

# Developing language-aware pedagogy in early childhood education and care

LANGPEDA TOOL



# Contents

TO THE READER .....	3
SECTION 1 ASSESSING A LANGUAGE-AWARE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT .....	4
Form 1 .....	6
SECTION 2 EXAMINING THE LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT OF A MULTILINGUAL CHILD .....	8
Form 2A .....	10
Form 2B .....	14
SECTION 3 MONITORING THE FINNISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF A MULTILINGUAL CHILD .....	16
Form 3 .....	18
Form 3.1 .....	20
Form 3.2 .....	22
Form 3.3 .....	24
Form 3.4 .....	26

2

ISBN (print) 978-951-29-8183-0  
ISBN (online) 978-951-29-8184-7



MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION AND CULTURE

# To the reader

The **LangPeda** tool has been developed to answer the need to develop language-aware approaches in early childhood education and care and to support the Finnish language learning of multilingual children in particular. The National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care (2018) calls for the support of children's linguistic and cultural identities (2018, 25, 49) and thereby the implementation of a language-aware pedagogy. It is up to the ECEC personnel to assess the ways in which pedagogical activities support the development of a child's linguistic skills and overall growth.

The three-part **LangPeda** tool helps support language-aware ECEC in which the significance of languages to the learning, development, interaction and identities of a child are understood (National Core Curriculum for ECEC 2018, 32). The tool helps to

- 1) assess and develop ECEC learning environments in relation to language awareness
- 2) examine the linguistic environment of a multilingual child in cooperation with the guardians
- 3) monitor the development Finnish language proficiency of a multilingual child.

Each section begins with a brief introduction explaining the aims of the section and the principles of language-aware ECEC on the basis of the National Core Curriculum for ECEC (2018). The tool always guides users back to examine the ECEC environment and the activities of the personnel and to ask if the ECEC practices and procedures are sufficiently language-aware and model rich use of language so that they foster the development of Finnish language proficiency in the best possible way.

It is important to realize that language proficiency and activities are changing constantly, which is why assessing learning environments and language proficiency always provides only momentary knowledge. This tool also provides only a partial picture of the child's environments and Finnish language learning progress, but it helps provide important information to develop practice.

The **LangPeda** tool has been developed as a joint effort by ECEC professionals across Finland, in addition to which the tool was piloted in 27 municipalities during its development. Thank you to everyone who took part in developing the tool for piloting it and providing user feedback and suggestions for development! The publication of this ECEC tool has been made possible by unique national collaboration. We wish all users an instructive language awareness journey with the **LangPeda** tool!

*In Helsinki, Vantaa and Turku, 1 September 2020*

*On behalf of the development team of the tool  
Heidi Harju-Luukkainen, Marjaana Gyekye, Nina Thurin, Niina Kekki and Maria Tyrer*

# Section 1

## *Assessing a language-aware learning environment*

**According to the** National Core Curriculum for ECEC (2018, 65) the personnel's goal-oriented and systematic self-assessment is essential for maintaining and developing the quality of ECEC. The target of assessment may include interactions between the personnel and the children, atmosphere in the group, pedagogical working approaches, content of activities, or learning environments.

The purpose of ECEC is to strengthen the development of children's linguistic skills and readiness and their linguistic identities. A language-aware learning environment is based on an operational culture that support the child's development and learning in diverse ways. (National Core Curriculum for ECEC 2018, 29.) The practice of language awareness can be examined from multiple perspectives. The perspectives chosen in Form 1 are personnel activities, learning environments and the child's participation and involvement. The form helps the team working with a group of children to jointly assess and record how the different statements are realized in their group. In addition, observations of what already works and what should still be developed and how are written under each statement.

Language-  
aware  
personnel help  
the child learn  
Finnish,  
appreciate all  
the child's  
languages, and  
make multilin-  
gualism visible.

In a language-aware learning environment, languages are present constantly and everywhere. All languages are important. Language-aware personnel help the child learn Finnish, appreciate all the child's languages, and make multilingualism visible. The personnel also stimulates the child's curiosity and interest in languages, cultures, and world views. (National Core Curriculum for ECEC 2018, 25-26, 32.) For the sake of the development of interaction skills, it is important that the child is heard. A language-aware learning environment offers a wide range of opportunities for listening comprehension, speaking, and using language in diverse ways. The learning environment should, for example, display different types of texts and literature in a variety of languages. Personnel reads and tells stories to the children, and encourages them to come up with their own stories. (National Core Curriculum for ECEC, 2018, 44-45.) A language-aware learning environment is always assessed and adjusted according to the interests and competence of the group of children in question.

