



An activity pack to support the second
language acquisition of English
for a bilingual preschool group
in the Y.E.S. daycare centre

Veera Suominen

2019 Laurea



Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu

**An activity pack to support the second
language acquisition of English for a
bilingual preschool group
in the Y.E.S. daycare centre**

Veera Suominen
Degree Program in Social Services
Bachelor's Thesis
May, 2019

Veera Suominen

A board game to support English studies in kindergartens

Year	2019	Pages	67
------	------	-------	----

The purpose of this activity-based thesis was to create an activity pack to support the second language acquisition of English for children in a bilingual preschool group. The thesis was made in collaboration with the Y.E.S. day care centre operational in Vantaa. The activity pack was created for one of their bilingual preschool groups. The aim was to give the workers in the kindergarten a new way to support the language acquisition of children and give children a fun way to learn the language. A product was created that contains a pack of cards, a board, pieces for the board, travel passports for the children and an instruction sheet. The theoretical framework of this thesis explains early childhood education in Finland, the language immersion method, child development and learning as a child with an emphasis on language development and learning a new language. The theoretical framework of the thesis also explains the benefits of play and games for children and the connection they have to learning.

Two sessions were planned to be held with the children to test the activity pack out, but only one of these sessions happened. The goal was to see how the activity pack works and what should be developed. The emphasis was on game development rather than on the experiences of individual children. The activity pack was left with the kindergarten for them to keep using it and seeing how it works. Feedback was collected from the teachers afterwards via email. The session held went well, and children seemed to be excited and motivated to keep using the activity pack. It would have been good to have more sessions with the children, but the way the sessions were arranged didn't benefit the children's language acquisition as well as using the product the way it is meant to be used. Together with the teachers, we concluded it would be better for them to keep using it and seeing how it works.

For the most part, children seemed to enjoy the activity, and a benefit to the activity pack in terms of language acquisition could be seen. Additionally, the activity pack supports multiple other skillsets as well. The aims and goals set in the beginning of the thesis process were reached and fulfilled. The product could be further developed to different age groups and different language-based language immersion daycares. Additionally, more could be studied regarding the theoretical framework. For example, executing a study on how playing affects children's learning could be a considerable thesis idea.

Keywords: Activity pack, Child development, Language acquisition, Early childhood, Language immersion

Sisällys

1	Introduction	5
2	Background of the thesis	6
2.1	Aims and objectives	7
2.2	Working life partner	7
3	Theoretical framework	9
3.1	Early childhood education	9
3.2	Language immersion	10
3.3	Child development	12
3.3.1	Language development of a child	13
3.3.2	Social development of a child	16
3.4	Learning as a child	17
3.5	Learning a foreign language as a child	21
3.6	The significance of games and play in early childhood	24
3.6.1	The significance of play	24
3.6.2	The significance of games	29
4	Implementation	31
4.1	Process	32
4.1.1	The action plan	33
4.1.2	Planning	35
4.1.3	Creating	37
4.1.4	Testing	42
4.2	The product	44
5	Feedback and evaluation	46
6	Conclusion and discussion	48
	References	50
	Figures	54
	Tables	54
	Appendixes	54

1 Introduction

In Finland, the language immersion method is getting more popular, and offering early childhood education in English is more common nowadays. However, in 2017, only 56 municipalities in Finland out of 311 offered language immersion early childhood education, which, though is more than earlier, is still not much (Sjöberg, Mård-Miettinen, Peltoniemi & Skinnari 2018). In Finland, emphasis has also been put towards starting foreign language studies in schools earlier. Previously, English studies in primary schools started in the third grade, but since 2018, it has been possible for children to start learning a foreign language already in the first grade. Children are given a chance to choose a language they want to start learning, however, most often the chosen language is English. (Perkkiö 2018.) In fact, it has been scientifically proven that younger children have an easier time learning a new language, and the older a person gets, the more difficult learning a language gets. (Tiedeykkönen 2017.)

Due to the worry that Finnish people are getting poorer with their language skills, some effort has been made to support learning foreign languages during the early years of life. As mentioned above, in primary school, language studies are started two years prior to before. This means children get familiar with the language early on and have more time to learn and make mistakes. Additionally, people have highlighted the importance of the language immersion method, and multiple experts have said that in Finland, the method should be used much more broadly. Some have even suggested, that language studies should begin as early as in the kindergarten. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019.)

The idea for my thesis arose during my second practise, which I did in an English language immersion day care. During my internship, I realized how much children can benefit from playing games, but I also realized that there are little games that support the learning of the language alongside with multiple other skillsets while also capturing the child's excitement and interest. I felt there needed to be an activity created which would be highly educational to the children, but at the same time exciting and fun, so their interest would be kept in the activity. I wanted to create something that children would want to keep playing and coming back to, since repetition is the way children benefit from learning the most (Kang 2016).

The product of my thesis will give my working life partner a natural, easy and fun way to teach the language to children. Playing is a natural way for children to learn, since they use play as a means to learn and develop themselves (Vähänen, Hintikka & Helenius 2004, 41-53). Not only will children have fun whilst playing the game, they will also feel more motivated to learn and come back to the game. With the help of games and play, children learn without realizing they are actively learning - it happens as a by-product. (David 1999, 5.) During the early years of a

child's life their language development is very rapid, making it a good time to learn new languages (Whitehead 2009, 10). It has also been proven that play and games are highly beneficial both in language and child development (Krokfors, Kangas & Kopisto 2014; Smith 2010).

The objective of my thesis is to give children a way of learning they enjoy and make the experience of acquiring a new language fun. Children are more likely to learn when the task they are provided with is something they enjoy (David 1999, 5). The objective is also to give my working life partner a new tool to teach the language. The product was made in collaboration with the teachers and they have had a say in what should be included in the product. The aim was also to create something the kindergarten didn't already have, and according to the teachers, what I had in mind was something they had a need for. My professional goal was to create activity, which is pedagogically correct and beneficial to the children. The aim was also to create a product that could be used for years to come and to exceed my own comfort zone. I wanted to get a feeling of working as an instructor for the children when using the product and learn new ways to work with children and develop their skills.

In my thesis I will first describe the objectives and goals of the thesis. After, I will talk briefly about early childhood education in Finland, and more specifically about the language immersion method. I will talk about the development of children, focusing especially on the language development and on how children learn a language. I will also discuss the importance of play and games for children. After the theoretical part, I will describe my process and implementation in detail and reflect on what I have done.

2 Background of the thesis

This thesis will be an activity-based thesis. An activity-based thesis, or practice-based thesis, is a form of thesis used in universities of applied sciences which consists of an activity or a product and a written report. Unlike a typical research-based thesis, an activity-based thesis doesn't necessarily always have a research question and it doesn't always involve research methods, though, some do. The main objective is to create something, usually for an organization, to give them something that will somehow help or advance their work. This creation can be for example a guidebook, a leaflet or an activity kept and instructed by the thesis writer or writers. It is important to note, however, that not all activity-based theses have a working life partner. In addition, as part of the thesis, a report is written of the thesis process, theoretical framework concerning the topic, outcome of the product and discussion of the topic. (Vilkka & Airaksinen 2003, 9.)

2.1 Aims and objectives

The objective of my activity-based thesis is to create an activity pack to support the second language acquisition of English for children in a bilingual preschool group. The main objective of the product is to support children's acquisition of the English language. That is supported by a pack of cards, which consists of multiple different questions for the children to answer and some tasks for the children to perform. All the questions are in English, and the aim is, that each child, supported by the teacher, will be able to read the question and answer it in English. While this supports the child's ability to speak the language, it also develops the child's literacy skills, specifically in English. The questions in the cards consist of different pedagogical aspects, which are there to support the content relevant to preschool-aged children. Some of these aspects are for example mathematics and wordplay.

The aim is to create the activity pack so that everyone can feel challenged to their desired level. Some of the cards in the pack are easier, while some of them are more difficult. This way the questions won't be too easy for those who are already very skilled with the language but also not too difficult for those who still need support with the language. The aim is to make sure each child has an opportunity to practice the language according to their own skill level.

Since one of the main objectives is to make learning a new language fun for children, I wanted to create an aspect to the activity pack that would support that goal. The aim for the added aspect is to include some of the features of a traditional board game, however, still keeping the activity pack a stand-alone product. In addition to the activity pack, I have created a board, which can be used along with the pack. The board is aimed to keep the children's interest in the activity and help them feel motivated to keep using the activity pack. The activity pack, however, can be used on its own, without the board. The aim is to create the board in such a manner that it is educational and correct so that children can learn from the board as well as the game.

2.2 Working life partner

My working life partner is the Y.E.S daycare center operational in Vantaa. It has been in service since 1993, first as a private daycare, then later, since 2007, due to a purchasing agreement with the parents' association and the City of Vantaa, as a public daycare. The Y.E.S daycare has 7 groups - two full-day groups for 1,5-4-year-olds, three full-day groups for 4-5-year-olds and two preschool groups. In the groups with the younger children, activity happens mainly in

Finnish but is enriched with English. In the groups with the older children and in the preschool groups, all activity is bilingual, with an emphasis in English. Additionally, the day care center has a YES-club for 2,5-3,5-year-olds and a YES Family club for parents and children to attend together. The YES-club for the smaller children gets together on Mondays and Wednesdays and for the older children on Tuesdays, Thursdays and every other Friday for three hours. The YES Family club is assembled every other Friday also for three hours. During these clubs, children can get to know English through fun activities, like playing and singing. The YES Family club enables parents to join in and be together with their children. Attending the club is free of charge. (City of Vantaa 2018.)

The environment of the daycare is modified with the needs and wishes of the children, but the emphasis is on safety, pedagogy, variety, and ecology. The preschool groups get to use the areas and rooms of the school in which the group's spaces are located. The daycare also has its own gym and a reading room, which are in active use by all groups. The environment aims to be versatile, where children have room to play safely and develop themselves and their skills. The surrounding forests and nature are utilized as are the near exercise areas, and, naturally, the daycare's outside ground is in active daily use. The Y.E.S daycare offers extensive bilingual early childhood education for the older children, with an emphasis on language and culture through play, social skills, exercise, and play. The motto of the daycare is "learning by playing". (City of Vantaa 2018.)

Both children and parents have an influence in the activities that happen at the daycare, and the daycare has different kinds of activities that give a chance for the parents to take part. Some of these activities are seasonal parties - such as Halloween and Christmas - and for example mother's and father's days. These are the type of activities where parents get to meet each other and spend time with their children in an environment that is already familiar to them. Additionally, the daycare has a parents' association, who, together with the daycare, arrange happenings for the whole family, like different kinds of trips, concerts, and fairs. The children are a part of all the planning and evaluation processes and their thoughts and wishes are actively taken into consideration. (City of Vantaa 2018.)

The group I will be carrying out the activity part of my thesis for is one of the preschool groups. The group has 23 children from all different cultural and lingual backgrounds. There is also a large variety between the language developmental levels of the children: some are very fluent in English, while some are just beginning to learn the language. Some children have been in the same kindergarten since they were very young, and for some, the pre-school year has been the year they have started. It is encouraged, though, that children would start in the daycare as early as possible since the goal is for children to continue to a bilingual primary school. The earlier the child starts, the easier it will be to continue to primary school.

Feedback will be collected from the teachers after they have used the activity pack for about a month. The teachers and I have agreed that they send me both positive and negative feedback, with an emphasis on the development of the activity pack and the functionality of the cards. The emphasis will also be on how the teachers felt the pack of cards supported the children's language skills, and if it did, how could it be seen. I'm also interested in hearing whether they think the game is suitable for everyday use, and if they think they will be utilizing it in the future. I will be sending the teachers some questions about their thoughts on the product by email, so it will be easier for them to answer especially those questions I wish to find answers for. However, there is no formal questionnaire I will be conducting on the teachers.

3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical part of my thesis will consist of defining what early childhood education is like in Finland, and how it is executed, as well as some regulations that go with it. I will introduce the Finnish national core curriculum for early childhood education (2018) and preschool education (2014) since they define much of my product. I will also talk briefly about the language immersion day care system specifically in Finland, and how it is offered in the country. I will talk about the development of children on a general level; however, my focus will be on language and social development, both of which are important subjects to understand concerning my product. I will discuss how children learn a new language, and what studying a language for children means. Lastly, I will discuss the importance of play and games for children.

3.1 Early childhood education

According to the law of early childhood education in Finland, early childhood education is systematic and target-oriented upbringing, education and care, with an emphasis on pedagogy (Helenius & Lummelahti 2018). In Finland, every child older than 9 months is entitled to early childhood education, but attendance is not mandatory (Finland 2018). However, a year before primary school starts, every child is required to attend preschool (Finnish National Agency for Education n.d.). Before 2015, parents could decide whether to place their child in preschool, but since then, it has become mandatory for all children. Even when preschool was voluntary, most children attended it. (Yle 2015.)

The law of early childhood education states (2018) that all municipalities are required to arrange early childhood education for those families in need of it, and 20 hours of care per week for those families where parents no longer receive parental allowance from Kela and where one or both adults are not working or studying. Municipalities are also required to arrange preschool education to all children one year before elementary school, and all children are required to attend it regardless of whether they attend early childhood education or not (Finland 1998).

Finnish early childhood education is based on a national early childhood education plan that all kindergartens must follow, called the national core curriculum for early childhood education and care. Additionally, each municipality - and often each daycare - has their own early childhood education plan, which is created to define and support early childhood education in that specific municipality. Things such as location and the surrounding areas of the kindergarten as well as the needs of the children in the kindergarten are taken into consideration when constructing the plan. In fact, each child has their own individual early childhood education plan constructed, which is updated annually. It is created to support the child's development with the benefit and needs of the child at the forefront. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018.)

The Finnish national core curriculum for early childhood education and care and the Finnish national core curriculum for preschool education defines the aims and objectives of early childhood and preschool education, the operational culture of action, the pedagogical planning and execution of activities, the support needed to give in terms of each child's development and learning, early childhood and preschool education based on alternative pedagogies and the evaluation and development in early childhood and preschool education (Finnish National Agency for Education 2014; Finnish National Agency for Education 2018).

In the national core curriculums for early childhood and preschool education, it is stated that each municipality or private operator decides whether they want to arrange bilingual early childhood and/or preschool education or not. Bilingual early childhood and preschool education in Finland can either be arranged extensively or concisely in any language, often in the national languages - Finnish and Swedish. Often, those daycares offering bilingual early childhood education are called language immersion daycares, which is the term I will be using in my thesis from now. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2014; Finnish National Agency for Education 2018.)

3.2 Language immersion

Language immersion in kindergartens has been a topic of interest for quite some time now, but there is no one specific definition for what the term means. A language immersion daycare is one where children and teachers use two languages during the hours spent at the kindergarten - the mother language of the child and a foreign language. Usually, all planned activity happens in the foreign language. The aim is to teach children a foreign language, while also supporting the mother tongue of the child - it is important to always pay attention to the mother language as well since it is difficult to learn a foreign language if the mother tongue is not supported. This way the foreign language becomes the target of learning but also a means to learn. (Bergroth 2015, 1-20.)

There are countless of things that might affect how and if a child benefits from learning in two languages, such as the environment of the child, anxiety and self-confidence of the child and even the teaching methods used. A teacher needs to know what works with each child and make the communication such that it is pleasant, meaningful and safe for the child. Additionally, the teacher should know how to focus the child's interest on the task at hand and divert their attention to what is relevant. (Bergroth 2015, 1-20.)

