Supporting Tuohimäki preschoolers' social skills through creative methods in order to prevent bullying

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This functional thesis project was implemented in partnership with VKK- Metro (Early childhood development unit) & Tuohimäki daycare. The goals of the project focused strengthening children's social skills through participating in playful activities with their peers. The social goals were inspired by the research done on bullying prevention, which has shown that by supporting individuals emotional and cooperative skills with peers bullying can be prevented. The theoretical framework consists of 6-year-old's development, bullying and creative methods.

The implementation consisted of 4 sessions, which were executed in the month of May in 2015 with the Tuohimäki daycare's preschool group of 13 individuals. Each session was observed and recorded through film in order to support observations and help children reflect during the final session. Participants will not be identifiable through the presented data. Consent for implementation was received from the parents and the research permit was granted by Espoo City.

Methods for implementation were inspired by the playful ways through which 6-year-olds learn and develop. Through drama children could playfully develop social skills in a safe atmosphere. The different media methods used would help children reflect on their own opinions and experiences. Each session centered around a specific theme, which were supported by the implemented methods. Themes included were apologizing, creative problem solving and understanding difference.

The used working methods were found to support the goals and aims of the thesis project. Each participant made efforts to participate in each activity and through participation practiced their social skills together.

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Tuohimäen esikoululaisten sosiaalisten taitojen tukeminen luovien menetelmien kautta kiusaaminen ehkäisemsiseksi

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Tämä toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö toteutettiin yhteistyössä VKK- Metron (Varhaiskasvatuksen kehittämisyksikkö) ja Tuohimäen päiväkodin kanssa. Toiminnan tavoitteena oli vahvistaa lasten sosiaalisia taitoja ryhmänä leikillisillä aktiviteeteilla. Sosiaaliset tavoitteet ovat sidoksissa kiusaamiseen keskittyvään tutkimukseen, joka osoittaa että tukemalla lasten emotionaalisia ja yhteistyötaitoja vertaisryhmän kanssa, kiusaamisen ehkäisy on mahdollista. Teoreettinen viitekehys keskittyy 6-vuotiaiden kehitykseen, kiusaamiseen sekä luoviin menetelmiin.

Toteutus koostui neljästä toimintatuokiosta, jotka toteutettiin toukokuussa 2015 Tuohimäen päiväkodin 13-henkisessä esikouluryhmässä. Toimintatuokiot havainnoitiin ja tallennettiin videokameralla, jotta osallistujat voisivat videon voimin pohtia paremmin koko prosssia viimeisellä toimintatuokiolla. Osallistujat eivät ole tunnistettavissa esitetyssä materiaalissa. Luvat toteutukseen kysyttiin lasten vanhemmilta sekä tutkinta luvan on myöntänyt Espoon kaupunki.

Toimintamenetelmät nousivat leikillisistä tavoista, joiden avulla 6-vuotiaat voisivat oppia ja kehittyä. Draaman kautta lapset voivat leikkisästi oppia sosiaalisia taitoja turvallisessa tilassa. Monipuoliset media menetelmät voivat auttaa osallistujia pohtimaan heidän omia mielipiteitä ja kokemuksia. Jokaisella toimintatuokiolla oli oma teema, joita tukivat käytetyt toimintamenetelmät. Teemoihin kuuluivat anteeksianto, luova ongelmanratkaisu sekä erilaisuuden ymmärtäminen.

Käytettyjen toimintamenetelmien todettiin tukevan projektin tavoitteita. Lapset osallistuivat aktiivisesti jokaiseen aktiviteettiin ja osallistumisen kautta kehittävät sosiaalisia taitojaan yhdessä.

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1   Introduction

This functional thesis has been conducted in partnership with VKK -Metro & Tuohimäki daycare. The project was started by presenting the idea to VKK -Metro who then provided suitable contacts to their developmental daycare units. The focus of this thesis project was to approach the subject of bullying through drama, media and playful methods with the preschoolers of Tuohimäki daycare. By supporting the children's social skills, such as participation, interactive and empathic skills, it was aimed to help prevent bullying.

The inspiration for the topic arose from its personal importance and interest to the authors and the recent coverage in media on the subject. 6-year-olds were selected as participants because through research it became clear that preschoolers are more equipped to address and comprehend the notion of bullying. Preschoolers are more skilled in recognizing their own as well as each other's feelings than younger children. Preschool is the final year before transferring to the school world where bullying has generally been considered as a bigger problem. Practicing the relevant social skills needed to interact with others will help the children to encounter new people in the next school term and later on in life. Bullying amongst young children has not been researched much and there was available only a few reliable sources on the matter. Research done by Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto (2015) points to the fact that bullying does occur amongst daycare aged children and preventive action should be considered already in early childhood education.

The main goal of this thesis project was to encourage the children involved to participate in the activity sessions. Each session consisted of relevant themes related to preventing bullying. Through the creative methods based activities the participants were able to practice their social skills in story based conflict situations, which may aid them in the future in possible bullying situations. Through the playful activities it was aimed that the children would learn more about bullying and its effects as well as to help them understand what bullying can feel like to others. The activities would help to teach the children what bullying can be and how one can deal with it. An added smaller goal in the project was to inspire the educators and parents on how to deal with bullying hands on through some concrete methods.

2   Background of the thesis

This thesis has been conducted as a part of the VKK- Metro project (2014-2016) - Play and playful learning environments in early childhood education (Leikki ja leikilliset oppimisympäristöt varhaiskasvatuksessa). VKK- Metro is a developmental unit for early childhood education in Espoo, Helsinki, Kauniainen and Vantaa. The unit operates in collaboration with the capital area municipalities, Universities of Applied Sciences and Socca - The Centre of Excel-

lence on Social Welfare in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. During each developmental period roughly 25 units are selected, which commit to systematically develop their own operations. VKK -Metro strives to involve as many early childhood education units in the capital area as possible by choosing different units for development during projects. Additionally the idea of rooting the continuous developmental operations structure, the educators in the early childhood education units are encouraged to examine and develop their own work and methods. The developmental themes originate from the timely challenges faced in workplaces and everyday life. (VKK-Metro 2015)

The VKK- Metro project objectives for this developmental period have been used as guidelines in planning this thesis project. The objectives have shown a direction within which the activities in the thesis project have been steered towards in order to support some of the VKK-Metro project aims. The VKK- Metro goals include strengthening the educator's abilities to utilize play in developing children's learning skills and exploring play as a learning environment and developing it to respond the children's needs and interests. Other goals mentioned were to generating observation material from play situations to support the work development and increasing appreciation for play within families with children. (VKK-Metro 2015)

The sessions were implemented at the Tuohimäki daycare, which is one of the developmental units in the VKK -Metro project during this term. The topic was introduced to the head of the daycare who then agreed for the preschool group to work in partnership with the thesis project. Tuohimäki daycare is a municipal daycare located in Espoo. The daycare has groups from ages 0 to 6-years-old and a preschool group. The thesis project was carried out with the preschool group, which consists of 13 children. As the daycare centre is a municipal daycare, a research permit was required from the Espoo city council of Education and Cultural Services in order to conduct the project with the children (see Appendix 1). The children's parents were asked for permission to film the sessions and for their children to take part in the project activities (see Appendix 2).

The basic Education Act requires that a plan for preventing and intervening in bullying situations should be composed in all schools in Finland. This law includes preschools and thus they all should have a plan. At the moment it is not required by any law that daycares should draft a similar bullying prevention and intervention plan for younger children. There are only different kinds of recommendations, for example in the Stakes National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman perusteet, Stakes), that the children must be provided with safe human relationships and their growth and development must be protected. (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a) Tuohimäki daycare centre has drafted their own plan of preventing and intervening in bullying. The plan consists of a short definition and description of bullying as a phenomenon, some means for preventing and

intervening in bullying, and a section on revising the plan annually at the beginning of the term. It is mentioned in the plan that the Espoo city's Early Childhood Education and Care Plan (Espoon kaupungin varhaiskasvatussuunnitelma) requires all its early education units to draft a plan of preventing and intervening in bullying.

Tuohimäki daycare provided the following plans, which include the Tuohimäki daycare bullying prevention and intervention plan as well as the Preschooler's Early Childhood Education and Care plan. These plans were considered and applied to support the implementation of this project. The plans illustrated what the daycare had considered as effective methods on how to deal with bullying. The means of prevention, in the bullying prevention and intervention plan, were quite abstract such as creating a safe environment, clear rules, positive attitude and atmosphere. Some of the tools mentioned for prevention included parental partnership, teaching children good manners, empathy, problem solving skills and self control. The Second Step model is one of the methods used to support the development of these skills in Tuohimäki daycare. Second Step program helps children to practice impulse control, staying focused and following rules. The program uses a wide range of different tools to achieve their goals, which include cards, songs, games and puppets (Committee for children, 2015). Some of the children in the preschool group had already taken part in the Second Steps program. It is highlighted in the plan that all adults have the obligation to intervene in bullying situations, even if the children are not from their own group. They are instructed to clarify, report and document bullying instance at the daycare. It is also mentioned that the child's parents should be notified on the situation and they should be informed on how to deal with the situation at home.

Some of the most important themes that arose from the daycare's Early Childhood Education and Care plan included, learning to understand other people's feelings and positions, understanding the cause and effect in social situations, avoiding conflict and how to solve conflict, apologizing and understanding what are you apologizing for, small groups supporting the children's peer relationships and supporting the children's interaction and play skills. Taking into consideration what the authors had at this point of the project learned on bullying as a phenomenon and what kind of matters the daycare had themselves taken into account in their plans of approaching bullying, an implementation plan for the project was drafted.

3   Theoretical background

The theoretical research began by gathering knowledge on the development of 6-year-olds, since the implementation would focus on a preschool group. It is vital to understand the developmental stages of the children studied to be able to plan the project to be significant for them. It was found that 6-year-olds are more physically adapt than ever before, but still are

learning a lot about themselves as they take steps towards independence (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015).

The children's social skills were at the core of the theory as it was found through research that good social and empathy skills are required in order to prevent bullying (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a). According to Laine and Neitola (2002) it is essential to intervene in the growing bullying phenomenon found in the early childhood education domain. It is argued that already amongst smaller children different roles are formed which can influence the children bullying or being bullied (Laine & Neitola 2002).

Bullying is a very in-depth and personal subject to tackle, but with the use of creative methods the subject could be addressed in a more playful and explorative manner. Vahala (2003) explains that creative methods can be used with multiple client groups to tackle a variety of goals. Creative methods can allow participants to internalize the subject at hand in an artistic manner. Some creative methods can be seen quite playful and for children play is a natural way to learn about the surrounding world (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015).

3.1 6-year-old's development

As children reach their 6th birthday they have mastered a variety of skills, however they can be still found further developing in many ways. From the years five to seven there are significant changes in how children think and feel, which is why some might struggle balancing their emotional behavior. Both girls and boys can be found releasing energy in a variety of ways from cartwheels to wrestling. Bouncing between a variety of activities is normal as children are keen to explore and learn. Because of this it is easy to be distracted, which is why educators should consider alternative or exploratory teaching methods when necessary. (Sharman & Cross & Vennis 2007)

Preschoolers can be found considering their options for a longer period of time in decision making situations. Listening to stories and reading has become increasingly more interesting. (Sharman et al. 2007) Starting preschool is a big step for a child as the child takes steps towards independence. The changes of stepping to preschool may not be visible with all children, but in some cases it can bring about strong emotions or reactions. Children can be found exhibiting signs of fear or comparing their own skills to the ones of peers. It is important to have an adult nearby who can comfort and support as the child exercises independency and goes through more challenging phases. (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015)

3.1.1 Learning through play

Playing is necessary for a child's emotional, social and cognitive development as in play a child will learn a variety of skills that range from creative thinking to emotional control. Playing with others can strengthen the child's self-confidence and through social interaction with playmates their moral, values and empathy can be developed. (Mannerheimin lastensuojelu-liitto 2015) Smidt (2011) describes play as a child doing all or any of the following actions: solving problems set by themselves, exploring something of interest or expressing feelings related to former experiences. This definition of play underlines the fact the play is always purposeful. The child defines the reason for play and conducts the play, which makes them the owner of that play. Play for the child can be pleasurable, but it is possible that play can be traumatic as well. (Smidt 2011) After traumatic event some children can be found refusing to discuss what happened, but rather playing out the event even if it may involve disturbing elements such as funerals, death and bullying. (Saari & Silver 2005)

Bruce (2011, 50) defines play by citing Vygotsky in 1978.
"In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development." Through play skills are practiced every day until adulthood is reached at which point people cease to play. Smidt (2011, 1) cites Shaw in explaining growing and playing:
"We don't stop playing because we grow; we grow old because we stop playing."
Playing gives the opportunity to learn and develop a variety of skills, which range from physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, moral and spiritual skills. The development of these skills are essential to growth as the child explores the world around them through play. (Sheridan & Harding & Meldon-Smith 1999)

Children can be found playing in many different ways. Active play is very physical and depending on the age can be witnessed as a large variety of actions. Babies begin by moving their hands around and older children can be found running from one place to another. Explorative play involves understanding objects through all of the senses, which develop fine motor movements. Imitative play reflects what the child experiences around them as they copy actions they find happening around them. Constructive play involves building or creating something they have visualized. Pretend play gives the child opportunities to bring imagination and creativity to life. Games with rules requires the child to understand sharing, giving turns and fair play. Rule based games begin at 4-years of age and later on evolve to competitive gaming rules. (Sheridan et al. 1999)
Smidt (2011, 9) discusses Vygotsky's work and explains that as children make sense of the world they look at people and objects. Later on children understand how objects can be used

to represent other matters, such as relationships, rules, roles and groups. Many forms of play make use of objects and the possibilities are endless. For example in pretend play simply a hat can be an important way to provide the child with a new role. 6-year-old children especially enjoy rule and team based games. Preferences may include sports, crafting and exploring creativity. Role play can be very detailed and participants are very particular in who plays which role and how the story in play will progress. (Sheridan et al. 1999)

3.1.2 Social development

Social development starts from the moment a child is born. People are born with temperaments and sociability can be determined by how rewarding social situations are to an individual. This can be observed by, how much a person appreciates emotional attachments, how willing is a person to please others with their behavior or how important is it to be appreciated and recognized by others. It is generally seen as a positive trait that a person is liked, but it is more important to personally define how important likability actually is. This drives the people to make different decisions or actions in social situations that others may consider unjust or brutally honest. To be highly sociable one can be described as selfless and dependant on others opinions. (Keltikangas-Järvinen 2010)

All children are not highly sociable by temperament, however prosocial behavior can be encouraged by parents and teachers as the child grows. A broad explanation for prosocial behavior, without defining the motive, includes all purposeful activity where one helps another. These activities include helping, sharing, donating, sympathy, friendliness, co-operation and respecting others. Feelings of empathy and sympathy are connected to prosocial behavior. Empathy is felt when one recognizes another's emotions and feels the same way as them. Sympathy is felt when one recognizes another's emotions, however instead of feeling the same way they are considerate of that person's emotions. (Eisenberg & Fables 1998, cited in Pulkkinen 2002, 87) The ability to empathize allows individual to act in a prosocial manner. Prosocial behavior in the early years occurs when a child shares their toys, co-operates with playmates and reacts when another person is in a foul mood. Empathy as a skill is easier to master when the child recognizes and can name their own emotions. Through this skill it is easier to recognize different emotions in others. (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010b)

A variety of social milestones are reached at the age of 6. Friendships can be formed and broken up quickly. Preschoolers often play and function better as pairs. Winning is very important along with the praises and accomplishments an individual receives from succeeding. 6-year-olds are more confident and aware of what behavior is acceptable than ever before. (Sharman et al. 2007) Preschoolers find it increasingly easier to describe emotions with words (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015).

