Parents and Educators: What are the Components that Govern a Successful Partnership in Childcare Settings?

Vanhanen Andrea

2016 Otaniemi

Laurea University of Applied Sciences
Otaniemi

Parents and Educators: What are the components that govern a successful partnership in childcare settings?

Andrea Vanhanen
Degree Programme in
Social Services, LTO
Thesis
May 2016

Andrea Vanhanen

Parents and Educators: what are the components that govern a successful partnership in childcare settings?

Year	2016	Pages	91

The purpose of this study was to explore the components, whether these are behaviours, qualities, skills or practical applications that govern a successful and optimal ECEC partnership. The theoretical framework of this study was centred on ECEC partnership and its fundamental principles.

This study employed a qualitative research method to elaborate a web-based questionnaire and analyse the obtained data. This methodology assists in facilitating the interpretation of the data in order to achieve the purpose of this study in the most factual and trustworthy way and to provide the reader credible, believable and relevant results. Moreover, this study used an abductive reasoning approach to producing and building new antecedents and explanations to the respondents' answers to the open-ended questions.

The content analysis of 28 written responses produced a total of 99 discrete observations across the data set. The Web-based questionnaire was carried out through an online survey. The questionnaire was served to six participants, three educators, and three parents. The response rate was 100%.

Researchers Hedeen, Moses, and Peter (2011, 1) propose, "All parents can and should participate meaningfully in their children´s education." Also, according to Deyell-Gindgold (2008), Maxwell and Eller in 1994 depicted that when educators and parents agree on a philosophy of education, children usually adjust more easily and feel more secure in their new environment if their parents support the educators and the school practices.

The finding supported the defined concept of the ECEC partnership in Finland and to a great extent the partnership defined by the terms trust, respect, and equality. The relationship between parents and educators was observed the central aspect promote children´s balanced growth, development, learning and the level of shared thinking, inquiry, ideas, concerns, and questions. However, creating a successful partnership takes time and effort as well as involving responsibility and creative collaboration on both sides (Venninen & Purola 2013, 48-49; NCCA 2009, 7; Bickley 2008, 1). What partnership does really mean? Bidmead et al. (2002, 259) state, "ECEC Partnership is the true power sharing relationship based on mutual respect, a non-judgmental attitude, honesty, flexibility, and negotiation of every step of the partnership process. Finally, parents and educators' education, overall training programs, employee training program and further research are highly recommended.

Keywords, ECEC partnership, Key Principles in ECEC, Innovative Alternative of Communication, Parents, Educators, The Family Partnership Model, A Qualitative Approach.

Table of contents

1   Introduction

> Knowledge is meaningful only if it is reflected in action. The human race has found out the hard way that we are what we do, not just what we think. (Fulghum 2004.)

Currently, educational partnership has emerged as an essential topic of professional development for the early childhood education and care. Much discussion emphasises the significance of family involvement and educators´ participation, which, underlie an importance part of the early childhood education and care in Finland, the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care, abbreviated as ECEC (ECEC in Finland 2003, 3-4.) An ECEC partnership in Finnish context hallmarks that families are partners with educators in their children´s education and wellbeing. (Alasuutari, 2010, 150.) Moreover, it is depicted as the relationship between parties to promote children´s balanced growth, development, learning and the level of shared thinking, inquiry, ideas, concerns, and questions. Creating a successful partnership takes time and effort as well as involving responsibility and inventive collaboration on both sides (Venninen & Purola 2013, 48-49; NCCA 2009, 7; Bickley 2008, 1). However, what partnership does really mean? Bidmead, Davis and Day (2002, 259) state that a partnership is the true power sharing relationship based upon mutual respect, a non-judgmental attitude, honesty, flexibility and negotiation of every step of the partnership. Zenger, Lazzarini and Poppo (2001,5) define partnership as an institutional arrangement to formally facilitate co-operation and co-ordination.

Parents and childcare educators bring important elements to the partnership working team of group. On the one hand, parents are the most important people in their children´s early lives in all aspect. Parents have a profound knowledge of their children and a lifelong commitment to their children's wholesome. (Lascarides & Hinitz 2011, 623.) Bidmead et al. (2002, 257) express that parents live with their children 24/7 days a week, therefore, it is foolish to think that someone else out of the children´s family surrounding can know their children much better as they do. On the other hand and equally important, educators are powerful influences in the child´s education (Smith 2013). Besides, educators have professional experience and specialised skills in working with children. As well, they also have knowledge and multidisciplinary skills to effectively communicate with their parent´s community (Bickley 2008, 1; ECEC Nurmijärvi 2010, 1). Davis (1993, 47) states "professionals complementary expertise, if combined, will then be most effective".

Researchers Hedeen, Moses, and Peter (2011, 1) propose, "All parents can and should participate meaningfully in their children´s education". Also, according to Deyell-Gindgold (2008, para. 7) Maxwell and Eller in 1994 depicted that when educators and parents agree on a philosophy of education, children usually adjust more easily and feel more secure in their new environment if their parents support the educators and the school practices.

Another essential point in partnership is the importance of the day care centre`s role. According to the Act on Children´s Day Care, the purpose of the day care is to support parents in their responsibility to raise their children and to promote children´s personal, balanced and overall development together with the educators. (Grierson 2000, 52.) In Finland, the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care (The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland 2003, 28) defines a partnership as a conscious commitment by parents and educators to collaboration for supporting children´s growth, development, and learning (Venninen & Purola 2013, 49; Alasuutari 2010, 150).

Bickley (2008, 1) asserts that a partnership requires mutual trust and respect, and quality for creating conditions favourable for ECEC partnership and co-operation on equal terms. Working closely with parents and childcare professionals allows gaining a clear picture of the child and leads to decision making that genuinely reflect the needs and interest of the child.

According to Gregory (2003, 27), conducting early childhood research is a systematic manner to discover the truth about what occurs in childcare settings. As a concept, some scholars have defined partnership as the collaboration and the relationship between two parties. In childcare fields, an educational partnership involves families and childcare professionals working together towards mutual goals to benefit children´s well being, growth and education. Alasuutari (2010, 150) explains that The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland depicts partnership as a general approach in the collaboration between ECEC and parents. Subsequently, partnership is defined by the terms respect, trust and equality. Researchers have identified four fundamental supporters namely, two-to-one listening, trust, respect and dialogue that conduce partnership involvement (Venninen & Purola 2013, 49; NCCA 2009, 7; Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006, 32; Bickley 2008, 1)

Previous literature has addressed the importance of this subject about the benefits and challenges in partnership from parents and educators´ perspective. However, although a number of studies continue to explore this phenomenon, it seems that partnership has not yet been clear perceived. What features are important to build an effective and successful partnership remain still unexplored. Often groups, organisations or collective efforts are unable to move further because they have lost sight of where they are going; roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined or equitable distributed; or simple because there is a varying of interpretation about what partnership means in practice (Alasuutari 2010, 149). According to Tanyi (2011, 14) researchers Hokkanen and Liehunen (2008) affirm that one of the main goals for the educational partnership is for the educator to recognise as early as possible the child's need for supporting in some area of growth, development, and learning and by that to create a workable strategy and implementation in conjunction with the parents.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2012, 103) state, "A clear aim makes sure the literature review stays focused. This study is guided by one main question, what are the components, whether these are behaviours, qualities, skills or practical applications that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in childcare settings. In the Finnish ECEC context, researchers have identified four wide principles namely listening, respect, trust, and dialogue. (THL 2014, para. 1; Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006, 36; Venninen & Purola 2013, 49; NCCA 2009, 7; Bickley 2008, 1; Lehtinen n.d.) Equally important, researches have demonstrated that the stable and personal communication is as well a key foundation for parents and childcare professionals' interaction with a focus on intervention, problem identification, strategy formulation and implementation (Hedeen et al. 2011,1; Alasuutari 2010, 150; Nurmijärvi ECEC 2010, 10;Virginian Department of Education 2002, 16). Therefore, an effective communication is also necessary to increasing the partnership engagement that enables both parents and educators to assist children´s learning at early years (Bokony, Whiteside-Mansell, & Swindle 2013, 45; Virginian Department of education 2002, 16). Likewise, it has found that parents not only place a greater importance on the social and emotional maturity of their children, but also importance on academic skills (The National Data Resource Center 1995; Maxwell & Eller 1994, cited in McCubbins 2004, 18).

To define better the main research question, the objectives of this study attempt to explore the following questions:

- What parents and childcare professionals understand by partnership and partner?
- What are the key components to creating effective partnerships?
- What are the expectations towards an effective partnership?
- What could be the practical ways to develop an effective partnership?

1.2 Research Limitations

This study was limited to six participants only, which means that three of the respondents were parents and three childcare educators. All of them were carefully selected from different day care centres, from the town of Nurmijärvi. For each party, a web-based questionnaire with five questions was elaborated to discover and seek answers to the research question and the objectives of this study.

Despite this study examined the term of the educational partnership and the fundamental dimensions (behaviours, qualities, skills and practical applications) that govern a partnership

from different resources, findings, and studies 'point of views this work, however, does not attempt to provide or give another definition for partnership in childcare environment, either to analyse in deeper the roadblocks to a successful partnership. This study focuses on discovering and exploring the positives outcomes and benefits of it, as well as the right frameworks that would enhance children´s overall so as to ensure the best growth and development as well as parents and educators' best teamwork relationship. (ECEC 2014, 8-9.)

This study explored to seek from both parents and educators, answers to the central research question. Also, it is salient to stress that this study is not a comparison research. The final purpose of this academic work attempted to find a shared understanding of similarities and differences between parents and educators' views when working together in a partnership. Thus, the benefits of the study are to gain an understanding of multiple ways to enhance and strengthen the educational partnership. Moreover to provide to educators, parents, and professionals from caring fields with additional information regarding the means to increase effective communication between them and to enhance the best support to the children and their families.

1.3   Terminology

In this study, some terms are repeated during the whole study; therefore, to avoid unclear and redundant concepts as well as expressions a brief description of them is given. When referring to the term parents, guardians or family does not necessary, mean that one is the biological mother or father, but takes the role of a parent. Nowadays, exist many family models, and every family is unique. (Pugh 2001, 146 -148.)

At present, staff operating at day care centres include kindergarten teachers, special kindergarten teachers, social educators or Bachelors of Social Sciences, Bachelors and Masters of Education, practical children's nurses, kindergarten practical nurses and practical nurses. In this study, the used of various terms referred to the staff responsible for the care, teaching and education in early childhood education is then condensed to the term of educator. (OECD 2010. ECEC 2003, 3.) Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) refers to educational interaction taking place with young children to promote growth, development, and learning. ECEC partnership refers to educational endeavours of parents and educators, working in close collaboration and mutual, continuous, and committed interaction. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland 2003, 3-4.)