The first language immersion daycare started in Canada in 1965, and even though people were sceptic about the concept at first, the benefits of the method were quickly proven to be true. The first language immersion daycare in Finland started in Vaasa in 1987, when a university professor had visited the Canadian language immersion daycare and thought it would be a beneficial method to use in Finland as well. (Bergroth 2015, 23-26.) In 1998-1999 a study was conducted about the situation of language immersion schools in Finland and at the time 24 schools offered Finnish-Swedish language immersion education and 15 schools offered foreign language-based language immersion education. According to another study conducted in 2005, only 2,8% of schools in Finland offered language immersion education. In 2012, 19 municipalities in Finland offered language immersion in early childhood education in a foreign language through a private sector. (Kangasvieri, Miettinen, Palviainen, Saarinen & Ala-Vähälä 2012.) In 2017, 18% of the municipalities in Finland offered language immersion education (Sjöberg et al. 2018).

The national core curriculum for early childhood education (2018) and the national core curriculum for preschool education (2014) by the Finnish National Agency for Education states that bilingual early childhood and preschool education can be given either extensively, when at least 25% of the activity happens in the foreign language, or concisely, when the use of the language is below 25% of the time spent in kindergarten. The goal is to utilize the sensitivity period children have for learning new languages by offering them versatile language education and giving them a chance to absorb the language through activity and play. By practicing the language in a fun environment, children are more likely to find the language more interesting -

even in the future - and are more likely to practice the language. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018.)

Through extensive bilingual education, the goal is to familiarize children with the foreign language so they will be able to work in multilingual environments in the years to come. All the activities are planned so that the child's language development is supported through the foreign language, and that both the languages - mother tongue and the language being learned - are present and developed through activity. The staff is often bilingual, or at least able to fluently talk both languages used in the daycare. Children who attend extensive early childhood education often move on to attend bilingual preschool education and, eventually, all the way to bilingual primary education. Concise early childhood education supports the learning of a new language through motivation. During this type of early childhood education, children are taught the language through small activities that are carried out in the language of the program, rather than focusing most of the activities in the foreign language. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018.)

3.3 Child development

During the first three years of a child's life, their body and mind change drastically. Physical growth is quick, the size of the head gets more proportioned to the rest of the body, bones get stronger and muscle mass is increased. All of this enables a child to prepare for controlled body movement like crawling, sitting, rolling and walking. Brain development is quicker than it will ever be in a child's life again and with the number of neurons increasing every minute, a small child's brain activity is very active. During these first years, a child's brain structure forms so that almost all the structures that define adulthood behaviour will already be present. (Lightwood, Cole & Cole 2013, 123-199.)

Even though infants spend much of their time asleep, the moments they are awake they spend analysing and exploring their surroundings as best as they can. Although a small child's senses aren't very good, they develop and heighten drastically during the first year of their life, making exploring surroundings much easier. Their motor skills - both fine and gross - develop, making it easier to start exploring their surroundings more independently using different ways - crawling, walking, grabbing things, playing with toys etcetera. This also makes children's movements more coordinated and planned, leaving out the involuntary moves infants make. A child's cognition is drastically developed during the first years of life, and if given a chance, during sensitivity periods a child is able to learn skills much faster than ever in their life again. Their attention span gets longer, and memory gets better - this makes learning new skills easier. The

attachment type is developed during the first years of life, which affects and defines the rest of their social life. Communication ways also change, and speech develops. (Lightwood et al. 2013, 123-199.)

During the early childhood years, a child's language skills are further developed - they will learn to form sentences, talk grammatically correct, use more vocabulary and talk using figurative language. Motor skills develop even further with the brain developing continuously and cognitive skills are further improved. Culture is learned through social surroundings and identity is developed - a child learns to recognize their sex and ethnicity, personality is formed, and a sense of morality comes into being. Additionally, a child learns to regulate their emotions, feeling, and reactions. (Lightwood et al. 2013, 235-343.) Young (2002), states that those children whose development hasn't been focused on or supported are more likely to act in antisocial ways, which might affect the crime and violence rates in a society. It is clear then, that focusing on giving children the best possible start to life isn't only important for the child, but also for all the people around the child. (Young 2002, 48.)

A six-year-old child is already very capable and skilled. Their speech is almost fully developed as are their motoric skills, but there are still multiple skills they need support and guidance with. Preschool aged children understand their own gender and usually learn to identify themselves according to the expectations of society - researches show that the length of the child's hair and their body build is what most effects how children view themselves. Six-year-old children have an understanding of the differences between people, for example, by people's skin colour. Children learn about their bodies, and they start understanding that people's bodies change as they get older and they learn to understand the lifespan of people - everything has a beginning and an ending. During the preschool year, children learn literacy and writing skills, though all children learn at their own pace. They learn to compare and categorize things, their mathematic understanding gets better and their speech keeps on developing rapidly. They also have a higher sense of empathy, and can recognize other people's wishes and needs, and regulate their own with the other person's. (Curtis 2002, 35-75.)

3.3.1 Language development of a child

Knowing a language and knowing how to speak the language is important for multiple things. Being able to talk helps immensely with learning new skills, being in communication with other people and exploring one's surroundings. It gives children a different way to show emotions and express themselves, other than for example crying or laughing. The desire to learn a language stems from wanting to be in connection with other people and share one's views and thoughts

verbally. With the help of language, children learn to plan and control their behaviour and actions, and it helps them form a sense of self. (Nurmi, Ahonen, Lyytinen, Lyytinen, Pulkkinen & Ruoppila 2014, 38-46.)

Language development starts before we are even born. During the third semester, babies start to recognize voices and they learn to identify their mother tongue from other languages. They do not yet understand the language or any of the words, but they recognize the rhythms, intonations, and syllables common to the language. They learn to recognize their mother's voice from other voices and, after birth, can associate the mother's face with the correct voice. (Oller, Oller & Oller 2012, 19.)

Before babies learn to speak a language, they learn the sound of the language, and they communicate using signs, sounds, and small gestures. During this time period, it is the caretaker's job to react to the child's signs and gestures and communicate back to the child. Babies learn that other people, too, have emotions and intentions and they learn to anticipate reactions to their actions from other people. This nonverbal communication prepares a child to use the language and work with it later. The way in which the caretaker reacts to the child's communication also affects the child's self-esteem and their capability to show love and be affectionate in the future. If the caretaker always responds to the child's communication efforts, the child is more likely to think they are important and loved. (Whitehead 2009, 6-10.)

Before a child starts forming words or sentences, they start trying out different sounds and syllables. By the time a child is one, they will mutter their first words. These words stem from sentences that have often been used around the child. It's important that the caretakers support language development by talking a lot and using words to help the child connect the correct words to the appropriate situation. Once a child has learned their first words, they start combining words together and their vocabulary starts developing at a rapid pace. (Whitehead 2009, 10.)

Somewhere between the first and the second year of life come the first words of the child and they start learning words up to over 200. However, they still understand more words than they can use. A two-year-old child's vocabulary consists of words that are common and familiar to them, like toys, clothes, and names. They understand simple commands and often follow those commands appropriately, for example, when a caretaker tells them to walk instead of run, they stop running and start walking. (Nurmi et al. 2014, 46.) After a child learns to use word combinations, they start conjugating their words and using different tenses. This is when a child's grammatical competence starts developing. (Oller et al. 2012, 21.)

After the third year, a child starts learning new words enthusiastically and they start forming sentences. Their speech is more versatile, and they are able to use multiple words together and conjugate words. During the 4th year, a child's speech is already very understandable, and

they make little grammatical errors. They can pronounce words without difficulty and their lingual awareness gets better. (Nurmi et al. 2014, 46.) This is often the age when fantasy play comes into place since children learn to differentiate between what's real and what is not - even in terms of language (Oller et al. 2012, 22).

After the 4th year, little changes happen - vocabulary is further increased, speech becomes more and more grammatically correct, using of words is more thought of, storytelling becomes easier and dialog speech is made possible due to increased attention span and skill to listen and focus on what is being said. By the time a child is six, if their language development has followed the normal trajectory, their speech will be almost identical to that of an adult. (Nurmi et al. 2014, 46.) Figure 1 illustrates the milestones of language development in children.

Approximate Age	Expressive Language	Auditory Comprehension
2 to 4 months	Verbal play through cooing, gooing and laughing. Vowel sounds heard such as ooohh, eee, and ahhh.	Turns head toward sounds and can begin to discriminate one sound from another.
4 to 8 months	Babbling begins. Some Consonant sounds can be heard.	Anticipates an event (e.g. peek-a-boo) and follows a line of regard (e.g. visually follows toy moving across floor) as well as joint attention (i.e. is capable of visually attending to object with caregiver).
8 to 12 months	Syllable variation (e.g. badugatadudah). First word approximations (e.g. dada for daddy). Non-verbal communication. Jargon (i.e. unintelligible speech) is present.	Relates words with physical objects (e.g. understands that the word "ball" actually means the object ball). Responds to simple phrases such as "no".
1 to 2 years	10-15 words at 18 months, 40-50 words at 24 months. Uses mostly nouns and pronoun me/mine. Jargon (i.e. unintelligible speech) still present.	Increased attention to toys. Changes behavior in response to comments made to him/her. Knows a few simple commands with gestures needed at times. Understands simple questions. Points to simple pictures.
2 to 3 years	150 words at age 2; 300-400 at age 3 years. Uses two-three word phrases frequently. Asks simple questions. Fluency can be poor. Jargon (unintelligible speech) mostly gone. Vowel sounds intact.	Comprehension shows rapid increase. Responds to more 2 step commands with prepositions (e.g. Pick up the ball and put it on the table).
3 to 4 years	Uses 600-1000 words and 3-4 word sentences. Pronouns and adjectives are used as well as some adverbs, prepositions, past tense and plurals. Answers what, where and when questions.	Understands 1500 words. Recognizes gender differences, plurals, pronouns, adjectives, and colors.
4 to 5 years	Vocabulary increases to 1000-1600 words and 4-6 word sentences. 3-4 syllable words are being used. Articles appear. Uses more adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions. Fluency improving.	Comprehends 1500-2000 words. Understands if, because, why and when. Follows complex directions.
5 to 6 years	Vocabulary of 1500-2100 words. Uses complete 5-6 word sentences. Fluent speech. Many multi-syllabic words are used.	Understands 2500-2800 words. Understands more complicated sentences.

Figure 1: Milestones of language development in children (Talking child 2013).

3.3.2 Social development of a child

A new-born infant has their first interaction with another human at birth, and the mother of the child is the first person they grow attached to. This attachment starts to develop before a child is even born, when they learn to recognize their mother's voice from all the voices they hear around them. (Oller et al. 2012, 19.) The attachment between a child and their caretaker keeps developing during the next few years and, according to Bowlby and his team of researchers, an attachment type is developed. These attachment types develop according to how the caretaker reacts to the child's wishes and needs (Ding & Littleton 2005, 28). According to the theory, there are four different attachment types, which children can develop to their parents: detached/avoidant, resistant/ambivalent, disorganized/disoriented or secure (Cowie 2012, 39).

When a child is securely attached to their parent, they feel comfortable in knowing that they are safe and that their caretaker will meet their needs. They are more social with and accepting of their caretaker than of other people. (Cowie 2012, 39.) They feel that they are worthy of attention and are not afraid to show their emotions (Ding & Littleton 2005, 26-30.) When a child's attachment type is insecure (detached avoidant, resistant/ambivalent, disorganized/disoriented), they are often uncertain about how their caretaker will react to their needs, perhaps the caretaker has been neglectful or disorganized with the way they have reacted to the needs of the child in the past, or their reactions might have been incorrect. (Cowie 2012, 39.)

The attachment type that is formed during childhood has been linked to affect a person's relationships in the later life. It has also been linked with the attachment type that people develop to other people as adults. Someone with a secure attachment type as a child is more likely to have positive relationships with other people and feel more confident about themselves. Their relationships are more likely to last longer and feel more satisfying. It is also important to note that the attachment type changes over the years, and as an adult, the attachment type might be completely different to what it was in the childhood. In many cases, though, the type developed during childhood follows at least somehow into adulthood. (Cowie 2012, 37-42.)

During a child's life, adults work as their mentors, teachers and supporters. Caretakers have a responsibility to teach children about behaviour that is acceptable. Through their own actions, they can show the child what is expected of them in the society, and with their words, explain what is frowned upon. Their job is to help children regulate their emotions and behaviour, so that in the future, they are able to do it without guidance. Children come into the world not knowing how the society works and how to behave in it as others do, and it is the adult's job to teach them that. Knowing how to behave in society and knowing what is accepted and what

is not, is necessary for being in interaction with other people. (Kostelnik, Gregory, Soderman & Whiren 2009, 2-23.)

These skills are learned and gained through observing and working with other people. Bronfenbrenner categorized areas of a child's life that affect their development into four categories: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem. Microsystem includes those places and people who have an immediate and direct contact to the child, for example, family, day care, school and friends. Mesosystem refers to those links that are connected within the microsystem, for example, the link between family and school or school and friends. Exosystem is built on the people and places that the child does not have an immediate link to, but that affects their life, for example, a parent's job. Macrosystem consists of cultural contexts and defines what the culture of the child expects of them. (Cowie 2012, 4.)

In a child's life, being in interaction with peers is the way in which much of the social development of the child happens. During the first year of a child's life, while finding interest in their peers, they see their peers rather as objects than other people to socialize with. During the second year, with the help of speech development, children start forming relationships with their peers, and though friendships are rarely built this early on, children are able to communicate and be in interaction with other children their age. Children learn to co-ordinate and adjust their behaviour to fit the other person's, they learn the skills of imitating and turn taking, and their sense of empathy gets stronger. (Rubin, Bukowski & Parker 2006, 586-589.)

Once children get older, they establish multiple new ways to develop themselves socially, often through play. Playing has a significant role in child development and especially in children's social development. In play, children must communicate, negotiate, agree, co-operate and solve conflicts. These are all important skills to own in order to work in a society. 6-year-old children's empathic awareness gets better, they start to understand the value of relationships and they start to understand their feelings and show characteristics of sharing, caring and helping. (Rubin et al. 2006, 589-592.)

3.4 Learning as a child

Learning as a concept is hard - if not impossible - to define. The Oxford dictionaries (2019) defines learning followingly: "The acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught". Learning can be seen in a person as a stable change in behaviour as a result of exploration and actions taken. Learning could also be seen as a sort of a state of mind, which includes things such as thinking, imagining, seeing, hearing, remembering and problem-solving. It stems from us wanting to explore and understand our surroundings and the things happening

around us. It is a cognitive, emotional and social unity that occurs as a physical reaction in our sensory systems: nervous system, brain, and body. Our social surroundings, culture and life experiences have a great impact on how and what we learn. (Ostroff 2012, 3-4.)

Throughout the years and decades, learning has been viewed differently. Earlier it was thought that children were not born with the ability to learn but were merely just wondering around the world without understanding much of what was going on around them. There was little information out there about how children view the world and how they are able to learn new things. Therefore, at the beginning of the last century teaching was focused on grooming children into the future labour force. Children wanted to be taught to listen and take instructions, and not work against those instructions. Children were made to sit down and listen for long periods of time, compete against each other by taking tests and comparing them to each other. Children weren't given enough room to develop their skills and abilities but were rather put into groups where everyone had the same skills. However, within the last few decades, the field of developmental science has given us a clear view of children needing more than what was earlier thought, for learning to be efficient. (Ostroff 2012, 1-2.)

Contrary to what was earlier believed, the first years of human life are when we learn the most and the fastest. Learning starts even before a child is born. In the womb, children learn to, for example, recognize voices - especially the mother's voice - and move their limbs. This gives us an understanding that the mind starts to develop even before we are born. In fact, the mental development that happens in the womb gives grounds for learning after birth. (Oller et al. 2012, 19.)

