

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

Agathe Israel (GER)

**Emotional learning in supervision groups
for people running Infant Observation groups**

Saturday, April 20, 11:00 a.m. / Hörsaal 29 / Parallel session C2

Abstract:

The presentation will focus on experiences with supervision groups for people who run Infant Observation groups at various psychoanalytic training institutes in Germany. The supervision groups meet regularly for two hours with two leaders. A special procedure is used to analyse problematic observations or situations and dynamics in the observer groups that blocked or disrupted the work.

The early experience is characterised by enormous changes in the child and its parents; it is radical, predominantly physical and extremely changeable. While the parents unconsciously project expectations into the observer that derive from their biography and their inner world, the baby builds up an inner observer-object from its repeating experiences with the observer, which is used in different ways. In this way, the observer becomes a container for the family and the baby.

But sometimes the observer abandons the free-floating attention and acts out, assess, disregards the framework conditions. It is an essential task of the observation group and its leader to label such phenomena less as mistakes or failures, but rather to identify them as significant transference phenomena that can be related to the baby and its family. If the leader and the group are able to explore these phenomena with the group, the capacity for not-knowing in the group expands. If this is not successful, severe splitting can be the consequence. In this case, the group leader must re-focus on the primary task in order to maintain containment and to restore the place of emotional learning.

Keywords:

Container-contained, teaching Infant Observation, supervision of Infant Observation group leaders

Biographical details:

Agathe Israel, Dr.med., Psychoanalyst for adults, children and adolescents, training analyst of (DGPT), founder of the „Institut für analytische KJP-Esther Bick Berlin“, editor of the “Jahrbuch für teilnehmende Säuglings- und Kleinkindbeobachtung / Yearbook for Participating Infant and Young Child Observation“ (Psychosozial Verlag)

E-mail:

agathe.israel@kinderpsychoanalyse-iakjp.de