2   Background of the thesis

Working in early childhood education and care and endeavouring the best to built a genuine partnership with parents, whether as a nursemaid or currently as a kindergarten teacher; I have observed that there is not yet a clear understanding of what partnership means. For a myriad of people, a partnership means "collaboration" only and for other could mean to be part of a club. The word partnership seems little or almost a misused terminology and often used very loosely to denote any "help" and "conversation or interaction" between/ among people. This reflexion is based on the personal research experience of the author conducted in 2014 about customer´s expectation and satisfaction on mobile service at day care centres.

In January 2013, MukavaIT (2013) Oy and the Nurmijärvi early childhood education and care commenced operating a pilot project called Päikky. The goal of this project was to develop a compatible system, according to the needs of the early childhood education requirements. One of the central purposes of the mobile service was to connect parents and educators (Vanhanen 2015, 6) and by that to encourage both parties to work together in a partnership for the benefit of the child in all aspect.

The outcome of the work indicated that the overall level of perception and satisfaction among the mobile service´s customers was good, but not excellent. The testing and assessment time was an eye-opener to realise that the concept of partnership was not yet fully perceived by parents and educators. It seemed that each party had an exclusive and a different meaning of the concept itself. Educational partnership, parental engagement, family involvement, ECEC partnership are some concepts that define a partnership and are slightly well used and explored by researchers in early childhood education and primary education. (Gurlui 2014, 606-611.) However, despite the fact that partnership has been widely researched, investigated, and everyone seems to agree, that parents-educator involvement is based on equal interaction and it is a good thing to develop, yet a common conception or perceiving of the right frameworks of partnership is still needed.

2.1   The Importance of Having a Clear Understanding of Partnership

According to Karila and Alasuutari (2012, 21), Strandell in 2009 argued that the meaning of equality is not yet well clarified in national steering documents. On the one hand, parents are given the status of experts, while on the other hand, the use of this expertise seems to be confined and limited to political and regulations issues.

Therefore, a clear understanding of what are the components that a partnership requires is necessary to ensure parents, educators and children high-quality educational standards at day care centres. (Office of Community Service 2012)

After the realisation of that study, a high percentage of the responses offered glimpses of the lack of real interaction and participation in the day care centres. Parents and educators were critical about the absence of these essential components during the pilot time. Both parents and educators expected more involvement and partnership through the mobile service, but it seemed that it did not succeed as supposed. (Vanhanen 2015, 61.)

As a student and a professional, I consider this subject indispensable and needed to be continue researched, since establishing a partnership is never entirely straightforward; there is always tense and discomfort for both sides. When building healthy partnership and reliable communication, the work is less stressful and the evidence of satisfaction and benefits increases for both parties involved and affects third parties as well. (Bidmead et al. 2002, 257.)

The audience of this work is addressed to anyone who is interested in expanding the knowledge of understanding what could be the right frameworks of partnership in early childhood settings. The beauty of this study attempts to help to any organisation or individuals that want to expand their knowledge and construct successful partnership in day care settings. It has been observed that a healthy partnership promotes and creates opportunities, learning and development, but to develop a successful partnership takes a long time (Office of Community Services 2012) and need to be carefully maintained throughout the following processes (Bidmead et al. 2002, 257).

The purpose of this study was to discover what are the components whether these are behaviours, qualities, skills, and practical actions that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in early childhood education settings. According to Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006, 32), a partnership induces and is influenced by four fundamental pillars, namely a two-to-one listening, respect, trust and dialogue. Based on the findings of Kaskela and Kekkonen it can be hypothesised that these four components are the ones that create a successful partnership. Nevertheless, the question that arises then is, are these four prerequisites for sure the entirely components to safeguard children's optimal education, care, development and growth as well to enhance successful partnerships in childcare settings?

2.2   Nurmijärvi kindergartens

Nurmijärvi is the largest rural municipality in Finland concerning population and area (Nurmijärvi 2014). The numbers of children at the municipal day care centres is estimated around

2378 (Sanna 2015, Pers.Com.) All Nurmijärvi municipal facilities are consisted of highly qualified childcare professionals including kindergarten teachers, nursemaids and child minders.

They all offer a safe and skilled day care and education to children aged 1-8 years. Moreover, they provide genuine listening to parents about the needs and interest of the child. In this way, parents and childcare professionals provide and contribute to the child's best activities, education, growth, and care.

One of the main purposes of the Nurmijärvi early childhood education and care is to establish great patrons of co-operation and teamwork between parents and childcares professionals. This initiative attempts to encourage parents to participate in the primary education of their child/children. Thus, parents' engagement in the children education and care is seen as an integral element in the education system in Finland (ECEC 2014, 10).

The municipality of Nurmijärvi advocates that creating a culture of partnership starts from the first contact between the parents and the educator. (ECEC Nurmijärvi 2010, 10.) By way of example when children are about to start in a day care centre, it is required for professionals to support parents through several processes. The first process, it is to contact the parents and establish an initial conversation. The purpose of this practice is to get familiar with the child and its parents. Additionally, parents can share more detail information about their children, home environments, hobbies, as well as their hopes and interest for the day care. Moreover, parent's experience and the feeling to start in a day care place affect a child's attachment and relationship to the new treatment. That is why the achievement of these issues as trust and legitimate expectations are then essential to build from the first step. Therefore, open and trusting relationship between parents and educators are essential to creating a secure foundation for the child's wellbeing in the Nurmijärvi early childhood education and care. (ECEC Nurmijärvi 2010,18.)

Thus, the importance of having a sound and seamless communication between parents and educators is imperative and necessary. However, regular communication can also be difficult and divisive. According to Endsley and Minish (1989, 2), parents and educators' communication is specifically directed to the child's pick-up or drop off moments. For instance, when a child is dropped off to the kindergarten, parents may give some information about the child's situation and, correspondingly, when parents pick up the child, the childcare professional reports about the child´s day. They have observed that he average time for discussion at these meetings is approximately 12 seconds. Most of the conversations are usually very routinely, in which the discussion is overall of the child's health or behaviour during the day care. In addition, it revealed that parents seemed to be less active in the morning than in the afternoon.

According to the Nurmijärvi early childhood education plan (ECEC Nurmijärvi 2010, 18), parents and educators undertake together the child's growth, development, and learning. Parents bring their experience; expertise, and knowledge about their child/children and educators bring professional knowledge, skills, as well as the responsibility for creating the conditions for an equal partnership and co-operation in education (Kekkonen 2012, 43). Thus, the importance of partnership and effective communication skills goes hand in hands to facilitate both parents and educators role as cares (Bidmead et al. 2002, 259).

3   Literature Review

The literature review will provide a well- supported rationale to the conduction of this study; consequently, it will help the reader understand its perspective and purposes. According to Simon and Goes (n.d.), a good theoretical framework assures the reader that the type of investigation proposed is not based solely on personal aptitude or guesses, but rather informed by established theory and empirical facts obtained from previous credible studies.

> The selection of available documents (both published or unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed. (Hart 1998, 13.)

Therefore, literature reviews are important because they seek to summarise or provide a synthesis of research and information on the literature that is available on a particular topic. These academic reviews provide to the reader a huge mount of literature that he or she does not have easily access (Aveyard 2007, 6-13).

This theoretical review is organised in five subjects a) a general overview of the Finnish ECEC; b) the educational partnership; c) the key components for partnership; d) the benefit of partnership; and finally e) an electronic alternative to enhance successful partnership. This study aims to discover what are the components, whether these are behaviours, qualities, skills and practical actions that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in early childhood education settings. This review synthesises findings from a numbers of academic studies on partnership in early childhood education and care and the principle components for engaging with a successful partnership. Next, the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care is described.

3.1   The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care

In Finland, every child under school age has a subjective right to early childhood education and care (Finnish National Board of Education 2016). The Curriculum for early childhood education bases are framed on principles and values underlying by the Constitution, the Organic Constitutional Law on Education and the law of the Nation, as well as the anthropological and ethical conception that guides the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of child. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland 2003, 13.) The Finnish Government approved the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and care on 28 February 2002. The policy definition includes the central principles and developments priorities for publicly and operated and supervised ECEC. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland 2003, 3.)

The aim of the National Curriculum Guidelines is to promote the provision of ECEC on equal terms throughout the country, guide the development of the context of activities, and contribute to developing equal principles. Moreover to increase the professional awareness of ECEC workers, parental engagement in ECEC services, and multi-professional collaboration between different services supporting children and their families before the start of compulsory education. Likewise, The task of early childhood education and care is to promote children's welfare in all respects. (Finnish National Board of Education 2016, 28.)

The core of ECEC practices and pedagogy then forms the national framework for promoting children´s well being, development, and learning. (Venninen & Purola 2013, 49; The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland 2003, 9.) Knowing as well as the "EduCare" model, where care, education and instruction have been combined to form an integrated whole and where play is a central tool of pedagogical activities. (Finnish National Board of Education 2016; OECD 2000, 62.)

From January 2013, The Ministry of Education and Culture became the responsible of ECEC in Finland. Before this time, ECEC was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social and health Affairs. According to Venninen and Purola (2007, 49) childcare was perceived as a social service for parents, not at the first step of the general education system or life-long learning for all children under school age. As shown in Table 1, in Finland the policy documents governing early childhood education and care are two: the national regulations and policy documents and the local policy document. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland 2003, 10-11.)

National regulations and policy documents

Local policy documents

Legislation on Child Daycare and Pre-school Education regulates implementation of early childhood education and care, of which pre-school education forms a part

National Policy Definition on Early Childhood Education and Care contains the central principles and development priorities for publicly operated and supervised ECEC

National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood education and Care provide national guidelines for the content and quality of ECEC and for drawing up local ECEC curricula.

Core Curriculum for Pre-School Education in Finland provides national guidelines for the content and quality of pre-school education and for drawing up local pre-school curricula

Local Policy definitions and Strategies for ECEC may for part of a municipality´s child policy programme, or theyare included in other policy documents concerning children and families. They define the central principles and development priorities applied in organising ECEC in the municipality, and describe its ECEC service system.

A Local ECEC Curriculun is a policy document drafted by a municipality or several municipalities on the basis of the National Curriculum Guidelines. The curriculum takes account of the municipality´s own policy definitions, strategies, and goals and defines goals for the content of different service forms.

A local pre-school education curriculum and the ECEC curriculum form an integrated whole, and there is a clear continuity between them.

A unit-specific ECEC curriculum is more detailed than the local ECEC curriculum, describing a district´s or unit´s special features and priorities. The unit-specific curriculum also includes specified goals for different service forms

An individual ECEC plan and an individual pre-school education plan are drawn up jointly between professionals and the child´s parents to provide a basis for hte implementation of the child´scare, early education, and pre-school education

Table 1: The National Regulation and Policy Documents

These documents are meant to promote the provision of ECEC on equal terms throughout the country, to guide, and develop the content of activities, and the quality of them by introducing uniform principles for planning such activities. Moreover, to increase the professional awareness of ECEC educators, parental engagement and multi-professional co-operation between different services endorsing children and their families before to commence the compulsory education. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland 2003, 9.) Following, it is depicted the ECEC processes.

