



Notice for guardians: a study concerning the two-year pre-primary education trial

Dear guardian,

Your child's school participates in a follow-up study concerning the two-year pre-primary education trial carried out between 2021 and 2024. The Finnish trial was launched in August 2021, and in it some children participated in two-year pre-primary education instead of ordinary one-year pre-primary education. If your child has not participated in two-year pre-primary education, they are part of the study's control group. The study examines the impacts of longer pre-primary education on the development of children's learning skills.

In your child's school, the follow-up study's assessments will be conducted in November 2024. The assessments are carried out with all first-grade pupils in the municipality, under the supervision of a teacher during two lessons.

What happens in the assessment?

In the assessment, children do assignments independently on a computer following instructions from headphones and visual instructions. The assignments have been designed to be pleasant for children and have been successfully tested with first-grade pupils. In the assignments, children are asked about, for example, words, letters, numbers and simple calculations. If the assignment is too challenging for the child for one reason or another, the program will proceed to the next assignment. The child is also asked about their thoughts about themselves. We also collect information on your child's development through a survey directed at the teacher. The assessment data will be supplemented with data from national registers.

The assessment was designed by experts in educational science and psychology. The study is carried out jointly by researchers from Aalto University, the University of Turku, the University of Jyväskylä, the University of Helsinki and VATT Institute for Economic Research.

We are happy to answer questions related to the research project. You can contact the research group by emailing eskarikokeilu@vatt.fi or by calling +358 29 551 9556.

Best regards,
Matti Sarvimäki
Professor, Associate Research Professor
Aalto University and VATT Institute for Economic Research

Voluntariness

The evaluation is based on sections 3, 4 and 10 of the Act on a Two-Year Pre-primary Education Trial (1046/2020). Among other things, the act provides for the carrying out of evaluations for children belonging to the target group. Participation in the study is voluntary. As the study is based on the act, the guardian does not need to separately sign their child up for the study. However, the guardian has the right to prohibit or stop the child's participation in the study at any time during the study. This can be done without justification by notifying the child's school and without any consequences.

Confidentiality

The responses are transferred directly from the computer to the secure server of Turku Research Institute for Learning Analytics. The school does not keep any data on the individual responses of children or teachers. Teachers can see a summary of the results of pupils in their class. All data collected about your child will be processed confidentially. Your child's data can only be accessed by designated persons who are bound by secrecy obligation. The research material is processed in a protected environment and can only be accessed by researchers who have been granted a research permit. Your child cannot be identified from the study's results.

The child's responses will not be forwarded as such to the guardians. If you wish, you can request information about your child's performance in the assessment from your child's class teacher, who will receive a summary of the results for the students in their class in January 2025. It is worth noting that the assignments are not based on the targets of the national curriculum, and therefore may not necessarily provide information about the skills your child has acquired at school. They are also not used as part of student evaluation.

Data protection and risks

Risks related to data protection are minimised by storing the material in a secure data environment, by separating direct identification data from other data and by publishing the results in a format that does not enable the identification of individuals.

A privacy statement for guardians is available on the Ministry of Education and Culture website (address: <https://okm.fi/en/data-protection-and-processing-of-personal-data>, Privacy Notices > Personal data to be processed in the follow-up and assessment of the two-year pre-primary education trial). The data collected in the study and the processing of the data has been described in more detail in the privacy statement. The research project has received a positive opinion from Aalto University Research Ethics Committee.