.

Methods

The Family meeting model was developed, described and tested as a pilot over a period of 9 months with an ongoing evaluation from all the parties, evaluated and summarized in a final report in June 2021.

Results

By emphasizing clarity in roles, responsibilities and division of labor between the agencies involved, it contributes to increased coherence and safeguarding of the involved parties, and the agencies are given a better starting point for further cooperation and dialogue with the families. The parties involved reported that the model promoted the child's safety, by addressing the increased risk of negative pressure, violence, and possible reprisals taken against the child after disclosure. Another goal was to facilitate more children and parents to return to the Barnahus for further information and an assessment of the need for follow-up or psychological treatment. However, this has not been the case so far. The model involves the Barnahus staff to a large extent, contributes somehow to unpredictable working hours, and is a challenge that must be clarified and taken care of.

Conclusions

Due to the positive results of the pilot, the Family meeting model has been decided and established as a permanent measure at the Barnahus Oslo.