3.1.1   The ECEC Processes

When a child is about to start in a day care centre, different processes support the childcare relationship. According to Kekkonen (2012, 14), these processes are divided into four discourses. First, the social relationship between parents and educators, second, the home visits from the childhood educator, third service negotiations in early childhood education and finally, the educational partnership as a form of communication that lead to relationships. Equally important, the Nurmijärvi early childhood education and care distributes the process into seven straightforward steps, the service agreement information, the initial conversation, getting to know the child, the start process, the VASU discussion, daily encounter and joint evaluation, as well as the action planning with parents and the early open coaction. (ECEC Nurmijärvi 2010, 18,19.)

The service agreement discussion takes place through the unit activities, practices, fees, specific situations and related issues to the day care contract between the supervisor and the

parents. The second step is related when the educator will contact the family for starting a discussion period. The aim of the initial review is that the parents, the educator and the child get to know each other. This step can be held in the child's home or at day care centre. Visit at home environments give favourable conditions to share about a child in peace and a familiar surroundings and sense of confidence. Getting to know is the third step, which occurs in the childcare facilities. It includes a joint introduction to the parent and the child as well as the group where the child will start. During the first visit at the day care centre, a parent can observe different situations, get to know the rest of the educators, see the facilities and get an idea of the daily program. The goal is then to get the family to trust that a child can safely remain in the day care centre.

The fourth step is the interaction between the educator and the child. The smaller the child is, the more important it is to give the child the opportunity to attach and create a relationship to first only one adult. That is why is important that the same educator that started the initial conversation with parents, and the child should also be as much as possible at the beginning of the treatment period of the child to ensure confidence and comfort in his early education journal. (ECEC Nurmijärvi 2010, 18,19.)

The VASU (Varhaiskasvatus Suunnitelma) discussion is conducted approximately two months later of the initiation of the treatment. The main idea of the educational and care plan is to prepare a draft (together with older child's early education plan, if there is) of the significance construction of the child´s growth, development, and learning. (Kaskela & Kronqvist 2007, 31.) Also, to discover common understandings that supports and enhances the child's growth and wellbeing. VASU is then deemed an essential tool for the child educational planning. Kaskela and Kronqvist (2007, 37) believe that the primary purpose of the VASU is to ensure the child´s wellbeing. The action planning is by mean the daily conversations and feedback between parents and the educator. This step and VASU are believed to be the foundations of the educational partnership. A child's confidence grows when he discovers that the most important people in his life work together to support and help him. Therefore, parents' involvement in planning activities, parents' nights, connections with other educational programs, and evaluation surveys are included in the adoption and updating of the unit-specific of the ECEC plan.

The early open coaction is meant that if a parent comes to concern for the child's growth and development-related areas, parents can take the matter with the educator at a sufficiently early stage. The aim of this juncture is that the possibilities for the educator and the parents to help the child grows and develops. This stage model includes the operating procedures within the educator, which promotes and advocates co-operation between the parents and other early childhood education outside workers. (ECEC Nurmijärvi 2010, 18,19.)

3.1.2   The Individual ECEC Plan

In this section, it is examined the individual educational plan forms used in childcare units. In Finland, an individual ECEC plan, also known as VASU, was first introduced in 2003 as a practice that concerns all children in day care centres. (Alasuutari 2010, 150.) Furthermore, it was considered to be the backbone of the child educational planning and the guideline for parents and educators to assess children´s growth, development and learning. The National Policy Definitions and the Curriculum Guidelines as well as local policy definitions and plans provide a frame for evaluations and developing ECEC in municipalities; subsequently, introduced in every childcare units. Its implementation and details are assessed together with the child and parents. The child day care unit evaluates and adjusts the realisation and the contents of the plan in conjunction with the child and the parents. (Early Childhood Education and care in Helsinki, 2007, 12.)

Kaskela and Kronqvist (2007, 37) state that the primary purpose of VASU is to ensure a child´s wellbeing and teachings. An individual plan is then formulated jointly between educators and parents as well as the children. The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland (2003, 29) also mentions that even the child may participate in drifting and appraising the plan in such ways as agreed between educators and parents. The implementation of the Individual ECEC plan practice is then monitored and evaluated regularly by parents and educators.

An individual ECEC program attempts to focus on the child´s experiences, on-going needs and futures perspectives, interests and strengths, and individual goals for supporting and guidance. In other words, an ECEC plan promotes children' overall wellbeing, health, functional capacities, and basic needs are addressed. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland 2003, 15.) The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care (2005, 29) indicates that even though an ECEC plan is an evaluation of the child´s development and learning; an ECEC plan, however, is not meant to be conducted as an intervention program and strategy. But, rather, it should concentrate on the positives aspects that foster the child´s learning. Therefore, the primary purpose of an ECEC plan is to highlight the child´s wellbeing as a target. Problems and concerns pertain to children's wellbeing, and other matters should be brought up in as concretive terms as possible, and solutions should be pondered together with the parents. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland, 2003, 15, 29.) Next, The educational partnership is outlined.

3.2   Educational Partnership

In 2003, the concept of partnership between parents and educators was introduced in the

Finnish ECEC (Venninen and Purola 2013, 9; The National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC in Finland 2005, 3,9). According to Venninen and Purola (2013, 9) this new aspect in the ECEC brings about positive change in attitudes toward educational partnership and parents' participation in their children´s education and care. Besides, they consistent with the findings of many other researchers (Knopf & Swick 2007; U.S. Department of Education 2007; The Virginia Department of Education 2002) who demonstrate that supporting parents 'participation is a salient strategy for a myriad of reason. First, parents' engagement in day care is based on their right to act as primary educators, and the ones with responsibility concerning their children (Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006, 18-25). Secondly, ECEC practices and pedagogy affects not only the children´s growth and learning but also their family and environment. Thirdly, it has been demonstrated that by providing parents with opportunities to influence to their child´s day and promoting parental involvement enhance and improve the quality of early childhood education (Hujala 1999, cited in Venninen & Purola 2013, 49). Fourthly, it has also been found that the existing of strong interaction between parents and educators provide parents the basis for positive experiences concerning their children and their education.

Childcare professionals who provide a positive attitude towards parents and children create respectful atmosphere with them (Knopf & Swick 2007, 292). Moreover, according to Knopf and Swick (2007, 292), researcher Swick in one of his work in 2004 observes that active parent-educator relationship promote not only interaction but also empowerment between them. Positive experiences empower parents to enhance the initial communication to multiple relationships with educators.

> In parent-teacher interaction, negotiating privacy and publicity and setting the boundaries between the individual and family life are often sensitive issues and a source of criticism by parents. Therefore, how these issues are dealt with seems to be one of the key elements to the success of individual ECEC planning from both the parental and professional viewpoint. (Alasuutari 2003, 2009 & 2010b cited in Karila & Alasuutari 2012, 22.)

ECEC in early childhood education means parents and educators firm commitment to work together to support children's growth, development and learning processes. This commitment requires mutual trust, equality, and respect for each other. On the one hand, parents have the exclusive responsibility and right of their children's primary education as well the best knowledge of their child. On the other hand, educators have the professional knowledge and skills as well as the responsibility for creating a culture of partnership and equal conditions for cooperation. (Kekkonen 2012, 43; Lehtinen n.d.)

A partnership between families and childcare professionals involves sharing information, ideas, concerns and questions about the child. Developing an effective partnership requires parents and childcare professionals to take responsibility for providing information, and respect of each other's views, concerns and ideas, even if these are not inline with ones' point of

view.

A partnership occurs when two parties share an influence or power. Bidmead et al. (2002, 257) explain that when parents bring their knowledge and experience combined with the professionals' expertise the stage is then set for a true power sharing relationship. In childcare context, this means that decisions about the child result from discussion and negotiation between the parents and childcare educators. Each party strengthens this partnership. Parents and childcare educators support and appreciate each other's role and by that influence in the child's life. (Kekkonen 2012, 42; Bickley 2008, 1.)

Each party should importantly remember that developing partnership does not demand parents to do things, such as to become a member of the parent´s committee, or to help to raise money for activities (Bickley 2008, 1). Konzal (2001, 97) refers to McCaleb's work in 1997, who asserts that parents should be seen as equal partners who understand and have knowledge to the educative process. Similarly, Bidmead et al. (2002, 257) affirm that partnership working does not deny professionals knowledge and skills, but acknowledges parents also have expertise to participate and be partners in their children´s education and care process. Bickley (2008, 1) states that parents' participation in activities may be one-way to promote partnership between parents and educators; nevertheless, it is essential to perceive that partnership is about relationships rather than activities.

Carter (2002, 1) demonstrates that parents and childcare educators´ engagement significantly contributes to improved student outcomes. Working together in partnership brings positive impact on the child's development (Tahvanainen 2015,8). Similarly, The Virginia Department of Education (2002, 8) reports that parents' involvement in schooling has brought a myriad of benefits for students, which are the types of benefits desired by educators. The improved grades and test score, positives behaviour, work completion, increased attendance and participation in classroom activities.

Also, McCubbins (2004, 15) refers to a study by the National Head Start Association in tandem with the National PTA (1999), in which they observe that successful transitions from pre-primary education into school depend on how well prepared and excited children are about what they learn and expect. Moreover, it occurs when parents are active participants in the education process at home and day care centre.

Parents play a fundamental function in their children´s education, growth and protection (McCubbins 2004,17). Moreover, their participation is an essential right and obligation. (OECD 2010 2.) Traditionally in every period the care and the education of children, parents had the first and continuing responsibility for teaching their children about life, behaviours and conduct. Children learn about the world and their place in it through their conversations, play activities, and routines with parents, peers, families and closely community (NCCA 2009, 7).

In simple words, parents provide them with the skills and abilities to make their path in the society smoother and easier. Already in antiquity, the family was the center of the child´s early education and care and had (exclusively in the hands of women) the responsibility of educating the child until the age of seven. (Lascarides & Hinitz 2011, 3, 23, 623.)

The value of parent participation in early childhood education and care is recognised under the Finnish law since 2003 (Alasuutari 2010, 150). Also, the term "educational partnership" was introduced in the same year and is intended to describe the cooperation and interaction generated between the educator and the parents. The definition and the introduction of the concept of the educational partnership are based on a government's resolution and national policies adopted in 2002, which includes the main principles of the organisation and supervision of early childhood education and social development priorities.

The education partnership is then built on the child's needs, interests, and rights. ECEC partnership combines two great elements that influence in the child´s life, the parent and educator's knowledge and experience. Both, parents and educators share information about the child that create the best conditions for the protection of the child's wellbeing, identification of areas in which the child need support and the creation of a joint strategy between the parties for strengthening the child. (National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care 2003, 28.)

Nicolini (2003, 20) refers to a study by Epstein (1987) on the great benefits of parent involvement in their children education. Also, Epstein (1987) concludes that supporting parents as key figures in their child's learning provide self-confidence in parents' ability as learners, positive attitude toward homework and school; and higher grades and test scores. Additionally, better attendance, and completed homework more consistently. When parents help their children with learning activities at home they are ultimately helping their children be more successful in any place.

