This study has focused on describing the realization of individuality in children's daycare. Factors restraining or limiting it have also been of interest. Furthermore what is valued by the workers in upbringing children has been described. Individuality is something highly valued in West-European countries. This can be seen in social conversation as well as in everyday life at homes, schools, work and in leisure-time activities. In day-care individuality has gained new kind of interest along with the trend of assessing quality.

The roots of individuality can be found in individualism, culture typical of the Western world. There is a brief account of both the backgrounds and complexity of individualism in the theoretical part. Special attention is paid to the main values of individualism mentioned by Lukes. The usual way of seeing cultures as having either individualist or collectivise features has been criticized in literature. Taking this into account a new cultural pattern is outlined. Day-care in Finland is described both in the way that intellectuals see it, what is often called a theoretical ideal, and from the view of real life.

The data has been collected from two day-care centers, from four full-day departments for children aged 3 - 6 years by the technique of participant observation completed with interview and conversation. The most important viewpoint has been how a child is taken into account or is ignored as an individual.

The results show that there is quite a great deal of individuality in children's day-care. It means accepting a child as a person and filling her or his physical needs, giving her or him possibilities to some autonomy and opportunities of privacy and self-development in the existing environment. It seems that the primary factor restricting individuality is an adult and her way of acting whereas some elements found in a group, rules, room and schedule seem to limit it. The values mentioned as important by the adults in upbringing children are mainly individual but responsibility and co-operative skills are also seen as valuable.

The main sources of the study are Kulttuurit ja organisaatiot. Mielen ohjelmointi. (Hofstede 1993), Culture and Social Behavior (Triandis 1994), Individualism (Lukes 1973) and some studies and writings dealing with day-care.

**Avainsanat-Nyckelord**
- day-care - values - individuality
- individualism - organizational culture - day-care centers

**Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter**
- Työ on suomenkielinen. The work is in Finnish language.