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Sharing family and household: Children's experiences of diverse family forms and varied social and material relationships

It is a normative assumption that family relationships are characterized by 'sharing', such as living together in the same home; occupying the same space and place; sharing possessions, blood and genes; spending time together, whether special occasions are more mundane everyday life; and consequently creating shared biographical experiences. In this way, families are thrown into togetherness. At the same time, we see families in varying forms where 'sharing' is lived and contested differently. Many children live in different variations comprising more than one household. They share life circumstances, stories, places and spaces, households with both kin and non-kin. This keynote addresses the particularities of children's experiences of living apart and/or living together. They live in a mixture of attachment and fragmentation, in a grid of more or less stable connections and affinities. They inhabit several sets of social relationships that are bodily settled, separate material worlds with each their rules and regulations. Families that do not share everyday life develop other ways to keep in contact, be close, and share sensations. Based on video footage from my research, I will show and clarify how shared, (dis)connected, and (ex)changeable everyday life is established and dealt with in an everyday micro-level perspective. I want to invite you into the landscape of sensations, feelings, and materiality where different kinds of movements happen. I draw on various findings from my research done over the past 15 years: about homes and households, siblings, divorced family life, and youth in dorms.