As earlier mentioned, learning is a hard concept to define, and the word itself can be explained in multiple different ways. Similarly, learning has countless of different things and sectors that affect whether it is efficient or not or if learning even happens in the first place. For children, though, the most important factor to remember is that children learn best when they are having fun. Most often they learn best as a by-product of playing or having fun with friends. When children are having fun, they don't realize they are learning, even if active learning is happening. This means that motivation towards learning is one of the most important things to focus on when thinking of how children learn. The greatest things that motivate children are things that interest them and those that hold meaning to them. If a subject is not of any interest or if it lacks meaning, the child is unlikely to learn the subject at hand, or it makes learning much more difficult. (Ostroff 2012, 8.)

Children need newness, excitement, and change in order for their minds to stay focused and motivated towards learning. Once children get habituated in an event, they quickly lose interest in it, thus, their motivation to learn gets lesser. Children's interest in the surrounding world and their instinct to explore new things focuses their attention quickly from the boring subject

to things they find more exciting. As a teacher, it's good to keep the learning situations interesting, fun and exciting. This can be done, for example, with the help of arts or play. However, it's also important to notice that in order for children to feel comfortable and safe in their surroundings, they need structures and boundaries. (Ostroff 2012, 8-14.)

Confidence affects children's motivation greatly. If a child feels they are good at something, they are more eager to practice the same skill more. It's the same for adults; you're more likely to want to do something you're good at, and more put off from things you don't feel comfortable doing. In the learning environment, it is important for the teacher to give support to a child's confidence by complimenting the child and giving them positive feedback. A teacher should always make sure all children get to shine in some way by making sure that everyone's skills are focused on. This requires the adult to understand the children and their individual capabilities. In fact, if the teacher cannot recognize the children's existing knowledge, the child's learning is in jeopardy. The more confident a child is about their skills, the more likely they are to succeed and show off their skills. (Ostroff 2012, 16-26.)

Playing is one of the most efficient ways of keeping a child motivated toward learning. For children, playing is a primitive way of exploring and getting to know their surroundings. It gives children a fun way to learn because they don't play to learn, they play to have fun. Playing goes from inspecting and seeing their caregivers act in playful ways as an infant all the way to different forms of playing like social-, turn taking- and fantasy play. (Ostroff 2012, 27-28.) I will be discussing playing as a form of learning in a later section of this thesis.

However, as humans, our most basic instinct and desire is to be a part of something greater and become a member of the community around us. This thrives us to learn to act and behave in the ways the community is expecting us to. We learn these skills often without even realizing it, as a by-product of exploring and observing our surroundings and the people around us. We learn the languages spoken around us, in order to communicate and be a part of the surrounding community. We learn to talk, read and write to be able to function with the people around us. (Ostroff 2012, 41-48.)

Apart from motivation, a child's ability to pay attention to a task is of utmost importance in order to learn. For a child, however, paying attention can be very difficult at times, so it falls into the hands of the teacher to make sure the child's attention is focused on the task at hand. Self-regulation affects our ability to stay focused, and for children, it is a task that needs to be developed and learned - this happens with the help of caregivers and teachers. Once children gain control over their feelings and emotions, they gain access to controlling their attention and learning. This can be done by giving the child a chance to focus on their emotions and being supportive of their emotions. It can even help to explain the child's feelings to them and help them regulate those feelings in the moment. Not only should children be able to regulate their

feelings but also their thoughts and actions in order to learn and focus on the task at hand. (Ostroff 2012, 57-60.)

Movement and exercise help with keeping the child's attention grounded. Moving and exercising is what children know best and what they spend their time doing willingly and with pleasure. This should be embraced when teaching children - it doesn't do them any good to sit still all day and not get their pent out energy out. Body movement and getting rid of excess energy helps children regulate their emotions, thoughts, and actions and therefore enable their attention to stay better focused. Other than that, movement gives children a way to be actively involved in the teaching process. The more a child gets to move, participate and experience what is being taught, the more likely they are to benefit from the teaching. This is because when a child gets to experience and be a part, they are more likely to be engrossed and focused on the task at hand. (Ostroff 2012, 79-84.)

A child's memory and their ability to remember has a significant impact on learning. Teaching situations should be kept simple and the content shouldn't be too overwhelming or of great quantity, because working memory's operation decreases when it is overloaded. It also helps to teach in surroundings that are familiar to the child, because children learn best in a familiar context. There are many ways in which teachers can help children develop their memory, like helping the child organize and group things together, create a context for the child for example by showing pictures or videos and supporting their self-awareness. The most important thing is to make sure that what is being taught matches the child's understanding. Otherwise, children really won't benefit from teaching at all. (Ostroff 2012, 94-95.)

The adult's role as a supporter of learning is very important. Children are lost with their own skills and not always aware of their capabilities, they need someone to act as a supporter whom they can turn to in times of need. Adults work as children's memory banks in the sense that adults help children memorize their own skills and support the learning of new things. With the help of adults, children learn to use their own thinking and learning and learn to reflect on those. (Ostroff 2012, 94-95.)

However, much of everything children learn happens without them realizing it. They learn by listening and observing their surroundings and mimicking what they see others doing. Children choose reliable adults whom they observe and make those adults their role models. Those adults should give their attention to the child and offer support and help with imitation and learning. Adults should use language the child can understand and form their sentences in ways the child can follow and keep focused on. Articulation and speaking understandably and slowly enough is important in keeping the child's focus on the task at hand. Instructing clearly and making sure the child is following is the key to teaching. (Ostroff 2012, 121-130.)

Children learn best when they are supported and aided by those who know more about the subject than the child does. Vygotsky - a Russian psychologist - theorized that children learn the best when they are performing a task, which they can't perform on their own without guidance, with someone who is skilled in the task. They follow the other person performing the task and slowly learn from them. After some time, the child will learn to perform the task without help. This area of learning is called the zone of proximal development (Doolittle 1995, 3). According to Doolittle (1995), the zone of proximal development, illustrated in figure 2, was defined by Vygotsky as: "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more knowledgeable others". This theory, then, supports the claim that adults' influence and presence on children's development is crucially important.



Figure 2: The zone of proximal development

3.5 Learning a foreign language as a child

Learning a new language as a child isn't always a walk in the park, but there are certain things teachers can do to make it easier: using play as a method, supporting and encouraging the use of the language, having appropriate activities available for children, assessing the development of the child, being open, co-operative and reflective, speaking slowly and clearly, giving time, using gestures, pictures and other materials, supporting the mother tongue and praising the child. Remembering the individualism of the child, supporting the child in their path and paying

attention to what the learning environment is like, a kindergarten teacher can best support their children in learning a new language. (Crosse 2007, 5-19; Tabors 2008.)

It is known that children are able to easily switch between multiple languages, but for this to happen seamlessly, they need support from the adults around them. The most important thing to note is that for a child to learn a new language when they already know one language, they need to be able to handle their first language fairly well, so it is important to also support the child's first language when teaching them a second language. A good place to start is through artistic methods - music, art, and dance. Most children enjoy these activities and are more likely to feel motivated to learn new skills. Playing is also a very effective way to learn a new language in which a child isn't only developing their oral skills, but other skills as well. If played using a foreign language, someone who doesn't know English can benefit much from observing and listening to those who do know the language. It is important, though, that an adult is a part of the play to help with the language. (Crosse 2007, 5-19.)

Children can learn a new language in two ways. Either they have been exposed to the new language since birth and are acquiring the second language simultaneously with the first language, or they start deliberately learning the language only after they have established their first language. Usually, when children are exposed to two languages since birth, it means either their parents are bilingual, or their caregiver talks a different language than the parents. When learning happens like this, learning the language happens naturally alongside with the other language and often at a similar pace. (Tabors 2008, 11.) These children are able to keep the two languages separate, though they make some mistakes and mix the languages together, most of the time they are able to recognize when to use the correct language (Piper 2000, 13). According to Tabors (2008), Hakuta claims that researchers think there are some cognitive, as well as social benefits to learning a language this way.

However, when a child already knows one language and understands it, learning a second language becomes a different thing. By this stage, children are already familiar with how to talk and why to talk. They know that by talking, they can express different things like their needs, wants and emotions. Learning a new language, then, is about realizing that you can do those same exact things, only using a different language. (Tabors 2008, 12.)

There are differences in how children learn a language. Motivation to learn a language is one of the biggest factors in defining whether a child learns a language or not. If a child is not willing or motivated to learn a language, they most likely either will not learn the language at all, or the process will be very slow. This is why it is important for the adult to make the learning process fun and enjoyable. It is also important to realize that some people are more willing to openly take risks in learning the language, while some are shyer about using a foreign language in front of others. (Tabors 2008, 12.)

Additionally, children come from different backgrounds with different skill levels so it may be easier and quicker for some to learn the language than for others. Younger children have a harder time learning a new language and they take longer with it, since their cognitive capacity is so much smaller than that of an older child's. However, they also have an easier time with the language, since they don't need to do as much as an older child to impress others. This might affect how motivated one is to learn: if one gets recognition for their talent, it is easier to stay motivated and want to succeed. It is clear, then, that for younger children this happens more naturally since they are congratulated and recognized for less. Younger children also have more time to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes than, for example, a high schooler. Finally, some people are, simply, more talented at learning languages than others. Children who are naturally good at learning languages take less time to get fluent than those, who have a harder time with it. (Tabors 2008, 12-13.)

As we established in the last paragraphs, learning a new language is different for each child. The same goes for when a child steps into a bilingual early childhood education setting with no previous knowledge of the language. However, researchers have found a similar developmental sequence, which most children tend to follow in a situation like this. Again, depending on the factors listed above, all children take a different amount of time in each stage, and some may even skip some stages altogether. (Tabors 2008, 37-53.)

When a child steps into a setting where a foreign language is used, the only option they really have is to keep using their own language, since they don't know any other language. The child, depending on their age, sooner or later will realize the language they use does not match the language used around them, and will often stop talking altogether. They move to a nonverbal period of conversating, during which they will start observing the people using the foreign language by listening to them and start gaining an understanding of the language. They start practicing the language and finding the sound of the language, much like they did when they were practicing their first language. Slowly they start using the language by testing out words and phrases and, later, they start communicating using the language. They learn to understand the meaning of the words and learn to adapt the use of the words in different situations. (Tabors 2008, 37-53.)

During this process, it is important that the adult supports the child by talking with and to the child, demonstrating their words to help the child connect the words to actions and, simply, helping the child out with words, phrases, and sentences. This way, children get the support they need, and using the language will become easier and easier each day. An adult's support in this process is crucially important since, without an adult, a child learning a language would rarely realize their own mistakes and get the guidance they need with the language. (Tabors 2008, 37-53.)

3.6 The significance of games and play in early childhood

Through play, children develop multiple skills - some that are even necessary for survival. They develop their creativity, problem-solving, language and literacy skills among with countless of others they can benefit from in later life. Even more than that, playing is a child's way to learn and understand the environment around them. Most of all though, playing is done for the enjoyment of it. Children don't understand the benefits of playing - they do it because they think it is fun and they enjoy spending their time doing it. (Jones & Cooper 2006.) According to Smith (2010), play consists of at least 6 different types, all of which have their own characteristics and benefits: social contingency play, sensorimotor play, object play, language play, physical activity play, and fantasy or pretend play.

The Finnish national core curriculum for early childhood education (2018) categorizes playing as an important and a significant working method in early childhood education. It states that children should be provided with multiple different kinds of opportunities to play because playing is an important factor in child development. According to the curriculum, playing sets the ground for thinking and language development while also teaching children with multiple different skills. (Finnish National Agency for Learning 2018.)

3.6.1 The significance of play

Like learning, the words "playing", or "play" are hard to define, since they hold no one specific definition. Playing is something that is done for the enjoyment of it, not to please anyone else or to gain something larger from it (Smith 2010, 1-10). It's another world for the participants - a world that is almost impossible for an outsider to reach or understand. It may seem completely different to an observer to what it actually is. It may even seem somehow messy and unnecessary, but it holds meaning and importance to the participants. (Vehkala & Urho 2013.)

For an action to be considered playing, the action should hold and fulfill five characteristics. It must be interesting for the child and the child must be motivated to do it. This way the action is done for the enjoyment of it, rather than for something else. The action should be freely chosen, rather than decided or determined by someone on the outside. If it is determined by someone else, there's a risk that the child won't be as motivated towards the action. Additionally, the action must be pleasurable, which it will more likely be if the child has chosen the action by themselves. Often the play is also nonliteral, meaning the action holds imagination and goes beyond reality. Finally, the engagement of the action should be active. If a child is

not actively engaged in the action, they are not properly taking part in the action. (Hughes 2010, 4-5.)

Looking into the history of play, we can determine that playing has been a part of children's - and sometimes even adults' - life, all the way from ancient Greece to now. It has been an activity that has been acceptable, though not always encouraged. There was a time in history when children were seen as labor force, and there wasn't a clear distinction between adults and children. This was also the time when adults were actively playing without children. But even during this time, children were given time to play, though it was not in the foreground of people. Slowly, people learned to differentiate children from adults and childhood became distinguished differently from adulthood. Children's playfulness and childlikeness were beginning to be seen as more acceptable and something to be encouraged. Researchers started making connections between play and development, and many theories of play started to arise. (Hughes 2010, 8-14.)

Different developmental theorists started to form out theories on how play affects children and why children might be so active with playing. Some of these theories suggest that children play to get rid of excess energy they have in their body (Herbert Spencer: surplus energy), to entertain themselves and get focused on more intricate things (G. T.W. Patrick: Renewal of energy), to practice skills needed in adulthood (K. Groos, Practise for adulthood), and - perhaps one of the most well-known approaches - to practice and develop cognition (J. Bruner, J. Piaget, B. Sutton-Smith: Cognitive-development). These theories are to be seen as theories only, not as facts. They give us some understanding on how and why children play the way they do and what the effects of play are in young people. (Hughes 2010, 21-29.)

Many different things affect how and even what children play. Researches show that often there is a difference between how and what children play based on their gender, but also a difference between what play materials are used. This phenomenon could be explained with different theories, such as the learning theory, which suggests that children imitate the actions they see around them to be able to act in a way that is "expected" of them, or the biological theory which states that hormones affect the brain to act in a way typical to their gender. However, we can't for sure say why children choose to make a distinction between the two genders, we just know it is something that is common among children. (Hughes 2010, 157-159.)

Often different gendered children choose different play materials or toys, and they start making a separation between "girl toys" and "boy toys". Signs like this can be seen in children as young as 18 months, but usually, children start choosing between toys when they get older than two. Adults' and the society's view on gendering toys logically effects how children make their decision. If a child's caretaker encourages the child to play with dolls and dresses - objects that are seen as "girly" in most societies - but criticizes or limits their possibilities to play with cars

- object seen as “boyish” -, the child is more likely to gravitate towards toys that are in our society generally thought to be toys for girls. Similarly, if a child sees their friends playing with cars and tools, they are more likely to gravitate towards those types of toys. (Hughes 2010, 159-170.) According to Hughes (2010), a research conducted by Piaget in 1962 found out that differences could also be seen in role-playing in terms of what roles children take in the play, what situations they play and what props they use, activity play in terms of how rough the playing gets, and even in rule-based games, which were found to be much more common in boys.

Along with gender, there are countless of other things that affect how children view the world of play. Culture determines how much time children use playing during the day, what toys, object or materials they use or choose to use for play, whom they play with, what the content of, for example, roleplaying is, and in what surroundings and environment children play in (Gosso 2010, 85-98). There is a difference in how children play in different environments. Inside play is often calmer and quieter, often consisting of role-playing, arts or board games, whereas outside play is more physically active and loud, often consisting of games such as tag or hide and seek, water play or sand games. Often adults guide children into finding activities suitable for the environment. (Helenius & Lummelahti 2013, 77-83.)

