



## SISUKAS 2012–2016

Foster child at school -project

# SISUKAS 2012–2016

## Foster child at school -project

SISUKAS is part of Emma & Elias Programme (2012–2017). Programme acts as an umbrella for the projects by various organisations supporting the health and social welfare of children and their families.

### The main goal of SISUKAS-project

To prevent the marginalization of children in foster care by developing a cooperation model “Foster Child at School” applying the Swedish SkolFam® model.

### Target group

6–11 years old children in foster care who live in Central Finland. There are 20 children participating in the pilot project.

### Goals

- 1) To prevent development of learning difficulties and to improve school achievement
- 2) To create a multiprofessional cooperation model
- 3) To pilot the model in Central Finland
- 4) To evaluate the effectiveness
- 5) To implement the model

### Outcomes of the project

- Cooperation model and a handbook to support foster children in school
- Foster child at school -guide book
- Training and seminars
- Evaluation research and articles

### Foster children’s strengths and needs are tested

According to research children taken into foster care tend to be low achievers at school. Social exclusion later in life can be prevented by sup-



porting these children at an early phase.

SISUKAS -model is based on SkolFam® model. At the start a psychologist and a special education teacher test each child with standardised tests. The results of the cognitive test (WISC–IV) done by psychologist are compared with results of standardised tests for reading, spelling and numeracy done by special education teacher, and also to achievements at school, as perceived and reported by the teachers. Standardised tests are also used to assess baseline psychological well-being and behavior (SDQ, CBCL), as well as child-teacher relations (VAS-scale, STRS).

### Feedback to child’s team

The results of the tests are communicated to the children, their foster parents, teachers and social workers by the psychologist and the special education teacher at meetings where all the parties are present. This approach is chosen in order to create good working relationships among child’s network, and also to demonstrate that the child is not a person with problems but rather a member of the team.

## Intervention and support

Potential for school achievement, strengths and obstacles are identified in co-operation with children, teachers, carers and social workers. As a result a written individualised plan for each child will be created, indicating his or her needs for educational support and other types of interventions. During the 24 months' interventions, the psychologist and the special education teacher are key players, as one fundamental principle of the project is that they should constantly motivate and tutor the teachers (and foster parents) on how to assist each child to attain the set goals. The psychologist and the special education teacher do less work on a one to one basis with the children and work mostly with and through the teachers. Also, they closely monitor the individual progress and difficulties of each child, as perceived by foster parents and teachers. This information is used in planned meetings every three months with all parties present. This model makes it possible to evaluate continuously the interventions and support provided.

## Evaluation and retesting

After the 24 months' period, the 20 children included in the project are re-tested with the same instruments. Post-intervention test results are compared to pre-intervention scores for assessing outcomes.

One of the main goals in SISUKAS-project is to develop dialog. A closer cooperation and better communication between the foster family, school and social services will be created and further enhanced. The other goal is to create more positive attitude towards education among the children included the project and also to meet the needs of the children. The suitability of the SISUKAS-model and its effectiveness will be assessed by further research.

Pesäpuu ry is a nationwide child welfare association bringing expertise to the field of child welfare. The offices are located in Jyväskylä and Helsinki.

## Project personnel

2012–2016 Project manager  
2013–2015 Psychologist, special education teacher, social worker

# SISUKAS 2012–2016

## Foster child at school -project

Read more:  
[www.sijoitettulapsikoulussa.fi](http://www.sijoitettulapsikoulussa.fi)



Read more about Finnish education system here:  
[http://www.oph.fi/english/education\\_system](http://www.oph.fi/english/education_system)

Project manager  
Christine Väливаара  
+358 40 775 5700  
[christine.valivaara@pesapuu.fi](mailto:christine.valivaara@pesapuu.fi)  
[www.sijoitettulapsikoulussa.fi](http://www.sijoitettulapsikoulussa.fi)

PESÄPUU ry  
Centre of Expertise in Child Welfare  
Ilmarisenkatu 17 A, 40100 JYVÄSKYLÄ  
[www.pesapuu.fi](http://www.pesapuu.fi)



**SISUKAS-PROJECT**  
2012–2016