*As a team working with a group of children, assess how the statements in the form are realized in your group. Under each statement, write your observations of what already works and what should still be developed and how.*



## FORM 1 ASSESSING A LANGUAGE-AWARE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Date of assessment, group name and team members			
<b>ASSESSMENT SCALE</b>	1 Seen regularly – 2 Needs some development – 3 Needs substantial development	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PERSONNEL ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<p>1. The personnel act as linguistic models, help the child expand their vocabulary and adapt their speech to the child's level of proficiency.</p> <p><i>What already works in the group?</i></p>	<p><i>What should still be developed and how?</i></p>		
<p>2. The personnel create a permissive and interactive atmosphere where the child is heard and accepted (e.g., enough time to listen to what the child has to say, tones of voice, non-verbal communication such as gestures, expressions, and touch).</p> <p><i>What already works in the group?</i></p>	<p><i>What should still be developed and how?</i></p>		
<p>3. The personnel encourage the child to use the languages they speak in various situations.</p> <p><i>What already works in the group?</i></p>	<p><i>What should still be developed and how?</i></p>		

<b>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>		1	2	3
1. The languages used by the child can be found in books, pictures, games, play and texts.				
<i>What already works in the group?</i>	<i>What should still be developed and how?</i>			
2. Activities are differentiated to strengthen language proficiency (e.g. small groups and individual guidance).				
<i>What already works in the group?</i>	<i>What should still be developed and how?</i>			
3. The learning environment is modified according to the children's needs and interests in light of their developing language proficiency (e.g. observation, use of pictures).				
<i>What already works in the group?</i>	<i>What should still be developed and how?</i>			

<b>CHILD'S INCLUSION</b>		1	2	3
1. The personnel allow each child to be heard and included in all activities, regardless of their age, language skills or language background (e.g. gestures, use of pictures, repetition, observation).				
<i>What already works in the group?</i>	<i>What should still be developed and how?</i>			
2. The personnel actively support the development of children's multilingualism together with the guardians (e.g. provide guardians with pictures of vocabulary and songs learned in day care).				
<i>What already works in the group?</i>	<i>What should still be developed and how?</i>			

## Section 2

# *Examining the linguistic environment of a multilingual child*

**Every mother tongue is** valuable and worth protecting. Languages hold importance for developing a sense of self, and joining a language community, and relating to the surrounding society. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2016.) Languages are interconnected, and a strong proficiency in one's mother tongue(s) supports not only the learning of a new language, but all other learning as well (Cummins, 2007).

Section 2 helps examine the languages of a multilingual child and the situations in which they use language(s) in collaboration with the guardians. It helps clarify when, where and with whom the child uses their languages. In addition, it visualizes the languages the child hears in their environment. The guardians' view of the child's languages, competence and learning is an important starting point for planning language-aware pedagogy. According to the National Core Curriculum for ECEC (2018, 53), the objectives and methods of Finnish ECEC should be explained to the guardians. As part of this conversation it is important to discuss the family's language environments, language related decisions, the significance of the mother tongue(s), and stages of language development. Section 2 supports this discussion and makes the child's linguistic environment visible, producing valuable information that can be used by the personnel, together with the guardians, to strengthen the development of proficiency in all the child's languages.

The guardians have the primary responsibility for maintaining the child's mother tongue(s) and cultures (National Core Curriculum for ECEC 2018, 50-51). However, in terms of the development of language proficiency, linguistic and cultural identities, and the self-esteem of multilingual children, it is important that the personnel are aware of the languages spoken in the child's environment (National Core Curriculum for ECEC 2018, 32). This awareness is the key to implementing a goal-oriented language-aware pedagogy, which should also take into consideration the second national language of Finland, the minority languages spoken in Finland (see The Constitution of Finland 1999/731, Section 17), and dialects.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING FORM 2A LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT OF A MULTILINGUAL CHILD

Form 2A is an alternative to form 2B. Together with the guardian(s), choose and fill in the form that seems more relevant. The form can be filled during the child's individual ECEC plan discussion or the pre-schooler's personal learning plan discussion.