When it comes to rules it is easier for a child to commit to them if they have been a part of the rulemaking process. 6-year-olds enjoy different imagination- and role play games. Play can change and diversify a fair bit at this stage of life. Playing and rulemaking skills are practiced frequently in play situations with friends. Learning to negotiate, take turns and consider others becomes more natural through friendships. Friendships can bring about strong outbursts of emotions that can be both negative and positive. At times it can be difficult for children to recognize that what they are doing and saying may hurt others, however emotional recognition at this stage is easier than before, which is why children can be found comforting and showing compassion towards others when conflicts arise. 6-year-olds look to the example of friends and older children, which in practice helps define what the child finds interesting or acceptable. (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015)

Social status and roles are of great significance to children. Being left out of a group is a huge threat as it isolates children from developing important skills that are frequently practiced with playmates. These situations can lead to bullying, which in turn can have serious consequences on healthy skills development. (Keltikangas-Järvinen 2010) The desire to be accepted by peers and adults is strong. (Bruce & Meggitt 2006)

When it comes to moral development preschoolers begin to understand the difference between right and wrong or what is fair and unfair. This does not automatically mean that they will behave according to what they consider the right way to do things. For example a child can lie to impress a friend and in these cases it is important help the child to understand why this is not acceptable. (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015)

3.1.3   Supporting preschoolers development

6-year-olds are eager to try out a variety of things by themselves as they are practicing independence, however they require the guidance and support of adults around them. Educators and parents can help support the development of these complex skills in multiple different ways.

Play provides opportunities to develop a wide range of skills, which is why it is essential for adults to support and help develop children's play. Educators should strive to provide a safe environment for all types of play. (Sheridan et al. 1999) Playful educators provide contexts and arrange the environment to allow children to be in charge of their play (Smidt 2011). When in play children operate at a higher level and with adult support the child can make use of their skills through play (Bruce 2011). Bruce (2011, 55) explains that Vygotsky believes that

well delivered instructions enable children to enhance their learning if they are at within the correct developmental state.

At times it may be required for an adult to intervene in children's play in order to help solve possible disputes. Through active support and supervision children learn to understand that adults can be trusted as a positive influence who presents good examples of positive behavior and empathy. (May 2011) When supporting play it is important to be mindful not to be too focused on the product of the play. The most important part of play is the process of playing. (Sheridan et al. 1999) Educators should strive to become playful educators as it bridges the gap between learners and educators. At times play can lead to discourses and there is not one right way of solving these situations. Some educators believe you should intervene to stop the play and others believe you should discuss the themes of the play afterwards. For example if children are involved in imaginative play and the educator notices some of the children discriminating another. (Smidt 2011) This may be a single instance, but it is important to keep an eye on play as bullying may manifest in play.

Similarly to adults children do not always get along with everyone. It is important to allow children personal space to explore matters on their own. Agency should be respected and children should be able to choose who they play with and how to shape their play, because adult driven tasks throughout the day can be quite tiring. All children should feel safe in their environment and that the adults around them are willing to give personal attention to them. (Bruce & Meggitt 2006) It is important to help children reflect difficult questions and matters as they arise. For example, educators can have discussion on how one's behavior can influence themselves and others around them or how should one behave with playmates they do not get along well with. (Mannerheimin Lastensuojeluliitto 2015)

Most importantly the adult should strive to be present for the child. By being present educators and parents can provide support in challenging situations. Adults should be able to give praise and to recognize when the child is doing something well. Activities planned should be suitable for all of the children of the group regardless of their race, disabilities or gender. (Sharman et al. 2007) By observing children educators can use that knowledge to plan activities that meet the needs of the group. Educators should not only rely on observations, but use a variety of methods to aid in understanding the needs of the children in the group. (Hobbart, Frankel & Walker 2009)

3.2   Bullying

In Finland bullying has been a familiar topic amongst school-aged children and teachers for a longer period of time, but amongst daycare children the subject has risen to headlines during

the past decade. Bullying is mostly addressed in schools and there are national campaigns in Finland promoting anti-bullying action, such as KiVa Koulu. KiVa Koulu is a Finnish innovation anti-bullying program which has been developed utilizing research on bullying. During 2009-2013 roughly 90% of Finnish basic education schools registered to use the program. (Kiva koulu 2012) The program does not involve early childhood education units and similar programs have not been implemented in early childhood education. Internationally bullying has not been researched with children under school age largely because different countries have very different early education schemes. In some countries early education is a part of the school-ing system as children begin their studies at an earlier age. In these countries when bullying is discussed at school it includes all children from the age 4 and up. (Repo 2013) In Finland Mannerheimin Lastensuojeluliitto and Folkhälsan carried out a project on bullying amongst children below school age (Kiusaamisen ehkäisy alle kouluikäisten lasten parissa- hanke) in 2009-2010. According to the project study, at the time there was limited literature and re-search done on the matter and even the daycare educators did not possess enough knowledge on how to identify and intervene in bullying. After the study the topic has received increased awareness and other research, thesis and master's thesis on the matter have arisen since. The project study concluded that it is good to begin intervention in bullying as early as possi-ble, since the roots of bullying can already exist among small children. The essential factors in early prevention of bullying are thought to be strengthening the children's interaction and empathy skills as well as supporting the children's peer relations and social development. (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a)

It is challenging to define precisely what bullying is because it can mean different things to different individuals. Some may feel the slightest little tease to be bullying whereas someone would say that only upfront physical abuse and name calling is bullying. Repo (2013, 34) ex-plains that Olweus believes that bullying involves recurring negative behavior toward an indi-vidual during a longer period of time, which forces the definition to exclude single instances of negative behavior. This definition is still widely accepted today. In the same publication Repo (2013, 35) refers to the Finnish professor Salmivalli's idea on the individual's inability to defend oneself when being bullied; it is considered as bullying, when an individual is con-stantly made feel bad. The perpetrator is someone against whom the bullied has trouble de-fending oneself. Many definitions and classifications of bullying can be found in literature and most share similar traits. According to Repo (2013) different researches present that bullying has often been divided into direct and indirect bullying. Direct bullying occurs when the nega-tive behavior is aimed straight at the bullied for example by hitting, pushing or verbally abus-ing. Indirect bullying can appear as isolating the bullied individual from the group, gossiping or badmouthing.

Höistad (2001) identifies three types or classes of bullying: silent, verbal and physical bully-ing. Silent bullying or "the body language" is described as most common type of bullying as it is most subtle and hence most difficult to notice. Silent bullying can be for example staring or making faces, yawning and sighing at a person, avoiding contact or ignoring one as if the per-son was basically air. The victims of silent bullying are often according to Höistad (2001) qui-et and unnoticeable and they do not draw attention to themselves or tell others what they are going through. Similar traits can be found in Hamarus's (2012) definition on social bully-ing. In social bullying the bully aspires to negatively affect the individual's meaningful rela-tionships such as friend relations. Features like manipulation, isolation and interaction or the lack of it in social media are identified as part of social bullying.

Second type of bullying identified by Höistad (2001) is verbal bullying, which is more noticea-ble than silent bullying. It can manifest as gossiping, whispering, laughing or giggling, imitat-ing, threatening or making fun of a person. It can also be considered as prank phone calls, text or e-mail messages or sending notes about the bullied in class. As mentioned before, verbal bullying is usually easier to notice than silent bullying, but it too has its challenges. The bully or bullies can easily whisper behind the teacher's or authorities back. Höistad (2001) highlights the importance of addressing all sorts of bullying and not only the loud and visible kind. Teachers should tell the students upfront to stop making faces or stop sighing to show how seriously these matters should be and are taken.
When it comes children in the early years they might not recognize whispers or making faces as bullying the same way that primary school children do. Therefore this kind of behavior could be addressed by the educator in a way of teaching and educating the children on what types of behavior can feel bad or insulting to other people. Children learn by acting and do-ing, which is why addressing these types situations instead of leaving them unnoticed can help young children to understand the concept of bullying more efficiently as they empathize with their peers. (Repo 2013)

The last type of bullying Höistad (2001) identifies is physical bullying. Physical bullying can be witnessed from external indicators such as torn clothes and bruises, but it can be more subtle as for example accidentally pushing someone over, hiding the victims belongings or it can be claimed to be a part of the play. There seems to be a contradiction in this type of bullying, because in a way negative physical acts are easier to spot and identify but on the other hand because of the apparent nature of the bullying it is most often carefully concealed and cov-ered up.

When defining bullying it is common to describe it as regular or recurring during a longer pe-riod of time. Kirves and Stoor-Grenner (2010a) point out that this definition has its risks. An individual perspective is left out entirely, if the idea of recurring bullying is held on too tight-

ly. An isolated instance of negative behavior can leave a person feeling degraded and insulted, fearing to be bullied again in the future. School-aged children have a more developed moral and psyche, which is why they can often recognize where and when their actions are not permitted. When it comes to small daycare children it is not always clear whether they perceive their actions as bullying as their understanding of right and wrong is still developing (Repo 2013).

3.2.1 Peer groups in bullying

One of the most common enticements for bullying is seen as improved status or power relations in peer groups. The notion of peer group includes a group of children who are roughly the same age or in the same developmental level (Ladd 2005, cited in Repo 2013, 116). There is a slight difference in the definition of a peer group and a friendship. Friendship is defined as strong bond and relationship between two individuals, whereas peer group includes the relationships between individuals in a determined group. Bullying most often observed where children act in peer groups, which can be found in daycares, schools, neighborhoods, playgrounds and after school programs. Peer groups can provide positive long term effects on individuals socialization and overall development. A good peer group and friendships support the child's development and creates possibilities for the development of positive interaction skills and strong self confidence. (Repo 2013)

In a peer group the children learn social and emotional skills which are important later in life. Peer groups can influence children's behavior and development as they learn communication and co-operation skills together. Different peer groups can raise a variety of different feelings in the children and thus they are useful learning tools for practicing controlling one's own emotions. (Salmivalli 2005) Peer groups support individuals in understandings themselves and their surrounding world. The child can compare oneself to other children and as they form their self perception. In a peer group the child learns different kind of behavior from others, for example in accepting or opposing bullying. Peer groups can help with the feeling of belonging and being accepted in the group. It is not always a straightforward matter when it comes to a child being accepted into a new peer group. Often the new child can be found as passive and observant, which makes it easier to comprehend what the others are doing. After understanding the group and its activities the child can have enough courage to join the group members. Positive feedback can help the child to become a fully functioning member of the group. Here the importance of the adult is highlighted as a facilitator who introduces the new child as a positive addition to the group. (Salmivalli 2005)

Höistad (2001) brings up teachers who bully their students at school. As an authority figure, the teacher has all the power and they might use it to select out one person in the group as a

target of mockery, sarcasm or even harassment. All of this usually happens straight in front of the class for everyone to witness. An example of this could be applied into the daycare world where the educator knowing that there is a child who is slow to eat or dress constantly reminds or picks out this individual in front of the group. Verbally reminding the individual to hurry up and eat or get dressed, not being "the last one again", will isolate the individual from the rest of the group and give a permission for the group members to think and act as the educator does.

3.2.2 Influences of bullying

Bullying affects holistically the development and growth of a child. Early prevention of bullying is essential, because studies have shown that bullying can have severe and long term effects on a person. Bullying has negative affects not only towards the bully and the bullied, but toward the whole group within which the bullying is occurring, which makes the atmosphere unsafe and unstable for all. (Repo 2013) Bullying brings an uproar of emotions that can range from inequality, lack of trust, betrayal, loneliness, rejection, embarrassment, guilt and anger. According to a neurological study social inclusion can activate the same parts of the brain as feeling physical pain or torture. When an individual has injured a part of their body it can be seen in a specific part of the brain. The same areas activate when someone is isolated from a group or has been treated unfairly. A broken leg and a broken mind are very describing expressions, because with both a mark is left in the brain. (Hamarus 2012)

It has been observed that children and youngsters who have been bullied have had symptoms of a lower self-esteem, depression, anxiety and even self destructive thoughts (Pörhölä 2008) Children who bully tend to continue bullying as adults, if no one interrupts the negative behavior in their childhood. Bullying can cause problems for both the bully and the bullied in human relationships later in life. (Pörhölä 2008) Many of the people sitting a sentence in prison have either been bullies or victims of bullying (Höistad 2001). There is a lot in common with bullies and the bullied, for example they both usually lack self-confidence. Both the bully and the bullied are victims, both have their own problems due to which their lives are more difficult than others (Höistad, 2001). The bullied person has trouble defending oneself against the negative behavior focused on them. In a bullying situation the balance of power is unequal. The imbalance can occur because the bully is physically bigger or stronger, better skilled verbally, older or they might have more friends. The bullies status in a group can be higher and they might know the victim's weaknesses and get support from the group for the bullying. The imbalance of power does not necessarily need to be real but the victim can experience the situation as such. (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010b)

This poses the question that can everybody become a bully or end up bullied? There are similarities in the characteristics of people who bully but no generalization can be made that all people who have this kind of a trait will end up as a bully. There are multiple exceptions with both bully and bullied person's characteristics that no groundbreaking rule can be made on what kind of people end up either bullying or being bullied. Human interaction is complicated, which makes it more challenging to simplify them by categorizing similar traits between individuals. In many cases the problems in human interactions result in bullying, however this often mistaken as differing appearance or behavior between the pair. Bullies can use arguments based on appearance, but often these are just excuses to the reasons leading to bullying. Bullying can become a group phenomenon where one individual is the bully and the rest of the group give their consent by not interfering with the bullying, which translates to passively accepting what is happening. Power and status in a group is often pursued through bullying. Bullying raises interest amongst a group, good and bad, and often the group members give their approval to the bullying situation by for example laughing at what is happening. (Repo 2013)

In studies it has become apparent that there are some noticeable differences in the way boys and girls bully (Höistad 2001; Hamarus 2012). Girls tend to resort towards social inclusion, bad mouthing and gossiping. Boys often tend use more physical measures on each other. However these scenarios can turn both ways and girls can become physically violent just as boys can talk badly about each other. (Hamarus 2012) When looking for reasons to the typical differences in bullying between genders Höistad (2001) gives a possible explanation to this in the way people treat boys and girls differently. Boys might have more room to act out physically and they are not so restricted in their outbursts. Girls on the other hand are often hushed silent with a certain gender expectation of what girls should behave like. In the aggressions themselves between genders there is no real difference, they just appear differently.

