FINNISH SPORTS CONFEDERATION – VALO

GOALS

- For Every Child: Chance to be inspired about physical activity and sport
- For Youth and Adults: Energy to everyday life from physical activity and sport
- For Sport Clubs: Drive with passion and competence

The Vision:
"We are the world's most physically active sport nation – 2020"

LET'S WALK AND DEVELOP TOGETHER!

An introduction to new practices in physical education for pre school-age children, 2014

Sport Clubs – Where Dreams Can Come True

- A base for inspiration and growth
- Active play and training at least 20 hours a week – both spontaneously and under qualified instruction in diverse sports
- At a later stage the young athlete makes her/his own choice whether to make a commitment to sport or enjoy it as active pastime



Active Play Inspires Active Life in Early Education

- Possibility to enjoy active play 2 hours every day
- Develop versatile skills and adapt active lifestyle in the family

Move to Learn and Learn to Move at School

- Engaged in physical activity one hour every day
- A foundation for a healthy lifestyle and learning versatile skills
- Developing an environment that encourages action in all forms

THE NEW PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND WELL-BEING PROGRAM IS GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH!

The aim is to reform early childhood routines thereby increasing children's physical activity whilst simultaneously decreasing screen time.

We know that enough physical education is important for children's health and well-being. It's also been proven to promote learning skills and social skills. Despite this, children exercise less: an increasing share of leisure time is spent with smart phones, games and television.

Let's get up and get moving!

Studies have shown that conditioning towards a physically active or inactive lifestyle starts as early as 3–4 years of age. Therefore, the children's routines have to be established at an early stage.

There are a number of factors and persons around a child either promoting exercise or limiting exercise. A child's physical development is influenced by their environment. One of the major obstacles is security: running and climbing are often prohibited, for fear of injury.

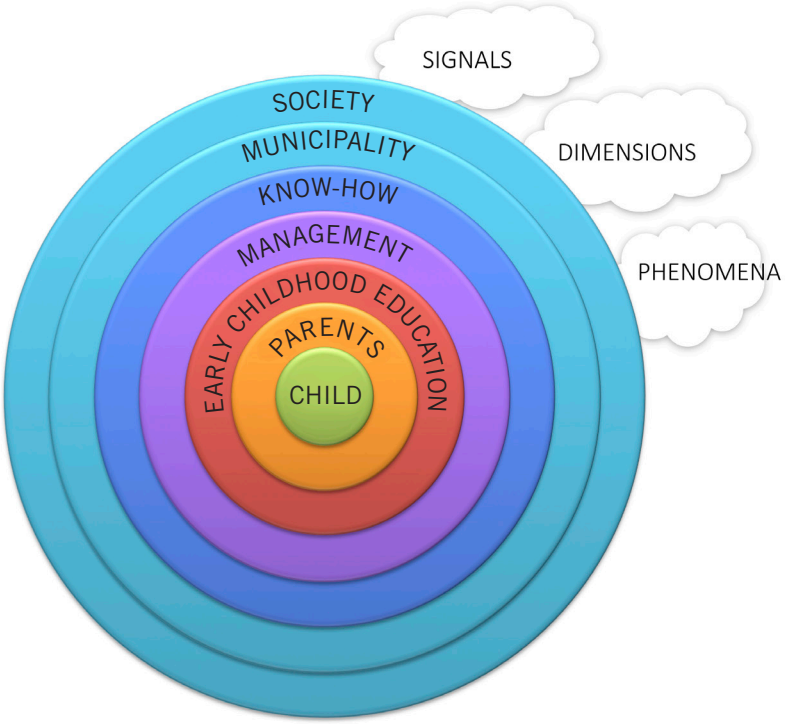
Our working attitudes and methods have to be changed massively. This requires co-operation with many people and a versatile, active and constantly learning network of developers.