The child's linguistic environment has been divided into three parts in form 2A: the child's family, free time and hobbies, and ECEC/pre-primary education. The guardian(s) fill in the blanks in the top row with the language(s) present in the child's environments. Every section is discussed with the guardian, and the guardian marks an X under the language the child uses in the activity given in the table. The ECEC teacher fills in the sections concerning ECEC or pre-primary education. This provides the guardians an understanding of the child's linguistic environment in ECEC or pre-primary education. The tables help form an overall picture of the child's linguistic environment.

Once the child's linguistic environment has been visualized, you can discuss the following questions, for example:

- Does the filled in form match the guardians' view of the child's languages? Is each language used as much as the guardians' expected?
- Does the child receive enough stimulation in the languages that the family hopes the child can speak?
- Which of the child's language(s) should be strengthened even more?
- How could the language(s) be strengthened (conversations with the child, reading books to the child, hobbies, media etc.)?

Notes of the discussion are documented at the bottom of the form. The notes can be used, for instance, when writing a pedagogical plan in the child's ECEC or pre-primary learning plan.



Every  
mother  
tongue is  
valuable



## FORM 2A LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT OF A MULTILINGUAL CHILD

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Child's name

	Language	Language	Language	Language
Guardian				
Guardian				
Siblings				
Grandparents				
Grandparents				
Other relatives				
Other, who?				
Other, who?				

### Child's free time and hobbies

	Language	Language	Language	Language
Friends				
Adults (e.g. hobby instructor)				
Books, stories etc.				
Music, nursery rhymes etc.				
TV, computer, tablet etc.				
Other activity, what?				
Other activity, what?				

Child's ECEC or pre-primary education

	Language	Language	Language	Language	Language
Learning environments					
Personnel					
Friends					

Notes on the joint discussion concerning the child's languages, their development and support (see the guiding questions on p. 9).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING FORM 2B LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT OF A MULTILINGUAL CHILD

Form 2B is an alternative to form 2A. Together with the guardian(s), choose and fill in the form that seems more relevant. The form can be filled during the child's individual ECEC plan discussion or the pre-schooler's personal learning plan discussion. You need coloured pencils to fill in form 2B.

The child's linguistic environment has been divided into three different parts in form 2B:

the child's family, free time and hobbies, and ECEC/pre-primary education. The guardian writes the languages present in the child's life on the lines and chooses a colour for each language. Every part is discussed with the guardian. The guardian colours in the shares of different languages in each part of the child's linguistic environment. For instance, if the child's friends include speakers of Russian, English, Finnish and Arabic, the guardian colours in the circle for friends using these colours. The guardian can also estimate how much each language is used: if the child's friends speak Russian more often than Finnish, for example, the Russian share in the circle can be larger. The idea is that the colours help illustrate the child's linguistic environment from the guardian's point of view.



The ECEC teacher colours in the section concerning ECEC or pre-primary education. This also gives the guardians an idea of the child's linguistic environment in ECEC or pre-primary education.

- Language Russian 
- Language Finnish 
- Language English 
- Language Arabic 



Once the child's linguistic environment has been visualized, you can discuss the following questions, for example:

- Does the filled in form match the guardians' view of the child's language? Is each language used as much as the guardians' expected?

- Does the child receive enough stimulation in the languages that the family hopes the child can speak?
- Which of the child's language(s) should be strengthened even more?
- How could the language(s) be strengthened (conversations with the child, reading books to the child, hobbies, media etc.)?

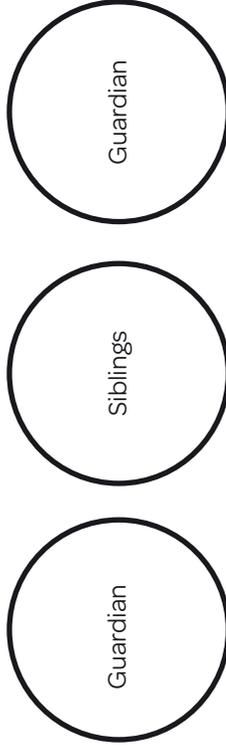
Notes of the discussion are written at the bottom of the form. The notes can be used, for instance, when writing a pedagogical plan in the child's ECEC or pre-primary learning plan.

FORM 2B LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT OF A MULTILINGUAL CHILD

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_  
Language \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
Language \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
Language \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
Language \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
Language \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD'S FAMILY



CHILD'S FREE TIME AND HOBBIES

CHILD'S EDUCATION OR PRE-PRIMARY  
EDUCATION

Friends

Adults, e.g.,  
hobby  
instructor

Books,  
stories etc.

Learning  
environments

Personnel

Music, nursery  
rhymes etc.