Next, it is briefly discussed the Family Partnership Model, the Relationship Building Helping Process and the Helper Skills and Qualities of Hilton Davis, a Professor of Child Health Psychology Guy´s King´s and St Thomas' school of Medicine.

3.2.1   The Family Partnership Model

Davis (1993, 47) developed a conceptual model called the Family Partnership Model (abbreviated with the letters FPM), formerly called the Parent Adviser Model. Figure 1 presents a model that contains six boxes surrounded by an ellipse that indicates how the different aspects of a partnership relate to each other. Moreover, each box including the ellipse contains a small number of specific points that make sense of each of the aspects of the Model. (Davis

& Meltzer 2007, 6.) The beauty of this model is that can be applicable to all caring professions.

Fig. 1: Diagram Presentation of the Family Partnership Model

The diagram presentation´s purpose is to disclose what professionals in any caring field should know about to be as helpful to parents as possible. This model suggests that all professional should understand that the process commences with the client and the practitioner establishing a productive relationship. In the case of early childhood education and care, the process starts between the parents and the educators (Kekkonen 2012, 42). Also, to understanding that the process will highly depend on the professional´s communication skills and qualities, therefore, to be aware of these competencies are at least partly determined by general characteristics of the professional (Bidmead et al. 2002, 257; Davis & Meltzer 2007, 6-8).

In Finland, childcare professionals are compelled to establish solid partnerships since the first encounter with parents (Kekkonen 2012, 14, 43). The first meeting involves already a participation that goes further than co-operation. According to the Finnish ECEC, all professionals have a pivotal role in sharing the day-to-day education and care of a child with the parents (Taguma, Litjens & Makowiecki 2012, 70). Moreover, it is established in the Finnish ECEC context that building a partnership relationship between the parent and the educators is mainly in the responsibility of the childcare professional. Parents cannot be required partnership skills, but professional interacts always are the best of their ability. Therefore, collaboration with parents and communication skills are essential part of contemporary professional expertise and the education of the ECEC educators in Finland. (Kekkonen 2012, 42; Alasuutari 2010, 159; Lehtinen n.d.)

3.2.2   Relationship Building

To establish a working relationship between parents and professionals is the most important of all the tasks within the interactive partnership process. The process of helping an interactive collaboration can be understood as a set of ordered tasks. Figure 2, Diagrammatic Representation of the Helping Process, shows how to understand the helping process in a working partnership. Davis (1993, 46-55) states, "Understanding the helping process would enhance both parents and helpers to promote positive family experiences for young children during the earliest years of childhood and successful interventions. The word helper is defined as to anyone attempting to provide an assist for parents, and the quality and nature of the parent-helper relationship will influence everything that happens later. Kelly and Barnard (1999, 155) stated, "Unless the parents feel that providers understand and respect their views of their child and the world, the vendors' attempts to offer instructions, advice, support, and guidance will have little effect.

Fig. 2: Diagrammatic Representation of the Helping Process

To understand fully the processes by which educators engage, relate to, and communicate with parents, is essential to make this explicit and usable to the design services. According to the European commission (2012, 9), "Early childhood educators have the chief responsibility for creating child-centred, interactive, and inclusive environments for the children in their care, and for engaging parents in their children's learning".

The process of helping is organised into eight boxes, and each one of them relates to each other. The first box is the relationship building, as it is described above the relationship building is the most far-reaching aspect of the whole process and depending on the quality of it, it will affect whether it is positively or negatively the work later. This stage involves getting to know each other and agreeing how the work will be done together. Besides everything will depend on which the parent feels able to trust and think that the "helper" has something to offer. If the practitioner is unable to engage parents for a whatsoever reason, there then will be severe limits to what can be achieved. Therefore, this stage needs to be carefully

maintained throughout the following processes. (Bidmead et al. 2002, 257; Davis & Meltzer 2007, 8-9; Davis 1993, 47.)

The second stage is exploration. This stage involves the parents and educators working together to explore any difficulties identified by parents. The third stage, understanding, aims to derive clear understanding of issues, difficulties or problems. This step involves parents and educators developing clear pictures of the nature of the problem.in other words, it means to go beyond the problem, for instance, who is involved it, how it arose, what caused it. The forth step is the goal setting. This stage assists clients to determine what they want to accomplish and achieve. Then, it is crucial to accord the goals, aims or objectives of the work together through discourse since these actions need to be well perceived to proceed to the next step of deciding strategies. If these actions are not well understood then the result of relationship may be very difficult to progress. Strategy planning is perceived when parents and educators work together with clear goals and aims to move forward to the next step that is formulating a plan or program to achieve them successfully. The implementation step´s task is to put then into action what have been decided in agreement. In this step is also salient to provide appropriate encouragement and support. The last step is the review. This task seeks to review or assess the outcomes, whether if the aims or goal worked out or not, to deem the process and to decide upon further actions or to end the process. (Davis & Meltzer 2007, 8-10; Davis 1993, 49-55.) According to Hedeen et al. (2011, 1), Amendt recognised that greater partnership between parents and educators develop in stages along a progression, no as a singular event.

Having described relationship building as the most salient mission within the helping process, then, it is crucial to define the nature of the relationship that a client and a helper seek to establish. According to Davis and Meltzer (2007, 11), partnership has been depicted in a myriad of ways; sometimes it has even been described too vague or not very precise. Partnership in early childhood education can be perhaps described as the interaction between parents and educators working together to benefit children in which each recognises, respects and values what the other does and says. Partnership involves responsibility on both sides (NCCA 2009, 6) and both parents and educators contribute their expertise. (Early learning partnership parental engagement group ELPPEG 2010,11.) Next, the components for building partnership are reviewed.

3.3   Components for Partnership Building

McCubbins´ (2004, 63) works observes that in order to build a trusting and honest relationship, the ultimate ingredient necessary for a successful parent and educator relationship is the communication. According to Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006, 32) the Finnish ECEC partner-

ship involves parents and childcare professionals working together towards mutual goals to benefit children´s well being, growth and education. To building an essential, nurturing partnership "teamwork" between parents and educators, researchers have primarily concentrated on two-to-one listening, respect and trust, which are achieved through dialogue as illustrated in Figure 3. (Venninen & Purola 2013, 49; NCCA 2009, 7; Bickley 2008, 1; Lehtinen n.d.)

Fig. 3: The Four Principles of the Finnish ECEC to Enhance an Optimal Partnership.

McCubbins (2004, 21) refers to one study by the National Association of Young Children in 1999, about the importance of mutual trust, a clear understanding of what is best for the child as an individual, frequency and open communication between parties as being the foundation for a successful partnership in any relations. Davis and Meltzer (2007,11) believe that the ideal model for a relationship between parties must be in a shape of an association. The eventuates of working together have demonstrated that is less stressful than working alone, and there is no need of having to answer to everyone´s problems. Besides, it increases satisfaction and decreases professionals' exhausts. By way of illustration, at the beginning appointments may (feel) be longer, but they produce within time boundaries. Eventually, meetings are less often and shorter, as parents become experts in problem solving. (Bidmead et al. 2002, 257.)

Davis (1993, 42-44) in his educational book, Counselling Parents of Children with Chronicle Illness and Disabilities, suggest six characteristics of an effective partnership. Table 2, shows these characteristics are deemed to be a model partnership (Davis & Meltzer 2007, 11).

Characteristics of an effective partnership
Working closely together with active participation and involvement.
Sharing power with parents leading.
Complementary expertise.
Agreeing aims and process/ a common goal
Negotiation.
Mutual trust and respect.
Openness and honesty.

Table 2: Characteristics of an Effective Partnership

In Davis perception, this model partnership assists to building and underpinning effective partnership relationships. Establishing partnership for first time, it is never entirely easy; there is without exception some gap of distress and discomfort for both sides. According to Bidmead et al. (2002, 257) practitioners should withdraw the uneasiness as quickly as possible and to establish a relationship built on mutual trust and understanding as soon as possible. A good relationship necessary to create a mutual listening, respect, and trust, which is achieved through dialogue, in which the parties interact. (Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006, 32-39.) Both sides bring their knowledge, experience and views on the debate but are especially sensitive to hear each other's messages and take them into account in creating consensus.

According to Davis and Meltzer (2007, 13) the success of any relationship is based to a large extent upon the professional or helper´s communication skills that enable her/him to relate to the clients, to understand their problems and to help them to change effectively. Table 3 presents their suggested skills and qualities that are required by professionals or supporters to establish, and facilitate a partnership; and to enable the process as a whole. Even though it is salient to understand these skills and qualities in being an effective "helper", they however, acknowledge that it is more important to be able to use them naturally with an appropriate training practice. As it is showed in Section 3.2.2, Relationship Building, a "helper" is defined as to any person attempting to provide an assist for clients or users.

Helper skills	Helper qualities
Attention/active listening.	Respect.
Prompting and exploration.	Empathy.
Empathic responding.	Genuineness.
Summarising.	Humility.
Enabling change	Quiet enthusiasm.
Negotiating.	Personal integrity.
Problem solving.	Technical knowledge.

Table 3: Helper Skills & Qualities

A working partnership is not an accident between parents and educators, but more rather a relationship building that implies the joint operation of teams, parents and the operation of the multi-professional networks. (Davis & Meltzer 2007, 11.) Moreover, it needs fundamental components to enhance successful partnerships. This study aims to discover, what are the components, whether these may be behaviours, qualities, skills and practical actions that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in early childhood education settings. To make this work clearer to the reader, the foundation of this study concentrates on four principles, namely, listening, respect, trust and dialogue, that according to Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006, 32-39), and the ECEC of Nurmijärvi (2010, 10), assets the ECEC partnership realisation. These concepts are described, explained and opened up to perceive in detail what are the behaviours, qualities, and skills behind these words. Next, listening is explored.

3.3.1 Listening

> "You can learn to be a better listener, but learning it is not like learning a skill that is added to what we know. It is a peeling away of things, that interfere with listening, our preoccupations, our fear, of how we might respond to what we hear" Ian McWhinney. (Cited in Robertson 2005, 1055.)

Listening is an effective key component of interpersonal communication skill and is an active emotional involvement process of an individual to listen and understand the message from the person´s point of view (Free management 2013, 4; Tyagi 2003, 1-5). Robertson (2005, 1053) added that humans listen not only with the ears, but with the eyes, mind, heart, and imagination as well. Listening for meaning (Free Management 2013, 6). Listening is part of the four skills of language, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To better understand how listening occurs, it is of great significance to first comprehend that listening is a demanding discipline that involves a willingness to understand the words that are spoken. In other words, "to

absorb everything the person is saying verbally and nonverbally without adding, removing or altering the message".

According to Isaacs (1999, 83), the heart of dialogue is a simple but profound capacity to listen. Listening requires not only hear the words, but also embrace, accept, and gradually let go of "our " inner clamouring. Listening is a great activity and gives individuals a way to perceive more directly the ways people participate in the world around them. This way means, listening no only to others but also to one´s itself and its reactions.

