

# Children's choices in the learning environment

The City of Hämeenlinna  
Finland

Marja-Liisa Akselin

Helena Nurmi

May 2013 Taiwan



<http://www.hameenlinna.fi/Hameenlinna-tietoa/>

## Sibelius in Hämeenlinna

The great master composer Jean Sibelius was born in Hämeenlinna in 1865. Sibelius will be celebrated in 2015, 150 years after the birth of the composer.



- ◆ One of the results of the Orientation project is that children with good interactive skills get chosen in the play groups.
- ◆ They have skills to negotiate with others and act in different groups. They are popular among other children ja their company is enjoyable.
- ◆ Children without social skills are often left outside of play groups.
- ◆ They do not have the required skills to participate so they get even less needed practice in social skills than other children.



# What factors affect in children`s choices?

(The roots of the model):

- ◆ Values of home
- ◆ Attitudes and values of ECEC
- ◆ ECEC partnership
- ◆ Curriculum and an individual ECEC plan for each child in collaboration with parents and staff

# "The trunk of the tree"

- ◆ Based on children`s interests
- ◆ Action/play idea (should be mindful and happen in a learning environment encourages sharing)
- ◆ Friends are important
- ◆ Peer group
- ◆ Experiences
- ◆ Seasons (4 in Finland)

# Educators` support for children`s choices

- ◆ Daily schedule
- ◆ A learning environment planned for the needs of the children
- ◆ Playgroup can plan their own play and action
- ◆ Discussions after action time with feedback between educators and children

# The nurturing of children's own choices..

- ◆ Children`s meetings
- ◆ Children`s own dicussions
- ◆ Small group activities
- ◆ Drama sessions
- ◆ Educators engagement
- ◆ Placatory stance (if there any arguing)

# Barriers for children's choices

("birds in the tree..")

- ◆ Children's different levels of development
- ◆ Children without play skills
- ◆ Physical elements which not good
- ◆ Absence of staff
- ◆ Feeling not safe

# Benefits of children`s own choices in the learning environment ("apples"):

- ◆ Social skills enhance
- ◆ Self confidence is getting better
- ◆ A child as an actor (not "the object")
- ◆ Children are getting more skilful and becoming the conscious agents of their own life
- ◆ Silent and sensitive children get play groups

# Children's own choices enhance skills.. ("brances of the tree")

- ◆ Everyday life..
  - ◆ Social..
  - ◆ Learning..
  - ◆ Mathematics..
  - ◆ Linguistic..
  - ◆ Physical..
- 

# Common experience: Movie called Troll Röllli and golden key

"It was fun movie.  
There was a man, who  
cheated Troll Röllli.....  
.... So that he would  
give a magic key...  
and there were birds,  
who hade babies in  
bag...

....and one dropped a  
baby in an  
accidentally and it  
dropped to the  
treasure box



"The home of Troll Röllli and Röllli and  
Troll Juurakko and it has flowers in her  
hand"

# Children`s troll play begins.....

"Two trolls play in a funny way!"

Olivia



"There`s a house of Rölli and Rölli flies from catapults to frog pond and a chief of the village shouts: "What`s going on?"

Aada

...play is continueing.....

Girls are planning  
together troll dance and  
some of the children  
wants to be fairys..

.....shall we do our own troll?

"Rölly is rather small and it has big feet"

"it has shaggy hair and patched clothes  
and it`s funny"

"they live in the village of trolls"



...”my troll is a girl and i`m gonna make a skirt for her”  
...”i have a boytroll, but I can`t make trousers..”



”hey,  
look! for  
this suits  
a beard”



”I`m  
gonna  
draw a  
mouths  
to my  
troll”



“..we could make a shelter of Röllli in our play”



“it could make of cardboard”

“let's make walls with a cardboard and roof with sticks”

“it can't do by cardboard, because it will fly away with a wind”

“it can defrost in the sun”

“no it can't, if it's raining then it become garbage”

“it would be worth of doing by willow and bind them taht way together”

“ yeah, there should be willows and then it could be fine”





.. And so on...

Thank you!