

# Early intervention –portal and implementation of EB parental support: Bridging the gap between research and practice

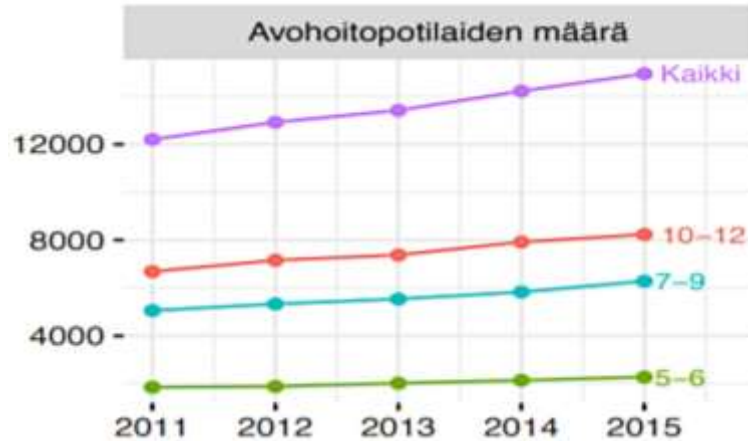
---

*Piia Karjalainen, Scientific Editor of Kasvun tuki, M.Ed.*



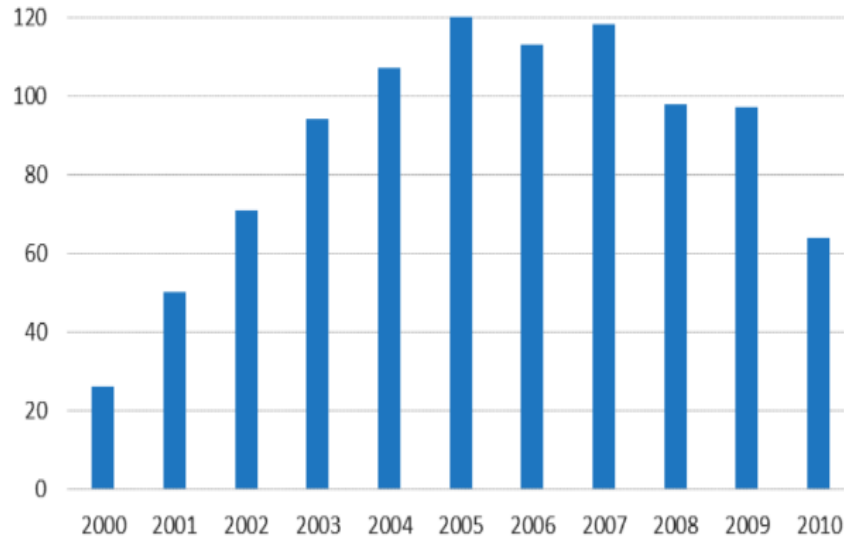
## By many standards Finnish children fare better than ever... ...however

Referrals of 5–12-year-old children with mental health issues to specialized medical care services and rehabilitation (Huikko ym., 2017)



Most typical 6-12-year old children attending Child Psychiatric outpatient clinic in Helsinki University Hospital were children with both conduct problems and ADHD-type of problems (Maasalo et al., 2017; Wessman et al., 2017).

# Hundreds of projects, innovations and interventions aim to support children and families in Finland



*Kuval: Käynnissä olevat perhettä ja vanhemmuutta tukevat projektit vuosina 2000–2010.*

- Do they work?
- What are the effects?
- How should resources be allocated?

Ongoing projects supporting families and parenting in 2000-2010  
(Sihvonen E., 2016)

# Kasvun tuki (Early Intervention) -portal

- Disseminates evidence-based knowledge of psychosocial preventive interventions aimed at families and children
- Targets primarily decision-makers in the social and health services, but aims to benefit researchers, developers, practitioners and parents as well
- Work started in 2013; current portal launched in 2017
- Describes the interventions (currently 24) in a standardized format:
  - quality of research evidence
  - level of effect
  - level of practical usefulness

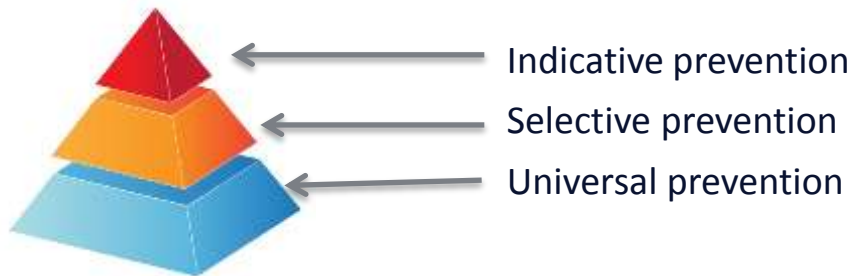


# Minimum requirements

---

All the included interventions must be

- ethically sound
- have a specified target audience (families with children under the age of 18)
- an evidence-based theoretical basis
- a clearly defined training programme (available in Finland)



# Editorial team and Scientific Committee

---

## Editorial team

- Scientific chief editor + 2 scientific editors
- Workers in Ita Children's Foundation

## Scientific Committee

- 10 top-level scientists from relevant fields (medicine, psychology, social sciences, education)

# Evaluation Process

2 meetings/year;  
2-4 evaluations  
approved in a  
meeting

Scientific editor meets  
program representatives,  
agreement



Scientific editor  
collects the material,  
writes a draft of the  
evaluation



Member of the  
scientific  
committee and a  
developer/user of the  
intervention collaborate and  
go through the draft with  
the editor