As a matter of fact, adults tend to affect children’s play in a significant way. In the beginning, they work as sort of the instructors or leaders of play and guide the child towards appropriate and suitable forms of play. They also work as supervisors and negotiators during play. They often give ideas and even play with children when they are unable to advance in their play. Additionally, when an adult is present during playtime, they provide children with a feeling of control over the environment, developing their self-confidence and self-growth, support their social interactions, encourage children to explore their surroundings, and help them with their language development by talking and encouraging the child to talk correctly. (Helenius & Lummelahti 2013, 77-83.)

Not only do adults affect children’s play, but obviously the child’s peers have a significant effect on the child’s playing. The more familiar a child is with the person or the group they are playing with, the more open and willing to participate in the play they are. Additionally, children are more likely to want to play with children of the same age or on the same developmental level as oneself, because communication and co-operation is easier and more flowing. (Helenius & Lummelahti 2013, 93-103.) Especially older children tend to be quite picky about who they chose to make friends with. Often children choose to form relationships with people who are similar to themselves, according to age, gender and, for example, skin color. (Rubin et al. 2006, 616.)

All playing starts with exploration. An infant opening their eyes for the first time start taking in their surroundings by observing what they can see. The infant's body starts moving by reflexes, and, slowly but surely, the child starts to gain control over their body. They start by repeating actions they already know and have found to be exciting and joyful. This stage Piaget called the sensorimotor play stage. Slowly the child's reflexes turn to intentional movements and they get more in control of their body - this is when children start reaching for objects and playing with them. They start by reaching for an object they find interesting, to manipulating and playing with said object. This is when they start practicing skills such as grabbing and letting go, they start understanding the consequences behind their actions, slowly their understanding of ratio gets better, and their physical development gets faster. They start giving their toys different meanings and using the objects to represent something else. This is when symbolic play first starts to make an appearance. (Helenius & Lummelahti 2013, 67-72.)

As the child develops, so do the playing skills of the child. Their playing gets more complex and more extensive and they start practicing different skills. A 2-year-old child is still very much about exploring their surroundings - they have gained the ability to move in different ways and they are using that ability to their advantage. They are getting more attuned with their body and are actively practicing the skills they lack, often by mirroring what people around them are doing. Their playing is energetic and vigorous, and they are eager and enthusiastic to learn new skills and use those skills to play. However, a two-year-old is likely to want to work independently and do everything without help. They use language effectively, though still need a lot of support with it. They learn the best with the help of materials that support large muscle play and sensory play. (Hughes 2010, 92-95.)

By the time a child reaches the age of three, their mind and body have gone through tremendous changes and development. Three-year-olds can already use their large muscles to get around and move without difficulty, and now they start practicing their fine motor skills needed to practice for example cutting, gluing and writing. Their playing gets more and more imaginative and fantasy play starts to show first signs in a child's life. 3-year-olds start to identify themselves with adults by acting out what they see adults doing and picturing themselves in those situations. Fantasy and role-playing also ensure that children start cooperating more with their peers, and this way their social interactions get more frequent. They start learning about working in groups and learning those skills and rules that are connected to working and being with other people. These include skills such as waiting for your turn, sharing and taking into consideration other people's wishes. This is, in fact, the time when children start to care about how other people view them, and they start to understand that with their own actions, they can affect other people's opinions about them. (Hughes 2010, 95-97.)

A 4-year-old child's confidence in themselves is higher than before, and they can work securely with their own bodies. Their body movement is more controlled with both large and fine muscles having developed immensely. Overall, their body movement becomes more controlled, with the focus being on the smaller muscles that enable them to cut, glue, paint and even dress themselves. 4-year-old children are more plan-oriented, which can especially be seen in their playing. They often plan their plays ahead, but those plans usually change as they go. They also become more aware of their gender and start mimicking the parent or an adult who holds the same sex as the child. Similar to three-year-olds, four-year-olds still heavily identify themselves with adults, which can be seen especially in children's role- and fantasy play. (Hughes 2010, 97-99.)

Five-year-old children show signs of logical thinking, their thoughts are more organized which makes them see the world as a rational place and view things realistically. Additionally, they are more stable and reliable, and their actions become more predictable. They learn important social skills, such as sharing, taking turns and co-operating while they play with their peers more and more. They want to take more responsibility for things concerning them, and sometimes of things not concerning them. Their role-playing becomes more realistic, with real issues and topics and truthful props to go with the play. (Hughes 2010, 99-100.)

Pre-school aged children are more focused on reality and that can be seen in their playing. Symbolic play gets lesser, because children don't feel the need to practice the skills practiced during symbolic play and they are no longer as interested in the fantasy dimension characteristic to the play. (Smith 2010.) However, children's creativity in playing gets higher the older they get and they start forming goals and objectives to their plays. Co-operation between children is easier, and adults are no longer needed as much as observers since children this age are already very skilled with things such as negotiation and conflict solving. (Hughes 2010, 92-95.) 6-year-old children gravitate more towards rule-based games and plays that help them with learning new skills. Children at this age are especially interested in collecting things and playing different games with rhymes and rituals. (Smith 2010.)

The benefits of play are vast and broadly talked about. Play benefits children intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially in ways that not many activities do. Not only do children enjoy playing, but they are developing multiple skills at the same time. Emotionally through play, children get to safely explore their surroundings and try out new things, get out of their comfort zones and push boundaries, this way reducing fear, anxiety, and stress. Playing sparks joy, since it is something that is done willingly and promotes self-esteem. Especially peer play develops children's ability to control their emotions and teaches them about working in groups. They learn to read people and learn to understand people's behavior. They also learn to predict people's actions - "if I do this, he will do that". Through peer play, children learn multiple sets of skills. They learn to negotiate, agree on things and solve conflicts they might get when

disagreeing on things. Children learn to accept and handle disappointment if - and most likely when - they lose in rule-based games and through this, handling emotions gets clearer and easier. (Goldstein 2012, 5-15.)

3.6.2 The significance of games

Playing games has been connected with learning for decades, and, according to Pivec (2007), there is a clear connection between playing games and learning. Despite this, playing is very rarely used as a teaching method in daycares and schools. So far, playing games has mainly been used in experimental ways, but few schools and kindergartens use games actively to teach children new skills and pieces of knowledge. One of the problems might be, that according to studies, most educational games fail to integrate the way of playing with the content of the game or what is being taught. (Felicia 2014, 29.) In the last few decades, though, games have surfaced more and more, with videogames developing and getting more popular (Kangas, Vesterinen & Krokfors 2014, 15-20). With the popularity of videogames among youngsters rising, board games lost theirs for a while, but have since started to regain it back. This can be seen through the sales of board games, which have started to rise for multiple companies. (Sardone & Devlin-Scherer 2016.)

Paying games provide children with a new ground for learning skills and gaining knowledge while supporting the development of multiple skills they already have. Often games are very modifiable, and with the thousands of games in the market, games provide teachers with multiple different ways of teaching. Games can be played in multiple different settings, when different settings will support different skills. For example, playing a game in a broad space will support the development of different skillsets than when playing a traditional board game. (Krokfors, Kangas & Hyvärinen 2014, 67-71.) Games allow for different contents or subjects to be studied and taught, such as for example mathematics, geography, physics or even history (Becker, Stan, Pistolis, Harris & Mayer 2009, 50-55). Additionally, games can be modified to be played with a large group of people, or sometimes even with just two people. This supports children's individualism, and on the other hand, children's inclusion and the feeling of being a part of a group. (Krokfors et al. 2014, 67-71.)

Board games often motivate children to learn, and they have a way of making learning enjoyable, fun and pleasurable (Yrjäinen, Parviainen & Lakervi 2014, 175). However, the teacher or the leader has a significant role before, during and after the game. How the teacher plans the session and how knowledgeable they are of what they are doing, affects how likely children are to benefit from the game. There is also a significance in how well the teacher has managed to

use games that are pedagogically beneficial, and how interested the teacher is of what they are doing (Koskinen, Kangas & Krokfors 2014, 30). Studies have shown that teacher enthusiasm has a great impact on the students' motivation and energy to learn - when a teacher is enthusiastic about their teaching, students are more likely to stay motivated on the task at hand and keep their focus on what is relevant (Patrick, Hisley & Kempler 2010). After playing and trying out the game, it is important for the teacher to evaluate the successfulness of the game concerning pedagogy and goal-orientation (Koskinen et al. 2014, 30). Table 1 demonstrates the importance of the teacher during each step of the game - planning, activity, and evaluation. With the help of this model, teachers can plan their activities in a new manner.

Pre-activity		Activity		Post-activity
Planning	Orientation	Playing	Elaboration	Evaluation
Cognitive How will the skill management and metacognition be supported?	Why is the game being played? What learning processes are involved and what are the objectives of those processes?	How will the learning processes and decision-making advance during the game and how will the teacher guide the students with this?	How to reflect or conceptualize what has been learned?	Cognitive How did the players succeed in skill management and metacognition and how can these skills be further developed?
Information Who is learning, how and why?	What is supposed to be learned? Who is going to evaluate and what?	What sort of information is acquired during the game and how is the acquiring being supported?	What experiences did the game offer and how did it motivate the learner? Did the groupwork and rules work out?	Information How was information learned and how will the process be continued?
Social How will co-operation be organized and supported?	How and in what sort of groups will the players work in? How does the game support inclusion of the student?	What sort of participation and processes does the game support and how is it supported?	What has been learned? How to continue with the subject outside of the game?	Social How did co-operation and the organization of it happen and how will it be further developed?
Technical How will different tools and technologies be used?	What games will be used? How will the activity be organized?	How will students play and instruct each other? What is the role of the teacher as a participant and an instructor?	What sort of evaluation knowledge does the game produce and how will it be utilized?	Technical How were the tools and technologies used and how will they be further developed?

Table 1: Inclusion supportive game pedagogy model (Krokfors, Kangas & Lakkala 2014, 214)

Playing games in larger groups supports children's inclusion and communal learning. Being a part of a larger group and having a say and a turn to speak and act in that group, highly benefits a child's feeling of inclusion. On the other hand, because in most games each person has their own turn to perform an act, playing games also supports each child's individualism. Playing with a larger group of people, children are also likely to learn from one another. When a group is large, people are bound to own different skills and bits of knowledge, and therefore are likely to teach other group members about their individual skills. This can also give children a feeling of success because they are able to teach someone else something meaningful to them. (Krokfors et al. 2014, 67.)

Through games, children can practice skills they will need in their everyday lives. These skills include things such as problem-solving, critical thinking, information processing, decision making and co-operating (Sardone & Devlin-Scherer 2016). Games develop skills such as reading and talking, while also supporting interaction skills with other people. Learning through games goes as far as learning about self and understanding ethicality and consequences for actions. With the help of games, children learn to take risks and aren't afraid of making mistakes while learning, thus building their confidence and self-esteem. (Becker et al. 2009, 26-29.)

All in all, it seems that games are highly beneficial for children. They benefit children's cognitive, physical, social and literacy skills among others. It is clear to see that children in kindergartens could profit greatly from using games to learn. Not only do children develop countless new skillsets whilst playing, but they also enjoy it. Enjoying what they are doing, they are more likely and feel more motivated to learn. (Krokfors et al. 2014.)

4 Implementation

I started my planning process by going through similar types of theses from Theseus, to make sure the type of product I had envisioned wasn't already in existence. I wanted to also make sure that I wouldn't accidentally be creating anything too similar to something that had already been made. I started brainstorming and playing around with some ideas I had and decided to initially introduce two ideas to the kindergarten. They decided which idea was something they would find more use for. Together with the teachers, we discussed what the product could look like - this way the product would look more like them because they had a say in what should be included in it. I planned and created the activity pack and then introduced it to the kindergarten. The teachers agreed to keep using and testing the product out for about a month and promised to send me some feedback afterward.

4.1 Process

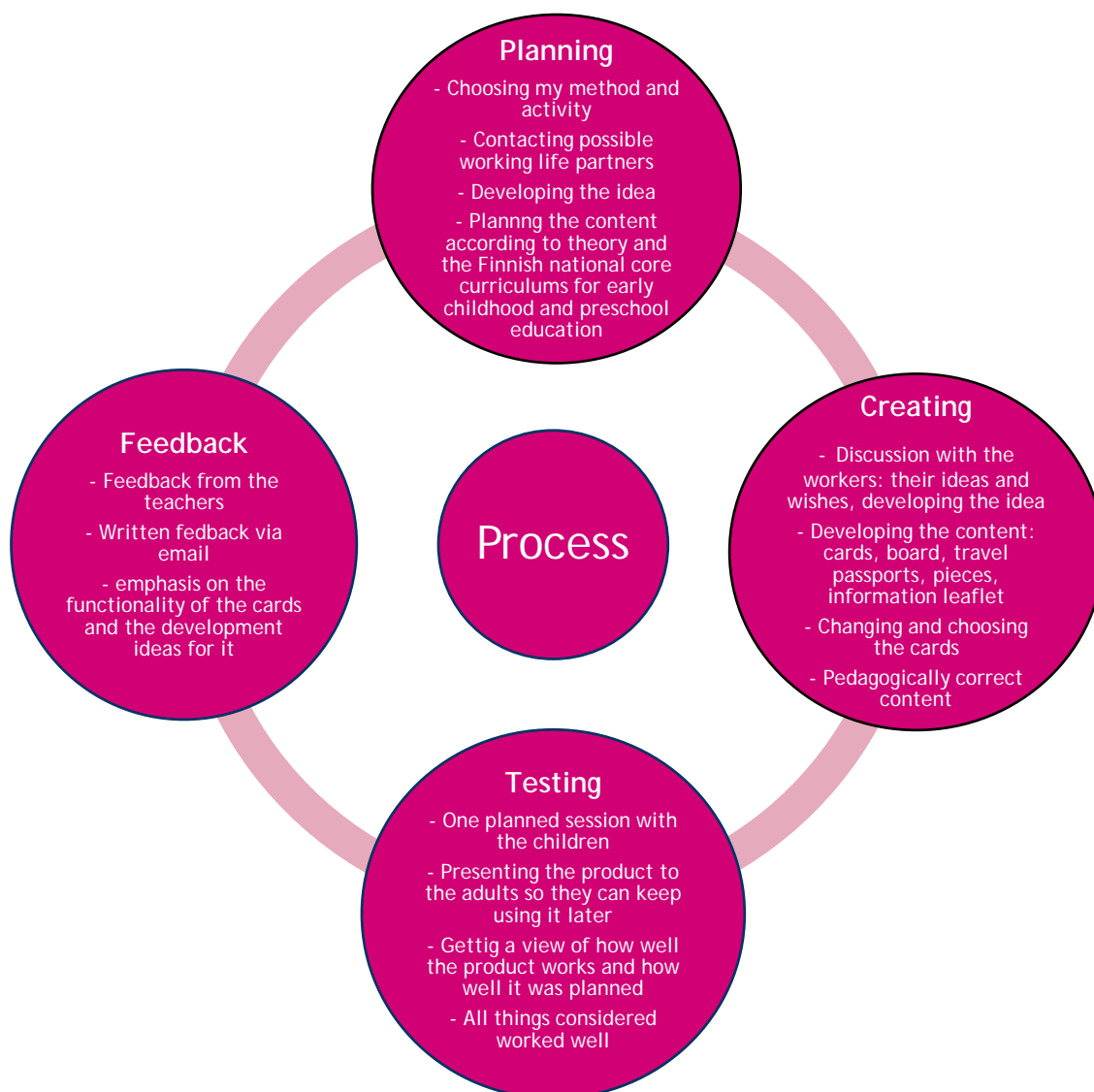


Figure 3: My thesis process.

