INTRODUCTION

The number of children with immigrant background has constantly increased in Finland. However, little research has focused on children with immigrant family background. Developing multicultural work requires more research data and practical tools on the field of formal early education.

The immigration policy situation challenges Finland and the EU countries to focus on these issues, most significantly by observing the formal learning contexts of young children to better understand the children and to develop the competence of professionals to work with children and families with immigration background.

AIM

To identify the kind of support immigrant family background children need for their self-regulation skills, their social skills and their learning skills in the context of early education.

METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS

These first results are based on evaluation data on the children collected by the early educators.

In this research 13 Finnish municipalities and 160 day care centers were involved. One group in each day care center was involved. There number of the multicultural children differs very much between different municipalities. There were 2250 children in the research. Age of the children were between 13-89 months.

Children with immigrant background were totally 15.7 % (N = 309).

RESULTS AND EARLY FINDINGS

There is a need for support the children in learning skills, especially metacognitive skills and language skills.

Children also have some difficulties to focus or behave in different learning contexts and situations.

Mismatch between cultures

- There is a need to fix the early education context to be more flexible towards multicultural differences.

- There is a need to create common contexts together, implicitly

- Finnish early educators need to use more concrete, active methods (e.g. demonstration, drama, role playing) also understanding the meaning of the second language learning.