

## **Social Work, Child Welfare and Social Class**

The aim of the workshop is to present and discuss findings from our own and international research relating to three themes:

- Life histories and social background of parents who are in contact with Child Welfare
- How different forms of marginalization affect children and families in child welfare
- Children's and parents' perceptions of child welfare and its social workers

In the workshop there will be a short presentation of the research program "The New Child Welfare Services" (NCW), followed by three short presentations and time for discussion. In NCW 715 families in contact with CWS answered a questionnaire, additionally 96 parents and 17 children from the original sample participated in qualitative interviews. The study showed that families who are unemployed or underemployed are overrepresented in child welfare and the long-term child welfare clientele have a greater prevalence of somatic and mental health problems than families in the general population. We found that the most marginalised families least often receive assistance that aims to improve family functioning. The most marginalised families are expected to manage the risks they and their children are exposed to, without assistance. Less marginalised and deprived children and families are more likely to receive help designed to improve functioning and parental care. This articulates a need for an alternative approach when dealing with marginalization in CWS policy and practice.