TV, computer,  
tablet etc.

Other activity,  
what?

Other activity,  
what?

Friends

Notes on the joint discussion concerning the child's languages, their development and support  
(see the guiding questions on p. 13).

---

---

---

---

## Section 3

# *Observing the Finnish language skills of a multilingual child*

**Learning the language of instruction**, i.e., the language in the environment that is the target of learning, is a process that resembles the development of one's mother tongue. The child absorbs sounds, words and expressions in the new language from their environment, even though they may not necessarily speak it themselves at first. The language of a child under school-age is still under development, and progress is made in all the main areas of language development both in the mother tongue(s) and in Finnish (National Core Curriculum for ECEC 2018, 43, 53). The goal is that the child's Finnish language skills will develop as age-appropriately as possible. Section 3 has been designed to observe the progress of Finnish language learning of a multilingual child whose first language has developed according to general milestones. In addition, the section supports the planning of well-timed language-aware instruction.

Listening  
compre-  
hension skills  
develop faster  
than speaking  
skills.

Before examining the child's Finnish language proficiency, the team should assess the ECEC learning environment and the activities of the personnel (Section 1) and examine the linguistic environment of the multilingual child (Section 2). The child's Finnish language skills can only be assessed on the basis of what the child has had the opportunity to learn. Language-aware learning environments, methods, approaches and goal-oriented Finnish language instruction promote the child's accumulation of language skills.

Finnish language proficiency and learning needs should be taken into consideration when preparing the child's individual ECEC plan and learning plan for pre-primary education, and when assessing the success of the plan. The Finnish language skills of the child should be examined at least once a year and whenever needed. Before the personnel can assess the child's Finnish language learning, they need to actively and regularly observe and document the progress of the child's Finnish language skills. The forms in Section 3 can be used to support this observation. It is important that the personnel discuss their observations together with regards to the child's progress in the main areas of language development (interaction skills, language comprehension skills, speech production skills, language usage competencies, linguistic memory and vocabulary, and language awareness, see Figure 1).

The forms have been created so that the Language proficiency scale (2016) for basic education has been combined and applied to the main areas of children's linguistic development

described in the National Core Curriculum for ECEC (2018). A new addition is the pre-linguistic pre-A1 level of proficiency in Finnish at which the child does not yet understand or speak any Finnish. Section 3 contains a total of four proficiency levels: no Finnish language skills yet (pre-A1), evolving elementary language proficiency (A1), developing basic language proficiency (A2) and fluent basic language proficiency (B1).

The assessment form of each proficiency level begins with a general description of the typical skills at the level and how Finnish language skills develop when moving to the next proficiency level. The statements to assess at each proficiency level portray progress in the main areas of language development. Finnish language skills are only assessed at the level of proficiency that best describes the child's competence at the time. The idea is not to go through all the proficiency levels in one assessment session. Finding the level that best describes the competence can be difficult if the skills are more advanced than at the pre-A1 or the A1 level of proficiency. You can start going through the levels by reading their general descriptions, starting with B1 and working your way backwards until you find the level of proficiency that best matches the child's skills.

There are two assessment criteria. "Developing" includes budding and uncertain skills that are demonstrated with varying success and usually in supported situations. These skills are therefore not yet fluent and operating them is inconsistent, although there is evident progress. "Developed" means that the child is able to function in the situation of observation using Finnish, with minor or no support. Displaying the skill is therefore generally consistent and confident, although it may not necessarily be entirely fluent and accurate yet. The date of the assessment is marked on the form next to each assessment criterion. If the skill is not yet present, the field is left blank and returned to later.

The different areas of language development often progress at a different pace. Language comprehension skills develop faster than speech production skills. Speech production skills gradually evolve into the skill to use situation-aware language. Language comprehension and speaking are bound together, and at the same time, dependant on interaction and linguistic memory and vocabulary. Language awareness fosters the development of the different areas and grows while the other areas develop. Therefore, the Finnish language skills profile can be uneven and not all skills are necessarily noticeable at all proficiency levels. The Finnish language proficiency assessment is an indicative assessment of the situation concerning developing skills and competence.

The assessment criteria highlight developing skills and competence. When personnel discuss the child's level of proficiency in Finnish language they produce information, which can be used for planning and developing language aware practices as well as teaching Finnish. It is up to the team to observe the skills together, but the ECEC teacher is responsible for monitoring the learning process of the child and planning pedagogical activities.