Networking towards our goals

An introduction to new practices in physical education for pre school-age children, 2014 -network of experts was formed in early 2012. The mission of this network is to develop a simple, easily executed program of physical education and well-being for nursery schools, daycare centers and kindergartens nationwide. In this way we intend to promote physical activity in preschool age children. The timing is perfect: a new early childhood law is to take effect in Finland on the 1st of January, 2015.

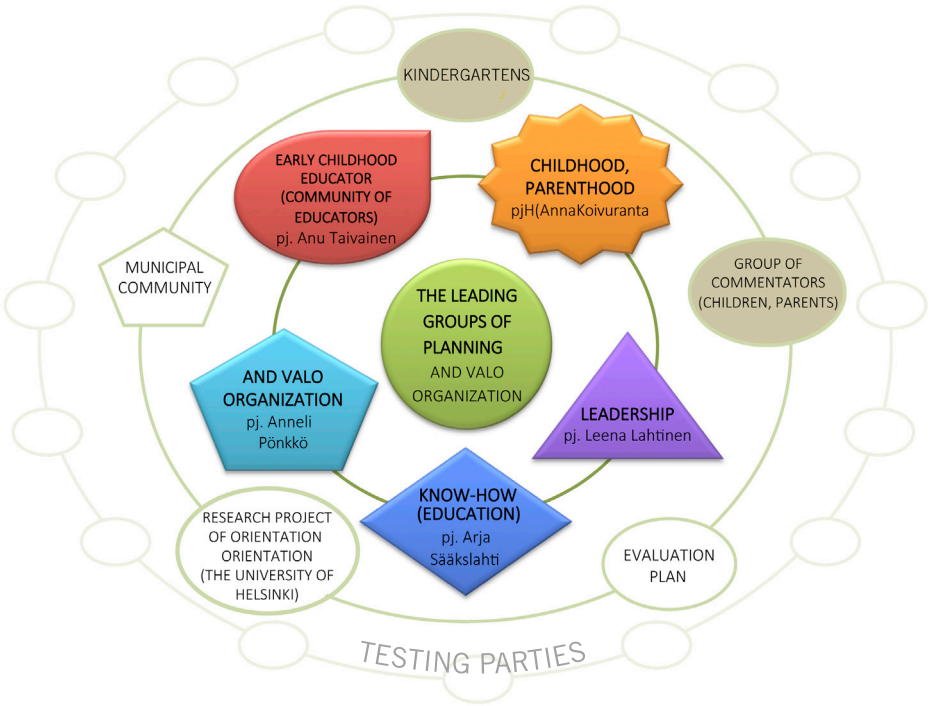
The movement and well-being program is being tested and developed all the time. The goal is to help people in nursery schools to become aware of the children's need for physical exercise and to make changes where needed. These educators are not alone though: there are models, help and support at hand.

How can we make the program a solid part of nursery schools activities nationwide? By creating roots for it and this starts to happen with full effect in the year 2015.



CORE THEMES OF THE NETWORK

The current most important themes of the network of experts can be summarized in five main points. These will become more accurate during spring 2014.



1. **A child has a right to physical exercise every day.** Physical exercise should be seen as a supportive action in healthy developing and learning. It is a condition for growth, development, learning readiness and general health.

2. **Adequate physical activity should be provided by early childhood educators to every child, every day.** A child has to have the right to the natural way of being, living, taking action and learning.

3. **The change in the culture of early childhood upbringing to more positive regarding exercise will happen with binding guidance.** The revised legislation should lift the extensive well-being of children to the ground mission in early childhood upbringing and establish adequate daily games and physical activity as the children's basic right.

4. **Pedagogical substance and leadership must be the focus.** The crucial role is taken by responsible, pedagogically trained childcare professionals, who understand the growth, development and learning of a child.

5. **There has to be time and room for physical exercise.** A stimulating environment for this will be built with basic equipment that is at hand for children both inside and outdoors.