3.3   Creative methods

Creative methods involves using artistic activities to achieve set goals with client or educational groups. There are a wide range of artistic activities that can be applied, which include music, creative writing, pictures, drama and so on. In most cases activities are designed to be able to include everyone and anyone. Because of this it is natural for the instructors of these methods to mold the artistic activity to fit goals of the group they are working with. (Vahala 2003) Hohenthal-Antin (2013) explains how a variety of creative methods can help to support demented clients. Vahala (2003) explains that, even though the focus of her work is to prevent addictive drug use, the methods can be applied to any client group.

Owens and Barber (2010) explain that using drama as a method is effective with children, because the method itself and children are playful. Through the use of media the process can be recorded and reflected upon with the participants. Children can identify with the characters of the video that can bring about deeper reflection (Mustonen 2002).

3.3.1 Drama

Vahala (2003) explains that how drama is defined depends on what age is in question. It is natural for children to play and adults can play through drama. Drama can be used in a variety of different ways depending on the client group. Drama can be used as an icebreaker or even therapeutically. Owens and Barber (2010) argue that using drama as a teaching method is a natural with children as they never stop playing.

Story drama or process drama is a participant friendly and flexible drama method. Story drama can be based on a story, book, play or even a photograph. Sessions are guided by one person, but the participants creativity shape each session. Each session has 4 phases, which include warming up, introduction, activity and ending. The warm-up can have small games or exercises that help spark creativity. During the introduction the group leader can share a story with the group, which will be the theme of the session. The point is to introduce the theme of the session after which it is more natural to move on to the activity phase. During the activity phase the objective is to invite the participants to act out the theme and everyone should have a role they are comfortable with. At the ending phase it is important to debrief what happened and make it clear that the acting has ended. (Vahala 2010)

Sociodrama is a method which invites participants in a group to spontaneously act within mutually agreed-upon scenarios. In these scenarios participants have the opportunity to express their thoughts, values and feelings, and creatively solve problems. As the participants act they can try different roles in action which can help them to understand themselves and others better. Similarly to story drama, sociodrama is structured into phases. These phases are called warm-up, enactment and sharing. (Strernberg & Garcia 2000)

Sociodrama includes three goals and possible sessions should provide a safe platform to express emotions outlined in the goals. The first goal is catharsis, which means expression of feelings. Catharsis can be helpful if participants have feelings that they might hide from themselves or others. These feelings may be pent-up and give relief to participants when expressed. The second goal is insight, which means that participants might receive insight in how another person acts. This insight brings attention to a way of thinking that the participant had not considered before. The third and final goal allows participants to partake in role

training. Role training allows participants to practice behavior in unfamiliar situations. (Strernberg & Garcia 2000)

3.3.2 Media education

Media has become a tangible part of everyday life, because of this it is important to educate children about media from an early age. Media education invites adults to give children tools to study media in a critical manner. Another essential part of this is helping children get familiar with different media creating equipment. (Santavuori 2011) One form of media education is media play, which is a child friendly approach to media education. Media play gives children the opportunity to explore media with different media tools and to explore media critically. Through media play children can learn in a functional, experience able and exploratory way. The children can be encouraged to use cameras to make their own stories and in the end the group could watch them together. (Santavuori 2011)

In order to use media methods efficiently the instructor should consider the age group they are working with. 3-6-year-old children go through significant changes in how they understand the world around them. One example of this is understanding the permanence of the matters around them. If an item is hidden it does not mean it stopped existing. (Salokoski & Mustonen 2007) Motion pictures can help participants to cope and analyze different emotions. Children especially can identify with characters in stories and through them can consider complex life situations. (Mustonen 2002) Because of this it is important for the viewer to watch age appropriate material.

Children are surrounded by media from an early age, which makes media a great developmental method. It is important to consider what type of media children consume and how utilize interesting media through educational means. Children can be found enjoying, learning and socializing through media in their daily life. Media gives ideas for play, conversation and mutual activities. (Niinistö & Ruhala 2007)

4 Study design

According to studies bullying intervention should begin as early as possible and an essential part of this prevention relies in supporting the social skills of individuals (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a). With this fact in mind this thesis project was designed to support the social skills of 6-year-olds in order to prevent bullying. The objectives focus on children's social skills and participation. Before the implementation of this project began the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were weighed and considered.

4.1 Objectives

The main objective of the project was to encourage the children to participate in the activities during each session in order to practice their social skills. In order to reach the objectives relevant methods were chosen to aid the process. These methods included play, drama and media education. Through participation children were able to practice relevant skills required to resolve issues and situations concerning bullying. Participation included taking part in each session's activities or discussions. By including individuals in group activities the participants could gain positive experiences. Positive experiences in turn could strengthen their self-confidence and improve their understanding of other peers (Repo 2013). Bullying often occurs when there is an imbalance of power relations within the peer groups or when there are complications in individual interactions. By keeping the challenges of peer interactions in mind, the activities were carefully planned to provide learning events to support positive interactions between the children.

Each session and the activities within were planned to support specific social skills. These social skills included interaction, empathy, recognizing peers actions and emotions and discussion of one's feelings and thoughts. The activities aimed to include all children, which allowed each participant to practice their social skills with their peers. Research on bullying has revealed that supporting the child's emotional and interaction skills serves a crucial part in preventing bullying (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a; Repo 2013; Höistad, 2001). Peer groups can influence children's behavior and development as they learn to communicate and co-operate with each other. Peer groups can cause a variety of emotions, which present excellent opportunities for children to practice emotion control. (Salmivalli 2005) Theories and studies (Piaget 1977, Kohlberg 1992, cited in Repo 2013, 40) indicate that children's moral and empathic abilities develop gradually and by school age children should have the required abilities to understand other people's feelings. For these reasons it is important to guide the children's awareness of bullying when their moral learning is amenable.

The focus of the project was to educate children, but it was considered important to allow the adults around the children to learn about bullying as well. The educators at the daycare are quite familiar with the subject and have suitable plans intervening with bullying if conflicts arise. The project goals supported the daycares own goals in bullying prevention, which was a positive realization for both parties involved. After this thesis paper is published the parents will be e-mailed a link to the finished publication, which may help their understanding of bullying or remind them of the facts they are already aware of. Even though all of the parents may not take time to read the finished paper, it was considered important to allow them the opportunity to do so. This way the parents will be able to read about their children's

development and consider their part in preventing their children's bullying as they enter the school world.

4.2   SWOT -analysis

One of the evaluation methods used was the SWOT -analysis. The abbreviation SWOT comes from the words strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT - analysis is used to assess the above mentioned factors in for example a learning event or a project. The SWOT -analysis is a convenient tool in assessing one's work, because it is easy to use and apply, does not require a lot of tools and it can be done in an individual or group setting. (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2010) The analysis is always done before the project implementation begins, in the planning stage, to help examine different angles of the project. SWOT -analysis is divided into internal and external factors, strengths and weaknesses being the internal factors and oppor-tunities and threats being the external factors. The SWOT - analysis can be very subjective in the way that how two different people working on the same project can result in very varying outcomes and views on the factors (Opetushallitus 2015). Often in the outcomes of the analy-sis it can be seen that the same factors can be classified into both strengths and weaknesses or opportunities and threats. This can also arise when in the beginning of the project both the present and the future is imagined and assessed. (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2010)

The method was used because of its benefits in mapping all possible factors which may affect the project. By being aware of various different factors connected to the project it is easier to improve on weaknesses and minimize the detected threats. By realizing the factors in-volved it is easier to enhance and exploit the strengths and opportunities of the project and the researchers.

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
• Project work is familiar • Good cooperation skills • Knowledge on working with children • Familiarity of work in day care • Topic of personal interest • Familiar implementation methods • Children participating are unknown • Ability to alter the implementation plans if needed	• Personal timetable is quite tight • First time using some methods with children • No prior experience in the activities • Children participating are unknown

Opportunities:	Threats:
• New learning event • Deepening professional skills • Opportunity to make a change in the children's views and beliefs • The children get a chance to practice their social skills	• Possible illness on the day of implementation • The children will not be able to participate or will be ill on the day of implementation • The children will not want to participate or will be too shy • The video camera can affect the children's behaviour • Some of the children might not want to see themselves in the video in the end • The children will not learn about bullying • Children might not be able to give feedback Unfamiliarity of the spaces available in the day care

4.3   Implementation

The sessions were implemented with the preschool group of Tuohimäki daycare. The group consisted of 13 6-year-olds and the majority of the group were boys. The sessions were implemented in Finnish. Some of the children had taken part in the Second Step program. The project was executed during the month of May 2015, which allowed meetings with the full group before summer holidays began. At this point in time the preschoolers were already familiar with each other and had formed their group identity. The sessions were held in the mornings, because some of the children might have not been present in the afternoon as they might have had daycare only in the mornings. This time suited the groups educators timetables and according to the educators the children are normally more energetic in the morning time. During each session one of us would lead the children in play, while the other was responsible for observing and making sure the camera was recording properly.

According to research, key areas in bullying prevention include supporting children's emotional and interactive skills (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a; Repo 2013; Höistad, 2001). When in play children naturally develop a range of skills, which help strengthen self-confidence. (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015) Similarly through drama participants are encouraged

to express their thoughts, values and feelings with each other (Strernberg & Garcia 2000). Because of the similarities in goals it was easy to adopt drama as a method. The sessions were planned to be suitable for whole preschool group regardless of their race, disabilities or gender. The activities encouraged prosocial behavior among participants. Prosocial behavior, without defining the motive, includes all purposeful activity where one helps another. These activities include helping, sharing, donating, sympathy, friendliness, co-operation and respecting others (Isomäki & Kukkonen 1993, Eisenberg 1982, cited in Pulkkinen 2002). Sessions were designed to be challenging and playful. Bruce (2011) explains that as children play, they often operate at a higher level and through adult supported play these skills can be further challenged and developed.

The implemented sessions can be divided into three phases. During the first phase the whole group was be present. The first phase consisted of introductions and getting to know each other as one big group. The second phase consisted of two sessions within which the subject of bullying was discussed through creative methods and play. The last phase consisted of reflection and sharing. Each session was recorded with a video camera, because by filming each session observations would be easier to make. For the final session a video collage of all activities was assembled for the children to reminisce what they have done during the project. Watching the video on the last session allowed children to reflect the whole experience better through audiovisual reminders. Mustonen (2002) outlines that, motion pictures can help participants to cope and analyze different emotions. An important part of each session was the discussion with the participants lead by the adult. All questions had been premeditated in order to encourage meaningful conversation. It was also considered positive if the children's comments took the conversation to a specific theme or matter.

Each of the sessions were structured by the different stages that are commonly found in social drama. Sternberg & Garcia (2000) emphasize that by keeping the structure clear makes the session more effective. Each session has the same structure in order to maintain effectiveness. The session structures include elements from sociodrama and story drama. Both methods have effective structures and elements, which support participant acting and learning. Session structure includes warm-up, introduction, enactment and sharing. Warm-up consists of small games or exercises, which help spark creativity. After the warm-up phase the theme of the session would be presented in the introduction phase. Vahala (2010) explains, that in story drama stories are shared to help the participants to understand the theme better. The enactment stage, which can be referred to as the activity stage, invites participants to express themselves and creatively solve problems. Sternberg & Garcia (2000) explain that in sociodrama participants have the opportunity to try different roles, which in return can help them understand themselves and each other better. Sternberg and Garcia (2000) along

with Vahala (2010) emphasize that during the sharing stage it is important to debrief what happened and make it clear that the acting has ended.

The first session was held with the whole preschool group. The sessions after were held twice as the group was split into two smaller groups. Session A refers to sessions lead by Lydia and observed by Sini. Session B refers to sessions lead by Sini and observed by Lydia. The session instructor is titled as "leader" in the session descriptions. The leader lead the children through the activities and the observer made free record notes of their observations. All of the children in the group were randomly coded with a letter from the alphabet. Through coding it was considered easier to hide the genders and identities of the children, whilst discussing what specific children did during each session.

4.3.1 First session

The first session was held on the 4th of May and the whole group was present at the session. The session was planned to take place within one hour. The first session's goal was to get to know each other and familiarize participants with the subject of bullying. An important part of this session was to encourage the children to express their thoughts and feelings on the different subjects at hand. 6-year-olds find it increasingly easier than in earlier years to describe emotions with words (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015). The videos viewed gave the participants the opportunity to empathize with the characters. Empathy as a skill is easier to master when the child recognizes and can name their own emotions. With empathy skills it is increasingly easier to recognize different emotions in others (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010b). By discussing opinions and emotions participants can become increasingly more aware of how others feel. Empathy is not mastered in one session, but it is an important skill to master when bullying is concerned. (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a; Repo 2013; Höistad, 2001) For the first session all but one member of the group was present, which was considered positive as most of the children would recognize both Lydia and Sini in later sessions. The leader of this session was Lydia and Sini was the observer. During the warm-up participants were encouraged to share their own names and likes. The group sat in a big circle and as one person at a time shared their name and something that they liked. If the other participants liked the same thing, they could raise their hand to point their agreeing opinion. This activity was considered as an efficient warm-up by Hyyppönen and Linnossuo (2006 a, 10). All of the children participated in the warm-up activity and were able to come up with things which they liked. Most children were able to come up with a different types of things which they like which differed from what others had already shared. A few participants said the same answer of enjoying building with legos. Some children were a little hesitant in raising their hands to indicate that they liked the same thing and they were glancing at each other to see who were raising their hands first.

