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KEYNOTE SPEECH II

Keynote Speaker:

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Topic:

Early Childhood Education and the
Aboriginals in Finland (Sami people)

Handout 演講資料

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Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and the aboriginals in Finland (Sami people)

Jyrki Reunamo

University of Helsinki, Finland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZIU7KEis3w>



Sami people

Reference:
the Sami
curriculum for
ECEC

Sami people are the only indigenous population with their own history, language, culture, a way of living and identity.

There are about 60000-100000 Sami people in four scandinavian countries Norway, Sweden, Russia and Finland.

In Finland there are 9350 Sami people (2007).

Approximately less than half of the population speaks Sami.

Nowadays more than 70 % of the Sami children below 10 years of age live outside the Sami region.

Everyday life today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWCyWj7BHko>



The Sami vision

Sami as indigenous population has a living Sami language and a strong togetherness, that enhance the Sami culture, lifestyle, traditions.

The traditional skills should be transferred to children.

The Sami people have a healthy self-esteem and solidarity.



The values of Sami ECEC

The starting point are the UN rights for children and the National guidelines for Finnish ECEC.

ECEC has a great important in enhancing children's well-being and health.

Sami ECEC is important in learning the Sami language and identity.

Sami ECEC is important for the Sami community to survive in the future.

Sami children have a right to get ECEC services and to become a member of the Sami community and to learn Sami skills, manners and values.

The Sami values include especially language, family, community, identity, nature, traditional source of livelihood, gender equality and humanity, multiculturalism, peace and peacefulness.



The objective of Sami ECEC

Independent

Responsible

Social

Rich personality and skills

Willpower and judgement skills to cope in the modern society



Sami language

Language is the foundation for thought and interaction.

By using language a child grows to become aware of his/herself, forms opinions and communicates.

Sami people have a history of interaction with different cultures and often they are multilingual and value language skills.

There are four different dialects or languages of Sami.

The society must give a foundation for maintaining and developing Sami language.

Preserving Sami language requires awareness of the Sami community.



The language of Sami children

Children attending a Sami day care center can vary a great deal in their Sami language skills.

Children with different language skills are in the same group.

A challenge is to acknowledge children's personal needs in a varied group.

If the children's Sami language is not supported enough, the children may change their peer communication to Finnish.



Sami language as a first or second language

For a children in the minority the language is especially important.

Some families speak Sami as their first language as do their parents. These children learn Finnish in school. In ECEC children can strenghten their Sami language.

Most of the Sami children live in two culture families, who acquire two or three languages at an early age. Sami ECEC is important in supporting a fluent Sami language development when children start school in Sami language classrooms.



Language immersion

In which an endangered language is meant to transfer for the children by speaking it the whole time from the beginning, even if they do not understand it when they start ECEC.

The staff uses only Sami language with children and with each other.

Gestures, tone, pictures, materials, song and movement are important.

Children are allowed to learn Sami at their own pace. It is a challenge to get the children communicate in Sami in peer relations.



Tools to enhance Sami language in ECEC

Stories, tales, poems

Role play, puppet play and drama

Music, traditional music (joiku), singing

Radio, videos, magazines, books, games, TV

Family and relatives support

Writing in Sami in the physical learning environment

Libraries and museums

Sami people of different ages, religion and third sector.



Sami identity in ECEC

Traditionally the culture was assimilated during daily activities.

Sami tradition emphasized indirect education.

Children learned to take responsibility in close contact with family and environment.

The valuing of others and nature still show in the Sami culture.



Sami levels of Sami identity in ECEC

The child experiences Sami as natural. The child has a balanced Sami identity and is skilful in Sami language and culture.

The child can speak Sami language, but does not know other areas of the culture.

The child knows only one part of the culture well.

The child experiences Sami identity through materials and tools.

The child is aware of the Sami background, but does not want to show it.



Connection with nature

Sami culture has strong ties with the natural cycles and seasons.

The living with nature is traditionally sustainable, the nature has been respected and valued.

Nature is part of humanity.

Nature is a part of children's everyday life.

Traditional livelihood, reindeers, hunting, fishing, and small-scale agriculture and collector's economy that still is practiced.



Enhancing Sami ECEC

There is a need for Sami language material (especially kolтта- and Inarinsami)

A Sami material bank is needed, see www.kuati.fi

The staff needs support in Sami language, work development and with coping at work.

Developing own work empowers ECEC educators to see their work in a new light.

A central ECEC expert is needed for Sami community.



Day care centres in Lappland and southern Finland

Enontekiö: 2 units

Inari: 6 units

Sodankylä: 1 unit

Utsjoki: 4 units.

City of Rovaniemi: 1 unit

City of Oulu: 1 unit

City of Helsinki: 1 group in one unit. One language immersion unit



Facts and figures

The Sami community (saamelaiskäräjät) gets a yearly funding of 120000 euro for supporting Sami ECEC.

Schoolchildren are supported with about 2 000 000 euro a year.

In Inari, Enontekiö and Utsjoki there are about 100 children in supported ECEC.

Of the Sami children (1100 children) living outside the above Sami area, only about 50 (4,5%) participate in ECEC in Sami-speaking groups.



Links and material

The Sami curriculum

<http://www.sosiaalikallega.fi/hankkeet/pakaste2/sakaste/varhaiskasvatus/1sote-savasusuomenkielinen.pdf>

A practical guide for Sami ECEC

<https://vk.sosiaalikallega.fi/hankkeet/pakaste2/sakaste/varhaiskasvatus/SaamphArjenopas.pdf>

Sami ECEC in YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIOft2qP8o0>