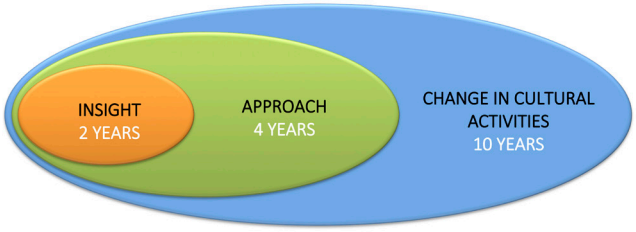
GETTING THE MOST FROM THE TEST EXPERIENCES

The first test round of this program achieved a lot of popularity, with numerous success stories and many valuable realizations.

The test phase in the fall of 2013 was joined by more than 50 nursery schools, kindergartens, etc.

A documenting tool called "Baby steps" was available for them. The tool helps by designing individual steps for improving, executing, evaluating and enhancing activity. It makes it easier to define the starting situation and shows clearly how little exercise the kids are getting. It also shows how, by making just small changes, one can achieve remarkable results.

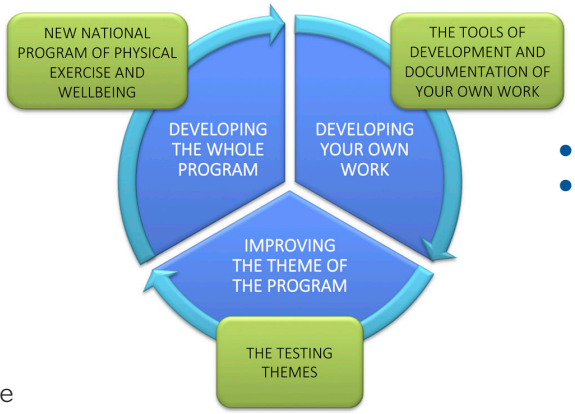
The report from the 2013 fall's test phase will be finished during early spring 2014 and will be available for public viewing. There are blogs from the people in the test phase at the same address. So check it out, get inspired and adapt the ideas for your own use!



Factors working for the change

To make lasting improvements one has to change attitudes and learn new routines. This takes time and might seem like a lot of work. There are some things that have made the way smoother, such as:

- Bold leadership. That's something that is required when there are thirty educators under one roof, who all think differently about raising pre school-age children.
- Organizing continuing training for early childhood educators.
- Educators' own enthusiasm and "seize-the-moment" attitude
- Baby steps- thinking, i.e. cutting large, complex challenges into small pieces that are easier to control.
- Marketing your way of thinking to others: with small changes come big achievements.
- Joint responsibility. Physical exercise is a natural function method for a child and it is a part of every educator's basic job.
- The collaboration of early childhood educators - making collective use of individual strengths.



- A supportive atmosphere.
- A strong partnership with the parents. More joint activities are required in addition to parenting nights and reporting! Make the most of the exercise possibilities in your surroundings.
- Happy moments shared with the children!
- The way children learn, through excitement and enthusiasm: after learning new games the children will play them independently

Results that show: when the attitude of the staff has become more positive towards exercise, the employees are happier, children less restless and the parents more satisfied.

WHAT NEXT?

The movement and well-being program will continue to be executed in a style proven to work: baby steps and positive energy.

The testing and development of this program will continue throughout 2014. There are 84 nursery schools participating in the project, of which 14 are operating on a municipal level.

Most of the groups that started in the fall 2013 are still with the project and have been joined by lots of newcomers. These participants will deepen their research using the tools that are available, such as workbooks like "Parasta Liikettä" (Best Movement)!

The books are based on the work of the program's experts. These books offer tools and tips for early childhood educators. The books are tools of motivation and inspiration. They will be modified according to the feedback from the testing parties.





Besides the test phase, there is also a background document that is being developed and rewritten. The background information and most important theories and research will be recorded in this document.

You are needed to help developing a more physically active childhood and improving the welfare of the children! Join us!

- Read more from www.sport.fi (Varhaiskasvatus ➡ Rakennetaan yhdessä)
- Get inspired from the blogs!
- Take in use new ideas
- Contact nina.korhonen@valo.fi or tanja.palosaari@valo.fi
- Share information of this network!