

## II: The definition of Social Competence

Based on the theoretical analyses, the concept of social competence in “*You, Me and The Two of Us*”, is operationalised in 5 areas, where each of these areas contains the same type of social skills:

- *Empathy and role-taking* – sensitivity for other peoples feelings and understanding the perspectives and thoughts of others.
- *Pro-social development* – positive social attitudes and actions as helping other people, cheering up and sharing with others,
- *Self- control* – to delay your own needs and wishes in situations that include taking turn, making common decisions and compromises, and to handle conflicts in acceptable ways,
- *Self-assertion* – how to assert yourself and your own meanings in an acceptable way, how to handle group pressure and how to become included in ongoing play and conversations, and
- *Play, pleasure and humor* – to differentiate between play and other activities, to interpret the different signals in playing, to be able to get “carried away” and feel happiness, joke, relax and have fun.

These five areas are further operationalised in more concrete themes in the framework program, but they are still not as concrete as they need to be to be used in the concrete pedagogical practice in the day-care institutions. A key point in the program, and a consequence of the explicit developmental view, is the assumption that the staff has to observe, evaluate and work with the children’s social competence in their own contexts. In other words, they have to connect – on their own - these themes in the program to the actual every-day life in their own day-care institutions.

They have to move from the five more abstract described areas/ goals to the different concrete here-and-now situations in the daily life. In the framework program, I call it “moving up and down the abstraction ladder”. *But to do this, the staff need to be quite competent!*

*A step-by-step progression for the development of the staff's own competence is therefore integrated as an important part of the program!*

Greater

- theoretical insight and knowledge, together with
- learning by active participation where
- reflection is a key issue,

are the main ingredients in this part of the program.