The idea for my thesis arose during my second practice placement when I saw very young children almost fluently talk a language that was not their mother tongue. I was intrigued and wanted to know more about how children learn foreign languages and what professionals in the field could do to help them learn those languages. I realized that I wanted my thesis to somehow concern the language immersion daycare method and children learning foreign languages. I

pondered everything from comparing a normal daycare setting with a language immersion daycare setting to interviewing teachers and children in language immersion daycares to making a literary review on the topic.

However, after I realized that none of the ideas I had created in my head about research-based theses felt like my own, and found out that most of the ideas I had, had already been carried out in previous theses by different students, I decided to start working on an activity based thesis. I came up with a lot of ideas I wanted to execute, and after a long time of thinking and planning, I came up with what I have now - an activity pack to support the learning of the English language for pre-schoolers. Once I knew what I wanted to do, I started contacting multiple different daycares by calling and sending emails. I had a hard time getting a hold of any kindergartens, but, eventually, one - the Y.E.S daycare center - answered and told me they found my idea interesting and wanted to work with me during the process. We set a date with the head of the daycare for a meeting where I could explain my idea to her better.

Before the first meeting, my idea was still on the level of creating an actual board game, rather than an activity pack. During the meeting, the head of the day care gave me some ideas about what the game could include and briefed me a little about what the preschool groups had been learning during the spring. She approved of my idea and we set another date for me to meet up with the caretakers in the group I would be working with.

Between the meeting with the head of the kindergarten and the meeting with the teachers in the group, my original idea expanded and morphed, and I came up with an idea that, at first, felt far-fetched and difficult to execute. I wasn't sure if the teachers would be interested in the idea and I wasn't sure how I was going to carry out the plan I had in mind. Nonetheless, I ended up introducing the idea to the daycare. I also gave them the option to refuse and go with the original plan, but they chose to go with my second plan. We discussed if the product I had in mind would be beneficial for the children and if the group would have a need for something like what I had in mind or even time to spend around it. Together we made some plans about the categories for the activity cards, I heard their wishes and needs for the game and we set up a date for me to test the activity pack out with the children. After I had this confirmation from the teachers, I started planning the activity pack and the board to go along with it.

4.1.1 The action plan

From the beginning, the aim was to create an activity pack that would be as pedagogically correct as possible. Not only is it stated in the law of early childhood education that activity in early childhood education should be pedagogical (Finland 2018), but without the pedagogical

aspect of the activity pack, it wouldn't be as beneficial for the children. The original plan was to create the cards bilingually, so the questions would've been asked in Finnish, which would have supported the statement that children learn a new language better, when their first language is supported alongside with the second (Bergroth 2015, 1-20). This, however, was not possible, since some of the children in the group had a different first language than Finnish. Together with the teachers, we concluded, that it would be best to create the product to be fully in English.

The objective was to make the experience fun for the children, which I chose to execute by adding elements of a rule-based game to the activity pack. A rule-based game is a type of play that pre-school aged children enjoy and spend much of their free time around (Smith 2010). Having this aspect in the product, children are more likely to feel motivated to keep coming back to the product (David 1999, 5). The cards have been created to include subjects that should be familiar to children attending pre-school, which gives a feeling of familiarity to the product. This, in turn, supports the motivation of the children. The idea was also to create cards with different difficulty levels to make sure each child can gain a sense of success, while also making the cards challenging enough, that the children would gain something from it. A balance needed to be created between challenging and simplicity, so children wouldn't get too overwhelmed, which could potentially be hurtful to the language acquisition. (Ostroff 2012, 94-95.)

The board to go along with the card pack was designed to be placed in a familiar context for the children, their classroom. Teaching in a familiar context has been proven to be highly beneficial, since it supports the child's learning process (Ostroff 2012, 94-95). Additionally, the activity pack was designed so that each child gets one on one time with their teacher and through this, can receive a feeling of belonging and inclusion. The idea was to provide each child with a pleasant, meaningful and safe experience that is heavily supported by the teacher. Being in this kind of communication benefits the child's learning process heavily (Bergroth 2015, 1-20). Children enter the zone of proximal development when they come across a question they cannot solve on their own. This then, through repetition, enables the teacher to help the child learn multiple new things and skills. (Doolittle 1995, 3.)

The aim was also to get children to move and try something new, to make children participate and be a part of the activity, rather than just sit around and listen to the teacher talk. Children are much more likely to benefit from an activity, if they get to be actively involved in it (Ostroff 2012, 79-84). I also created the activity pack in the way that it is modifiable: it can be used in different scenarios, with different amounts of children, the cards can be modified to better fit the group and the activity can be used as a game. This made the product much broader, and easier to use, since it is not limited to time and space.

To conclude, children learn new skills through fun activities and support they get from the adults around them. Using different forms of play as a method is a very efficient way to support children with learning, for example, a new language, but they also need encouragement and appropriate activities to benefit from the teaching. All of these were things I considered when I started planning my product and kept in mind throughout the whole process.

4.1.2 Planning

My very first idea was to compare a normal daycare setting and a language immersion daycare setting with each other and see how they differ. Once I started planning my idea, I realized I didn't quite know what it would be that I would or even should research concerning the topic. I came to the realization that with the time and resources I had, this type of research would be difficult to execute with a reliable outcome. After that, I started playing around with the idea of doing a literary review of the same topic but quickly realized that with the data out there it would be very difficult. I also thought about interviewing kindergarten teachers and/or children in a language immersion daycare setting about their thoughts on the method. After going through finished theses, I realized this idea had already been executed multiple times, and I wasn't sure if I could've given anything more to the topic. During this time, I came to the conclusion that I wanted my thesis to be an activity based one - I wanted to plan and create something of my own.

With my previous experience from working with children, I knew that most children enjoy different types of games, and even more than that, games are highly educational (Krokkfors et al. 2014). My first idea was to create a game with a traditional board that would be plaid with dice. The game would have consisted of a pack of cards with activities on them and the cards would have been separated to categories that would have been indicated with different colours. The board would have had a road with different coloured circles on it to indicate the different categories of the cards. This was the idea I originally introduced to the daycare.

The problem with this idea was that the game would have always needed an adult to be playing the game with the children for the game to fulfil its purpose. Of course, children can support each other, but if, for example, two children who are just starting out with the language had played the game together, it would have been very difficult for them to manage through the game. The game was originally supposed to be in English and in Finnish, but after visiting the day care, the language of my product was changed completely to English. This was also a reason I needed to modify and change my idea since the product was originally planned so different.

Additionally, the original game would have been aimed for 3-5-year-olds, but the day care's wish and need was for me to execute the plan for one of their preschool groups.

Slowly, then, the idea of a traditional board game was scratched from my head and replaced by an activity pack of cards the teachers could use in the moment. When I met with the teachers, they agreed with my thoughts - a preschool group would benefit much more from an activity pack that could be used whenever, than from a board game which they have tons of to begin with. I didn't want the cards to stand alone though, but I wanted there to be something that would motivate and make the activities fun for the kids. I came up with an idea that at first felt difficult to execute and I was unsure of how it would work in a daycare setting. The idea was to somehow create a board of sorts of the map of Finland, on which the children could travel around. I wanted the board to have multiple routes that were connected to different cities in Finland, to give children a chance to travel across the country and learn something from the places they visit. This was also an idea the teachers in the group found interesting and fun and agreed that it would motivate the children to want to actively use the activity pack.

Together with the teachers, we came up with some categories that would be good to include in the pack. These categories were based on subjects the children had been learning during their preschool year and on the theoretical framework of my thesis. I started doing some research on what children learn in preschool in Finland and based my cards off those. Some cards were also based on my previous knowledge of working in a preschool group and seeing what they were learning during the year. The final categories of the cards were rhyming and word-play, categorizing, mathematics, seasons, body parts, family members and, finally, question to support the children's empathic awareness. Seasons, body parts and family members were put together into one category.

The national core curriculum for preschool education (2014) states that during preschool a child's figurative thinking and expression through visuals is supported through creating, analysing and evaluating different visuals. Because of this, from most of the cards, you can find pictures that are associated with the text and help the children visualize the text on the card. Another objective of preschool education is to support the children to express themselves vocally and bodily - this is heavily supported with the activity pack, since children are required to talk during the activities, most of the questions are such that you can't answer with "yes or no" and some of the activities require children to use their bodies to show different things. Especially the English language is supported since all the questions are in English and the children are required to answer using the English language. The children are also given the chance to read the question in the card and are helped if needed. This supports the children's literacy skills, which is another objective named in the national core curriculum for preschool education (2014).

In the national core curriculum for preschool education (2014), it is stated that children are supported with learning to handle and recognize their emotions, and this can also be seen in the cards I planned. Supporting children's mathematical skills is a large part of the preschool education and it is also stated as an objective in the national core curriculum for preschool education (2014). In the cards, you can find an entire category concerning the topic, and the questions follow what has been stated in the national core curriculum for preschool education (2014). Additionally, some of the cards concern the child and their favourite things - this gives children a chance to get to know and express themselves.

4.1.3 Creating

The cards in the activity pack were designed to include different elements of pedagogy to support the learning process for the children as best as possible. The categories of the cards consist of subjects that are relevant to the age group, such as mathematics, categorization and word play, among others. Additionally, the cards were designed with the intention of supporting the skill of literacy, which is a skill that develops immensely at the age of six, if given the possibility. The cards also support 6-year-old children's empathic awareness by including questions about self-reflection, relationships and family. (Rubin et al. 2006, 589-592) Using the activity pack supports skills of thinking, imagining, seeing, hearing, remembering and problem solving, all which are elements of learning (Ostroff 2012).

For the cards, I got ideas for the categories from the daycare and worked according to their wishes. I first planned all the questions, making a list of the categories and coming up with questions for each category. Then I planned how the cards could look like (figure 4) and started creating them. The pictures for the cards I got from google by using picture search and making sure all the pictures were allowed to be reused and modified. I then printed and cut the cards into rectangles and chose colours for each category. Yellow for rhyming and wordplay, grey for mathematics, black for questions about empathic awareness, light blue for categorizing and dark blue for seasons, body parts and family members (Table 2). I clued each question on a piece of cardboard of the correct colour and cut circles from the cardboard for each colour. On the circles I wrote numbers one, two or three to indicate how many steps on the board a card would be worth - the larger the number, the harder the question or task on the card. Those circles I clued on the cards of the same colour, for example, yellow circles on yellow cards and blue circles on blue cards and so on. Finally, I laminated the cards and cut them to be the shape of playing cards (Figure 5).

Category	Example of a card	Argument: Why this category?
Rhyming & Wordplay	Come up with three words that rhyme with cake. Can you use those words in sentences?	A wish from the kindergarten, develops vocabulary + grammar, teaches new words and gives an understanding of words that rhyme together
Mathematic	How old will you be in three years?	A subject learned in kindergarten, helps with language skills + mathematic understanding, teaches numbers and calculation in English
Empathic awareness	Name three things you like about yourself.	Benefits children's understanding of self + loving and accepting self, teaches words and forming sentences, helps children understand their strengths and qualities
Categorization	Which item does not belong? → examples of items	A wish from the kindergarten, connecting words to situations and concepts, learning vocabulary
Seasons, Body parts & Family members	Can you name the four seasons?	A wish from the kindergarten, learning familiar words in English, subjects that are learned in kindergarten, broadening vocabulary

Table 2: The content of the cards.

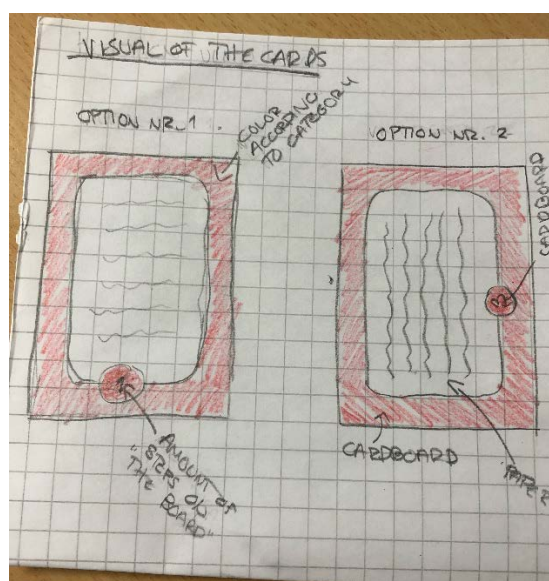


Figure 4: Plan of the visual of the cards.



Figure 5: The cards cut and laminated.

The board (figure 8) was created in collaboration with Meri Suominen, a design student from the University of Rovaniemi doing her master's degree. I was discussing my idea with her on a general level, and she volunteered to create the visuals for the board for me granted I gave her a clear plan of what I wanted. I gave her the go-ahead since actually creating the board wasn't relevant considering my degree. I printed out the outlines of Finland and started visualizing the board on that piece of paper (figure 6). First, I decided what cities I wanted to include on the map, drew those down and started connecting the cities to each other with smaller dots. These dots would create the road which the children would travel on during the game.

Once that was done, I printed the same map and started planning the colours for the map. I didn't want the map to look like a traditional map would - I wanted it to be pleasing to the eyes and interesting for the children, while also being educational and pedagogically correct. The best idea seemed to be to divide the map according to the landscape areas Finland has, and that is what I ended up going with. I wanted the colours to somehow correlate to what each landscape is best known for: blue for Lakeland for its rivers, orange for Ostrobothnia for its farming scenery, white for Lapland for its winters, green for the eastern Finland for its forests and grey for southern Finland for its industrialization (figure 7). After I had these and the general concept in mind, I contacted Suominen and we had a discussion about how the board should look like and what the size would be. During the whole process, I was in communication with the artist and she made the game according to my wishes, using some ideas of her own. I printed the finalized product using a printer meant for printing large pictures.

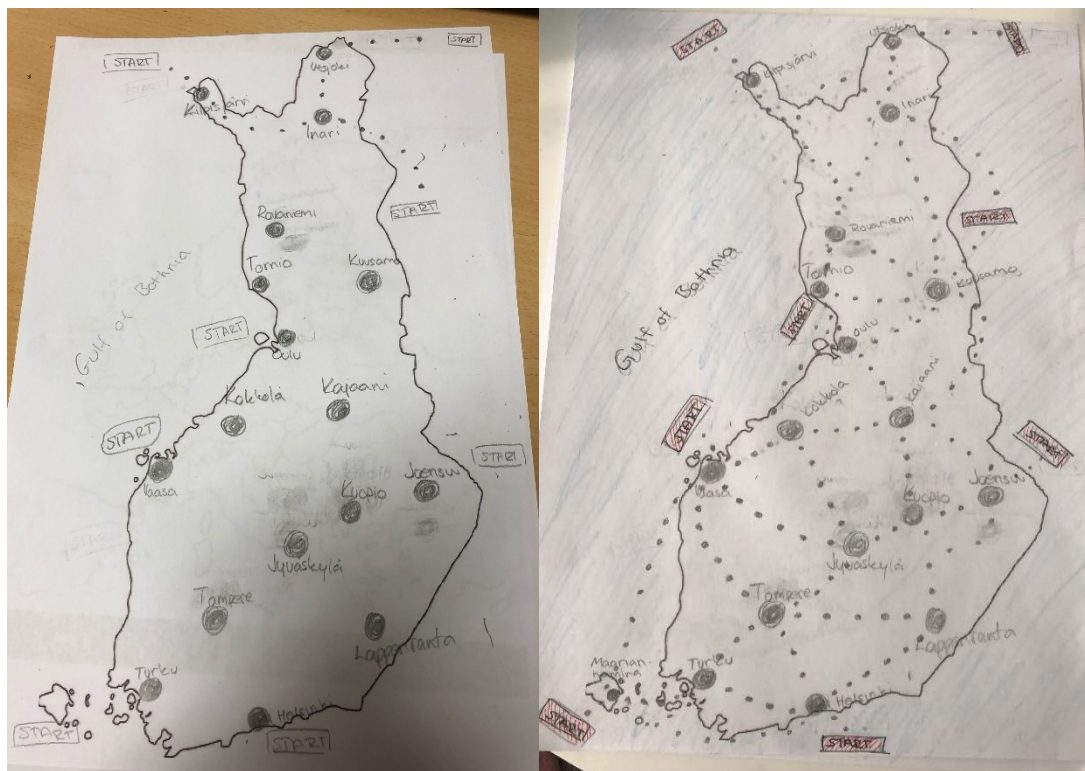


Figure 6: The plan for the map.

