



# The development of a child's self-regulation skills in **KIDS' SKILLS-INTERVENTION**

Merja Hautakangas

PhD student

Learning, Culture and Interventions Expert

Group, Faculty of Educational Sciences

University of Helsinki

Finland

merja.hautakangas@helsinki.fi

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to explore how Kids' Skills is in contact with the development of a child's self-regulation skills, and to teachers pedagogical thinking and action and scaffolding in the day-care context.

Doctor of psychiatry Ben Furman has developed Kids' Skills on the idea that a child does not have problems but skills he or she has not yet learned<sup>1</sup>. Child can practice his or her skills and strengthen them with positive feedback from adults. Positive emotions are resource for learning and wellbeing<sup>2</sup>. The principle of Kids' Skills is strength-based thinking. The purpose of Kids' Skills is strengthening the child's self-esteem<sup>1</sup>. Kids' Skills is internationally used program in Europe, North America, Australia and China, but its scientific research is still missing. This research is current because children's self-regulation skills is highlighted in the National Core Curricula for Pre-Primary Education (2014) and Early Childhood Education and Care (2016). Self-regulation skills are part of child's social competence which have noticed to enable wellbeing and work as a protective factor against child's internal and external risk factors<sup>3</sup>.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study's theoretical understanding is built on *socio-cultural perspectives*. Learning and development occur through interpersonal thinking and external interaction<sup>4</sup>. The main focus is on the social and cultural construction for wellbeing and learning<sup>5</sup>. As Lev Vygotsky (1978) said, children can imitate a variety of actions that go well beyond the limits of their own capabilities on the *zone of proximal development* with more skilled children or adult guidance, and with positive feedback.

*Positive Psychology* gives the scientific basis for Kids' Skills<sup>6</sup> and as well for *positive pedagogy*<sup>2</sup>. Instead of individuals, positive pedagogy's research perspective is in communities which support wellbeing and learning<sup>7</sup>. In positive pedagogy, child's involvement, strengths and positive emotions are in central<sup>8</sup>. The aim of positive pedagogy is to support the wellbeing and learning of the child, which are the result of interaction between environment and the child<sup>9</sup>.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How child's self-regulation skills evolve in Kids' Skills-intervention – according to parents, teachers and observations?
2. How and why teachers choose Kids' Skills tools of learning in different situations?
3. How children describe learning self-regulation skills?

## INTERVENTION

The study was executed as ten-week intervention in fall of 2017. Seven day-care center groups participated in it,  $N=120$  children at ages 4-7 ja  $N=20$  teachers in four day-care centers in medium-sized city located in Central Finland. The Kids' Skills-intervention involved  $n=80$  children and teachers  $n=14$  in two day-care centers. The control day-care centers involved  $n=40$  children and  $n=9$  teachers.

## METHOD

This study is mixed methods case study. Using mixed methods gives the possibility to combine the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods and to gain more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of the study<sup>10</sup>. The dissertation consists of three studies.

## STUDY I

**How child's self-regulation skills evolve in Kids' Skills-intervention – according to parents, teachers and observations**

Children Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS)<sup>11</sup>

Head – Toes – Knees – Shoulders –test (HTKS)<sup>12</sup>

Observations by allocating and analyzing interaction and adult's support for a child

*Results:*

HTKS: *T-test*: Paired Samples Correlations  $r=0,83$ , ( $p=0,000$ ). Paired Samples Test ( $p=0,002$ ).

