TRYGFONDENS
BØRNEFORSKNINGSCENTER

We Are Learning Language +

Information for parents



Children's early language acquisition has a major impact on the rest of their life. That is why TrygFonden's Centre for Child Research at Aarhus University is undertaking a project aimed at helping all children get off to a good start. The project is called *We Are Learning Language +* (*Vi lærer sprog/VLS +*), and your day-care facility is involved in it. The project is being carried out in collaboration with VIA University College and Rambøll Management Consulting.

Below, you can read about the implications this has for you.

Purpose and content

The purpose is to work with children's language acquisition and persistence (i.e. ability to strengthen their focus, thoughts, feelings and actions) through play, reading and other activities at the day-care facility. The project is based on knowledge about how children acquire language skills and their persistence as well as factors that are particularly important for children later in life, e.g. when they start learning to read.

Language acquisition and persistence activities

The project consists of games, reading and other activities that focus on strengthening the children's language acquisition and persistence. For example, the children can learn words for different feelings through one such activity. The day-care staff is responsible for selecting the activities themselves with a view to ensuring that they are appropriate to the children's lives and interests. However, the day-care staff will receive material and tools to aid them in their efforts. We already know from prior research that this approach helps children's language acquisition.

Data-informed management

At some day-care facilities, the manager will also get a helping hand in supporting the staff in organizing the language and persistence activities, specifically by receiving information about the activities and children. The manager will take a course and receive training to help them utilize that information to support the staff in organizing as many activities as possible that are appropriate to each child's language skills and persistence.

Video-based feedback sessions

In some classrooms, the staff will also have feedback sessions with a consultant on how they can improve their efforts in relation to the language and persistence activities to ensure they

are as effective as possible and appropriate to each child. This will be based on different types of knowledge about the activities (video recordings and other information regarding the implementation of the project). The feedback sessions will take place through video calls.

This project is set to run from 2018-2019, with approximately 90 daycares across nine municipalities.

What implications will this have for the day-care facility?

The project will run for a total of 25 weeks from 1 October 2018 to 22 March 2019. The day-care facilities have been divided into two groups:

The day-care facilities in group 1 will work on the language and persistence activities.

The day-care facilities in group 2 will work on the language and persistence activities as well as data-informed management.

Some classrooms in the day-care facilities in *group 2* will - in addition to working with the language and persistence activities as well as data-informed management - also work with video-based feedback sessions between the childcare staff and consultants attached to the project.

The day-care facilities have been randomly divided into group 1 and 2, and the classrooms in *group 2* that will also work with video-based feedback sessions have also been randomly selected.

How will children and parents be involved in the project?

A core part of the project is to gain scientifically robust knowledge of the extent to which the children benefit from the different aspects of the project the day-care facilities are meant to implement and work on. In order for that to happen, the children's linguistic and cognitive abilities as well as their persistence will be assessed before and after the project. We will also need insights into your child's life that only you as parents have. Specifically, this means that:

- We will ask you to complete a questionnaire on how you support your child's language acquisition and persistence at home and in cooperation with the day-care facility. We will send you an e-mail and text message asking you to complete the questionnaire before and after the project.

- The children's linguistic and cognitive abilities as well as their persistence will be assessed by TrygFonden's Centre for Child Research and/or the day-care staff before and after the project (i.e. twice in total). Both of these assessments will take place at the institution. The assessments will be linked to anonymized register data from Statistics Denmark.

The information collected over the course of the project will exclusively be used for research. The results will only be published in a completely anonymized format, meaning that none of the information will ever be published in a way that can be traced to individual children, their parents or the day-care facility. In this letter we have also included a consent form, which we hope you will sign. It is very important for the success of the project that you sign the form.

More information...

We hope you will support the project, and we look forward to working together with your day-care facility. You can read more about the project here: http://childresearch.au.dk/vi-laerer-sprog/

If you have any questions, please contact your day-care facility manager.

Kind regards,

Dorthe Bleses
Project Manager
Professor
TrygFonden's Centre for Child Research

Simon Calmar Andersen
Professor
Department of Political Science
Aarhus University