In the process of listening, it requires a sender, a message, and a receiver. Furthermore, it involves mastering certain behaviours and an attitude of respect, care and acceptance of the other person. It demands a high level of concentration, and genuine interests in place all of one´s attention and awareness at the disposal of another individual (Robertson 2005, 1053; Tyagi 2003, 1). Research finding by Knights in 1985 points also towards that listening requires an extra attention, which requires a significantly valuable commitment to give time, freedom and undivided attention to the message of the speaker without interrupting (Cited in Robertson 2005, 1053). Next, the process of listening is discussed

The process of listening can be challenging and very ineffective at times; this is because listening is a process that occurs in different stage or degrees. Tyagi (2013, 1) identifies five stages in the process of listening; these are hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding (See Figure 4). By understanding the process of listening, Fowler (2005, 5) highlights that listening and hearing are not the same activity. This statement is consistent with the studies by other scholars who declare the same (Tyagi, 2013; McNaughton & Vostal 2010; Robertson 2005; Fowler 2005). According to Tyagi (2013, 5), listening is an active process whereas hearing is a passive process. In other words, hearing is the very first activity of the listening process while listening is the whole communication process.

Figure 4 illustrates the process of listening by Tyagi (2013, 2) in five stages. These stages are hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. The hearing process refers to identifying, processing, and transmitting the sound waves of the speech to the brain. Humans use their ear to hear and capture individual sounds and convert them into messages with meanings (Free Management 2013, 4). Furthermore, hearing involves perception and undivided attention to the speaker.
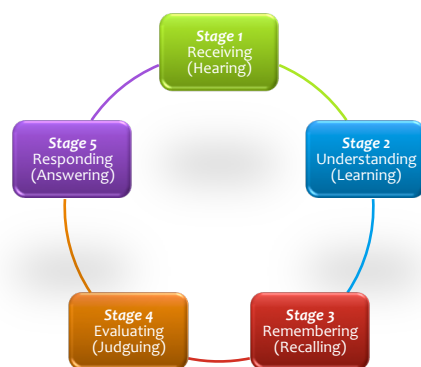
Fig. 4: The Process of Listening

Understanding helps to understand symbols, analyse the meaning of the perceived words, sounds like shout, and sights like sign language or colours in the traffic light. Be able to comprehend them it helps to understand the intended meaning and the context of the message. Remembering refers that a person has not only received and convert a message but has also stored in the mind´s bank. This important process would help to remember what was seen and heard. Evaluating process refers to assess the evidence, fact from opinion and determine the presence or absence of prejudice in a message. This step allows the listener to collect information while conveying his interest and attention to the sender (Friend & Cook, 2007, cited in McNaughton & Vostal 2010, 252). Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006, 33) say that when educators in early childhood setting listen and are present, they get more knowledge, and their understanding increases richly. Responding is the last stage; the listener completes the process through verbal or nonverbal communication, and the sender determines the degree of success in transmitting the message. In simple words, to what it has been heard to get a better understanding.

Professionals have conclusively reported that humans are naturally just not good at listening to for a whole range of reasons. People have a tendency to interrupt or just to switch the stories. It is also found that people are uncomfortable with emotions; so they avoid focusing too closely on someone else' story; they rather talk about themselves or rush the speaker along. (Bernstein 2015). Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006, 32) also observe that listening is challenging at times since it can contain the risk to receive a variety of negative emotions, such as anger and anxiety. Therefore, it can create that people start taking a defensive posture and start telling their opinions and not allowing the speaker´s thoughts be heard. The major roadblock to successful interpersonal communication is the natural tendency that humans have, to evaluate, agreed to or disagreed to of what another person is saying or communicating and avoid

the other´s concern, and rush into a prompt response (Carl Rogers 1957, cited in Robertson 2005, 1054)

According to the Free Management study (2013, 8), successful active listening starts with Professor Carl Rogers who felt that, for best outcomes, the listener orientation should be characterised by undivided attention, empathy, respect, acceptance, congruence and concreteness. "A good supporter is a good listener". (Bodie & Jones 2012, 250.) Tyagi (2013, 4-5) and Fowler (2005, 5) provide three basic core modes of listening that should be understood to help to prevent undesirable outcomes that would lead to serious problems and an unsatisfactory response or incorrect advice or action. Likewise to prevent not become a bad listener; instead, by improving the listening skills, people can completely enhance their relationship and performance with the people around them.

These modes are competitive or combative listening, passive or attentive listening, and active or reflective listening. Combative listening happens when the receiver is more interested in promoting his perspective and opinion than in understanding or considering the sender´s thoughts. In combative listening, the listener makes believe in paying attention to the speaker, while he actually is formulating what to say next or how to rebuttal the sender.
In passive listening, the listener is actively listening and is sincerely interested in hearing and understanding from one´s own perspective. Unfortunately, the listener however neglects verify that what he heard and comprehended is the true. The problem of this listener occurs when he has to take action. In active listening, the listener is totally interested in the sender´s message. This listener genuinely wants to help and wants to know what the other person thinks, feels, and wants to as well, he is active in asking and confirming what he has heard and understood before reacting (Tyagi 2005, 6). In other words, the three major degrees of active listening are repeating, paraphrasing, and reflecting (Free Management 2013, 5)

As explained above, listening involves a message or a communication that is sent by the speaker, messenger and it received by the listener or multiple listeners (Observe Figure 5 Robertson 2005, 1053). This action is also known as the communication process. Listening skill is an extension of generic communication and consists both verbal and nonverbal communication (Robertson 2005, 1053). Listening is the most important element involving a personal relationship in communication; however, active listening is concerned with improving the ability to understand exactly the spoken words or what the other party means. Furthermore, it encourages communication. This procedure is also known as listening for meaning (Free management 2013, 4).
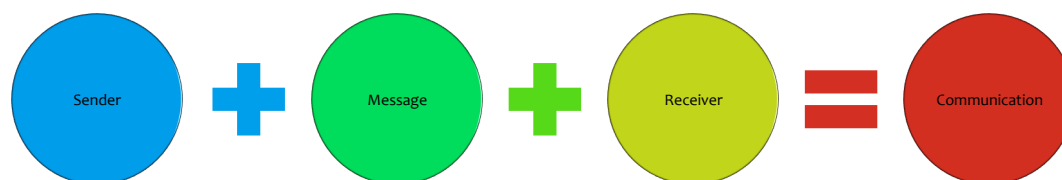
Fig. 5: Communication Process

Active listening takes an important function in establishing effective two-way communication and successful partnerships. This finding is also supported by Knopf and Swick study "How parents feel about their child´s teacher/school: implications for early childhood professional". They reveal that by demonstrating a genuine attitude, attention and adjustment by listening to parents 'concerns, parents are much more comfortable in sharing and more likely to become involved in their children´s growth and school´s programme. (Knopf & Swick 2007, 295-296.) Similarly, in the work of McNaughton and Vostal (2010, 251) observe that active and efficient parents-childcare professionals' communication develops a strong partnership and improves academic results. Davis and Meltzer (2007, 13) depicted effective listening as:

> Effective listening is powerful in attracting people to the helper, engaging them in the helping processes, facilitating the development of the relationship, and enabling them to explore their problems and to change positively. Without being able to completely focus on the person with the problem and to hear what he/she says, there would be no success in the process. These skills involve concentrating deeply upon the person seeking help, excluding all other distractions, and listening very carefully. This means far more than hearing the spoken word. It involves trying to understand what the person is saying by putting the meaning of his/her words together with the array of non-verbal information available moment by moment, the thoughts and feelings that are evoked in the person listening, and even the things that are not being said. At the same time, the helper should be actively indicating to the person verbally and non-verbally that he/she understands.

Also, Knopf and Swick (2007, 294) present a comprehensive review of strategies for relationship building and developing a positive perception for childcare professionals. They highlight the need to having a meaningful relationship and establishing from the beginning meaningful communication with parents. In Kaskela and Kekkonen´s (2006, 32) work, listening requires a genuine presence, which manifests itself as a real interest in empathy, and honesty. For example, gestures and comments tell the speaker that the listener is present in the situation and wants to listen to them. Additionally, Bodie and Jones (2012, 251-254) observe the efficacy of the immediacy behaviour that construct active listening. They say that when the listener displays more of the behaviours like making eye contact, asking open-ended questions, parroting, attentive body language, postures or gestures, the speaker perceives the listener as more emotionally aware. Richmond (2006, 65) describes immediacy behaviour as a perception of physical and psychological closeness.

Clearly making efficient and active listening is a hard job; however, indeed a very helpful skill to undertake and understand (Fowler, 2005, 5). Active listening enhances the ability to absorb and overtake the data and information given during the conversation. A fundamental aspect of active listening is the capacity to give full attention and make use of appropriate immediacy behaviours (McNaughton & Vostal 2010, 252). However, the most important aspect of active listening and during the listening process is just to set aside all types of thoughts, prejudices, and agendas. Additionally, it is to put in another´s shoes and tries to see the world through that person´s eyes (Tyagi 2013, 1). Furthermore, as McNaughton and Vostal (2010, 255) looked at the using active listening to improve collaboration with parents, that the use of active listening is highly valued by parents and can also create a strong desire to help and boundaries for effective partnership teamwork between parents and childcare professionals (Bernstein 2015). Next, respect.

3.3.2   Respect

> When we respect someone, we accept that they have things to teach us.
> (Isaacs 1999,115).
>
> Respecting other perspectives and positions does not free one´s responsibility
> to make a choice (Moss & Dahlberg 2008,9).

Isaacs (1999, 110) describes respect as to see others as a legal person and as a person as a whole being. "To respect, someone is looking for the sources that feed the pool of one´s experiences". In other words, respect means honoring boundaries to some extent of protecting them. Isaacs (1999, 114,116) describes that when an individual respect others' points of view, he does not intrude. However, by the same talking, he also does not withhold or leave them. Treating people with extraordinary respect means seeing them for the potential that they carry within them. In other words "treat the person next to you as a teacher and learn from him or her.

According to Isaac (1999, 124), respect implies that humans are constants, and they do what they preach. Acknowledging this signify taking responsibility for what is said and done. Thus, building practices for respect require highlighting what seems different or impossible to understand. Humans are participants, not observers.

When humans do not respect, they impose on others their ideas and ways. Moreover, they tend to restrict or limit others participation and perceive their opinions, expertise, and knowledge as not necessary or in a secondary level. (Venninen & Purola 2013, 59; Isaacs 1999, 131-133.)

> If you want to thrive in Baltistan, you must respect our ways," Haji Ali said, blowing on his bowl. "The rest time you share tea with a Balti, you are a stranger. The second time you take tea, you are an honored guest. The third time you share a cup of tea, you become family, and for our family, we are prepared to do anything. Doctor Greg, you must take a time to share three cups of tea. We may be uneducated. However, we are not stupid. We have lived and survived here for a long time." Greg Mortenson said, "That day Haji Ali taught me the most valuable lesson I've ever learned in my life. He taught me to share three cups of tea, to slow down and make building relationships as important as building projects. He taught me I had more to learn from the people I work with than I could ever hope to teach them. (Mortenson & Relin, 2006, 150.)

