

Child's weight and nurse–parent interaction at a Child Health Centre:

Normality and parents' mindreading

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Measuring and weighing infants and young children is a key feature of assessment practices in child health centres, a high-stake context in Sweden where young children's health is examined. Growth curves are recurrently at the centre of attention. During almost every visit, a nurse measures and weighs the child. Two of the research questions that will be elaborated on are: How is children's weight talked about in child healthcare clinics? How do parents and nurses co-construe children's health problems? The data are drawn from a video-ethnographic study that was carried out at two healthcare units, focusing on the encounters between children, parents and health personnel. The analysis concerns advice sequences and the types of conversational patterns involved in advice and support about weight that are offered to parents. The analyses also concern nurses' and parents' concepts of normality. The analyses indicate that discussions about weight are collaborative affairs. Institutional talk and social interaction are explored, using an approach, informed by linguistic ethnography and conversation analysis. Moreover, the analyses concern how the conversations are organised and how different and, at times, contradictory discourses, agendas and understandings are negotiated in the encounters (involving quite delicate conversations) between children, parents and health personnel.