After the warm-up short Moomin videos were viewed with the participants. The Moomin videos have been compiled together by Mannerheimin Lastensuojeluliitto (Muumi-tietoiskut 2015). These videos present a situation in the Moomin world that falls under a specific theme. The themes addressed ranged from accepting difference to thanking others. Due to time restraints all videos could not be viewed and the video clips chosen intertwined with goals of this project in discussing bullying. The videos picked for viewing were: we accept difference (hyväksymme erilaisuutta), we do not use violence (emme käytä väkivaltaa) and we do not bully (emme kiusaa). Through media the children can be invited to reflect and identify with the charters on the videos presented (Mustonen 2002). After each video there was a discussion on what happened and why did a character in the video behave the way they did. During the discussion the children were encouraged to share similar experiences or stories that these videos reminded them of. The videos were meant to spark conversation, which is why it is important to allow each of the children to freely share their opinions about the events they witnessed in the video (Koskenlahti 2013, 4-5).

When the topic of Moomin videos was introduced to the children, child A immediately expressed disliking the subject. Others then followed the child's example in making "yuck" noises. However once the videos were played all children were fully engaged watching them for the short moment of the video. When the children were asked what Moomin character they would like to be, child A immediately raised hand, while no one else did, and answered the character Tiuhti. After this two other children followed with the same answer. When the leader asked all the children if anyone wanted to be a character besides Tiuhti, no one answered. The children were then asked to think of similarities and differences that they might have with their friends and family. It seemed to be easy for the children to come up with for example similarities and differences in taste of food, horoscopes and letters in one's name. After the "We do not use violence" video, the children were asked what does the word violence mean. Most children said they know what violence means, child G expressed not understanding the word. The children were asked to explain the word and child F answered that it means killing other people. Another child answered violence involves be hitting other people. The leader went on to ensure the children understand what violence means. Through this conversation the next video "We do not bully" was watched. The children were asked about the feeling of anger. The ones who had siblings said that they have been angry with their siblings and vice versa. The leader asked what does it feel like to be hit or pushed over by someone else. Child A answered:

"Tyhmältä! Ja sit jos joku tönäsee nii mä vedän takas." -A

"Stupid! And then is someone pushes I will do back." -A

"Miltäs luulet et se sitte tuntuu tönijästä se - jos susta tuntuu tyhmältä ni tuntuuks se tönijästä kans tyhmältä?" -Lydia

"What do you think it feels like for the pusher then - if it feels stupid to you, does it feel stupid for the pusher?" -Lydia

"Noo, sitku se saa takas, ni sit ku… sit mä näytän, et… et tollast sä teit mulle ni mä vedän nyt sua takas" -A

"Well when it gets back, then… I will show that… that is what you did to me so I do it to you back." -A

After this the leader asked the children what does bullying mean. One child answered that copying is bullying if it does not feel nice to the other. The leader asked if there was any other kind of bullying and the children replied there are a lot of different kinds of bullying. At this point child F disagreed with copying being bullying. The child stated that they copy all the time when they want to learn something.

All other children, except for E & J were able or willing to contribute the discussion at some point during the video debriefing. Throughout the children had some trouble concentrating in the discussions about the videos. Some were whispering to each other and did not listen to other children or adults talking. A few were sitting with their back towards the leader. Especially towards the end of the discussion it was visible that many of the children were fidgeting in their spots, talking to each other or did not seem to pay attention to the activity at hand. Originally it was planned to show four videos to the children. The last video, with the theme "We say sorry" (Pyydämme anteeksi) was left out, because the children seemed restless and unable to concentrate.

The next activity involved the group sitting in a circle as one person would begin by passing the same expression on their face from one person to another. For example the first person made a sad expression to the person sitting next to them and as they observed it, they copied it and passed it along to the person next to them. This was done until the last person in the circle has seen the expression. Finally everyone will be able to see the expression after which, there will be a short discussion on what has changed and what the children think the expression represents. Koskenlahti (2013, 14) explains that this activity encourages children to observe each other in recognizing different expressions. The point of the activity was for the children to practice understanding other people's feelings, emotions and expressions. The activity was repeated four times and at all rounds the faces which the children came up with were rather similar. When the children were asked about the faces and what they might

mean to the person doing the facial expression, the children did not have many comments for questions asked.

The next activity involved using the whole space of the room. The objective was for the children to individually decide their opinion based on an argument which was presented to the group by the leader. When they had decided what their opinion to the argument is, they would move toward either the left or the right side of the room. One side of the room meant that they agreed and the other side meant that the disagreed with the argument presented. The arguments were for example it is okay to push back if someone pushed you first, I get scared if I see others fight, if you do not fight you are a coward and so on. This activity is by Koskenlahti (2013, 15) and encourages participants to share opinions through movement.

The children often were looking at each other before they moved to state their answers. All of participants in most cases moved to the same side of the room. A few times some children might have been taking steps away from the majority opinion, but changed sides to match with their peers answers. When the children were presented with a statement "The one who wins the fight is the best" all other children moved to the NO side of the room. Child F noticed this and moved towards the side YES. The then leader encouraged everyone to make individual choices and asked why child F had decided first to go to the opposite side. The child answered with a little stuttered voice that the winner was the better one because they stopped the fight. At this point other children were swirling around and looking at the floor or the ceiling, not seeming to pay attention to the conversation. At one point child G asked the leader to repeat the statement because the child had not been listening to it on the first time. When the children were asked whether they are afraid when someone is fighting the answers were most spread. Mostly girls in the group stepped into the YES side and boys to the NO side. The children seemed to have trouble concentrating on the activity at hand, they were moving widely, uncontrolled in the space, swirling around oneself, talking to each other and or engaged in something by themselves. Towards the end of the game most children started running from side NO to side YES, trying to go to the furthermost corner of the space available.

The final part of the session involved gathering feedback. First the group gathered in a circle, but this time they faced the outside of the circle. The idea was to turn around at the same time and for the children to express feelings about the day with their face. After the feedback on the first session was gathered with the expression game, the children were given the opportunity to give verbal feedback if they wanted to. Hyyppönen and Linnossuo (2006b, 73) presented that the goal of this activity is to gather feedback from the group through visual and audible means. In the activity children were mostly showing similar faces. Similar to each other and similar or each round. The children were looking at each other's expressions and

whilst watching each other the expression changed. Children started laughing when looking at each other sitting in the circle. The leader then asked the children to raise their hands and tell what they liked about the day's session. One child said that they liked the expression game in the beginning of the day, three others followed with the same answer. All children had the opportunity to say something they liked or did not like about the day's session.

4.3.2 Second session

The second session was held on the 6th of May. The group was divided into two smaller groups of children. The sessions were roughly 45 minutes each, first group A followed straight after by group B. The goals for this session were to encourage children to consider solutions for possible conflicts and to discuss difference. During the main exercise children had the opportunity to change negative situations into positive ones through drama. This was the first session to include drama as a method, which is well suited for 6-year-olds as they enjoy different imagination- and role playing games (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015). Preschoolers are increasingly more confident and aware of what behavior is acceptable, which in practice helps them consider how the outcome of a conflict should be (Sharman et al. 2007). The activity required participants to cooperate and to think how to reshape the presented conflict. These skills can be described as prosocial, which can be improved by practice and adult support. (Isomäki & Kukkonen 1993, Eisenberg 1982, cited in Pulkkinen 2002) Early bullying prevention can be done by strengthening the children's interaction and empathy skills as well as supporting the children's peer relations (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a). Similarly to the first session the children were encouraged to discuss the topics at hand.

The second session was structured so that half of the group would participate at a time. In practice this was roughly 5-6 children at a time, which gave each child more time to express themselves during the session. The session was repeated with both groups, but due to the nature of drama and the subject at hand both sessions were not identical. For the first activity the children were invited to use the whole space of the room. Music was played for the group and as the music played the children were encouraged to freely move in the space. Rules dictate that as the music stops the children had to stop as well and assume a statue-like position. During the stop the children could take a moment to look at the different statues in the room and then resume to move around as the music continued. This activity by Koskenlahti (2013, 8) encourages to participants view differences in each other as statues.

In the session A, 6 children were present, D, G, H, J, K & M. Children assumed the game rules easily. As the music started the children were walking and dancing in the space. All children were moving close to each other as the music played. Child G was going in circles by oneself, not paying close attention to others. When the music stopped all children stopped as statues.

Children M & G were falling down to the floor after a few stops. The children were laughing at the falling statues.

During Session B the children A, C, E, I and L were present. As the rules were explained children A, C and L expressed familiarity in the activity. As the activity begun most children appeared to be fully engaged in play. All except for child E moved fairly independently in the space. Child E seemed a bit unsure moving around as expressively as others did. Participant E followed the example of a friend and how other participants moved around, however after a couple pauses child E began moving in a more expressive manner. Expressive movement includes moving hands widely, jumping, taking big steps and so on. Some participants sang along to the music as they moved around. All seemed to enjoy the activity and most were smiling or even giggling.

After the warm-up the children were reminded of what happened in the previous session. The children were reminded of the Moomin videos and the short discussion on everyone being different. After this a story was shared by Orvola (2000) about Elmeri, the color patched elephant, who wishes to be like other elephants. This story was chosen as it highlights the theme for the session. The theme for this session was to discuss diversity in people and to practice solving problems that might arise from differences of opinions and viewpoints. After the story was read the subject was discussed by asking questions about the book.

In session A the children seemed to be engaged in the story of Elmeri looking and quietly listening at the leader reading the story. The children laughed at the places where it was expected for them to laugh. After the story the leader made a series of questions for the children. Child M was most active and raised hand to answer to most questions. All children raised their hands to answer when they were asked if Elmeri was feeling better in the end of the story. During the discussion three children M, G and D answered the questions asked by the leader. The discussion after the story was quite brief overall. Children did not give out many answers to the leaders question.

During session B all of the children raised their hands when the leader asked if Elmeri looked like a normal elephant. All of the children agreed that he did not look normal. Child A explained looking at the cover of the book that Elmeri is a very colorful elephant. The leader reads the story and all appear to be listening. At the end of the story the leader asks the children what happened in the story. A answered again by explaining that Elmeri was different to all the other elephants and when Elmeri made himself look like everyone else no one recognized him. Others did not raise their hands to answer the questions.

The next exercise required the children to pair up. One group had an uneven number of children, which resulted one of the Tuohimäki teachers pairing up with a child. This risk was considered beforehand and if the teacher had not volunteered, the leader of the session would have paired up with the child without a partner. This activity by Koskenlahti (2013,14) involves one pair at a time to assume a still statue position, which portrayed a conflict situation. The other participants looked at the statue and explained what they understood from the portrayal. After this the participants one at a time moved one body part of the statue person toward a more peaceful portrayal. For example if a hand was raised at a fist then a child could move that to hug the other person. The expressions of the statues could be changed as well to portray a more positive situation. Koskenlahti (2013, 4) explains that this activity allows participants to effectively practice their social skills.

In session A the children were paired up for the exercise by the teacher of Tuohimäki daycare. Other children were sitting on the sofa while two were acting out the statue situation. The children's idea of a friendly situation was changing the statues to hold hands or hug and smile. There were nine statue situations in total of which only one portrayed something else in the end than hugging or holding hands. This was the statue of J & H which ended up with both standing towards each other, hands up in the air as cheering and smiling. The statues sometimes had trouble not laughing when something funny was happening. For example child J was trying to hold and angry face, but did not succeed because the other children's laughter was contagious. The children were laughing a lot during the activity. Overall the children seemed to enjoy the activity. They were eager to act out the statues as well as to change the statue portrayals.

During session B child E paired up with the Tuohimäki daycare teacher as there was an uneven amount of children present. The teacher volunteered herself to pair with the child and helped divide the group into pairs. Children A and C were the first to begin. The leader suggested that they could be a statue in which one person tried to trip the other person. Since it was a new activity for the children they were a bit hesitant in moving the different body parts at first. The first statue was turned into two persons holding each other's hands. After this L and I were encouraged to portray a statue where one person is making faces to the other pair. As the children moved the different body parts the leader encouraged them to think how to make the end positive by asking what it would look like if they saw a friend. The pair ended up shaking each other's hands. E and the teacher pairing up caused some giggles in the participants. It was fun for the children to see their teacher act as a statue. Child E was a little hesitant to assume a statue position and was encouraged to do so by the leader and teacher. The same child was quite hesitant to change the statues for the first few rounds, but got more comfortable with it later on in the activity. Just as the first round ended the leader asked if the children would like to do another round of the game. Some of the children shout-

ed simultaneously yes or no. During following rounds children did seem keen to participate as they did look at the statues and thought of statute changes quite fast. Already at the second round of statues pair A and C thought of their own statue to show to others. The leader encouraged the participants to think of versatile ending scenarios for the statues. Friendly ends included giving instead of taking, holding both hands, hugging and dancing.

Before the session came to an end it was important to help the children come out of their acting roles. This involved gathering the group in a circle and for them to shake different body parts. After this the group sat down in a circle in order to discuss the session with the help of a soft animal. The one from the circle who had the soft animal could share in words, expression or movement what they thought of the session. Hyyppönen and Linnossuo (2006a, 64) presented that this activity allows the participants to debrief and be heard.

At the end of session A all of the children were all shaking their bodies and limbs, joining in counting down the shakes with the leader. The children sat down in a circle with the leader after the shaking. As the stuffed animal was passed around the circle to indicate whose turn it was to speak, all children answered that they liked the statue game. The leader then asked all children together if they liked the other activities done that day. All children answered yes out loud together to the question.
Overall all children were able to participate in the activities during this session. Some were more active answering questions and coming up with their own ideas than others.

