

The Psychoanalytic Observation of Children
Origins and Recent Developments -- Training and Research
Its Significance for Psychotherapy and other Fields of Psychosocial Work
An International Conference at the University of Vienna, April 19-21, 2024

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**“Just the two of them?” or
Struggles of a pair of fraternal twins in the transition from home to day care**

Saturday, April 20, 11.30 a.m. / Hörsaal 31 / Parallel session A4

Abstract:

The transition of twins from home care to day care provides particular constraints and challenges. Publications highlight the negative consequences of 'collective denomination' when twin children settle into the same group, as they may be perceived as a pair and not addressed as individuals. The lecture will present the initial results of a single case study of a pair of fraternal twins, who were settled into the same day care group. Weekly one-hour observations were conducted using the Tavistock Observation Method (TOM), starting from the twins' first day at the nursery. The analysis of the observation protocols showed that the staff spoke about the children as a couple (pair), which indicated a less reflective and individualised approach. However, further analysis showed that the staff did indeed behave differently towards the twins. Both twins had different experiences with the staff at the day care centre, which affected their coping mechanisms and resulted in varying levels of psychological stress during the transition. Excerpts from the observation protocols of the children's first month in the day care centre will be used to track the transition process of the twins. In particular, situations of interaction between the twins and the staff of the day care centre will be presented. Finally, it will be discussed how it can be understood that the children have experienced different levels of support from the staff in dealing with their painful feelings due to the transition.

Keywords:

Tavistock Observation Method, fraternal twins, transition to day care, Young Child Observation

Biographical details:

Ulrike Schäufele, a fellow of the Vienna Doctoral School in Education of the University of Vienna, specializes in early childhood education, the transition of twins into daycare and the use of the Tavistock Observation Method as a research tool. She has attended Young Child Observation seminars in the context of the Viennese study "Toddlers' Adjustment to Out-of-Home Care" (led by Margit Datler) and in the context of the "Vienna Parent-Toddler Group Study" (led by Wilfried Datler).

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