### FORM 3 OBSERVING THE CHILD'S FINNISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

**Background on the child's participation in Finnish-language activities**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Surname and first names of the child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name normally used (or how the name is pronounced): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother tongue(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Previous participation in Finnish-language activities (place, time, date–date): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Starting time in the current ECEC place/group (date and place): \_\_\_\_\_

Participation: club \_\_\_\_\_ / part-time \_\_\_\_\_ / full-time \_\_\_\_\_ / other, which: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance is regular \_\_\_\_\_ / attendance is irregular \_\_\_\_\_, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Periods of absence outside holiday periods and their durations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

Place of assessment, assessor, date: \_\_\_\_\_



Figure 1. The main areas of children's linguistic development in early childhood education and care (National Core Curriculum for ECEC 2018, 44).

"The language skills of foreign language speaking and plurilingual children, as well as the development of their linguistic and cultural identities and self-esteem, are supported in early childhood education and care. The development of Finnish/Swedish skills is promoted with a goal-oriented approach in different areas of linguistic skills and capacity based on the needs and capabilities of children. Versatile interactive situations and learning environments are used to provide the children with opportunities to use and learn Finnish/Swedish as a second language. Concrete everyday language and its resource of expressions are the starting point for learning the Finnish/Swedish language. Language comprehension and production skills develop in connection with one another. Children learn to make observations as well as express their ideas, emotions, and opinions in a manner that is suitable for the

situation and natural to them." (National Core Curriculum for ECEC 2018, 53.)

"Skills in interaction situations: Listening comprehension and speaking are closely linked in authentic interaction. Rather than being a monologue, speaking means functioning in an interaction situation where a person has to be able to react to the activities of his or her partners in the interaction. This requires listening comprehension and the skills to interpret the interaction situation." "The student's age, proficiency in his or her mother tongue and school background affect the amount of knowledge of the world and strategic skill the student has to exceed the limits of his or her language proficiency." (Language proficiency scale 2016.)

## FORM 3.1 OBSERVING THE CHILD'S FINNISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Pre-A1 proficiency level in Finnish: no Finnish language skills yet

The child subsists in certain everyday interaction situations, as long as they feel safe in the situation and environment. The child needs pictures and illustration and/or words in their mother tongue to support interaction in order to interpret very simple and clear situational speech. The child must be allowed to observe others' behavior and mimic it. The child often responds with a look, gesture, or expression to initiated interaction addressed to them and supported, e.g., with their name, picture, or gesture. The child may use their mother tongue(s).

### Skills at the pre-A1 proficiency level

Interaction skills	Developing: date	Developed: date
Observes other children's activities.		
Follows the example of others.		
Shows interest in speech by giving a look or making a gesture.		
Initiates interaction with a look, gestures, expressions, touch, or using pictures.		
<b>Language comprehension skills</b>		
Follows some simple, situation-specific instructions supported with pictures and gestures.		
<b>Speech production skills</b>		
Points to the object they mean.		
Uses a gesture, expression or picture to ask a conversation partner to name things and objects.		
<b>Language use competences</b>		
In the immediate situation, repeats easy, short words and greetings that occur frequently on a daily basis.		

## Linguistic memory and vocabulary

Developed: date

Developing: date

Lists simple words, such as numbers, colours, or objects.

## Language awareness

Participates by observing the reading of a simple picture book.

Date, examples of speech produced by the child, and other observations:

### How does language proficiency develop from the pre-A1 to the A1 level?

The child starts to acquire Finnish language from their environment. From the start, the child makes observations about the language they hear and accumulates an understandable vocabulary, even if they may not yet speak the language themselves. The child gradually starts to repeat words and phrases according to the example they have heard. Word meanings start to become more organized in contextual usage. The child needs extensive speech modelling and illustration using pictures, gestures and demonstrations.

## FORM 3.2 OBSERVING THE CHILD'S FINNISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Evolving elementary language proficiency, level A1: limited communication in the most familiar situations**

The child is usually able to function in certain recurring everyday one-on-one situations that involve use of language. The child relies heavily on expressions and gestures in interaction. They understand brief instructions and familiar topics in slow and, when necessary, repeated speech. They can name familiar items and recognize familiar words and expressions in clearly spoken language and read text. Learning new things requires demonstration and picture support as well as clear and slow speech and repetition so that the child can understand certain elements of the topic being addressed. A familiar speaker and parlance make comprehension easier. The child requires a lot of help from conversation partners. Speech may contain a lot of long breaks, repetition and interruptions. Understanding the topic in unstructured social speaking situations requires a lot of support from the context and situation-specific hints. With regard to instructive discourse, the child understands the topic with the help of pictures and clearly designated key words. The ability to understand an unfamiliar word is limited even in a very predictable context.