Therefore, to respect someone first is needed to remove personal attention from the "whir" of activities and to calm down. Second, "listen as if it were all in me". Listening, asking questions and taking notes demonstrate respect to partners, and this respect paves the way for shared problem solving and finally, respect is looking for what is highest and best in a person and treating them as a mystery that could never fully comprehend. (McNaughton & Vostal 2010, 255; Isaacs 1999, 125-130.)

3.3.3   Trust

> Trust is a precious commodity. We can think of it as money in the "relationship bank". As we work with people over time, deposits are made (Axelrod 2010, 168).

Trust is considered a very basic concept of engaging and building a strong and healthy relationship with partners, clients, and professionals in any field (Hylton Rushton, Reina, Francovich, Naumann, & Reina 2010, 42; Reina & Reina 2005, 5). According to the Reina Trust and Betrayal model, the fundamental aspect of trust are divided into three specific elements namely, Contractual Trust, Communication Trust, and Competence Trust. (The model is presented in Figure. 6) Contractual Trust, the Trust of Character concentrate on performance behaviours such as how well people keep their commitments, how clear expectations and boundaries are, and how consistent people are in their behaviour toward one another. In other words, Contractual Trust is a mutual exchange; it is reciprocal.

The second element is Communication Trust, the trust of disclosure, which focuses on behaviours that indicate how well people share relevant information, how freely they admit mistakes, give and receive constructive feedback, and speak directly to people when they have an issue with them. In others words when communication trust is present, people collaborate freely, channels of communication open up, the sharing of ideas becomes the rule, and people are not afraid to say what the want to communicate to one another. They take pleasure in the organisation they work for or are involved. Additionally, they are committed to the

people they work with, and bring themselves more entirely to their work (Hylton Rushton et al. 2010, 43; Reina & Reina 2005, 5; Reina & Smith 2004).

The last element is Competence Trust, the Trust of Capability focuses on behaviours related to how well people acknowledge other people's skills and abilities, include them in decisions that affect their jobs, and their lives and how often they help people learn new skills. In therapy, Fine and Glasser (1996, 93,94) describe trust as the state in which the client rely on what the professional does is in his best interest, even if he does not fully understand it. With this statement, they depict that if the client feels safe, he knows that nothing will be used against him, either literally or psychologically. When someone gives their word and makes commitments, and these commitments are kept, peoples can count on their straight talk and decisive action (Axelrod 200, 168); it will make feel a person that he can say anything, tell anything and reveal anything (Fine & Glasser 1996, 94). In therapy settings Fine and Glasser (1996, 94) observe this element as the client ´s absolute belief and confidence in the professional´s goodwill, proficient skills and professional judgement. Next the purpose of building trusting relationship is briefly discussed.

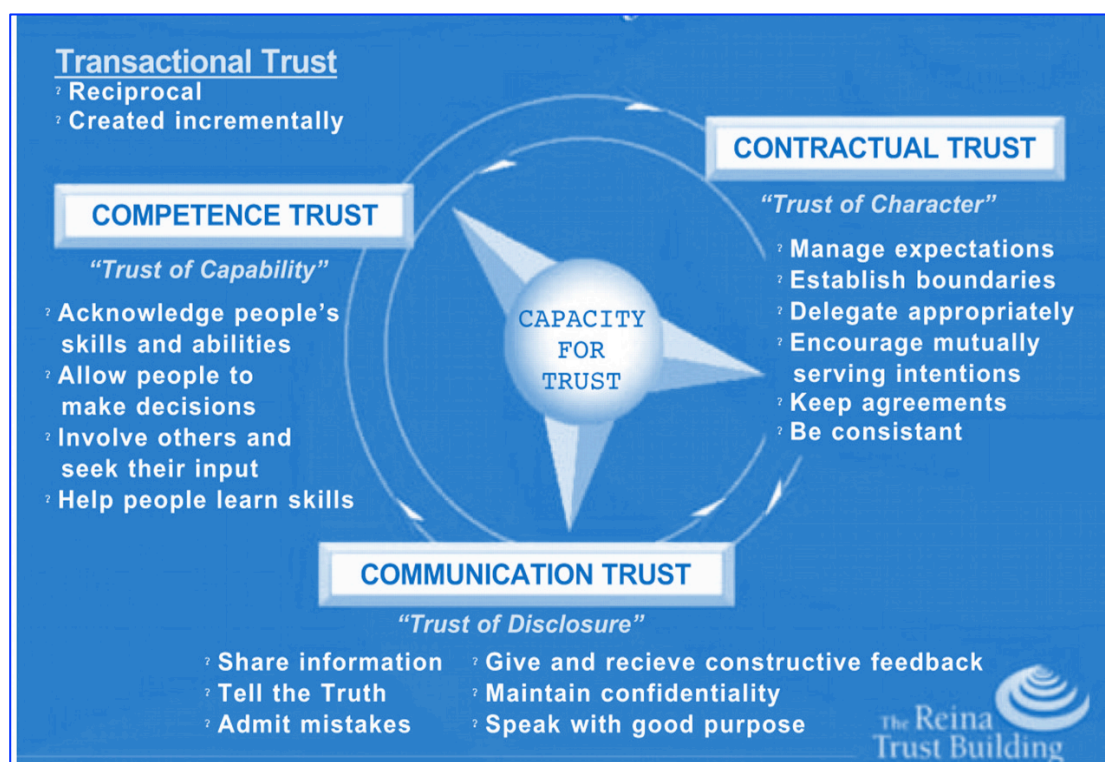Fig. 6: The Reina Trust

One of the focuses of the trusting relationship is on helping the people, whether people might be aware of it or not, but during the process, the rights and obligations of all the parties have to be exercised to bring successful results to everyone involved. Rules and expectations are part of every relationship, even between client and professional (Fine & Glasser 1996, 79-80,

94). Trust is the agreement done between partners in which the right to confidentiality are safeguarded and respected. In trust confidence is essential. Confidence is the construction that affects the people' opportunity to participate in and influence their relationship and attitude towards issues related to them and others. Therefore, clear rules, goals, and contracts are needed from the beginning. All interpersonal rendezvous had straight and suggested a set of ground rules that to a considerable degree determine how people interact. That is why when building a trusting relationship the aspect of ground rules are considered significant patterns (Joey Pauley, 2012). Trusting relationships are what make the difference between feeling good about what people does and simply going through the motions.

At present, people have a need for connection with others, and trust is the channel that makes that connection possible. People have a need to understand others and to be understood in return; to use their skills, talents, and a full range of capability; to challenge and be challenged; to share information and receive information, and to rely on others and be relied on others. (Reina & Reina 2005, 5.) Figure 7 outlines the trust Triangle adapted from Axelrod (2010, 201).

Fig. 7: The Trust Triangle

> "If your organization is lacking trust then leadership, group initiative and creativity suffer. Provide an environment to develop trust through straight talk, listening and making commitments." (Joey Pauley 10.01.2011)

Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006, 36) in their work, "Kasvatuskumppanuus Kannattelee Lasta" (Educational Partnership supports children) list two fundamental principles in which trust is built namely, listening and respect. However, the authors also point towards that to building trusting relationship there should be encounters, and dialogue as well. "Daily dialogues between parents-childcare educators on matters related to their child lays the foundation for trust and confidence and thus enable a shared understanding of the child." (Harju & Kiuru 2015, 23.) Moreover they observe that trust is built through developed relationship between the professionals and the children. Building a trusting relationship, however, is harder to

achieve when there are significant differences in personal characteristics and cultural back-grounds (Fine & Glasser 1996, 96).

Trust is the foundation of effective relationships. People need to relate to others, and need to be able to count on each other to do their part, to believe that what others are saying is the truth. People need to have confidence that others have what it takes to deliver, to receive honest feedback on the quality of their work, participation, and coaching from one another to learn new skills or improve performances (Reina & Reina 2005, 5). Thus, organisations, companies, and services should be offered and given in a manner that is honest, open, truthful, and transparent to all the parties involved. (Clark 2000, 51.)

In the business field, building trust is the necessary thing to do for business performance and the right thing to do for relationships. Without trust, an organisation will not meet or exceed its potential, and workplace relationships will not thrive (Reina & Reina 2005, 5,10). This statement is not far from other fields such as childcare settings, where the key principle in educational partnership is to create an atmosphere of trust for parents and professionals (Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006, 36). For instance, parents, in childcare environments, describe that when the professionals take their thoughts, perceptions and aspirations of education into account, they feel that they can openly participate in the upbringing and development of their children in tandem with the educators.

In a different study, John Carter (2000), a professor at Gestalt Institute Ohio, has developed a model for thinking about trust. He calls it the Trust Triangle (See Figure 7). The foundation of the trust triangle is straight talk. Straight talk connotes sharing all of the information available in an honest and straightforward manner and must simply be the truth. Moreover, it means providing all of the available facts, thoughts, and feelings about those facts, and what people would like to have to happen, without distorting or exaggerating them. (Hagerman 2012; Axelrod 2010, 200.)

Straight talk must collaborate with listening for understanding. When someone listens for understanding, by asking questions, more than telling, allows people to learn what is on people´s mind and see what people have heard from what others have said. This action empowers people not only to get more information, but it makes them feel to trust more. Another stage in the trust triangle is building trust by keeping the commitments or agreements. Making commitments is a way in which people pledge themselves to a course of action. Therefore to keep a valid word is essential for creating and guaranteeing long and trustful relationships and by that to becoming reliable over time. To becoming reliable over time means doing what it promise to be done; it is the extension of making commitments. Building trust is a continuing pursuit that is accomplished over time (Hagerman 2012; Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006, 36).

In summary trust is an essential element in building relationship with one another. The need to understand the behaviours that build trust and how to practice those behaviours will contribute to the best performances in any field and relationship. Moreover, individuals must understand that trust is reciprocal and trust begets trust. Individuals earn trustworthiness by practicing such behaviours as honouring their agreements; behaving consistently, even during demanding times; investing in the people by providing feedback and opportunities to learn new skills; acknowledging people' capabilities by including them in decisions or expressing their creative ideas, suggestion and participation; by maintaining open channels of communication; and by holding people accountable. "There is no need to keep secrets and dance around the real story" (Reina & Reina 2005, 10).

3.3.4   Dialogue

> Dialogue seeks to harness the "collective intelligence" of the people around you; together we are more aware and smarter than we are on our own (Isaacs 1999, 11).

Isaacs (1999, 9,19) defines dialogue as a shared inquiry, a way of thinking, and reflecting together. It is a conversation with a core, not sides, in which people think together in a relationship, a living experience of information within and between people. In other words, the opinions, beliefs, assumptions, and views of each of the participants can bring a unique and a creative conversation. Dialogue is a way of taking the energy of another´s differences and channelling it towards a greater common sense, and coordinated power of groups of people. The purpose of dialogue is to achieve new understandings and form a new basis from which to think and act.