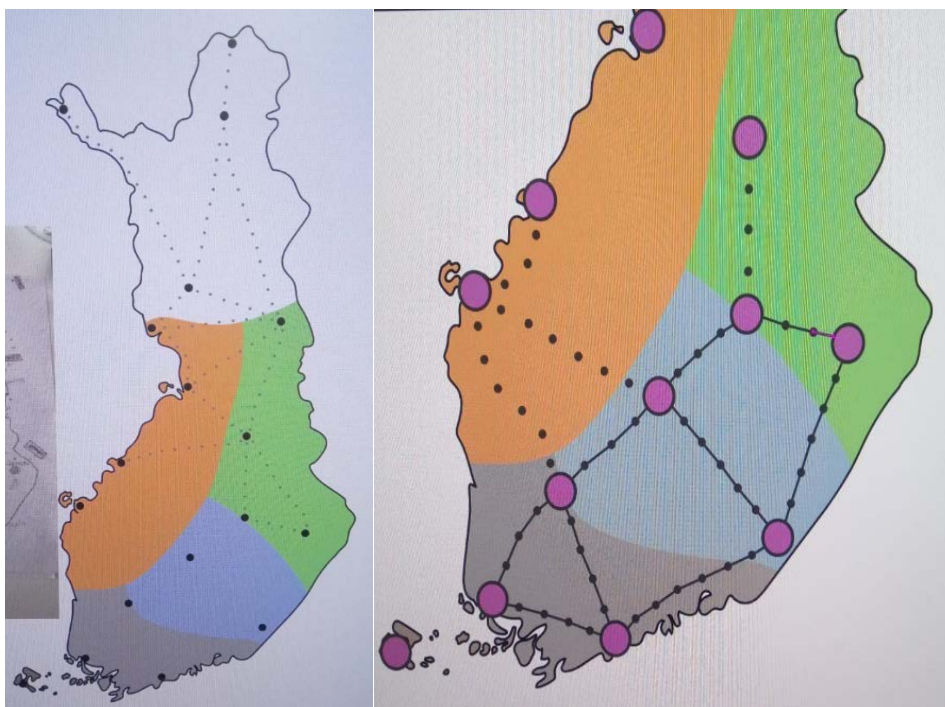


Figure 7: The board in the making.

The pieces for the product or what the children would use to move on the board were more difficult to plan. I decided to go with cut out pieces from cardboard that the children could

decorate to make look their own (figure 8). I first thought of doing multiple colours, but decided against it, since some children might have been disappointed if their favourite colour had either already been taken or not available. I cut out square-shaped pieces of cardboard, that I was going to let each child decorate before playing the game. I also created “travel passports” (figure 9) for all children, where they could track their progress on the map. The idea is to put down the date when each city is reached and write down what was learned from the city.

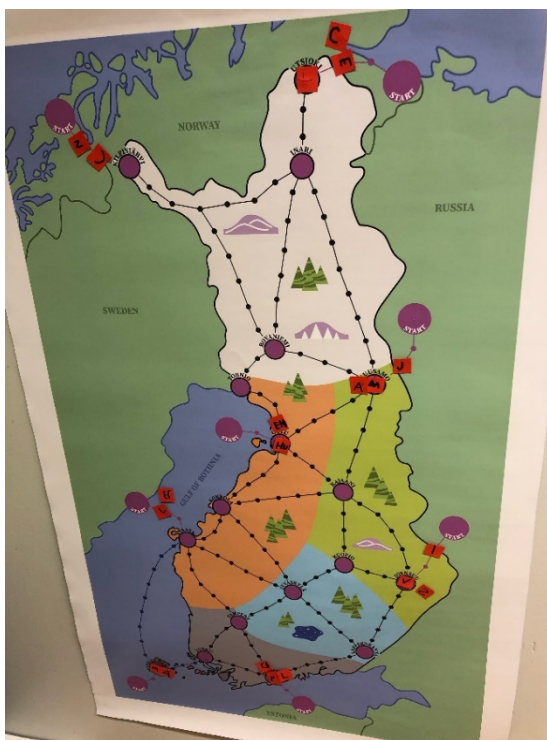


Figure 9: The board with the pieces on it.

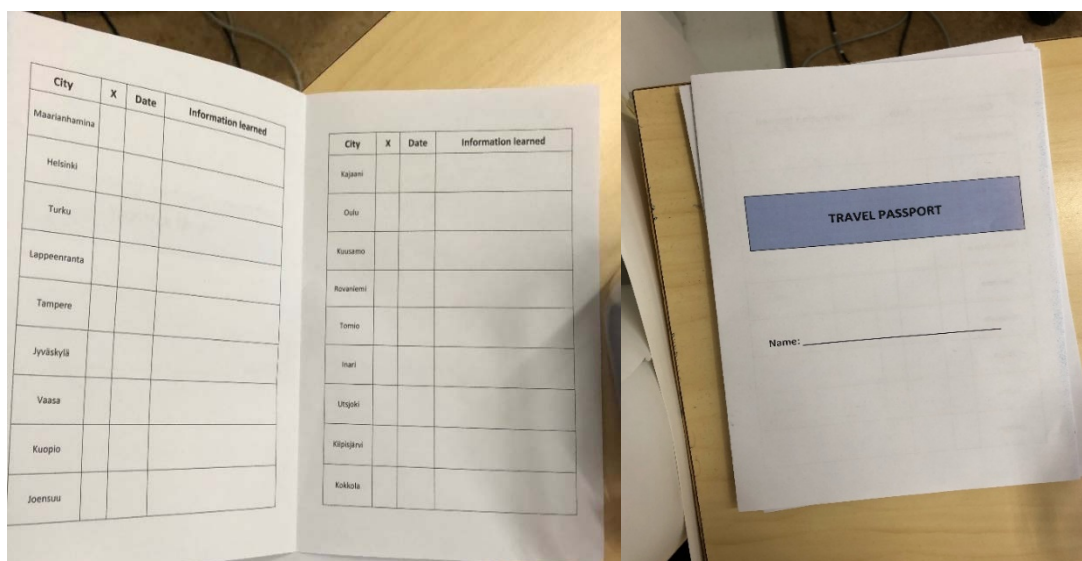


Figure 8: Travel passports.

I also created a rule book (appendix 1) of the product for the kindergarten to follow. This way it would be possible for future workers to use the activity pack along with the map, without me there to explain it to them. In the rule book, there are facts about each city for the teachers to use, so they don't have to look up facts on their own.

4.1.4 Testing

Originally, we had agreed with the kindergarten, that I would have two sessions with the children, first to try the activity pack out and then make appropriate changes and try it out with the same group of kids again. However, after the first session I had with the children, the teachers and I came to the conclusion, that it would be unnecessary for us to set another date for me to use the activity pack with the children, since the way it is meant to be used differs much from the way my session was held. We also didn't have the opportunity for me to test the product out in the way it is meant to be used since that would have required for me to stay in the kindergarten for multiple days with the children. We agreed with the teachers, that since I got a good enough look at how the product works with the children, and there weren't all too many changes that should have been made to the cards, that they would actively use the cards in the way they are meant to be used and send me feedback after a while of using it.

When I held the session, I had five children try the activity pack out at a time. This created a lot of confusion with the children, since there were always four children who were watching and waiting, and - at times - getting very bored. I also felt that having so many children do it at once, the focus wasn't on the one child doing the activity, since all the children were around to help. I also felt that the time I had was very limited, and I didn't feel I had enough time to focus on each child individually. Much of the time was also taken away from the children since they had to fill out their passports and decorate their pieces for the game. All in all, I had 20 children to go through, so I had four groups of five children to go through the product with.

I explained the mechanism of the cards to each group of five children individually, had each child put down their name on the passport and create a little mark on their piece, so each piece could be easily recognized on the board. All children ended up writing the first letter of their name on the piece. I instructed children where they would start on the map and helped them with sticking the piece on the map. Children would pick a card from the card pack and perform the task on the card. I helped each child when they needed assistance. I went through each child individually and filled out their passports when they landed on or passed a city. After the first couple of children had tested the game, I could already tell that the activity pack

couldn't be used the way I was doing it during this session. This didn't surprise me since the activity pack wasn't planned or created to work in this way.

If the cards are used in a way that each child stands in a line and the teacher goes through everyone individually while others wait, there is a fear that the effectiveness of the game is lost. There is a chance that children might feel pressured to perform and succeed perfectly, when others are watching their performance, and that might affect the way children perform the tasks - some might refuse altogether. Doing it this way also means teachers won't have enough time to spend on each child since they might be tempted to rush through the line of children. There is also a possibility that children get anxious and restless having to wait for their turn, which in turn means their performance when their turn comes won't be the best possible. I found all of these to be true when I held the session using the product in this way.

I could see some children got very nervous with four other children listening and watching at all times, and it was very difficult for them to perform the tasks on the cards. Even with my help, getting through was very difficult. However, for some children, this was no problem at all. In fact, all children ended up managing through their cards, some with more help than others. I also learned that almost all children got very restless having to wait for their turn and needed a lot of instructing to focus on the task. This, then, meant that the awaiting children would start performing the tasks on other children's cards, meaning some children had to pick up several cards. I also realized with the time I had, it was close to impossible to go through each child and properly focus on everyone individually. This made the session feel very rushed. I also didn't get the chance to go through multiple cards with children who wanted it.

Although most cards seemed to be good, appropriate and well planned, I found that some questions were too difficult, and some seemed to be too simple. This could be due to the different skill levels of the children, since for some children different categories were simpler than others. For example, for some children the rhyming category was very easy, while for others it was very difficult. It might have been better to separate the cards into categories according to the difficulty level of the card, but the problem with this was that I wasn't familiar with the child group, so I wasn't aware how skilled each child was with the language. This is perhaps something the teachers could focus on.

All in all, however, I felt the session went well and all children seemed to enjoy the activity. Some thought it was too short and would have liked to continue answering questions and moving on the board. Some children even came up to me and told me they enjoyed the product very much and enjoyed spending time using it. I got the feeling that most children will benefit from the activity pack and it will support each child's acquisition of the English language if used regularly and appropriately. It is up to the teachers how much they manage to support the children with the questions and tasks and how well the children benefit from the product.

After the session, I explained the mechanism of the activity to the teachers in detail, and we agreed that they would keep using the cards in the way they are meant to be used and see how it works that way. We also agreed that I would send them the instructions to the game and a list of facts of each city via email, so they could follow the instructions and be absolutely clear on what to do with the children, were they to forget the mechanism.

4.2 The product

The activity pack has been created with children in mind, specifically 6-year-old children, who are already familiar with the English language. The questions have been formatted with the presumption, that children using the cards can already speak the language some. The content has been created according to the Finnish national core curriculum for preschool education (2014) and early childhood education (2018) as well as the theoretical framework of my thesis. The cards support the principles for implementation of preschool education that has been laid out in the national core curriculum for preschool education (2014).

The activity pack supports inclusion, but also individualism. Each child can feel a part of a group when they see their piece on the board along with everyone else's, but they can also feel important and seen as an individual when they see their piece on the board that differs from everyone else's. The game also supports the child's one on one time with the adult when an adult pulls the child aside and uses the cards with them. Being heavily supported by the adult during the action supports the child's learning of the language. It also provides the children with a fun, exciting and a new way to learn the language that differs from what they have been used to before.

It is hard to distinguish whether what I have created is a game or simply an activity pack with a poster to support motivation and excitement for the children. Games have rules that are followed; however, these rules do not define the game, and they are often modifiable. Most games follow some type of a standard, or patterns that are familiar to players. Most games have a clear ending, a winner and a loser. However, some games have no winners or losers, and such is the case in what I have created. (Elias & Garfield 2012, 71-96.) Looking at these very basic characteristics for games, one could say that what I have created falls in the category of games. I have created rules, but those rules are modifiable; there are standards to the game, like moving a piece according to numbers and having a board with a clear path to follow on it and although there is not a clear goal to the game, one goal could be to travel across the country, visit all the cities and fill out the travel passport. However, since the cards work as a

stand-alone product, and are the main product of my thesis, for the sake of clarity I will be calling the product an activity pack.

The activity starts with a child picking a card from the pack. The teacher can either choose to divide the cards into categories and let the child choose from a category, or the child can choose a card from a mixed pack of categories. The cards can also be divided into categories according to the difficulty levels - 1 for easy, 3 for difficult. However, the idea is that a child shouldn't pick a card they can see, because then they can choose to pick a card with a question, they know they can answer for sure. This would lead to the children rarely challenging themselves with harder questions. It also means that it's okay for children to pick the same card multiple times because if a question on a card has been challenging, they can refresh their memory from the last time and learn through repetition.

The next step is to read the card, either alone, or with the help of the teacher. This supports children's literacy skills. The aim is for the child to be able to read what the card says and for the adult to heavily support those children in need. While supporting literacy skills, reading the question also supports the learning of the English language, because all the questions are in English. The child performs the task or answers the question in the card, with the help of the teacher. The aim is for the child to be able to get through even the more difficult questions, even if heavily guided and supported by the teacher. Since the questions are expected to be answered in English, naturally, the learning of the language is most likely to happen during this section of the game. If a child does not know a word, they can lean on the adult, and learn new vocabulary. The aim is also for adults to correct any grammatical errors the child might make. Additionally, the questions support different skill areas of the child; cognition, physicality and mathematical understanding.

It is highly effective for children to keep practicing those cards more difficult to them over a longer period of time since, according to Kang (2016), repetition over a longer period of time supports the learning process best. Repeating, along with other things, supports the memory since the performer must recall the previously happened scenario and connect it to the present scenario. Through repetition, children learn to use what they already know in advance and they have a shorter list of items they need to learn each time they go back to the difficult card being learned. (Kang 2016.) For example, if a child is asked to name the months of the year, after the first time of answering the question, they might remember the first two months, which means on the second run they only have to learn 10 months, instead of 12. This is how it goes on until the child remembers all the months.

After completing the task given on the card, the child reads the number on the card and moves their piece on the board as many steps as was indicated by the number on the card. This supports the child's mathematical understanding and counting since they have to know the number

on the card and count the steps taken on the board. Though for six-year-olds, counting up to three is very easy and moving up to three steps on the board isn't a difficulty. The numbers are correlated to the difficulty of the card, one is for easy, two is for mediocre and three is for difficult. Should the player land on or pass one of the cities on the board, the adult should tell the child some information about the city. This supports the child's knowledge of their home country and the geography of it. They learn where in the country a city is located, what is characteristic of the city and how far it is from their home city. The adult should also fill out each child's travel passport, once they land on or pass a city.

What's great about the product is it can be used in multiple different ways. First and foremost, the cards work as an activity pack that teachers can utilize whenever; if children have to wait around and are getting anxious, teachers can pull the cards out and entertain children with them. The cards can be used with children methodically, focusing on each child's specific developmental levels. Secondly, the product can be used as a continuous or even like a traditional board game. Using the product as a traditional game, an ending on the board could be marked, and children could use the product together as a game. Additionally, also the board can be used alone, when, for example, teaching children about geography. This was also a point the teachers made when giving me feedback.