### **Skills at the evolving elementary language proficiency A1 level**

Interaction skills	Developing: date	Developed: date
Responds to initiated interaction.		
Briefly answers familiar, simple questions.		
Initiates interactions verbally (using 1–2 words).		

### **Language comprehension skills**

Understands brief instructions, questions and commands that are repeated on a daily basis.		
Recognizes familiar words from speech.		

### **Speech production skills**

Names familiar objects and items.		
Uses short, memorized expressions and phrases.		

Developing: date	Developed: date
Briefly answers easy questions related to everyday situations (Using 1–2 words).	

### Language use competences

Expresses a lack of understanding non-verbally or verbally.	
Asks questions (what) related to familiar situations and everyday life.	

### Linguistic memory and vocabulary

Remembers some parts of songs and rhymes.	
---	--

### Language awareness

Utilizes visual clues.	
Listens to short fairy tales and stories for a moment when illustrative support (objects, pictures) is used.	

Date, examples of speech produced by the child, and other observations:

### How does language proficiency develop from the A1 to the A2 level?

Speaking becomes more continuous. The output has more vocabulary and content. The need for direct support from the conversation partner decreases. Comprehension increases from the level of individual words and phrases to understanding some of the main points and longer passages.

### FORM 3.3 OBSERVING THE CHILD'S FINNISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Developing basic language proficiency, level A2: basic needs for direct social interaction and brief narrative**

The child still relies heavily on expressions and gestures in interaction. The child manages with language use situations associated with daily routines in early childhood education and care. They understand recurring instructions and tasks and use the most common phrases. They talk briefly about familiar and contextual topics. Comprehension requires slow and clear speech, repetition and a familiar topic. The child's speech is fluent at times, but various pauses are very common. Pronunciation and inconsistent language structures may occasionally cause comprehension difficulties. The child needs a lot of models and support when practising speaking. Acquiring new information and skills requires a lot of support. The child needs guidance regarding what they should focus on in spoken language or text that is read out loud. With regard to instructive discourse supported with illustrative methods, the child understands the theme and some information. They understand fragments of information from text read out loud when it is illustrated. The child can express their lack of understanding verbally and may ask clarifying questions. In unstructured social situations, the child has difficulty understanding what others say if the speech does not contain concrete situational hints and actions. The child recognizes their name when it is written down and can write their name using an example.

**Skills at the developing basic language proficiency A2 level**

Interaction skills	Developing: date	Developed: date
Is able to focus on what is relevant with the help of the conversation partner.		
<b>Language comprehension skills</b>		
Notices when the topic of conversation changes.		
Understands contextual speech about topics that are important or familiar.		
Understands simple concepts associated with quantity, attributes, and prepositions of place (a lot, a little, big, small, in front of, behind, next to).		
<b>Speech production skills</b>		
Answers questions about familiar topics, asks questions, and requests explanations and repetition.		
When asked, talks about themselves, their family, living environment, and everyday events.		

	Developing: date	Developed: date
Discusses familiar topics but needs help from the conversation partner in order to maintain the conversation.		

### Language use competencies

Uses short sentences to describe what is happening in, e.g., a picture.		
Uses euphemisms when speaking.		

### Linguistic memory and vocabulary

Actively uses their growing vocabulary.		
---	--	--

### Language awareness

Deduces the meaning of words based on contextual, sentence and picture clues.		
Understands some information in a short story that is read out loud.		

Date, examples of speech produced by the child, and other observations:

### How does language proficiency develop from the A2 to the B1 level?

Interaction gradually improves also in unpredictable situations. The child's ability to take the initiative in conversation develops. They learn to understand and discuss topics that are not directly related to their life or sphere of life. They are able to participate in discussion with several people or in a group situation. The child is also able to vary their expression and expression is more continuous and coherent.