Dialogue comes from the Greek words dia, which means "through" and logos, which means "word" or "meaning". Isaacs (1999, 9) refers to the work by Philosopher Gemma Fiumara in 1995, who showed in her book, "The other side of language" that the word dialogue has unfortunately been referred to the rational and orderly fashion of speech or excluded from half its meaning. She founds that logos comes from the verb "legein" which means "to gather" and " to speak". She also analyses that "logos" comes from an even early origin in the Greek language, "leg" which means, "to collect". According to her findings, the original sense of logos conveyed a deeper perception of gathering and participation. In other words, the term dialogue also implies an immense sense of belongingness or relationship.

Dialogue is a form of conversation that can be meaningful to people from a vast number of backgrounds. Humans come to dialogue for different reasons. Some want to resolve problems; others want to improve their relationships with a particular person, whether it is a business

partner, a spouse, a parent, or an old friend. Isaacs (1999, 19) mentions the significant relationship between the one´s solves problems; and one dissolves them. Dialogue not only attempts to reach agreements, but it also tries to create a context from which many new agreements might come. Furthermore, it helps to coordinate and align actions a base of shared meaning and values.

Bojer (2008, 131) states that dialogue is a fundamental ingredient of successful capacity development interventions and an essential practice and discipline of creative conversation. Figure 8 shows the level of action in a dialogue according to Isaacs' academic study, Dialogue and the art of thinking together. (Isaacs 1999, 29.)
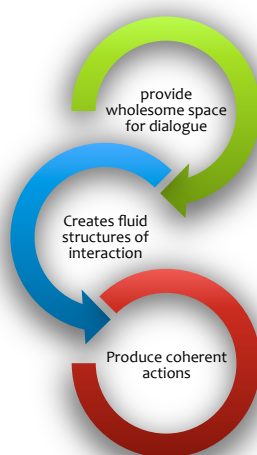

Fig. 8: Three Levels of Action in a Dialogue

The art of thinking together, however, is not as easier as it sounds. How can be created dialogue or open atmosphere to develop dialogue in settings where people may not have initially been willing to take part in it? According to Isaacs (1999, 29), the key to answering this dilemma requires addressing three fundamental levels of human interaction.

a) The produce of consistent (coherent) actions: a dialogue involves that individuals learn to be aware of their contradictions between what they say and what they do. This principle is essential to perceive to overcome limitations and misunderstandings. Developing capacity for new behaviour puts humans in position to determine resolve incoherence and produce effects that are intended.

b) Create fluid structures of interaction: "human beings do not always see the forces that are operating below the surface of their conversation". Unfortunately, these forces quite often conduct people to misread what others are doing and the impact that they have on other humans. Developing a predictive intuition and understanding

the nature and quality of these influences as well as creating ways of anticipating and managing them enable individuals to liberate stuck structures of integration, free energy and promote a more fluid means of thinking and working together. (Isaacs 1999, 30.)

c) Provide wholesome space for dialogue: The importance of the atmosphere greatly influences and impacts the way in which humans think and act. It is then important to create dialogue in spaces or atmospheres in which people feel confidence. This area is composed of habits of thought and quality of attention that people bring to any interaction. By becoming aware of these patterns or invisible architectures the quality and the profound effect of the words in a conversation could incline the whole dialogue successfully. (Isaacs 1999, 30.)

In Sum, dialogue is the ability to think, speak, and act together. It creates a shared understanding and adjusts to varying interpretations of reality. However, we need both discussion and dialogue. Isaacs (1999, 45) explains that there are times when it is useful to think alone, or use discussion and there are other times when it is crucial to think together or engage in dialogue.

The discussion refers to the act of making a decision. Discussion seeks to closure and completion while dialogue aims to open possibilities and see new options. Dialogue makes people aware of the educational value, culture beliefs, and perceptions of each member. A respectful conversation (dialogue) becomes possible, even if things would be contrary to one's values and point of views. (Isaacs 1999,). Dialogue builds a sustainable partnership relationship between parties and gives individuals a way to regain that gold standard. In brief, it is through dialogue that human beings learn to engage their hearts. This is not by means to engage in a wallowing sentimentality, but rather to engage in a cultivating mature range of perception and sensibility that is widely discounted or missed from most professional contexts. (Isaacs 1999, 47.)

3.4   The Benefits of Partnership

The importance of establishing a partnership with families and encouraging involvement in the daily operations of childcare has become common knowledge among early childhood professionals. Studies have clearly shown that active parents and educators relationships lead to increased parental involvement considerably, which has been demonstrated to have a significant and lasting impact on children's academic achievement. (Mann 2006; Lawson 2003; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Ames, De Stefano, Watkins, & Shelden 1995; Ryan, Adams, Gullotta, Weis-berg, & Hampton 1995; cited in Knopf & Swick 2007, 291.)

According to Knopf and Swick (2007, 201-292) relationships with families are essential be-

cause they conduct to positive child outcomes. However, it has also been observed that for many educators building a partnership with parents seems to be tough to facilitate parent involvement at levels that will result in significant change. Knopf and Swick (2007, 292) state that one key factor in the development of meaningful relationships with families is how educators go about establishing partnerships that are perceived positively by parents and that lead to increased childcare involvement.

According to Rockwell, Andre, and Hawley (2010, 277) researchers, Prior and Gerard in 2007 observed that the process of communicating with parents is a fundamental component of being an effective educator in which he or she must exhibit competence in human relations and planning skills. Therefore, the importance of first establishing open lines of communication that facilitate the development of relationships that will enable these conversations to take place is essentially a must. It is then essential for educators to keep in mind that the chief responsibility for creating child-centred, interactive, and inclusive environments for the children in their care, and for engaging parents in their children's learning is in the educators´ importance of interaction skills as one aspect of present day professional expertise. (Alasuu-tari 2015,158; The European Commission 2012, 9.)

Therefore, early childhood educators need more specific guidance for developing positive and meaningful relationships with the parents that they serve and more creative ideas for encouraging and involving families in their children´s growth, education and care. (Epstein, 1992; Lawson, 2003; Swick, 2004b, cited in Knopf and Swick 2007, 291-292.)

The important role of parental perceptions in the formation and maintenance of meaningful relationships shape positive perceptions in a partnership. Table 4 outlines the benefits of good partnership for parents, educators and children. (NCCA 2009, 8.)

Parents	Educators	Children
❖ Feel respected and valued. ❖ Are more involved in their children´s learning and development. ❖ Can share information about their children. ❖ Feel their family´s values, practices, traditions, and belief are understood and taken into account. ❖ Feel confortable visiting the setting, taking to, and planning with educators. ❖ Know more about their children´s experiences outside the home and use this information to support their learning and development more effectively. ❖ Understand why early childhood care and education is important. ❖ Have increased confidence in their parenting skill.	❖ Understand better the children and families in their settings and use this information to make learning more enjoyable and rewarding for all children. ❖ Can help children develop a sense of identity and belonging in the setting by actively engaging with and finding out about family values, traditions, and beliefs and building on these where appropriate. ❖ Benefit from parents' skills and expertise. ❖ Can provide a more emotionally secure environment for children	❖ Feel more secure and benefit more from the educational opportunities given to them. ❖ Move from one setting to another with greater confidence. ❖ See learning as more enjoyable when their home life is "visible" in the setting. ❖ Enjoy hearing and seeing their home language in the setting when their home language is neither Finnish nor English. ❖ Experience more connections between the different services that support them.

Table 4: The Benefits of Partnership Working Together

In sum, several researchers have emphasised that parent´s involvement in their children´s education and care is a pivotal element of the early childhood education curriculum. (Ven-

ninen & Purola 2013, 59; 2015.) Moreover, it has been widely demonstrated that the benefits of good partnership in day care environments are numerous. (NCCA 2009, 8.) For instance, constant interaction enables a significant number of issues to be addressed substantially, thus to share feedback on a variety of informal encounters between parents and educators is easier. (Tauriainen 2000, cited in Venninen & Purola 2013, 60.) Next, it is explored how an innovative alternative could enhance and sustain successful partnership in early childhood education and care.

3.5   An Innovative Alternative to Enhance Successful Partnerships

> Innovation is about to move out from an unusual, infrequent activity to a more standard, consistent capability, regularly applied, to advance the company's vision, culture, and profits in order to succeed today and in the future. (Phillips 2012, xix.)

According to a definition provided by Phillips (2012, 2), "innovation is the ability to create new products and services that originate new markets or please/enchant customers while innovating on a relatively consistent basis". In the words of Professor Ekström (2014) "not every innovation is an invention". In other words, it is not necessary to create or invent new goods or a service to set up an innovative firm, but rather to reinvent or recreate an idea, a service, or product. Kanter (1983, 20) has described innovation as "the process of bringing any new, problem-solving idea into use". Therefore, firms, organisations, and companies should aware and understand that the sustainability of their products and services is on the increase and improve their innovation capabilities. (Phillips 2012, 8.)

According to Fritsch (2011, 25), innovation does not have anything to do with technology, even though the world is moving from an industrial mindset into one of technology. Slow development time is being pressured by rapidly changing customer demands, global outsourcing, and new software's making businesses change gears, and only innovation can help companies keep up with this drastic change. Service innovation helps traditional services and products to fulfil market and consumer demands. Therefore, service innovation is possible through the development of innovatory services such as electronic and mobile innovation services, and many others technologically related services (Bouwman, Haaker & De Vos 2008, 3). Moreover, information and communication technology (ICT) has driven to new information and communication services. New technologies support the performance growth services provided by processing innovations. Besides, service quality is heightened due to exact process change so that new services emerge (Bouwman et al. 2008, 22).

Bouwman et al. (2008, 22) affirm that there are two types of service innovation approach. On the one hand, service innovation has a strong focus on service delivery but disregard technology developments. This strategy puts more emphasis on the skills of the staff members and

the cooperation between the departments; and within the service provider company, than on technology. This innovation approach in services is directed at the quality of the service and at improving customer satisfaction; as a result, the stores are open for a longer period, and service quality is based on face-to-face strategy, or frequent buyer program. On the other hand, the alternative type of innovation is technology, particularly information technology (IT). IT has a dominant role in the service-delivery. To a large degree, this approach is characterised by the increasing significance of information communication technology (ICT), which support services and service innovation.

The Internet makes possible for service innovation to open up new total markets, by way of illustration Google, Adobe, eBay, Skype, and Facebook. These enterprises advance from work-intensive and interactive services to become asynchronous, which mean that they facilitate the communication between the sender (Internet) and receiver (devices) (Beal 2014). Berry, Shankar, Parish, Cadwallader and Dotzel (2006, 57) assert, "Technology has transformed many former inseparable services into services that can be consumed at any time or place". By the same token, ICT appends capacity to the service delivery process, for instance, CMR, tracking, and tracing retells the customer interface by adding online communication and service marketing. All in all, the characteristics and capabilities of information systems play a pivotal role in innovation and mobile services (Bouwman et al. 2008, 23).