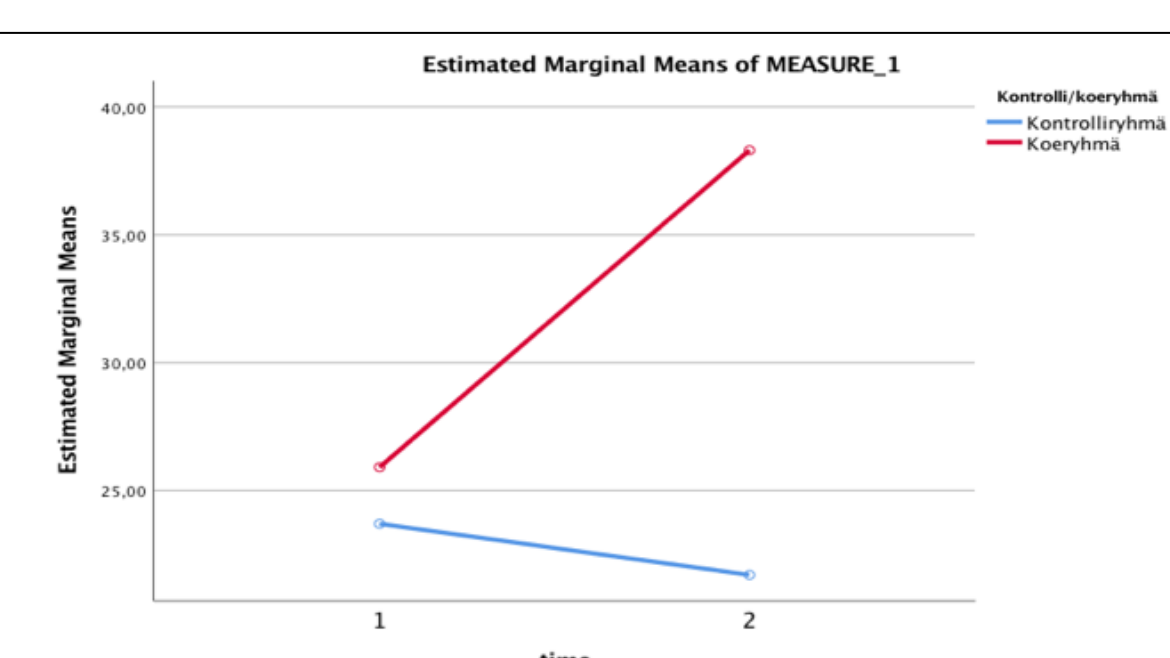


Fig. HTKS-test results at the start and at the end of measurement

CBRS: Inquiry I at the beginning of the intervention and II at the end. The questionnaire has 17 self-regulatory issues, and evaluation Likert-scale 1-5. Inquiry I: 126 respondent, mean 3,4 and Inquiry II: 100 respondent, mean 3,5. The parents rated the child's skills higher than the teachers. Overall, according to parents and teachers, child's self-regulation skills had developed during the intervention.

## STUDY II

**How and why teachers choose Kids' Skills tools of learning in different situations**

Narrative analysis of teachers ( $n=12$ ) reports. The research topic is a cultural story of teachers' pedagogical tools and the functioning of teaching in the day-care context. Reports are collected in the spring of 2018.

## STUDY III

**How children describe learning self-regulation skills**

A visual narrative exploration of the child's drawings and stories about how they learn self-regulation skills. Matter are collected in the spring of 2018.

## CONCLUSION

According to the preliminary results of this study, Kids' Skills appears as a method for a child to learn self-regulation skills.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Furman. 2003.
- <sup>2</sup> Kumpulainen, Mikkola, Rajala, Hilppö & Lipponen. 2014.
- <sup>3</sup> Blair & Diamond. 2008; Boekaerts, 2011; McClelland & Cameron. 2011.; Poikkeus 2014.
- <sup>4</sup> Säljö. 2004.
- <sup>5</sup> Vygotsky. 1978.
- <sup>6</sup> Lipponen. 2014.
- <sup>7</sup> Seligman. 2002.
- <sup>8</sup> Seligman & Csikszentmihályi. 2000.
- <sup>9</sup> Kumpulainen, Lipponen, Hilppö & Mikkola. 2013.
- <sup>10</sup> Creswell. 2015.
- <sup>11</sup> Bronson, Tivnan & Seppanen. 1995.
- <sup>12</sup> Cameron, McClelland, Jewkes, Connor, Farris & Morrison. 2008.