Scientific editor  
collects the material,  
writes a draft of the  
evaluation together with  
a member of the  
scientific committee



Scientific  
Committee

# Criteria for classifying interventions

Total level of evidence* 0-3	Quality of research evidence 0-3	Level of effect 0-3	Research quality + effect
*** Strong	3	2-3	5-6
** Moderate	2	1-2	3-4
* Intervention with limited research evidence	1	1	2
Intervention with no effects (or iatrogenic effects)	(0-3)	0	0
Intervention with no research studies conducted on the effectiveness	0		
Study ongoing			Study ongoing



# Evaluated Interventions (2019)

- **Incredible years** – parent programme\*\*\*, Incredible years – School and day care programme\*\*\*, Incredible years –Child programme\*\* – for children with behavioural problems
- **Voimaperheet\*\*\*/Strongest Families** - Internet-Assisted Parent Training Intervention for Disruptive Behavior
- **MDFT\*\*\*** – Multidimensional Family Therapy
- **Let's talk\*\*, Beardslee family intervention\*\* & Vertti – multifamily support groups**  
– 3 interventions for families with depressed parents or parents suffering from other mental health issues
- **VAVU\*\*** – Universal intervention for supporting early interaction between parents and their infant
- **Video Interaction Guidance (VIG-MLL) \*\*** for enhancing communication within relationships
- **ICDP \*** – International Child Development Programme
- **Kiikku\*** - Parent – infant intervention for children in developmental risk (based on attachment theory and ecocultural theory)
- **Pidä kiinni\*** – Mother and child homes specialized in substance abuse treatment for pregnant women and families with babies
- **Theraplay\*** – parent child therapy aiming to improve the parent-child relationship through play and healthy interaction
- **Aggressopm Replacement Training (ART)\*** -Programm for youth who have problems with self-regulation
- **Hoivaa ja Leiki** – Mentalization-based for pregnant mothers, who experience depressive symptoms to strengthen emotional availability
- **Families First** - Mentalization-based group intervention for first-time parents to promote child development and family health – *study ongoing*
- **Trappan** – Programme for children who have witnessed violence in their families
- **Voikukkia –ryhmät/Mayflower - peer support groups** - Activities developed for parents of children placed in foster care
- **Fhille** - Home Instruction for parents with children preparing for school start
- **Kids'Skills, Muksuoppi** (Finnish intervention: solution –focused parenting training, tools for teachers and an app for kids) – *study ongoing*
- **Family Group Conferencing** – approach to working with and engaging families in the child protection or other context
- **Perhekoulu POP** – Group based parent training program with a program for children for child's problem behavior
- **Sisukas** – Intervention to support school achievement for children who has been taken into foster care

# Current organizational structure & resources

---

- Kasvun tuki is part of the ITLA foundation
  - foundation received a large present fund from the parliament to celebrate Finland's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2017
- ITLA is an independent foundation but operates under the Finnish parliament – opportunities and liabilities
- Three operational areas
  - Knowledge
  - Innovations
  - Education
- Kasvun tuki –editorial team is part of “Knowledge” –operational area

# WHAT...

---

**...do we do with this information?**

# Early intervention "tool kit"

- Is currently implemented as **part of the governmental family service program 2017-18** in collaboration with the Finnish Association for Mental Health (Mieli ry.)
- The tool kit includes interventions that have received strong or moderate effect in our early intervention assessment procedure ([www.kasvuntuki.fi](http://www.kasvuntuki.fi))



# Implementation support

- Information meetings; including facts and requirements regarding the interventions, “what EBP is/is not”, common misunderstandings etc.
- Contracts with the county stakeholders, aim to guarantee longevity and systematic support by the organizations for the clinicians / professionals
- Leadership seminars on implementation obstacles/possibilities
- Follow-up, data gathering



# Building an implementation handbook

---

1. **Video-interviews** with regional and local key persons, method developers Themes include e.g. identifying tensions where EBP meets reality
2. **Review** of the relevant implementation science literature
3. **In 2017, a survey conducted** on know-how of EBP and child development issues within the leadership in municipal child- and family work (including education, social- and health sector). N= 90/358



First national implementation handbook for child and family services will be published January 2019

## In the future we will hopefully also..

---

- Find “Home Base” for the interventions with the strongest evidence
- Develop “Help-desk” –service for programs that not yet have research-base and help them to “get to the next level”
- Disseminate the understanding of EB work
- Monitor and evaluate the EB work (i.e. electroinic feedback loops)
- Collaborate with University of Eastern Finland and other institutions in order to
  - Evaluate the effects of the tool kit using register-based data (e.g. referrals to CPS & child psychiatric care)
  - Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the tool kit implementation; develop tools tools to support decision makers in cost –benefit assessments
- Continue developing both the evaluation process and implementation support
- Include a ***population-level approach***: provide information on parenting, child development and support to every family in order to produce a change at a whole population level
  - limited, but encouraging findings abroad from e.g. Triple-P public health approach (Prinz, 2009)



Thank you -  
Kiitos!

Piia Karjalainen  
Scientific editor, Ilta  
[piia.karjalainen@itla.fi](mailto:piia.karjalainen@itla.fi)

The logo for 'itla' features the word 'itla' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A small teal dot is positioned above the letter 'i'.