At the end of session B the children enjoyed shaking the roles out before they sat down to discuss the activities of the day. Before the leader passed around the soft animal she asked all the participants what the day had been like. Child I was the first one to receive the soft animal and the leader again asked what the child would like to tell about the day. Child I explained that they had played statues and had to move positions of the statues. It was commonly agreed that the activity was fun. Child A shared that a nice story was heard of the elephant Elmeri who was different to all the other elephants, which made the elephant sad. Child L shared that the warm-up activity was fun. Child C shared that the statute activity was nice and nicest part was to move the other statues. Child E agreed with what child L said. Overall the session went well. All the children participated in all activities. At times some of the children hesitated to act or answer questions, but they made efforts in participating.

4.3.3 Third session

The third session shared similarities in structure with the second session. The third session was held on the 11th of May. Participants were again in smaller groups, however the theme for the third session was different. The theme of this session was to share thoughts on apolo-

gizing, which would be addressed through activities and discussion. The goals for the third session were for the children to discuss apologizing and to consider different situations where one can apologize. The children would be able to show their creative solutions to conflicts in role play situations in a new drama activity. It is not always easy to recognize that something ones says or does might hurt others, however emotional recognition is a skill children practice throughout the years. Even though children understand what is right and wrong it does not automatically mean they behave accordingly. (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015) The drama activity allowed children to safely practice this skill as they thought of more positive outcomes to conflicts. Practicing this skill together with peers can have long term positive effects on an individual's confidence and interaction skills (Repo 2013).

The session began with a warm-up activity. In order to warm-up the leader called out different roles, which the children could assume while walking around the room. These roles could be animal or people related roles. After a few role switches the children could take turns to suggest roles for the group to assume.

In session A, there was six children present, B,D,G,H,J & K. The leader began by explaining what roles are, how one takes on a role and after this asked the children to start the activity by assuming a role of a puppy. After this the a role of a fireman was called out and all the children started pretending to put out a fire together. A blanket on a bed played as the fire. All other children were interacting with each other in the roles except for child G. The child was coming up with individual ways of acting out the role. When the children were asked to take a role of a teacher, child G started pointing a finger around as a mark of someone being naughty. Others were watching child G and started to copy. Taking the role of a teacher seemed difficult for the children to act out. Children H, J & K were mostly looking at what other children were doing. When acting as monkeys, children D,G & B started making loud monkey noises and they could not hear the leader say stop to the game. Other children were holding their ears. Once the children were asked to think of roles on their own, child G was the only one to come up with some roles such as clowns and robots. All children participated in the activity. Children H & J were constantly close to each other and moving around in one place doing small movements. Others were utilizing most of the surrounding space freely.

Session B included children A, C, E, I, L and F who was not present for the previous session. Before the warm-up the leader with the help of child A reminded what they did during the warm-up last time. After this the leader asked if the participants knew what roles are. Most exclaimed out loud that yes they do know what roles mean. When asked Child F helps explain the definition of roles. The leader suggested the first role to be dogs. All children assume 4-legged stances and start walking around. Child E follows friend around and looks what other children do and walks around like a dog. After a while child F comments that the barks of C

sound a little bit like monkey howls. Some roles were easier for all to assume, for example worms and robots. When asked children C, F and A suggest roles for the group to assume. Some children can be found exploring the roles more independently and creatively. During cat role child L in a catlike manner licks front paws and child C attempts to pee like a cat. Visually all the children seem to assume roles eagerly and some even make relevant sounds to each roles.

After the warm-up it was time to introduce the theme for the session. The theme for the session was to discuss apologizing and to practice apologizing in different scenarios. The leader read a story by Koskenlahti (2013, 13) which tells about a girl who does not know when to apologize. The children stuck their thumbs up in the air when they thought the girl should say sorry. At the end of the story there was a short discussion on apologizing.

In session A the leader explained the rules of the activity and emphasized the importance of listening to the storyline. Throughout the story children K, G & B were sitting faced to the big window, unlike the others, and they were observed looking out the window many times. In the first part of the story when sorry should be said, only one child raised their thumb to indicate saying sorry. Others followed this child's actions and stuck their thumbs up. After the first part children quickly took on the story and found places where sorry should be said. After each "sorry section" the leader explained and discussed shortly with a few words why sorry should be said in this situation. In the end of the story the leader asked the children to reminisce the instances in which one should have said sorry. At first the children did not answer this questions but after some extra questions and encouragement they were able to remember some parts of the story. All children shared parts of the story except for child B. The leader then asked the children is it always easy to say sorry and if they could share a story where they had trouble saying sorry. The children did not answer to this request.

Session B proceeded with the leader explaining the theme for today and what the participants should do as they listened to the story. The leader began reading the story and child I needed a tissue to blow their nose into. The daycare teacher helped with this, which meant that the story was not interrupted. As the first situation to apologize in rose up child I was the first one to raise their hand and right after A and C raised their hands. After a short pause F, E and L followed. After this the children quite swiftly lifted their hands up to different apologizing situations. Only situations that where the children did not raise their hands were when ringtones played and when Tiina arrived late at the cafe. When playing ringtones was not guessed the leader asked the children why it may not be nice to play ringtones loudly on the bus. Child E answered explaining that the loud music may disturb others. At the end of the story the leader asked the children why does one say sorry in different situations. After a pause child A explains that the other person feels bad. The leader recapped the sorry scenarios with

the help of children I, F, C and F. After this the leader asks if it is easy to apologize. Some agree and some disagree out loud. Teacher commented that it may depend on the situation if it easy to apologize. The leader then asks when it is difficult to apologize. Child A answered that if someone does something really bad and then you feel bad about it yourself it is hard to know if you are able to say sorry.

Following the story the it was time for the drama activities. The leader poured make believe dust on all of the children. This made everyone speak gibberish. As everyone spoke gibberish to each other, their goal was to try to figure out together how to say sorry. Everyone was encouraged to speak out their own way of saying sorry and at the end of the exercise the children presented their own way of saying sorry in gibberish. After each word for sorry was presented there was a discussion on apologizing. This activity by Koskenlahti (2013, 26) encourages children to playfully begin discussion on apologizing. After this it was time for the main activity, which involved acting out conflict situations and encouraging audience to help think of a more pleasant ending to the conflict for the pair to act out. This activity encouraged cooperation between actors and viewers as they try to creatively to solve the situation.

In session A the children had a little trouble understanding the rules of the activity in the beginning. As the leader told the group about the "magic dust", some children expressed disbelief in the magical dust. The leader went on in explaining how to speak gibberish and had to start the game herself as the children seemed confused about the situation. After this the children got into the activity and were talking to each other with their own languages. All children moved freely in the room talking to each other in their own languages. Once the leader asked one by one the children to tell their words for sorry in gibberish, all ended up having very different sounding sorry words.

After the gibberish activity the leader started to explain the main activity for the children. The leader explained the first scenario throughout to the children as they acted it out because they seemed to have problems understanding the activity. Children B & G were paired up to enact a role situation where one was the father and one was a child. They could not decide on who is who and started doing a counting game to determine who plays who. The children could not come to a conclusion between them about the enactment, which is why the leader suggested another role situation. Child B was not present in the previous statue session and the child needed some guidance into settling into the role. With the help of the other participants and the leader the situation was changed into a better one. After a few runs the activity rules were modified a little. At first the children had enacted a scenario a bad way, then did the same scenario again in a good way. The rules changed so that within the scenario the children practiced how to change the bad scenario into a good one by saying sorry and acting accordingly to it.

In another situation after the rule change child G played an old man in a bus trying to get a seat. The child was talking something not related to the situation to oneself. The other children did not follow child G in the story. Children H & J enacted a situation where a little sister was playing with the big sister's lipstick. The children were able to play out the scenario so well by themselves that they did not need the help of the leader in order to make the situation better again.

The children's concentration started to fade during the activity. Child K was playing with a stuffed animal toy whilst sitting in the audience, distracting child D by putting the toy by the child's head. As children were waiting for their turn in the audience they had trouble paying attention, listening and staying quiet. Throughout the activity the children had difficulties in understanding and following the point and the rules of the activity. The leader made plenty of questions and remarks in order to help the children to enact the situations.
In the very end the leader stated that the children had found it easy in the game to say sorry, but it might not be as easy to say it in real life. The leader summed the session up by repeating to the children that by saying sorry one can change a bad situation into a better one.

During session B participants were curious about the magic dust as they had heard about it from the previous group during the switch. At first children spoke to same gender friends, but after the leader encouraged to speak to others the children began moving around more and speaking to others as well. Children A and C started making soft bumping into others motions as if to apologize for bumping into another person. Child E smiled a lot to the gibberish others spoke and walked with other participants, but did not seem so speak gibberish as much or loudly as others did. In the end participants were gathered in a circle to share their gibberish word for sorry. The words sounded quite similar to each other, with the exception of child C.

For the main activity all the children paired up with each other and took turns to act as others watched. Children A and F began by acting a scenario where one had to cut in line. For the solution child C suggested that they simply walk peacefully in line. In another scenario child E pretended to bump into Child C causing C to drop a toy. Child A suggested that E apologized for bumping into C. Child E was quite shy to act, but said sorry when encouraged by the leader. L and I acted out a scenario where one of them changed the TV channel without the others permission and left the room. Child A suggested that the child should return to the room to change the channel and apologize. Starting from the second round 2 pairs thought their own scenarios to act. Usually the scenario was suggested by one person. The teacher suggested a scenario, for children I and L, they commonly have at the daycare. I and L washed their hands while splashing water all over. The leader invited child C to act as the teacher would in this situation. Child C reminded the children to clean the counters as they are making a mess. This caused widespread giggles among the group. I and L cleaned the

counters and began to make their way to sit down. The leader asked should they say something to child C who was acting as the teacher. L apologized but child I said that they had not done anything wrong. At this point the leader reminded that this was a play scenario and in reality child I might not have misbehaved, but this situation was acting.

Some scenarios brought surprised reactions from actors and viewers. For example an acting scenario, which involved stealing a toy happened so fast that it left the toy less child baffled how fast the toy had been taken. After a couple more suggested scenarios the leader asked for 3 volunteers for a bus scenario. F and I sit in the bus and C acts as an old man who wishes to sit down, but the bus is quite full. C sat on the lap of I, which again resulted in a burst of giggles in the room. The leader invited all to discuss what should actually be done. Child F commented that it would not be fair to have the old man sit at their places, because then they would not have anywhere to sit. The teacher was surprised by this answer and asked if child F really thinks this way. Child F quickly commented that they would give way to the old man acted by child C. In a later situation F also questioned the solution as the logistics of it did not make sense and suggested a new solution. Overall the activity went well as it sparked different suggestions and conversation at some points.

Similarly to the second session the children shook their body parts to get out of roles. After this the group gathered in a circle to discuss what happened with the help of a card deck. Each participant got one card from the deck randomly. Each card number had a different function and depending on the value of the card the child might do something different. If the child got an ace, then they were encouraged to share something good about the session. Number two meant that they should share something that was not so good during the session. Number three encourages them to share what would have liked to see or do more of. The card number four meant that the child should share what they learnt and number five allowed the child to freely share what they did that day. Hyyppönen and Linnossuo (2006 b, 80) present this activity as a method to be used to gather feedback from the group.

In session A the children were anxious and had trouble concentrating in the last activity. The body shaking seemed to help the children to concentrate again when sitting down to the next activity. In the beginning of the card feedback game the leader asked the children to do an action according to the number of their card, one by one. The leader asked number two's to jump once, number three's to clap twice, number four's to turn around and number five's to make a funny face. After this the leader asked for feedback by asking one number one question. Questions were for example, what was not nice today, what was nice today, what could have been done more and what did the children learn today. Answers were mostly simple yes and no answers. Child K was asked to answer what was they had learnt today, which challeng-

ing to answer. All children had the opportunity to share some feedback about the day. During the feedback session most children were playing around with their cards.

As session B drew to a close all the children shook their body parts and proceeded to sit down in a circle. Each child took one at a time drew a card and shared their thoughts about the day. The question asked from them was based upon the value of the card. Answers to the questions were quite similar to each other. When follow up questions were presented the answers still remained fairly similar. For example many mentioned that they had learned to say sorry or that the warm-up and role play activity were fun. In the end the leader asked the group if they remembered by it was important to apologize. Child L answered that you can make the other person feel better after apologizing. The leader agreed with this that it is important to help others feel better if you have done something to upset them.

4.3.4   Final session

The fourth and the final session was held on the 13th of May. It was originally planned that the whole group would be present at the session. This was later on changed so that the children were again divided into two separate smaller groups. The focus of the final session was try to discuss the project as a whole and gather final thoughts from the children about the themes in each session. In the first session participants were challenged to share their own viewpoints as bullying was discussed. During the second session participants got to practice creative problem solving as they saw differences in each other's actions. The third session was all about apologizing and when do you apologize. According to research by supporting the child's emotional and interactive skills it is possible to prevent bullying (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010a; Repo 2013; Höistad, 2001). Active interaction or participation with peers was highlighted in each session and through discussion everyone listening may gain new perspectives. It would have been tiresome to discuss for a lengthy time with the children, which is why there were a couple games planned for final session to help the children stay focused. The groups were not the same as they have been in previous sessions, because half of the preschool group went to visit a local school.

For the warm-up the group gathered in a big circle in order to hold hands. As the group held hands they would send electric shocks to each other. One hand press sends the message to that direction and two hand presses sends the message back the other way. This was done for a couple rounds after, which the group watched the video. All children, in both small groups A and B, were familiar with this game and had played it in preschool before. Participants had played a different version of this game before, which made it trickier to familiarize them with the newer version.

The main activity of the day involved watching the pre-edited video of the whole the project. Mustonen (2002) explains that media can help participants to cope and analyze different emotions. The purpose of showing the video was to help children reflect and maybe even receive insight from previous session. The video was paused at regular intervals in order to discuss what happened in the video and possibly share recalled memories from previous sessions. The video was edited to include clips that clearly showed what the children were doing or saying. The video started with a clip from the first session. There were short clips of some of the children commenting on the Moomin video and sharing their viewpoints on what the leader asked. The next clip included clips from the second and third session in which participants assumed different roles. The third clip included the leader reading the sorry story and the children raising their thumbs. The fourth clip showed participants solving conflicts through acting. The final clip had the children say sorry in gibberish. The video meant to act as a recap of the main themes of the activities and to spark conversation after each clip was paused.