## FORM 3.4 OBSERVING THE CHILD'S FINNISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Fluent basic language proficiency, level B1: coping in everyday life

The child understands the key points of clear speech and is able to participate in a discussion. They can express themselves understandably also in a group situation, if the topic is familiar. Narration may be linguistically simple and limited and list-like or broad and unclear in terms of content. The inaccuracy of speech does not affect the success of the speaking situation. The child can follow instructive discourse, but still needs support in recognizing the key points. Understanding a long instruction requires careful concentration and a calm environment. Working independently according to heard instructive discourse may be difficult. When assisted, the child can speak briefly in their turn and answer questions related to what they said. In unstructured social situations, the child is mostly able to follow the speech of others if the speech is general in nature or familiar spoken language. Participation in conversation when the tempo is fast causes difficulties. It can be difficult to recognize the tones of speech. The child does not require a written example to write their name correctly and without letter reversal.

### Skills at the fluent basic language proficiency B1 level

Interaction skills

Developing: date

Developed: date

Interaction is successful even if the linguistic expression may not be entirely accurate.

Language comprehension skills

Understands the main ideas and details of a broader conversation.

Speech production skills

Is able to talk about events in their life also in detail.

Is able to express their opinion and views and make suggestions.

Language use competencies

Can express themselves relatively effortlessly and independently, although breaks and interruptions may occur in speech.

## Linguistic memory and vocabulary

Developing: date      Developed: date

Is capable of versatile verbal expression.		
<b>Language awareness</b>		
Is able to play with language.		
Is able to follow picture books read out loud.		

Date, examples of speech produced by the child, and other observations:

--

## How does language proficiency develop from the B1 to the B2 level?

The B2 level can be expected only from school-aged children. During basic education, the child's development and learning process helps improve the abstract level of thinking, making it easier to deal with conceptual topics. Expression becomes more varied and idiomatic. The student has many alternative ways of expressing things. Communication becomes more independent, and the student is able to control interaction situations themselves. The student learns to differentiate between the modes of language suitable for different situations (including the formal and informal register) in varying contexts and to use language systematically according to the situation and purpose. It is relatively easy to understand popularized topics and talk and write about them, even when the topics are not directly related to the student's life and interests. Accuracy increases, means of expression become more diverse and expression is more concise.

# Sources

Cummins, J. 2007. Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 10, p. 221–240.

Harju-Luukkainen, H. & Kultti, A. 2017. *Undervisning i flerspråkig förskola*. Gleerups förlag.

Harms, T., Clifford, R. & Cryer, D. 2015. *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3)*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Language proficiency scale 2016. *National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2016, Finnish and Swedish as a second language and literature (support material)*. Finnish National Agency for Education.

OPH 2016 = Oma kieli – oma mieli. *Oppilaan oma äidinkieli*. Finnish National Agency for Education.

Sallinen, J., Paqvalén, M., & Harju-Luukkainen, H. 2009. *Språkgroddar: Information om barns språkutveckling*. Helsinki: Folkhälsan.

*Språkligt observationsschema för barn som lär sig svenska som andraspråk (S2)*. Espoo: Svenska bildningstjänster.

*Språkprogram för förskolorna i Enskede-Årsta-Vantör 2015*. Stockholms stad.

The Constitution of Finland 1999/731. Enacted in Helsinki on 22 April 1999. Available online at <<https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1999/19990731>>

*National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care. Regulations and guidelines 2018:3c*. Finnish National Agency for Education.

# Developing language-aware pedagogy in early childhood education and care

LANGPEDA TOOL

## Team leader

Heidi Harju-Luukkainen

## Team

Johanna af Björkstén  
Irene Altundas  
Satu Antikainen  
Tiia Elomaa  
Marjaana Gyekye  
Riitta Hakkarainen  
Terhi Hyvärinen  
Virpi Hämäläinen  
Riitta-Liisa Joutsenlahti  
Irmeli Järvinen  
Jaana Kastikainen  
Auli Kauhanen-Salomäki  
Taija Korhonen  
Minna Lehtivuori-Ahonen  
Kirsi-Marja Lehtovirta  
Minna Lyytinen  
Niina Nevalainen-Pohjala  
Kirsi Pennanen  
Teija Pylkkänen  
Niina Rosvall  
Mirkka Rouhio  
Tuija Ruonala  
Jenni Suokas  
Nina Thurin  
Riikka Tidenberg  
Tuija Vähätiitto

