

**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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**The observation of children in Anna Freud's Jackson Nursery (1937/38)**

***Saturday, April 20, 9:15 a.m. / Kleiner Festsaal / Plenary session I***

**Abstract:**

The so-called Jackson Nursery existed in Vienna from February 1937 to March 1938. It was led by Anna Freud and financed by Edith Jackson and Dorothy Burlingham. In the nursery, children were looked after during their pre-linguistic period, i.e. none of these children could yet speak. This institution fulfilled several goals: On the one hand, it was a social institution that supported children from the poorest classes in Vienna. Secondly, it served as a training facility for child analysts, and thirdly, it was used as a research facility to test psychoanalytic theory of development through direct observation.

Observations and experiences were made, for example, about food, the social life of the children and the appropriate group structure and group size. There was also an explicit focus on cleanliness education. And observations were made about sleep. The effects of illnesses on the children were also recorded, as well as the circumstances under which a recovery process can occur more easily. After its abrupt end in March 1938, the Jackson Nursery found a continuation in the Hampstead War Nurseries in London.

**Keywords:**

Jackson Nursery, Anna Freud, Edith Jackson, Dorothy Burlingham, direct observation of children

**Biographical details:**

Roman Krivanek, born 1967, works as a psychoanalyst in private practice. He studied teaching music education/mathematics, then psychotherapy sciences (Sigmund Freud Private University Vienna). He worked from 2022 to 2023 as a psychotherapist at the "Institut für Erziehungshilfe /Child Guidance Clinic" in Vienna. 2023 Graduation in "Psychoanalytically Oriented Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy.

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