In session A six of the children were present, C, E, F, K, L & M. All children seemed engaged and enjoyed watching themselves. Children E & L were covering their faces or whispering to each other whilst watching themselves on the video. The leader asked about the first session showed on the video and if it was easy or difficult to decide whether to agree or disagree with a statement. Child K started to say it was not easy, but the child changed the answer after all other children said it was easy. The leader asked the children what bullying is, linking the answer to the Moomin video watched on the first session. Child L was the only child to engage in the question. Others did not give out any answers to the multiple different questions on the subject. The children started to laugh a lot when they saw the fast forwarded images of themselves as statues on the video. Some light conversation sparked from the statues and how fast they were. The leader asked if it was easy to change the statue situations in the second session. All children together answered yes. The leader then asked if it would be as easy to change the situations happening outside when the children are playing. All children answered no. Child L commented that outside the situation is real and thus not so easy to fix or change. When the leader reminded the children that in the sorry story the girl named Tiina had trouble saying sorry, she then asked if the children thought they knew when it is appropriate to say sorry. All answered yes. Towards the end of the video the children had trouble answering the leaders questions. Child C said it was difficult to remember what had been done in sessions before, even with the help of the video. All children got to participate in the discussion about the video.

Session B consisted of the children B, D, G, I and J. Participants were quite keen to watch the video and throughout the video were quite focused on following what was going on. At times children would smile or giggle if something funny happened on the video or if they themselves

were saying something in the video. The leader encouraged children to try and remember the videos which were viewed during the first session. Child J explained that in one of the videos Little My scared Moomin and he got hurt. The leader went on the remind of the other video clips as the children did not share memories themselves. The leader reminded of the activity where participants walked in the room to show their opinions. After the next clip the participants were more keen to participate in discussion. The fastened clip of the statues made most of the children giggle or smile. The leader asked if the children remembered what was the objective of the statue activity. Child I explained the structure of the activity. The leader asked if they remembered what roles they assumed during the 3rd session and quite many participants raised their hand for this. The next clip was about saying sorry. After the clip the children were asked if they wanted to share a recent experience where they apologized to someone. Child G shared that they were playing tag outside the other day and found it difficult to say sorry. However child G managed to do it without adult help in the end. The leader reminded the children the it is always a good idea to ask for adult help if some conflicts are too difficult to handle. The book about Elmeri was discussed shortly as it was not a part of the video. Child D helped explain the plot of the book. The next clip showed the acting scenarios after which participants shared memories of what they acted. Child J spoke of using lipstick without permission and I reminded of the scenario when the old man wanted to sit in the bus. The final clip got children laughing at the gibberish being spoken on the video.

After the video there was an activity where one would act out an action and if anyone from the audience guessed what it was they would join it. For example a one child was trying to convey through movement that they were putting winter clothes on. As soon as one of the children watching guessed what it was they would join in acting it out.

In the beginning of this activity in session A the children M, F, C & K had difficulties in settling down on the sofa. The leader repeatedly asked these children to sit down nicely on the sofa. The leader started the activity by explaining to the children what pantomime means and what are the rules for the activity. Child C came up with a situation by himself. Children F, M & K joined in, but after a while children F & M sat back down, because they realized they did not know what was going on. Jumping rope was easy for everybody to guess instantly. After some tries children in the audience became restless in their seats. Child C was clinging into child M and babbling away on their own. The children were so restless that the teacher of Tuohimäki daycare stepped in to correct them. Sitting arrangements were changed from the sofa to the floor.

In most situations some children guessed right and others guessed wrong or did not guess anything at all. Most times children were able to come up with a pantomime on their own, but sometimes the leader helped out by giving out suggestions. Child E joined the activities only

together with child L. At first neither of these children wanted to be the one who acts the pantomime for others to guess. After a while child L wanted to go and act. Child E did not act the pantomime out alone. At the end of the activity the whole group did the body shaking which was familiar from previous sessions.

During session B participants made efforts to pantomime effectively and in most cases participants guessed what the pantomime acted out was. Some actions were very easy to guess and got viewers rapidly to join. These included skipping rope, driving and skiing. Other actions got half of the viewers to join as the movements were a bit trickier to guess. These included playing with toys, reading a book and fishing. Some actions were misinterpreted, which was expected in some cases. For example child J was peeling potatoes and child B joined in by assumed the action involved craving a piece of wood. Toward the end of the activity children were thinking what they could pantomime themselves without any suggestions from the leader. Some children took longer time to guess pantomimes, but joined in eventually or during the next acting. The activity was ended by shaking limbs similarly to previous sessions.

At the end of the session the group gathered in a circle to share final thoughts on the whole experience. The children took turns in sharing their viewpoints as they held a soft animal in their hands similarly to the second session. The children were encouraged to verbally communicate their answers to the open ended questions the leader asked.

In session A the children had been restless in the activity before. Sitting down in the circle and starting the feedback activity the children were asked to be very quiet and only speak when they have the stuffed toy. Child C raised hand to get a turn to speak and laughingly pointed out that why is the leader speaking even though she does not have the stuffed toy. Other children began to laugh at this. The leader made it clear that she had to talk in order for the exercise to progress, but children should wait for their turn. The leader then asked questions about previous sessions. Children seemed to be hyperactive, they were turning around and around on their spots and there was nervous sounding laughter in the air. Child E raised hand to answer the question on Moomin videos. The child said it was nice to watch them. Leader asked follow up questions and the same child did not answer at first, then said yes to a question. Child C said laughing that today was a nice day. Child M said that the story of Elmeri was the best elephant story the child had heard. The children were asked about the restlessness and they replied they have no more patience to sit down. The session was ended and the children went outside to play.

During session B feedback was gathered by asking a question and then passing around the soft animal. If no one else wanted to comment the leader asked another question. Children J and D agreed that the Moomin videos were childish. Child I shared that it felt difficult to discuss

the topics of videos. Children I and B agreed that it was sometimes easy and sometimes difficult to decide what opinion they had during the opinion activity. Children I, J, G, D and I all commented that the Elephant story was nice. Some commented that the parts where Elmeri laughed, loudly scared the others and how everyone dressed different to honor Elmeri were especially nice about the story. Children I and J agreed the statue game was fun and it was especially nice to move the statues. All children agreed when asked if it was easy to change the statues. All children enjoyed the role activity. G commented the being a gorilla was especially nice and B shared that being a monkey was nice. Child I shared it was fun to speak gibberish. J and D expressed that they learnt something new during the project. G felt that nothing was learnt. All agreed that they had a fun with us hosting the activities during this project.

5   Project evaluation

Heikkinen, Rovio and Syrjälä (2008) state that qualitative research is based on the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon and gradually developing interpretation. It is said that the researchers one most important research tool is himself. When the research is done, if the reader find the same points from the text which the researcher has identified this can be considered as a mark of a successful analysis. In qualitative research the analysis is done throughout the whole research process. In the beginning the analysis is more holistic and anticipatory whereas some kind of a summary will be produced in the end of the research. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013)

In this thesis project the objective is to reflect on the gathered material in a self-reflective manner not forgetting the author's possible influence on the turnout of the interpretation. Observation and feedback gathering have been used as the main evaluation tools in the project. It was important for the development and evaluation of the project to receive feedback and review the work throughout the whole process. One way to approach project analysis is to take the gathered material as a starting point and a tool to the researcher's own analysis (Eskola & Suoranta 2000). This means that after the implementation all the collected material is opened up by sorting it in a way that makes most sense to the researchers. For example, similarities and differences, has some issue come up many times, is there something that was expected to be there but is not and so on. When making the end analysis of a project the researchers should ask themselves how do they know the correct analysis has been made, have they comprehended the participants messages right, do they have an understanding of the whole context and so on. Another issue to consider is that there often can be a longer period of time between making the final analysis and the functional activities, which is it is important to ask if the writers still remember the issues related correctly from the vast extent of the material gathered. According to Eskola and Suoranta (2000) the most problematic part

of qualitative research is making the analysis from the material at hand because there is no real formal instructions for this part. It is up to the writer's imagination and creativity whether the interpretation of the material becomes fruitful.

The first part of the evaluation was done through the SWOT- analysis. This analysis was done in the planning stage of the project to aid predicting different events related to the work. After the implementation the chosen evaluation methods formed from elements of goal-fee and goal-based evaluation models. In goal-free method evaluation the project's goals are not in the centre of the evaluation criteria, but rather the need and influence of the project in relation to the participants. The idea of the researcher not being aware of the goals is to enable the researcher to find out what the meaning of the project is without having preconceptions on the matter. If the goals are met in the project this should become evident in the findings without knowing them in advance. (Scriven 1991, cited in Boulmetis & Dutwin 2011, 104-105) This has been considered in the methods as the observations are done without any checklists and the important themes for the evaluation arise from the collected data, the observations. To summarize, the goal-free model concentrates in what happens in the project despite the set goals it may have. Boulmetis & Dutwin (2011) state that the goal-free model is a commonly used method, however the most difficult one to use because of its vagueness.

It was found helpful to utilize the goal-free evaluation method in understanding the meaning and effects of the thesis project regardless of the set goals. A video camera was used to record all the sessions in order to aid the analysis and observations after each session. Therefore the evaluation was able to happen throughout the project. Observing the recorded videos also enables the researchers to travel back to the events and not only rely on their memory. By watching the recordings the researcher can see oneself interacting with the participants and therefore is able to assess interaction skills and make changes if needed (Heikka, Hujala and Turja 2009). The video recordings allow the researcher to dive into the actual events instead of being merely silent observer. According to Heikka et al. (2009) participants, especially children, can be affected by the presence of a video camera and it might be useful for the participants to be informed of the appliances before filming starts. Mäkitalo (2009) presents that the video recordings can expose not just the concrete events but thinking processes as well. This gives the researcher an opportunity to observe events more objectively, as if an outsider, which in real time would not be possible (Mäkitalo 2009). By observing during each session and after watching the videos, the observer is interested in the present happenings not in the end results and goals.

In contrast to goal-free evaluation method the goal-based method is described to be as any type of evaluation where the researcher has the knowledge of the goals or objectives of the project (Scriven 1991, cited in Boulmetis & Dutwin 2011, 109). The goal-based evaluation be-

gins from the original goals set for the project and it is not concerned with other byproducts or affairs that may arise from the project. In this method the researcher is not interested in what is happening during the project but rather how the end result looks like. The researcher looks to weigh the specific outcomes of the project either using qualitative or quantitative research methods. (Boulmetis & Dutwin 2011) The goal-based method is argued to be the one of the easiest methods to use and thus the most commonly used. In the beginning of this thesis project objectives and desired goals were set, making the goal-based evaluation a relevant choice to assess whether these objectives have been met.

5.1   Observation

Observation allows practitioners to learn more about children and accompanied with the knowledge of early childhood development one can understand why and when children do something. If the observer does not have knowledge of early childhood education it is easy to misunderstand the observations made. When making observations it is important to remember that observations may bring attention to a problem, but it does not automatically mean there is one. Conclusions should not be made rashly and possible problems deserve a proper follow through. (Sharman et al. 2007) During observations the subject may convey information that might not be communicated in interviews or even establish behavior that has escaped their conscious awareness. (Sheppard 2004) Alternatively they may behave differently, because they know they are being observed or because the observer is an unfamiliar person. (Sharman et al. 2007) Observations should be done objectively and the researchers should consider any possible bias they may have toward the target group. There are multiple factors that can affect observations and it is important to give them appropriate weight when recording observations. (Hobbart et al. 2009)

There are a variety of observation methods that can be used for multiple situations. In this thesis project free written record was considered the best method (Hobbart et al. 2009). Written record was decided as the best method as it allows observers to write freely without assuming specific events. Check listing was considered as well, but deemed too tricky to assume reactions the children might have. Voice recorders have their advantages as well, but it may have distracted the children if there would have been extra talking in the room. Written record allows the observer to write freely when convenient and enables the observers to use a variety of note taking styles if needed. Bryman (2008) presents three different field note types, which are mental notes, jotted notes and full field notes. In the projects full field notes will be used for the observations, but situations during the sessions may arise and complicate using the method. Mental notes and jotted notes help support in writing full field notes. Bryman (2008) emphasizes that it is important make detailed notes as soon as possible. Similarly to other methods, keeping written record in observation situations has its disad-

vantages. It may be difficult to write down the events as they have occurred. Descriptions of settings may be shorter than they should be and the observer may write down irrelevant recordings. Keen observers may produce a massive amount of information, which makes analyzing the data more difficult. (Hobbart et al. 2009)

5.2   Feedback

Boulmetis & Dutwin (2011) describe formative evaluation as a evaluation method which takes place during a project. Formative evaluation gives the researcher an opportunity to criticize and modify, if needed, the practices throughout the project. In this thesis project feedback of the implementation was gathered from both the children and teachers. The feedback was not a necessity for the evaluation of the project but it was considered as a useful tool for the self-reflection of the work. According to Vilkka & Airaksinen (2003) it can be beneficial for the evaluation of a project to ask feedback from the participants of the project. The gathered feedback can be for example on the success, usefulness or functionality of the work.

The children were asked for feedback throughout the project. The idea behind the children's feedback was a client-centered approach, taking into account the participants thoughts and feelings. Feedback was asked after each session since all of the sessions had a little different theme and activities. It was also thought that the children might change their minds on the addressed issues during the project or they might unravel something new after getting better acquainted with the instructors. Asking for feedback throughout the project also provided an opportunity to make changes to the upcoming sessions if needed. The children's answers gave insight to the used methods and whether they seemed to be working on the desired way or not.

On the final session the children were asked feedback on the project as a whole. Sadly the verbal feedback from the children was left quite short and simple as some of the children became rather restless. Much of the evaluating had to be done on the basis of the observations made during the sessions and from the video recordings. The main purpose of gathering feedback from the children and the discussion parts of the sessions were to assess whether the message of the activities affects the children participating in some way. As the idea of the thesis project was to teach the children about bullying and provide an opportunity to practice their social skills through various methods, it was hoped from the feedback to get straight answers from the children on this matter.

The educators of Tuohimäki daycare preschool group were asked for written feedback in the end of the project. The purpose of the feedback gathered from them was to get an professional opinion on the project as the educators were neutral observers on the sessions. It was

assumed to be interesting to compare the daycare educators views to the author's own views and reflections. The educators were given a list of questions to answer in written form. The questions covered areas of the educator's and the children's learning, the meaningfulness of the project work and its successfulness.