ISBN (print) 978-951-29-8183-0

ISBN (online) 978-951-29-8184-7

Publisher © University of Turku 2020



## Design and editing

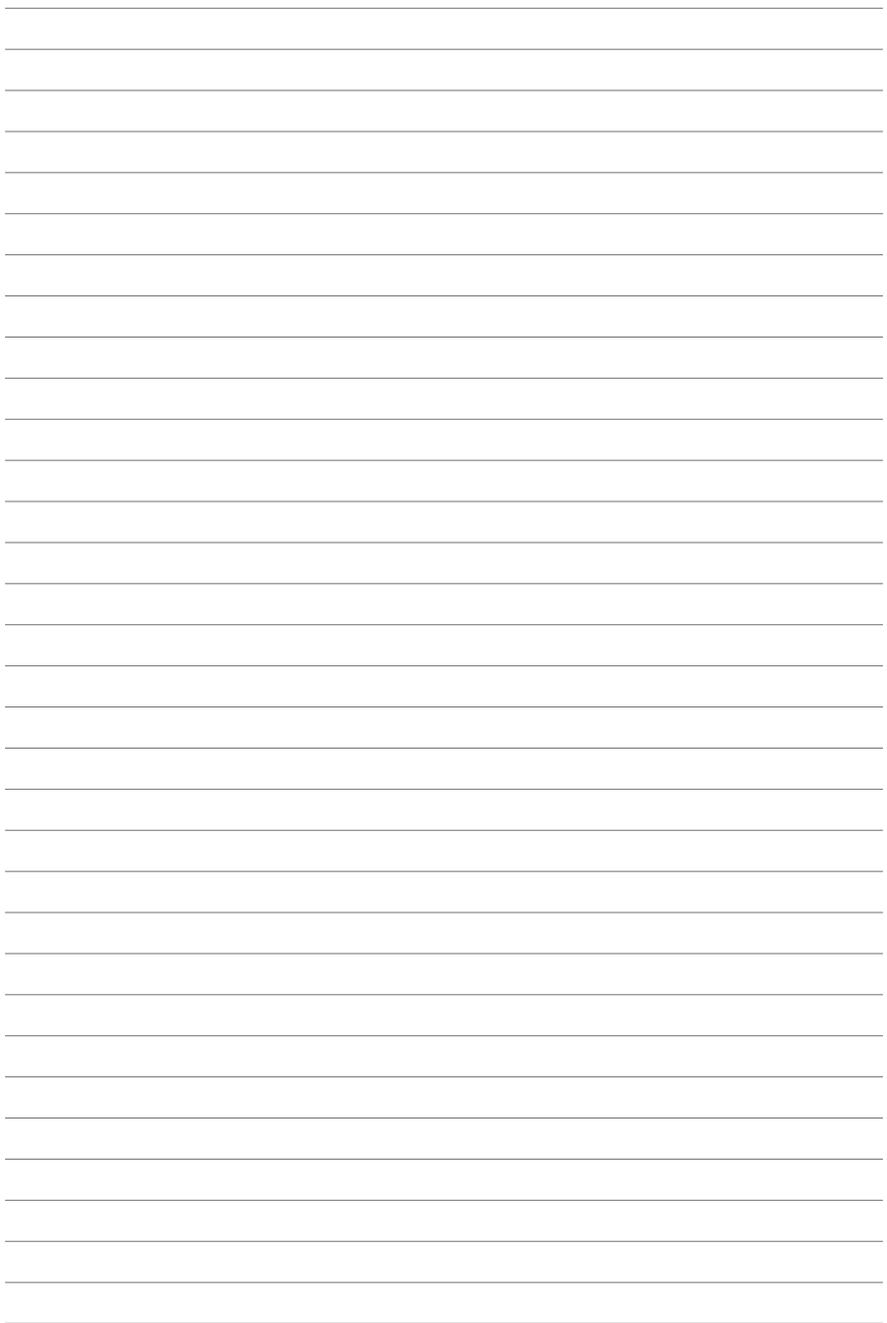
Heidi Harju-Luukkainen  
Marjaana Gyekye  
Nina Thurin  
Niina Kekki  
Maria Tyrer

## Layout

Jaska Poikonen

**LangPeda** is a tool that has been developed in spring 2019 as part of the project entitled “Opettajana monikielisessä ja -kulttuurisessa yhteiskunnassa” (Being a teacher in a multilingual and multicultural society), coordinated by the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Turku and funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The tool was piloted in 27 municipalities in the autumn and winter of 2019–2020, based on which its development was completed as part of the project “Diverse Education and Early Childhood Education and Care” (Moninainen opetus ja varhaiskasvatus), coordinated by the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Turku and funded by the Finnish National Agency for Education. The team was composed of ECEC professionals from across Finland.







**UNIVERSITY  
OF TURKU**



FINNISH NATIONAL  
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION AND CULTURE