5 Feedback and evaluation

After a month of using the product, the teachers sent me feedback on what they had noticed during the time they had used the product. Most of the feedback was very positive, with some development ideas to further work on the product. Mostly the teachers felt that children enjoyed the product, and that children were interested in the contents of the product. Additionally, according to the teachers, children seemed excited about executing the different aspects of the product. The language used in the product was versatile and easy for the children to understand and follow, which supported children's lingual development. Furthermore, the teachers felt the content - especially the cards - supported children's social skills, mathematical understanding, patience as well as, and especially, language skills.

The teachers felt the product supported multiple aspects of children's pedagogic development, and through repetition, children's learning and development was further supported. Reading the cards and performing the tasks, children got to test and show out their individual skills and build their self-confidence. Especially those children, who were able to read the cards on their own, seemed to develop their self-confidence immensely. The teachers also noted that adult commitment during the session was important, and children learned best with an adult being

actively involved in the process. Children were able to lean on the teachers and get help from them in terms of especially language development. Additionally, the teachers felt that the versatility of the game was beneficial.

According to the teachers, conversation was sparked during activity about the places each child had visited both in-game and outside of the product. Children also discussed the different places in Finland and compared where they have relatives living. Children also got very attached to their travel passports and carried them around during the days. For some children, the travel passports became a very important item. However, the teachers felt the travel passports were difficult to use in the moment and filling them took too much time to keep the sessions flowing smoothly. They also felt that the board could be made more durable and perhaps magnetic, to be able to use magnetic pieces to move around on the board. Finally, the information given on each city to the teachers were at times too difficult for children to understand. The information could have been more thought of with the interests of children in mind.

Looking at the feedback received from the teachers, we can conclude that in a longer run, the product will benefit children's language development among many others. The product seems to be beneficial to children in multiple different ways, and most aspects of the product were well thought of in this thesis. The content was well supported by theory, which could be seen in the outcome of the sessions held. Children seemed to benefit from the many aspects of the product. However, the best outcome would be seen, if used the product for a longer period of time, than a month.

During the thesis process, it was important to work in a way that was reliable and ethical. Considering the ethicalness of my work was an important part of my thesis process, to make sure I was not harming or disrespecting anyone's work. It was also important to keep in mind a certain sensitivity when working with children. During my writing process I utilized the HTK-directions (Hyvä tieteellinen käytäntö/responsible conduct of research) put together by Tutkimuseettinen Neuvottelukunta (2012) as well as all ethical directions and rules dictated by the social services field.

During my process I remained honest to my work and everything I wrote. I worked with care and accuracy utilising only reliable sources when writing the theoretical framework of the thesis. I gave credit to where it was due and did not copy anyone's text or ideas. I have reported my process from start to finish as in detail as I could. I worked in co-operation with the working life partner honouring and respecting their rights and taking into consideration their opinions and wishes. Working in this way, I ensured my work was ethical and respectful, but also reliable and credible. (Tutkimuseettinen Lautakunta 2012.)

Working with children, it was important to note any laws and regulations that apply when working with them and follow those accordingly. I gave everyone the chance to not take part in my project if they did not wish it, and I considered the parents' opinions and wishes. I informed the parents about my project and gave them the chance to choose whether their child was allowed to take part in the session I held (appendix 4). No child was forced to take part, and all were supported and encouraged if they were shy or anxious during the session.

6 Conclusion and discussion

The finalised product was created with the wishes and needs of the kindergarten in mind, and it shaped into something completely different to what I had in mind. The original idea was to create a board game to support the acquisition of the English language for children in early childhood education, but after having the conversation with the kindergarten teachers, we concluded that an activity pack for a preschool group would be much more needed. However, I still wanted to include aspects of a traditional board game to the product, because in my theoretical framework it is stated that preschool aged children enjoy rule-based games the most. Unlike the original idea, I thought of making the activity pack almost like an ongoing game that could be played for months. The goal was to make the activity pack simple enough that it wouldn't be too overwhelming, but challenging enough, that it would benefit children's learning.

I felt that changing the product and developing what I have now, instead of a traditional board game, was a good thing. I feel the children in the group will learn better with the activity pack than they would have with a board game. I also think the product I have now will motivate children to learn better than a traditional board game would have. I feel the objective to give children a new and fun way to learn was reached well. Most children in the group seemed to thoroughly enjoy the game.

The activity pack has been made with the intention that it can be easily developed according to the needs of the child group. The content and categories can easily be changed, since the cards have been made so simple to create, and the number of steps to be taken on the board can be changed. The pieces can easily be changed and modified by crafting new ones with the children. I feel this would have been a good thing to do, so all children could have had a piece that would have looked even more like their own. The cards can be used as a stand-alone product without the board, but it can also be used as a traditional board game if the group would see better fit. The product has multiple different ways of using it and it can be modified into each child group according to their needs.

The process for me was fun and extremely educational. I got out of my comfort zone and created something I would have never seen myself doing. Creating the cards, I got more familiar with the preschool education content in Finland and learned to understand pre-school aged children's developmental level better. All in all, my professional growth during the process was immense and I have learned much about children and working with them. I have learned especially about child development and children's capability of learning new language. I reached my professional goal of working as an instructor and getting a feel for that, though, if I could change anything from my process, I would have tried to arrange an intensity week with the day care where I would have actively used the product with the children. This, unfortunately, wasn't an option for me or for the day care.

This product could be further developed to fit any age group to help with language acquisition. For example, I see this could be beneficial in a classroom setting in primary education when children are starting out with the language. The questions and tasks could be modified to fit each target group according to the developmental level. This idea could also be used to create a product of a same kind but for different language-based language immersion day care, for example, a Finnish-Swedish one. Additionally, my thesis only scratched the surface of game-based learning and how games can affect learning, and because playing has been proven to be an efficient way to learn, it might be interesting to learn more about the subject and delve into it properly.

The growing popularity of bilingual education, whether it be extensive or concise, gives us a clear understanding that there is some benefit to it. Knowing that it is easier for children to learn a language than for adults, it is clear to see that language immersion day cares should be invested in, and children should be supported with learning new languages as early as possible. Since children learn best when playing, I feel my product is necessary and successful in supporting children's learning process. With the help of the feedback given to me, I can keep developing the product and hopefully be able to utilize it in my own field of profession during the years to come.

References

Pressed

Becker, B.; Stan, S.; Pistolis, D.; Harris, C. & Mayer, B. 2009. Libraries Got Game: Aligned Learning Through Modern Board Games. American Library Association.

Cowie, H. 2012. From Birth to Sixteen - Children's health, social, emotional and linguistic development. Routledge.

Crosse, K. 2007. Introducing English as an Additional Language to Young Children: A Practical Handbook. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Curtis, A. 2002. A Curriculum for the Pre-School Child: Learning to Learn. 2nd edition. Routledge.

David, T. 1999. Young Children Learning. SAGE Publications.

Ding, S. & Littleton, K. 2005. Children's Personal and Social Development. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Elias, G. & Garfield, R. 2012. Characteristics of Games. MIT Press.

Felicia, P. 2014. Game-Based Learning: Challenges and Opportunities. Cambridge Scholars Publisher.

Gosso, Y. 2010. Play in Different Cultures. In: Smith, K. Children and Play. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 80-95.

Helenius, A. & Lummelahti, L. 2018. Varhaiskasvatus perusteita. Helsinki: Books on Demand.

Hughes, F. 2010. Children, Play and Development. 4th edition. California: SAGE Publications.

Jones, E. & Cooper, R. 2006. Playing to Get Smart. Teachers College Press.

Kangas, M.; Vesterinen, O. & Krokfors, L. 2014. In: Krokfors, L.; Kangas, M. & Kopisto, K. Oppiminen pelissä - Pelit, pelillisuus ja leikillisuus opetuksessa. Tampere: Vastapaino. 23-37.

Koskinen, A.; Kangas, M.; Krokfors, L. 2014. Oppimispelien tutkimus pedagogisesta näkökulmasta. In: Krokfors, L.; Kangas, M. & Kopisto, K. Oppiminen pelissä - Pelit, pelillisuus ja leikillisuus opetuksessa. Tampere: Vastapaino. 23-37.

Kostelnik, M. J.; Gregory K. M.; Soderman, A. K. & Whiren, A. P. 2009. Guiding Children's Social Development and Learning. 7th edition. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Krokfors, L.; Kangas, M. & Hyvärinen, R. 2014. Oppimispelit rajoja ylittävinä ja osallistavina oppimisympäristöinä. In: Krokfors, L.; Kangas, M. & Kopisto, K. Oppiminen pelissä - Pelit, pelillisuus ja leikillisuus opetuksessa. Tampere: Vastapaino. 15-22.

Krokfors, L.; Kangas, M. & Kopisto, K. 2014. Oppiminen pelissä - Pelit, pelillisuus ja leikillisuus opetuksessa. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Lightwood, C.; Cole, M. & Cole, S. 2012. The Development of Children. 7th edition. Worth Publishers.

Nurmi, J-E.; Ahonen, T.; Lyytinen, H.; Lyytinen, P.; Pulkkinen, L. & Ruoppila, I. 2014. Ihmisen Psykologinen Kehitys. Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus.

Oller, J.; Oller, S. & Oller, L. 2012. Milestones: Normal Speech and Language Development Across the Lifespan. 2nd edition. Plural Publishing, Incorporated.

Ostroff, W. 2012. Understanding How Young Children Learn: Bringing the Science of Child Development to the Classroom. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Piper, T. 2000. And Then There Were Two: Children and Second-Language Learning. Pippin Publishing Corporation.

Rubin, K.; Bukowski, W. & Parker, J. 2006. Peer Interactions, Relationships, and Groups. In: Eisenberd, N. (ed.). Handbook of Child Psychology. 6th edition. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 571-646.

Smith, K. 2010. Children and Play. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Tabors, P. 2008. One Child, Two Languages. 2nd edition. Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Vehkala, R. & Urho, T. 2013. Leikki on totta!: Näkökulmia vapaan leikin tukemiseen. Helsinki: Premedia.

Vilkka, H. & Airaksinen, T. 2003. Toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö. Helsinki: Tammi 2003.

Villka, A. & Airaksinen, T. 2003. Toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö. 1.-2. edition. Jyväskylä: Gummerus kirjapaino Oy.

Vähänen, L.; Hintikka, M. & Helenius, A. 2004. Leikistä totta: omaehtoisen leikin merkitys. Helsinki: Tammi.

Whitehead, M. 2009. Supporting Language and Literacy Development in the Early Years. 2nd edition. McGraw-Hill Education.

Young, M. 2002. From Early Child Development to Human Development: Investing in Our Children's Future. World Bank Publications

Yrjöinen, S.; Parviainen, P. & Lakervi, H. 2014. Opettaja ja älykäs valo- ja ääniteknologia liikuntatunnilla. In: Krokfors, L.; Kangas, M. & Kopisto, K. Oppiminen pelissä - Pelit, pelillisyyys ja leikillisyyys opetuksessa. Tampere: Vastapaino. 168-190.

Electronic

Bergroth, M. 2015. Kotimaisten kielten kielikylpy. University of Vaasa. Accessed 21.5.2019. https://www.univaasa.fi/materiaali/pdf/isbn_978-952-476-617-3.pdf.

City of Vantaa. 2018. Varhaiskasvatus ja esiopetus Y.E.S.- päiväkodissa. Accessed 28.4.2019. https://www.vantaa.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/vantaa/embeds/vantaawww-structure/143291_Y.E.S.pk_kuvaus_2018-2019.pdf.

Doolittle, P. 1995. Understanding Cooperative Learning through Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Accessed 22.5.2019. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED384575.pdf>.

Finland. 1998. Perusopetuslaki 21.8.1998/628. Accessed 14.4.2019. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1998/19980628>

Finland. 2018. Varhaiskasvatuslaki 540/2018. Accessed 14.4.2019. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2018/20180540>

- Finland. 540/2018. The Law of Early Childhood Education. Accessed 21.5.2019. <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2018/20180540>.
- Finnish National Agency for Learning. 2014. The National Core Curriculum For Preschool Education. Accessed 21.5.2019. https://www.oph.fi/download/163781_esiopetuksen_ope-tussuunnitelman_perusteet_2014.pdf.
- Finnish National Agency for Learning. 2018. The National Core Curriculum For Early Childhood Education. Accessed 21.5.2019. https://www.oph.fi/download/195244_Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman_perusteet19.12.2018.pdf.
- Finnish National Agency for Learning. N.d. Esiopetukseen osallistuminen. https://www.oph.fi/koulutus_ja_tutkinnot/esiopetus/esiopetukseen_osallistuminen.
- Goldstein, J. February 2012. Play in Children's Development, Health and Well-being. Toy Industries of Europe. Accessed 21.5.2019. <https://www.ornes.nl/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Play-in-children-s-development-health-and-well-being-feb-2012.pdf>.
- Kang, S. 2016. Spaced Repetition Promotes Efficient and Effective Learning: Policy Implications for Instruction. Behavioral and Brain Sciences 2016, Vol. 3 Issue 1, 12-19. Accessed 1.5.2019. [https://www.dartmouth.edu/~cogedlab/pubs/Kang\(2016,PIBBS\).pdf](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~cogedlab/pubs/Kang(2016,PIBBS).pdf).
- Kangasvieri, T.; Miettinen, E.; Palviainen, H.; Saarinen, T.; Ala-Vähälä, T. 2012. Selvitys kotimaisten kielten kielikylpyopetuksen ja vieraskielisen opetuksen tilanteesta Suomessa: kuntatason tarkastelu. University of Jyväskylä. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/40412>.
- Ministry of Education and Culture. 2019. Opetusministeri Grahn-Laasonen: Kieltenopetus tulee aloittaa yhä aikaisemmin - lisää kielikylpyjä päiväkoteihin. Accessed 10.5.2019. https://minedu.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/opetusministeri-grahn-laasonen-kieltenopetus-tulee-aloittaa-ya-aikaisemmin-lisaa-kielikylpyja-paivakoteihin.
- Opetushallitus. No date. Varhaiskasvatus. Accessed 12.3.2019. https://www.oph.fi/koulutus_ja_tutkinnot/varhaiskasvatus.
- Patrick, B.; Hisley, J. & Kempler, T. 2000. "What's Everybody So Excited About?": The Effects of Teacher Enthusiasm on Student Intrinsic Motivation and Vitality. The Journal of Experimental Education. Vol. 68 Issue 6, 217-236. Accessed 10.5.2019. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220970009600093>.
- Perkkiö, T. 2018. Vieras kieli opetusohjelmaan jo ekaluokkalaisille - englanninopettajan suositus: "Valitkaa joku muu kuin englanti". Yle Uutiset. Accessed 19.2.2019. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10438183>.
- Pivec, M. 2007. Play and learn: potentials of game-based learning. Vol. 38 Issue3, 387-393. Accessed 22.5.2019. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2007.00722.x>.
- Sardone, N. & Devlin-Scherer, R. 2016. Let the (Board) Games Begin: Creative Ways to Enhance Teaching and Learning. Clearing House. Vol. 89 Issue 6, 215-222. Accessed 10.5.2019. <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=8&sid=d74246e0-05a1-447b-8cc0-aab833bf9ed0%4> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learning0sdc-v-sess-mgr01&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZvc3QtbGI2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=118989890&db=afh>.
- Sjöberg, S.; Mård-Miettinen, K.; Peltoniemi, A. & Skinnari, K. 2018. KIELIKYLPY SUOMEN KUNNISSA 2017: Selvitys kotimaisten kielten kielikylvyn tilanteesta varhaiskasvatuksessa, esiopetuksessa ja perusopetuksessa. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän Yliopisto. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/57575/978-951-39-7370-4.pdf?sequence=1>.

Talking Child. 2003. Child language development. Accessed 10.4.2019. <http://www.talkingchild.com/chartvocab.aspx>.