The feedback received from the educators was a joint feedback from both of the two educators. It was quite holistic and all of the questions were answered in a combined text form. In the feedback consisted of both critic and praise. The educators of the daycare praised the happy and positive attitude of the session leaders as well as the will to find solutions together with the children. The group leading and interactive skills with children could be improved upon. The educators mentioned that many large themes had been included in the sessions and some of the themes such as being different was assumed to be too extensive for the children to digest in such a short period of time. The themes were still seen as relevant to the thesis topic. The educators told in their feedback also that they had learned new working methods from the project sessions and gained different views into addressing bullying. The children had liked the statue game which give them concrete ways of creatively solving different situations. The educators shared that the game lingered on with the group after the implementation.

5.3 Achieving project goals

The aim of this thesis project was for the preschool group to participate in the activities held each session. Through these activities participants could develop their social skills alongside with their peers. Activities were designed to challenge individuals, but most importantly support peer co-operation and interactions. These skills were supported through creative problem solving and theme lead discussion. Group work focused on developing the children's learning, but it was considered positive if the teachers and parents involved gained new insight or ideas that could be used in the future to develop and support the same skills.

Each session had goals related to the overall goals, which were achieved through participation within the activities and discussion. The first session's goal was to discuss bullying and share opinions related to the different themes within. Discussion was aided through the use of videos as the children could empathize with the characters and attempt to comprehend their own emotions in similar situations. After one of the Moomin videos violence was discussed. One of the children commented that if they were pushed by someone they would feel angry and wish to push back and by pushing back the other child could feel the same anger. This child was able to describe personal emotions and how similar actions can lead another child to feel the same way. The same child commented quite frequently in later sessions and through the comments it was easy to observe the well developed social skills. The social skill of empathy

is mastered through personal emotional recognition and through that one can better understand peers emotions (Kirves & Stoor-Grenner 2010b). By discussing emotions with children they can develop their emotional skills.

The goals in the second session were to encourage creative problem solving and to discuss difference. Through the drama activity all participants could one step at time change a punch toward any positive solution they wanted. All participants co-operated as they took turns to reshape their statute friends. This involved individuals trying to see the end result along with understanding what their peers were trying to do. Key part in this activity was to help children find what they wanted to change and not what the leader wanted them to change. Through this drama constructed activity children were able to practice prosocial skills, which broadly defined means purposeful actions of an individual that help another (Isomäki & Kukkonen 1993, Eisenberg 1982, cited in Pulkkinen 2002). All of the participants shaped the statues themselves and some made efforts to make the end results look different from one another.

The third session highlighted apologizing and the challenges it may bring. Emotional recognition is important in apologizing as it helps individuals recognize when they should apologize. During the drama activity the teacher suggested they act out a situation at the daycare where the children would wash their hands in a very messy manner. After the acting was done the leader asked what the children should say to the teacher when they have done this. One of the child struggled to say sorry even though the scenario was only acted out. The scenario was close to reality, which made it more challenging to say sorry.

The last session was designed to be playful, but most importantly recap the previous sessions through discussion. This gave participants the opportunity to yet again to share old or new insights on the subjects at hand. Even though the final session acted as a closure it was hoped that children may recall the experiences they had together on these sessions as positive. Improving social skill together with peers can have longer term positive effects (Repo 2013).

The different levels of participation varied between individuals. All participants made noticeable efforts to participate in each activity. During the first session the patience of the whole group was tested as it took a while to get the Moomin videos on the laptop to work. However as soon as the Moomin videos were viewable all participants were found watching them. For the first session the most challenging activity for participants was when the leader asked for their opinions and they had to move to a specific direction to show their opinion on the matter. Some of the participants looked to where their peers moved or otherwise hesitated in their movement. Other matters that may have influenced restlessness was the fact that the

whole group was present and the session was held in the daycare gym where they normally have quite physical activities.

Some of the children followed actions based on what their peers were doing. Following peer actions is common among 6-year-olds as they look to the example of peers, which help them shape what they consider interesting or acceptable (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015). During the second session it was observed that one of the children in the group looked at how others moved and moved along with them, but not as broadly and independently as others appeared to. The same child was more hesitant in the acting scenarios at first, but with the leaders encouragement and by the example of peers it was easier to participate after a couple rounds of practice. In some cases participants would try to make peers laugh at different actions or comments made by themselves. During the last session this could be seen between three friends as they tried to make each other laugh as they were too restless to join the current activity.

Friends help shape children's emotional skills through example, disputes and play (Mannerheimin lastensuojeluliitto 2015). Participants were often found sitting or moving next to their closest friends when possible. When sitting children could be found seated with boys on one side and the girls on the other. During activities some children would move near their closest friend, while others enjoyed moving in the space more freely moving from one peer to another. Peers influenced the way children gave feedback at the ends of each session. At times participants would repeat peers feedback instead of sharing the same though in their own words. At the end of the first session children shared expressions on how they felt about the session. Some children changed their expressions into more positive ones having seeing their peers look more positive.

The participants worked well together in pairs, which Sharman et al. (2007) explain to be more natural at their age. Children were encouraged to co-operate especially in drama activities. During second and third session actors in pairs would portray conflicts peers who were encouraged to suggest positive solutions in order to fix negative conflicts. Some children or pairs suggested their own drama act to portray to the audience of peers. For example in the statue portrayal activity already in the second round you could find some of the participants eager to portray their own ideas of a conflict. Altering the statues into more positive portrayals was something all participants were able to do. Some already had a clear picture in their mind and acted upon that, while others took a bit longer to consider what to do. In some cases the leaders pointed out different body parts that might need to be worked on, but the participant themselves always thought of what to change it into. Participants at this age are increasingly more aware of what it right and wrong. Preschoolers enjoy diversifying plays they

are involved in and this was one example of how they could do so. (Mannerheimin lasten-suojeluliitto 2015)

Sometimes participants struggled sitting still or might have been looking elsewhere. This however did not mean that the participants were not listening to the leader. One example was observed during the second session when the leader read the Sorry story. During the reading of the sorry story one child had to blow their nose. The teacher brought a tissue for the child and one might assume that the participant was not focused at that moment in the story. However as soon as there came a situation where Tiina should have apologized in the story the same child raised their hand first. 6-year-olds enjoy listening to stories, which is why they make effort to listen to them when interested. (Sharman et al. 2007)

The fruitfulness of discussions varied between each session. Some participants were observed answering questions during each session and others might have only commented once or twice. It is common for 6-year-olds to consider their options for a longer period of time before reaching a decision (Sharman et al. 2007). In action this meant they might not share the first thing that comes to mind, but consider how their response would be perceived by their peers and teacher. Some participants found it easier to participate in discussion if the question was asked from the whole group and all could answer together. For example when the sorry story was read participants would help decide when to say sorry and commonly all participants raised their hands together rather than alone.

How questions were formulated influenced the answers received. After the second session a difference in question formation was observed between the leaders. By asking open ended questions children were encouraged to think longer and for themselves, which resulted in more diverse answers.
For example when Sini asked the children:

"Mitä haluat kertoa tästä päivästä?"

"What do you want to tell about today?"

This prompted participants to give more diverse answers compared to when Lydia asked:

"Mistäs tykkäsit tänään?"

"What did you like today?"

Adding the question what an activity was like resulted in different answers from different children. In this question the children needed to think about the activities and what has happened during the sessions and not just reflecting on what they liked or not. The question gave more room for answers as it did not assume the child necessarily liked some activity of the day. Discussion was also aided by the use of media methods. Answers to questions after a video or story were found to be more diverse. For example participants made efforts to share examples from their own lives when difference in family members were discussed based on what was seeing in the Moomin video.

Overall the process was successful. There were enough participants for each session and all of the children made efforts to participate in each activity. Differences in social skills were observed during the implementation and in some cases small changes were visible, for example in the case of one child hesitating to participate in the drama activities. However the objective was for all participants to practice their social skills together and not significantly change them in such a short time. The goals for the project were realistic and achievable with the preschooler group.

6   Discussion

The different aspects on bullying and the subthemes of being different and understanding others are quite vast topics. To fully go through them would take much more time than the four sessions spent in this thesis project. If this project would be repeated it would be highly recommended to use at least double the time that was used in the implementation this time. Alternatively it might be a good idea to stick with one theme for a longer period of time. For example using one semester on practicing apologizing skills and the next semester on understanding and accepting difference. This way the participants of the project could delve deeper into the subject and get a wider understanding of it. Perhaps recording changes in the participants attitudes and thoughts would be easier to demonstrate and validate.

Some technicalities could have been executed better. Sometimes the camera was pointing in way that one could not see all the children in the room. For example in the statue game, sometimes only the audience of children were visible or vice versa. The room within which the implementation was put to action had its own limitations to the camera placing. Placing the camera more strategically would have helped in making detailed observations from the video easier and more reliable. Especially when one of the objectives of the project was to get the children to participate in activities, it is important for the evaluation to be able to tell whether all children were able to take part in the activities and discussions. Having all equipment ready for the activities was an important aspect. If there were difficulties with,

for example getting the computer to run, the children struggled with their patience to wait quietly and sit still until the computer was ready.

Setting the scene for the activities beforehand could have helped both with the camera technicalities and fluidity of the sessions. If the leader of the session would have arranged the children and oneself in the statue game differently, the camera could have been pointing at the whole group instead of only some children participating on the activity at hand. The camera could have been moved to a better location in the room even during the sessions. The children did not seem to be much affected by the presence of the camera. Sometimes the children forgot that others in the room should be able to see the situation played out and they were only portraying their movements to the leader, who was on the opposite side of the room to the children who were sitting down as the audience. Again if the leader had placed oneself differently, on the same side as the audience, there may not have been this problem. As the theme of some of the sessions was to understand other people and difference, it could have been more emphasized that the children learn from each other at the activities are performed.

Giving the instructions clearly and simply to the children also helps them to better understand the point of the activity. When the children were asked multiple questions in the same sentence it seemed to sidetrack their thoughts and make them confused about the situation and questions. The educators of the daycare pointed out in their feedback that practicing leading and instructing skills would be in place. The leader should not be afraid of the silent pauses children take in thinking about a questions which they are given. Children might need more time to process some difficult questions in order for the discussion to be fruitful and meaningful to them. The leader should give time for the children's answers and be able to lead the conversation on with supporting questions. In this project one restricting factor on the discussions was the time limitation. Each session had specifically planned activities and in order to execute them all the leader had to keep track of time. This brings up the question, could it have been considered more valuable to give the children time to reflect and discuss than time to participate in the activities? Both issues, discussion and participation, were thought important for the thesis project. In order for the children to practice their social skills and learn about bullying they needed to participate in the planned activities but equally importantly the children needed to understand the message behind the activities and often this would be realized best in the discussions. As already mentioned before, probably having more sessions would have helped this situation.

In the expression game of broken telephone, on the first session, it would have been helpful to show some images of different expressions and discuss with the children what the expressions might mean. The participants had difficulties displaying diverse expressions to indicate

a specific emotion during the game. It is possible that not all children made the connection between different emotions and expressions. If some expressions would have been shown to the children prior to the game, the end result could have been more versatile. At the end of the session the children were asked to give feedback by displaying their emotions through expressions rather than words. The expressions were not the best possible way of gathering feedback from the children as their expressions changed after they saw each other and the meaning of the expressions were hard to interpret. Some of the expressions were not visible on the camera afterwards nor for the session observer as the children were sitting in a circle on the floor.

Some other issues noticed afterwards or discussed briefly with the educators after the sessions could be changed if the project would be repeated. It was stated in the early childhood education and care plan that the children will practice saying sorry and saying out loud what they are saying sorry for. This could have been given more notice in the session in which apologizing skills were practiced. Repeating what one is saying sorry for would make it clear for the children why it is important to say sorry. In a way this was considered in the sorry story since the leader verbally pointed out some issues why it would be good to say sorry after the children had all together indicated where the girl in the story should have noticed to say sorry. In the same session there was an activity where the children needed to change the situation presented into a positive one, participants often used apologizing to change the situation and here the leaders could have emphasized more that the children need to verbalize what has happened and why saying sorry is necessary in order to make the event more positive.

There were quite many small changes made to the original plan for the implementation of the project. Changes were anticipated already in the beginning of the project and making changes was not deemed as a bad solution at all, on the contrary. In the Swot analysis done before the execution of the project, the possibility to make changes was listed as a strength not a threat. After the very first session it was noticed that the gym room where the session had been held was not the best option for the activities. The children were restless and had a fair bit of trouble concentrating. The room might have influenced the children's mindset of the project activities, because the gym room is normally used for fast-tracked physical activities. It was then decided that the gym room is not used again for the later sessions.
For the last session it was planned to gather the overall feedback from the children with a game of "Maa-meri-laiva". Similarly to the agreeing and disagreeing game the children would have been asked questions, in this case about the project, and they would indicate their opinion by moving to a certain place in the room. The game was changed because it was expected that the children's answers would not indicate their true thoughts and feelings they have. The children seemed to move and act on the basis of what other children were doing so the

planned game would probably have been more just a running game to the children and the feedback would probably not have been truthful and valid.

Other changes were made in the session activities for example adding extra physical activities when children were restless. Shaking one's body was often used as it was a simple and quick way to get the children's attention and an opportunity for them to shake off other thoughts and bring back the concentration. It was discussed already in the beginning of the project that as a plan B the body shaking could be used in between activities to help the transitions. Some activities were shortened or left out either because of losing the children's concentration or due to time constraints. Some activities were simplified in order to maximize the benefits. Getting into the activities took sometimes more time than anticipated so keeping the games simple made them more productive for the whole group. The children's needs and learning were put before the desires and plans of the leaders.

Before the last session some of the children had been visiting a school nearby and therefore the participants on each small group had to be modified from previous. There was a noticeable difference between the two groups behavior as the first one had had more or less a normal day at the daycare and the second group just arrived from the school visit. The first group was much calmer and cooperative. The children were able to concentrate on the tasks at hand and were participating and responding better than the second group. With the second group the dynamics of the children were completely different than on the sessions before and the children seemed to have little willpower to concentrate. The children seemed overly tired, laughing and smart mouthing frequently. In the near end of the second session some children commented that they could not sit still and stay focused anymore. Before this time there had not been similar kind of issues with the small group sessions.