The Oxford Dictionaries. 2019. Definition of learning in English by Oxford Dictionaries. Accessed 21.5.2019. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learning>.

Tiedeykkönen. Tiedeykkönen: Lapsi oppii kielet leikiten - vanhempanakin leikkimieli auttaa. 2017. [podcast]. Yle Radio 1. Broadcasted 7 April. Accessed 12.4.2019. <https://areena.yle.fi/1-3985735>.

Tutkimuseettinen Neuvottelukunta. 2013. Hyvä tieteellinen käytäntö ja sen loukkausepäilyjen käsittelyminen Suomessa. Accessed 2.6.2019. https://www.tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/HTK_ohje_2012.pdf.

Yle. 2015. Esikoulu ei ole enää oikeus vaan velvollisuus. Accessed 12.3.2019. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-7726362>.

Zone of Proximal Development. Southeastern Louisiana University. Accessed 21.5.2019. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED384575.pdf>.

Figures

Figure 1: Milestones of language development in children (Talking Child, 2013)	15
Figure 2: The zone of proximal development	21
Figure 3: My thesis process	32
Figure 1: Pan of the visuals of the cards	38
Figure 5: The cards cut and laminated	39
Figure 6: The plan for the map	40
Figure 7: The board in the making	40
Figure 8: The board with the pieces on it	41
Figure 9: Travel passports	41

Tables

Table 1: Inclusion supportive game pedagogy model (Krokkfors, Kangas & Lakkala 2014, 214)	30
Table 2: Content of the cards	38

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Game instructions	55
Appendix 2: The activity cards	59
Appendix 3: The board	66
Appendix 4: Information leaflet for parents	67

Appendix 1: Game instructions

Game Instructions:

Game components: 53 playing cards, 25 red pieces, 25 travel passports, a map, game instructions.

Object: Travel across the map of Finland by answering questions on the playing cards and get the travel passport filled up.

Playing: A child picks a random card from the pile of cards and performs the task or answers the question on the card. Children can read the question on their own if they want, but an adult can also help the child read the question. Each card has a number on the bottom – this number indicates how many steps each card is worth on the map. After the task has been performed, the child can move on the board as indicated on the card. If a child passes or lands on a city, they get told a fact about the city in question. Their travel passport also gets filled with the date they landed on or passed the city and with the fact they learned about the city. Three facts on each city can be found in the table after this text. Each child has an individual piece on the board they use for traveling on the board. Every piece also has the child's name written on the flipside. The game can be continued until a child has visited all cities and filled out their travel passports, or even after that, by giving different and new information about each city during the following rounds.

Facts about cities:






HELSINKI	The capital city of Finland.	A poetic name for Helsinki is "the daughter of the Baltic Sea".	Helsinki is the world's coldest capital.
INARI	The largest municipality in Finland by surface area.	The only quadrangular (4 different languages spoken) municipality in Finland - Finnish and three different Sami languages.	The municipality has more rivers than any other municipality in all of Finland - 8 033.
JOENSUU	Translates to "mouth of the river" in English.	90% of all the locks on buildings in Finland are made in Joensuu.	Holds the record for the highest weather temperature ever measured in Finland, +37,2 degrees Celsius.

JYVÄSKYLÄ	Jyväskylä is also known as the Athens of Finland.	Has said to be the capital city of sports and physical activity in Finland.	Finland's City of Light. Has over 100 permanently illuminated locations in the city.
KAJAANI	Holds the last medieval styled fortification in Scandinavia.	In Kajaani, you can go on bear watching safaris, and spot bears in the wild.	In Kajaani, you can ski all year long, because the city has an indoor skiing track.
KILPISJÄRVI	The city only has about 100 permanent residents.	It has one of the highest mountains in Finland called Saana (1 029 meters).	If you want to see the Northern lights, you're most likely to do so in Kilpisjärvi.
KOKKOLA	Kokkola has the oldest school building in Finland still standing today, it was built approximately 400 years ago.	The beginning of Karl Fazer Milk Chocolate lies in Kokkola, where Karl Fazer was granted a loan to start his first confectionery.	Kokkola has one of the brightest lighthouses in Finland, situated on an island where people live.
KUOPIO	Kuusamo is known as the capital city of culture in Finland.	Kuopio holds the annual wife-carrying world championship competition.	In Kuopio, every other street is reserved for pedestrians and cyclers and every other for cars. This is a very unique feature in Finland.
KUUSAMO	Kuusamo is the southernmost part of Lapland.	Has one of the largest and busiest ski resorts in Finland, with visitors coming from all over the world!	Santa's vacation spot cottage is located on the outskirts of Kuusamo.
LAP-PEENRANTA	Is situated by the largest lake in Finland - Saimaa.	In Lappeenranta, you can spot the largest sandcastle built in Finland. A new design is built every year.	The city is known as an international university city, with students




			from 68 different countries.
MAARIANHAMINA	The capital city of the Åland Islands, a region in Finland.	Most people in the city speak Swedish as their first language.	Has the most sunshine hours in all of Northern Europe between May and August.
OULU	The largest city in Northern Scandinavia.	Oulu holds the annual Air Guitar World Championships.	Oulu in Sami language means "flood water" - it is speculated that this is where the name of the city comes from, since Oulu is located by water.
ROVANIEMI	The Santa Claus village is located in Rovaniemi. It is also the official home town of Santa Claus.	Rovaniemi is situated on the arctic circle.	The largest city in the European Union by land.
TAMPERE	Tampere is the most attractive tourism and residential city in Finland.	Hometown of the World's only Moomin Museum.	Särkänniemi - the second largest amusement park in Finland - is located in Tampere.
TORNIO	The oldest city in Lapland.	Turku is the official Christmas City of Finland.	One of the Duudsons Activity parks is located in Tornio.
TURKU	Before Helsinki, Turku was the capital city of Finland.	The first school in Finland was established in Turku	Turku is the oldest city in Finland.
UTSJOKI	The northernmost municipality in Finland and in the European Union.	The only municipality in Finland, which has as many people whose first language is Sami as there are those whose first language is Finnish.	The municipality has the northernmost movie theatre in the European Union. Instead of advertisements before the movie, they show short movies in Sami.

VAASA	Vaasa is the sunniest city in Finland.	Vaasa is the fastest growing city in Finland.	One of Finland's most popular waterparks is located in Vaasa.
--------------	--	---	---

Appendix 2: The activity cards

<p style="text-align: center;">What can you look at when you want to know what time it is?</p> <p>Can you tell what the time is now?</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Tell us about something that makes you happy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it? • How do you react to it? • Why does it make you happy? • How does being happy make you feel? 
<p style="text-align: center;">What is your favorite animal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it sound? • How does it move? • How does it look like? 	<p style="text-align: center;">What is your favorite thing to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you like to do it most? • Who do you like to do it with? 
<p style="text-align: center;">Let's rhyme! What rhymes with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mouse? • Bee? • Star? • Clock? 	<p style="text-align: center;">If you could have any animal in the world as a pet, what would it be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where in the world do you think you would have to go to get it? • What would you name it? 
<p style="text-align: center;">Arrange the following numbers from greatest to smallest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8, 16, 3, 9, 20 • 5, 8, 16, 1, 10 • 7, 3, 11, 15, 4 	<p style="text-align: center;">How many dots are there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many black dots? • How many red dots? • How many yellow dots? 

Which one has more than 5?

- a) 
- b) 
- c) 

What do you...

- Use your eyes for?
- Taste with?
- Breathe with?
- Blink with?
- Use your ears for?



Can you name the months of the year?

Which month is your favorite? Why?



Come up with three words that rhyme with cake?

Can you use those words in sentences?



What do you think the weather is like:



- In the summer?
- In the spring?
- In the fall?
- In the winter?

If you could have or do anything in the world for your birthday, what would you want and why?



What do you think you will be doing 10 years from now?

- Do you know how old you will be then?

What's the greatest thing about being you?

- What is something you're really good at ?

What food items do not belong?

- Spaghetti, apple, pear, orange
- Carrot, tomato, beef, cucumber
- Chicken, rice, fish, beef



What words would you use to describe your family?

What do you like most about your family?



Name three of your favorite foods.



Name three words that relate to the word 'furniture'.

For example:
Table, couch, chair



If Matt has 7 apples, and he gives 3 to Freddie, how many apples will Matt have left?

$$7 - 3$$

How old will you be in three years?

$$3 + 6$$



Let's count!



- How many tables can you see around you?
- How many fingers do you have in your left hand?
- How many adults can you see in the room?

Can you count out loud to 20?

123456
78910

Can you count how many different colors you are wearing today?

- Can you name those colors?



How many toes and fingers do you have?

Do you know what each finger is called?



Which shape is similar to this?



a)



b)



c)



Arrange the following numbers from smallest to greatest.

- 9, 7, 14, 10, 1
- 2, 7, 5, 9, 3
- 4, 1, 11, 6, 9

How many dots are there?



Which one of these has the least? Which one has the most?

a)

b)

c)

Do you know the name of the organ that pumps your blood?

Do you know what color it is?



Which season is the coldest in Finland?

Which season is the hottest in Finland?



Which month is your birthday in?

- Do you know what season your birthday is in?



Can you name the four seasons?

- What's your favorite season?



Which body part do you use to:



- Talk?
- Hear?
- See?
- Smell?



What do you use to:

- Write?
- Run?
- Grab onto things?
- Chew?



How many members do you have in your family?

Who are they?

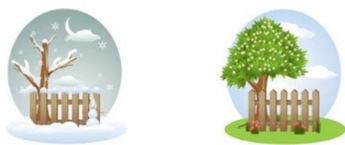


What is the weather like today?

Do you remember what it was like yesterday?



What is your favorite thing to
do in the summer?
What about in the winter?



What color starts with:

- a) R
- b) G
- c) Y
- d) B



Can you name three
animals?



What is this item?

Can you come up with two words that rhyme with
the word?

Which item does not
belong?

- Knife, fork, plate, spoon
- Car, bike, motorcycle, teddy
- Pen, pencil, book, crayon



Pick up an item to your liking.

- What is it?
- Can you come up with two words that rhyme with it?
- Can you use those words in sentences?



Let's rhyme!

Do these rhyme together?

- Sing and ring?
- Cow and window?
- Kiss and hiss?
- Table and chair



Can you sing the alphabet
song? We'll help you if you
want!



A-B-C-D-E-F-G,
H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P,
Q-R-S-T-U-V,
W-X-Y and Z,



Now I know my ABC's,
Next time, won't you sing with me?

**Which three words
rhyme with the word cat?**

Can you use those words in
sentences?



**What alphabets does
your name consist of?**

**What colors do you have in your
shirt/dress that you have on at
the moment?**

Are you wearing your favorite color?
What is your favorite color?



**Name three things you
like about yourself.**



**If you owned a
restaurant, what would you
serve in it?**



**Can you name five body
parts?**

Now show those body parts to us.

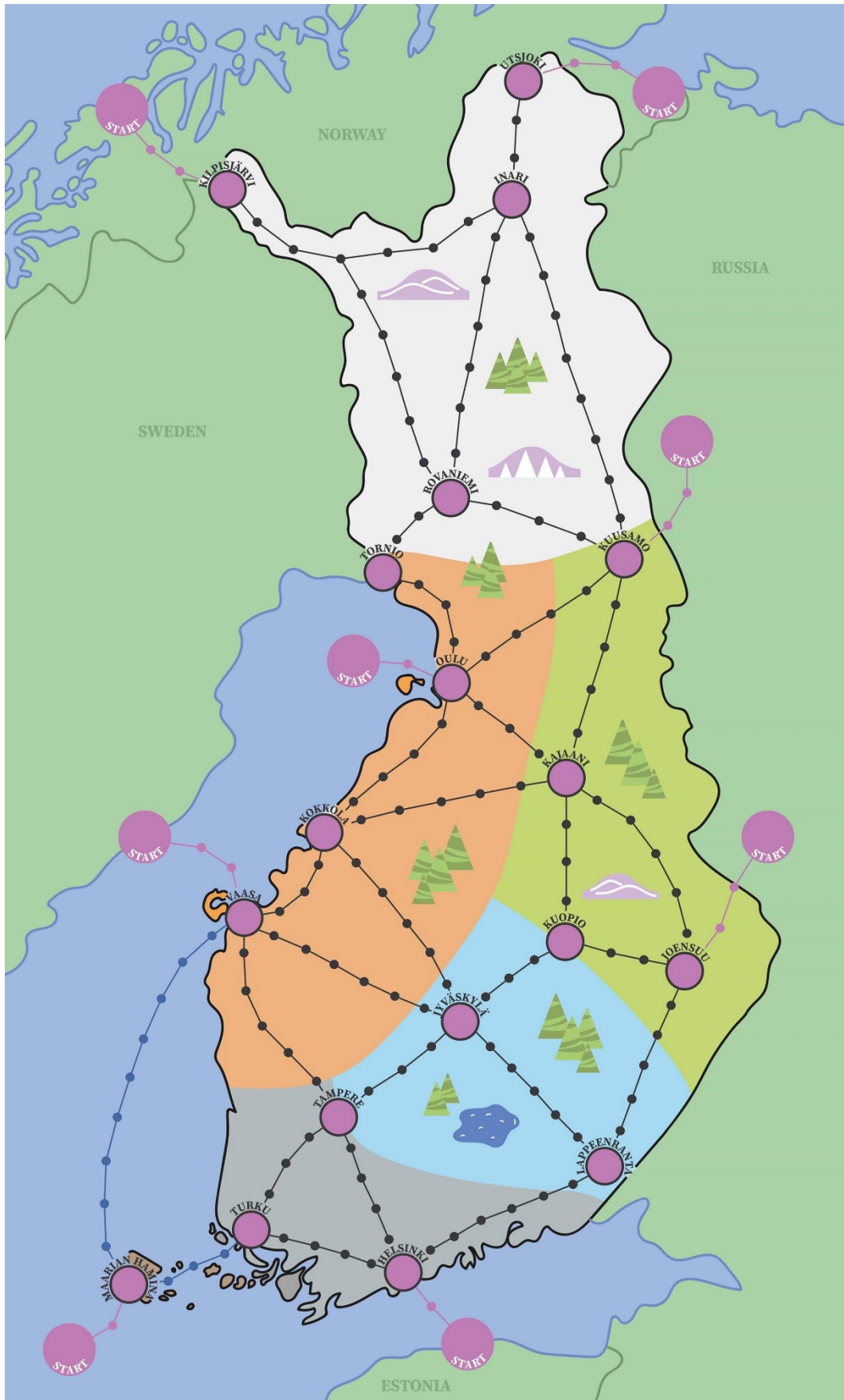


Can you name:

- Three fruits?
- Three yellow thing?
- Three months?
- The names of the days in the week?



Appendix 3: The board



Appendix 4: Information leaflet for parents

Hello!

I am a third-year student from the Laurea University of Applied Sciences. During May, I will be carrying out two sessions concerning my thesis for the Y.E.S. Day Care Centre in the Frogs preschool group. The basis and objective of my thesis is to support the learning of the English language through fun activities. I have built an activity pack for the teachers to use with the children when they best see fit, and along with the activity pack, the children get to travel around Finland on a map I have created. You will be able to spot this map in the preschool group's room after my first session.

During the sessions, I will introduce the game to the teachers and the children and see how the game works with a larger group. My first session will be held on Monday the 29th of April. I will not be documenting my sessions, there will only be a written section in my thesis about how the sessions went, how the activity pack worked and if anything needs to be changed.

If you have any questions about the project or the sessions, I would be happy to answer those questions. You can contact me through my e-mail: veera.suominen@student.laurea.fi. I hope to see everyone participate, but if you do not wish for your child to partake in the sessions, please let the teachers in the group know.

Best regards,

Veera Suominen