The effect of one person to the group dynamics was noticed on the early stages of the project sessions. As one child from the group was absent in the first session, the child's presence on the second session visibly changed the other children's behavior. The group became more restless and it was easier to joke around during the activities. On the basis of the observations during the project it was come to the conclusion that when the children got to participate with their best friends it influenced the outcome of the activities and discussions. Depending on the child sometimes the effect of one's best friend was that the child was more willing to participate, sort of being more encouraged by the friend, and sometimes concentration was lost when acting with one's best friend. It is difficult to say whether other factors, such as earlier mentioned about the school trip, had influenced the change in group dynamics. The consistent change in behavior when interacting with different children was still strongly advocating for the influence of one's best friend. Also the fact that in one of the sessions where the educator helped pair up the children for an activity, the educator separated

one child-pair saying out loud that these two cannot be a pair since they will not be able to concentrate and follow instructions when working together. This incident yet again confirmed the author's observation.

The feedback from the educators was gathered and received after the implementation stage via e-mail. The preschool group had two educators, but one overall feedback answer was written. It would have been better to have the feedback as a discussion with the educators since quite a few questions arose from the written feedback that was received. It would have been also fruitful for professional growth to get both the critic and the praise in person and to be able to discuss deeper on the matters. The educators told in their feedback that the group had already addressed bullying so much, partly in the Second Steps model, that they did not really learn any new things on the matter. It would have been nice to discuss this statement and together wonder what kind of changes could have been made in order to teach more about the subject of bullying. The statement that they did not learn also leaves open the question whether the educators did not learn new things or the children did not learn. Maybe the children's view could be different. Also the last comment on the feedback was that there was a lot of content put in the session

"Olitte saaneet paljon asiaa toimintatuokioihin."

"You had managed to put a lot of stuff in the activity sessions."

This comment is quite vague and it would have been nice to discuss the meaning of it. Was there too much stuff in the sessions or was it a good comment that many important issues were dealt in the sessions?

The thesis project was a learning opportunity for not just the children but for the instructors and the daycare educators as well. The methods used in the project seemed to work well. The children enjoyed the activity based approach to the subject and enjoyed watching the videos. The discussions with children were noticed to be more diverse when discussing with the children during or after a story or video. In the beginning of the project there was the challenge of incorporating the sensitive subject of bullying into a working action based learning event. As proved by theory and research children learn best through play as it gives them an easy way to process different skills and emotions. In the project all children participated in both the activities and discussions, which was the main objective. It was sincerely hoped that the children will learn social skills and tools for interacting and cooperating with others through the projects activities. It is rather difficult to try to assess whether any change in the children's social skills has happened in such a short period of time. It is easier to evaluate for example the development of physical skills that the something as vague as the development

of social skills. Thus the aim of the project was to practice these skills as research had proved that good social and empathy skills will help prevent bullying. The project gave just that opportunity to the children and all were able to receive this opportunity.

7   Ethics and trustworthiness

Generally ethics and morals stand for customs, habits or constrictions which control the life between people. The ability to contemplate what is right or wrong in a certain situation, in both the values of an individual and the community's point of view, is vitally linked in ethical consideration (Kuula 2006). The term research ethics includes following a certain good scientific conduct. The ethical process starts already in the beginning of the research and continues all the way to the finalization of the research. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009) In social sciences there will always be ethical issues to consider. Probably the most important ethical issues when researching people involve confidentiality, privacy, dignity and consent of the participants (Kuula 2006). There can be various other issues of ethical consideration to take into account, especially in research where the researcher is in direct contact with the participants.

For the thesis project consent from the Tuohimäki daycare manager and the preschool teacher was required. A research permit from the city of Espoo was acquired (Appendix). Considering the ethical issues involved, a written permission from the children's parents was requested for their child to participate in the activities and the video recording of the sessions (Appendix). Even though parents are able to make these kind of decisions for their children, there is the ethical question of asking the children themselves. In the beginning of the project implementation, the project itself was discussed with the children and they were told that if they did not want to participate in all of the activities they in no means need to. Eskola and Suoranta (2000) argue that in a study it should be important to ensure that identities of the participants is made as difficult as possible to guess. In this thesis all the children's identities have been kept a secret throughout the project. All the material and recordings gathered during the implementation of the project will be destroyed after the thesis completed. According to the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child the child has the right to privacy and their dignity must not be dishonored (Brandon, Schofield & Trinder 1998).

Objectivity and truthfulness stand out in the trustworthiness of a qualitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). The observations of the thesis project have been made and analyzed as objectively and precisely as possible. All possible prejudice which the author's may have had, has been considered so that it would affect process as little as possible. When researching children the researcher should think about the ethical issues involved in observation and how much the children themselves should be informed of the observing and its purposes. For ex-

ample it is good to consider whether it is ethically correct to film the children playing without explaining understandably to them why this is done. (Heikka 2009) In the beginning of the implementation of this project the camera use and recording was explained to the children. It was also explained that the children will get to see themselves in a video at the end of the project and that the material is used only for this thesis project.

As this thesis involves working with small children, the research should be examined and re-flected from a child centered point of view. In the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child it is stated that the child has the right to express their opinions, the right to be heard and the right to influence the decision making concerning themselves in a manner suited to the child's developmental level (Brandon et al. 1998). The research analysis should therefore be based on viewpoints and information received from the children and their parents using diverse in-formation gathering techniques (Heikka 2009). One of the most important ethical aspects of researching children is that the actions cannot be in any way harmful to the child. In the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child it is stated that the child must be protected from all violence, ignorant treatment and abuse (Brandon et.al. 1998). The wellbeing and healthy de-velopment of the child is the number one requirement and there shall be nothing in the re-search that will harm these requirements (Heikka 2009).

Among others, appropriate scientific sources, knowledge of the fields scientific literature and self-reflection to the research analysis are connected to good scientific conduct. The re-searcher shall reference accurately to the used sources. The researcher cannot plagiarize or distort other researchers work. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009) The thesis project as a whole is af-fected by the materials used in the research of the theoretical background of the project. This has been taken into consideration when researching the theoretical subjects and only sources which have been considered reliable have been used. Almost all of the sources have been published within the last five to ten years and most were books and other physical pub-lications.

Bullying can be a heavy subject for anyone to address and the possible emotional turmoil it might bring with it was considered. The preschool groups educators were asked beforehand if there are some issues which need to be considered during the project for example difficult bullying case with the children. Throughout the project it has been a priority that the chil-dren's feelings and thoughts are taken into consideration. Attention has been paid to ensure that no child is labeled into any bullying related role during the project, even by accident.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 Research permit

Espoon sivistystoimi   Tutkimuslupahakemus

1 TUTKIMUKSEN NIMI	Toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö kiusaamisen ehkäisemiseksi varhaiskasvatuksessa		
2 KOHDEYKSIKKO	Tutkimuksen suunniteltu kohdeyksikkö (-yksiköt) Espoon kaupungissa Tuohimäen päiväkoti		
3 TUTKIMUKSEN KUVAUS	Lyhyt kuvaus tutkimuksen sisällöstä ja menetelmistä (max. 160 merkkiä). (Liitä tutkimussuunnitelma liitteeksi.) Noin 6 aktiviteettikertaa eskarilaisten ja kasvattajien kanssa kiusaamisen ehkäisemiseksi ja tiedostamisen lisäämiseksi luovia metodeja käyttäen		
	Aineiston otanta ja keruutapa Toiminnallinen havainnointi		
	Tutkimuksen tarkoitus ☐ Pro gradu ☐ Lisensiaattityö ☐ Väitöskirja ☒ Muu opinnäytetyö, mikä Laurea AMK ☐ Muu, mikä? Tutkimuksen arvioitu valmistumisaika: 2015		
4 TUTKIMUKSEN TOTEUTUS	Onko tutkimuksen kohteena henkilö (henkilöitä), jonka osallistumisesta päättää huoltaja tai edunvalvoja	☒ Kyllä ☐ Ei Jos kyllä, selvitä Lisätietoja -kohtaan, miten huoltajan suostumus hankitaan	
	Käsitelläänkö tutkimuksessa henkilötietoja	☐ Kyllä ☒ Ei	
	Muodostuuko tutkimusta tehtäessä henkilötietopohjainen tutkimusrekisteri	☐ Kyllä ☒ Ei Jos kyllä, täytä myös Tutkimusrekisteritiedot -lomake	
	Käytetäänkö tutkimuksessa jo olemassa olevien rekistereiden tietoja	☐ Kyllä ☒ Ei Jos kyllä, selvitys Lisätietoja -kohtaan	
	Onko tutkimus osa jotain laajempaa tutkimusta / projektia	☒ Kyllä ☐ Ei Jos kyllä, selvitys Lisätietoja -kohtaan.	
	Lisätietoja Ennen toiminnan aloittamista lasten vanhemmilta pyydetään lapselle kirjallinen lupa osallistua opinnäytetyöhön sekä sen videointiin. Opinnäytetyö on osa VKK- Metron varhaiskasvatuksen projektia.		
5 TUTKIJATAHON TIEDOT	Tutkimuksen tekijä/t (alleviivaa yhteyshenkilö) Sini Lehtinen-- & Lydia Rogers		
	Yhteyshenkilön osoite Myötätuulenmäki 8 B 4, 02330 Espoo		Puhelin 0504106012
	Sähköpostiosoite sini.lehtinen@laurea.fi		
	Organisaatio / yksikkö, johon tutkimus tehdään Laurea AMK, Otaniemi		
	Tutkimuksen ohjaaja / vastuullinen johtaja yhteystietoineen Laurea AMK lehtori Hillevi Ukkola, hillevi.ukkola@laurea.fi		

6	Arvioi, miten tutkimus hyödyntää kaupungin palvelujen kehittämistä: Tuohimäen päiväkodin lasten kanssa kiusaamisen ehkäisyyn, löydökset VKK-Metron harkitsemassa laajuudessa.
7 TUTKIMUKSEN TEKIJÖIDEN SITOUMUS JA ALLEKIRJOITUKSET	Sitoudun siihen, että en käytä saamiani tietoja asiakkaan, hänen läheistensä tai Espoon kaupungin vahingoksi enkä luovuta saamiani henkilötietoja ulkopuolisille, vaan pidän ne salassa. Tutkimustulokset esitän niin, ettei niistä voida tunnistaa yksittäistä henkilöä tai perhettä. Noudatan henkilötietolaissa ja muualla lainsäädännössä mainittuja säännöksiä henkilötietojen käsittelystä ja salassapidosta.
	Paikka ja aika 14.04.2015
	Allekirjoitukset ja nimenselvennykset Sini Lehtinen & Lydia Rogers
8 PÄÄTÖS	☒ Tutkimuslupa myönnetään ☐ Tutkimuslupa myönnetään ehdollisena: Myönnetyn tutkimusluvan numero: 24/2015 ☐ Tutkimuslupaa ei myönnetä seuraavin perustein:
	Pyydetään lähettämään tutkimuksen valmistuttua sähköpostitse samaan osoitteeseen kuin tämä tutkimuslupahakemus ☐ Tiivistelmä ☒ Koko tutkimusraportti
	Espoossa 29/4 2015
	Päättäjän allekirjoitus Virpi Mattila
	Nimenselvennys Virpi Mattila
	Virka-asema Varhaiskasvatuksen kehittämispäällikkö

Tutkimusluvan myöntäminen ei velvoita tutkimuksen kohteita osallistumaan tutkimukseen. Tutkijan on neuvoteltava aina erikseen tutkimuskohteena olevien organisaatioiden kanssa tutkimukseen osallistumisesta ja kohteen nimen mainitsemisesta tutkimusraportissa. Tutkimuksen teko ei saa häiritä tutkimuskohteen toimintaa.

9
LIITTEET   Merkitse alle rastilla
☐ Tutkimussuunnitelma

Appendix 2 Permit Slip to parents

Hei vanhemmat!

Olemme kaksi Sosionomi opiskelijaa Otaniemen Laurea Ammattikorkeakoulusta. Tulemme tekemään opinnäytetyötämme Tuohimäen päiväkodin eskariryhmän lasten kanssa. Aiheenamme on kiusaamisen ehkäisy varhaiskasvatuksessa luovien menetelmien ja leikin kautta. Opinnäytetyömme tarkoituksena on tukea ja kasvattaa lasten tietämystä ja käsityksiä kiusaamisesta sen ehkäisemiseksi.

Pidämme toukokuun aikana lapsille noin kuusi leikki -ja keskustelutuokiota kiusaamiseen liittyen. Tarkoituksenamme on videoida kaikki tuokiot. Videot tulevat vain meidän opiskelijoiden ja päiväkodin apuvälineeksi havainnointiin ja keskusteluiden sekä tilanteiden läpikäymiseen opinnäytetyön aikana, eikä niitä näytetä ulkopuolisille. Käytämme kuvamateriaalia myös viimeisellä toteutuskerralla yhdessä lasten kanssa. Kuvattu videomateriaali tuhotaan asianmukaisesti opinnäytetyön valmistuttua. Itse opinnäytetyöhön ei tule lasten nimiä, henkilökohtaisia tietoja tai mitään muutakaan yksityisyyttä rikkovaa materiaalia.

Valmis opinnäytetyö julkaistaan ensi syksynä. Mikäli haluaisitte tutustua aiheeseen paremmin ja lukea työmme, jättäkää sähköpostiosoitteenne lapun alaosaan. Lähetämme teille linkin opinnäytetyön nettijulkaisuun sen valmistuttua. Opinnäytetyö on kirjoitettu englanniksi.

Toivottavasti mahdollisimman moni lapsi pääsee osallistumaan projektiimme!
Jos teillä on projektiin liittyviä kysymyksiä, voitte ottaa yhteyttä allekirjoittaneisiin.

Aurinkoisin kevätterveisin,

Opiskelijat Sini & Lydia
sini.lehtinen@laurea.fi

Lapseni saa osallistua opiskelijoiden vetämiin tuokioihin   kyllä ☐   ei ☐

Lapseni saa osallistua videokuvattaviin tilanteisiin   kyllä ☐   ei ☐

Päivämäärä:_____

Lapsen nimi: _____

Huoltajan allekirjoitus:_____

Sähköpostiosoite valmiin työn lähettämistä varten:_____

Pyydämme teitä palauttamaan suostumuslapun täytettynä viimeistään 30.4.2015. Kiitos!