Similarly, a remarkable phenomenon as well rises and goes almost hand in hand with service innovation. Numerous studies have demonstrated that at present, customers are more expert in enunciating and expressing their needs and demands; and, thus, they are becoming co-creators/producers of services (Bouwman et al. 2008, 3-9). The term of co-creation was introduced as to "any act of collective creativity". (Sander & Stoppers 2008, cited in Steen Manschot & De Koning 2011, 53.) In other words, co-creation refers to the creative participation during the process of delivering and usage. Grönroos (2011, 5) concludes "both the service provider and the customer are always a co-creator of value." The scholars, who assert, "In co-design, both clients and users are seen as experts to cooperate creatively, support this view. (Steen et al. 2011, 53.) Smaby (n.d.) states, "When customers share their story, they are not just sharing pain points. They are teaching how to make product, service, and business better. Therefore, customer service organisation should be designed to communicate efficiently those issues.

According to Steen (et al. 2011, 54), Sander (2002) points out that there are three ways of interacting with customers during the design (innovation) process the say, do and make, where "make" is related with co-design. In addition to the last, Sanders highlights that the benefits of co-designing are various such as collective learning, integrating different people´s ideas, and strengthening communication. In recent studies have been observed that ordinary

customers showed more expertise in creating new and original services or products than professional developers of ICT (Steen et al. 2011, 54). According to Bouwman et al. (2008, 11) producers and consumers can create a service together. Many experts in the field of service have supported this quotation, to a greater extent, because service involves human activity as well. (Bouwman et al. 2008; Grönroos, 2011; Gummerus 2011.)

Because the expertise and the abilities of modern technologies and rapidly changing needs and requirements of companies or services providers, suppliers have to act and respond immediately and make changes in their service offering. This complexity feature makes, to some extent, service innovation sound too ambiguous (Bouwman et al. 2008, 3). However, service innovation serves to increase revenues and create profit highlight Bouwman et al. (2008, 10). Moreover, Kindström and Kowalkowski (2014, 105) state that service innovation creates benefits for customers and providers, while; Kanter (1983, 20) says that change brings new, problem-solving idea into use.

Recently, in different health and caring sectors, technology has changed traditional communication (face-to-face) by replacing them with electronic alternatives (Järvinen 2009, 1). One could reasonably argue that mobile devices are even used as a lifesaver (Bradford 2014, para.3). In the last years, several Finnish IT companies have developed a variety of mobile services for the utilisation in childcare settings. The core idea of these services is to endorse the communication parents educators and assist the administration to develop better services, and thus to anticipate future work (Tieto 2013; CGI 2013; MukavaIT 2013; WOM 2014).

In 2013, the Finnish government planned significant changes in the early childhood education and care system. One of those necessary changes that the government's policy attempts to reach is to encourage fathers to take parental leave and thus to motivate mothers to return to work sooner. (Rosendahl & Ando 2013.) According to the Turun Sanomat (2013), The Finnish Government also has proposed the introduction of hourly billing at kindergartens; this suggestion implies that parents will pay according to the hours that a child is present at a day care centre. Therefore, with this proposal, it is expected to reduce operating expenditures significantly by 2017. (Ministry of Finance 2013.) However, neither the review reform law nor the other proposals have yet lodged with parliament (Yle Uutiset 2014).

At present, a myriad of municipalities have already tested or are right now testing a mobile service as part of their strategy and future operating conditions in their childcare facilities. (Toivainen 2014: Kaarina 2009.) Certainly, mobile devices engender new challenges for the information technology (IT), and thus to transform the way of communicating with each other. Likewise, mobile devices could help and reinforce more advanced economies. (Bradford 2014.) In 2014, the study conducted by three kindergartens and five family private day care

facilities demonstrated that theses types of innovative services are importantly needed and mainly wanted at day cares for parents.

4   Research Methods

This chapter explains the nature of the research methodology used. A qualitative research approach was used to discover what are the components that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in early childhood education settings. In a qualitative approach, researchers are after meaning, in others words a qualitative researcher seek to extract meaning to their data. The focus of qualitative research is words, and text to explore the social meaning people attribute to their experiences, perceptions, circumstances, and situations. (Collins 2010, 10, 49.) A qualitative questionnaire was elaborated and conducted among six selected participants from different day care centres in Nurmijärvi. Three of them of which were parents and three educators. They expressed their interpretations and experiences of partnership that develop through their reality. To achieve the purpose of this study in the most reliable and accurate way, and to provide the reader credible, believable and relevant findings, the researcher also used a conventional context analysis. (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, 1278.)

Likewise, the researcher used an abductive reasoning approach in tandem with the conventional content analysis to develop, examine and build the present study (Walton 2004, 34). The outcomes of the conventional analysis data with the abductive approach helped and underpinned to explain the data obtained from the qualitative Web-based questionnaire as well as to add additional information and bestow the best explanation to the merged information. (Collins 2010, 131; Walton 2004, 34.)

4.1   A Qualitative Web-Based Questionnaire

The qualitative data collection tool used in this study was a web-based questionnaire. Questionnaires are good ways of collecting data about point of views, behaviours, and opinions. (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012, 230.) In this study, the web-based questionnaire was carefully designed, in order to provide the participants a clear and an easy set of questions to be completed in an only couple of minutes, likewise to get the most factual and dependable information. The five designed questions employed in the survey were based on this study background. Moreover the context of the questions is reflected in the theoretical framework of this thesis in Chapter three.

A Web-based questionnaire is the collection of data through a self-administered electronic set of issues on the Web. With Web-based questionnaires, "the manager has control over the physical appearance and can create attractive and inviting forms". (Archer, 2003, 1.)

The benefits of Web-based questionnaires are include the following:

- They are more inclusive and with the potentially of including a global audience
- They are cheap to carry out, making it easier to recruit large numbers of participants
- The data is captured directly in electronic format, making analysis faster and cheaper
- This allows more data to be collected than with conventional mailed paper questionnaires
- They allow interactive data capture with rapid checking of responses. (Wyatt, 2000, para.4; SmartSurvey, 2016.)

Therefore, using a web-based questionnaire, the data was collected. The questionnaire link was sent to each participants e-mails address.

Once, the questionnaire was completed online the responses were stored in an online database (Google Forms) for statistical processing later. The application tool used, to create the web-based questionnaire and store the database was the Google-Drive application. This application is easily accessible, no costs for the user, the instructions for use are easy, and the outcomes are easy to follow from any place. This application is an excellent instrument for text analysis for open responses; "the data is instantly available and can easily be transferred into specialised statistical software or spreadsheets when more detailed analysis is needed." (SmartSurvey 2016.) The questionnaire was designed with one demographic question and five open-ended questions. All the issues were answered in the local language, Finnish.

4.2   Conventional Content Analysis

The qualitative content analysis is used when the qualitative text data obtained from the respondents' answers to the open-ended questions is converted into knowledge and information (Collins 2010, 50, 179). In other words, the content analysis used in this study, whose aim is to investigate a phenomenon, in this case, what are the component parents and childcare professionals understand by working together as partners in childcare settings. This method helped to examine the obtained data much better, easier and more reliable.

A qualitative conventional content analysis is one of the most used research methods to analyse text data. Researchers who using a qualitative content analysis focus to identify certain key phrases or words on the characteristics of language as communication in tandem with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text. (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012, 164.) Text data could be in verbal, print, or electronic forms and might have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, and interviews (Kondracki & Wellman

2002, cited in Hsieh & Shannon 2005, 1278). According to Downe-Wamboldt (1992, 314), We-ber in 1990 affirmed that a qualitative content analysis is more than just "counting words to examining language for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings". The goal of a content analysis is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study".

A conventional content analysis is appropriate when existing theory or research literature on a phenomenon is limited or when the researcher does not have sufficient understanding of the subject (Collins 2010, 43). The technique process used in this study were, a conventional content analysis since the researcher used an existing theory and started to move from theory to data (Hsieh & Shannon 2005 1279). A conventional content approach highlights the exact "real-life observation" (Gummerus & Pihlström 2011, 525) words from the respondents' answers to the open-ended question to capture key concepts and new dimensions. After that, the researcher approaches the text by making notes of her first initial analysis. As the process continues, labels for codes emerged that are reflective of more than one fundamental concept. These often come directly from the text and are then become the initial coding scheme. These codes then are sorted into categories based on how different codes are related and linked. These new categories are used to organise and group codes into meaningful clusters (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, 1279).

According to Gummerus and Pihlström (2011, 525), Dubois and Gadded (2002) refer to the abductive reasoning approach as the production of the "bests explanation and presenting condition under certain assumptions hold. An abductive reasoning approach commences with actual existence observations and going back and forth between the findings, theory, and analysis. The steps included in the abductive analysis include revisiting the phenomenon, the familiarisation, and alternative casing in where the theoretical background is gently "switched on" to try to see the data in the light of different cases in as many ways as possible. (Tavory & Timmermans 2012, 168-176.)

In this study, the 28 open-ended responses were first analysed in detail, in the original language written form. After getting familiar with the theory by reading, the researcher moved towards the data analysis. At this stage, the researcher translated into English the texts and placed into the existing initial coding scheme by codifying with colours the texts and labelling the collected data into the initial coding scheme. The original coding scheme, the researcher, sorted the schemes into categories based on how different codes are related and linked to the theory and the research question, succeeding. Therefore At this stage, the codes moved from the category into a meaningful cluster. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2011, 112), the principal idea behind the clustering is to shape a ground or to give a basic foundation for the core concepts in the research, which create the frame for the findings and lead to the theoretical concepts. After the data had been shaped to a reduced form, all unnecessary in-

formation was ruled out. (Table 5 shows a small excerpt of the finding)

Text	Scheme	Category	Cluster
" avoimuus, rehellisyys, luottamus, kunnioitus ja dialogisuus. " -E-	Helping process (Davis 1993)	Working together.	Partnership
"Työntekijän ollessa helposti lähestyttävä" "pienillä positiivisilla juttutuokioilla rakennat luottamusta vanhempaan ja päinvastoin"	Helper qualities and skills	Supporter Helper	Partner
"Hyvä kasvatuskumppanuus on avointa vuoropuhelua kasvattajan, lapsen ja hänen vanhempiensa välillä"	ECEC defined by the terms of (ECEC 2003)	Respect Listening Dialogue	Key principles
" Avoimuus, luottamus, kunnioitus ja dialogisuus leimaavat tätäkin yhteistyötä. Kaikki yhdessä teemme työtä lasten kasvun ja kehityksen tuke- miseksi"	Result	Good Fair	ECEC partnership experi- ence and expectation

Table 5: An Excerpt of the Data Coding Process

After the data had been shaped to a reduced form, it was possible to view in full the merged clusters, and the aim and objectives of this study. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2011, 112), the principal idea behind the clustering is to shape a ground or to give a basic founda- tion for the core concepts in the research, which create the frame for the findings and lead to the theoretical concepts.

The original data and the theories were sides by side analysed several times to avoid wrong understanding and misuse interpretations. The final themes created were four, of which emerged from the conventional content analysis. The themes emerged from the conventional content analysis are "Partnership and Partner Definition" which refers to the participants perception of what means or signify for them the terminologies partnership and partner. The second theme "The Key Components in a Partnership" refers to the ingredients that make possible a successful partnership; this theme answered the question: what are the key com- ponents (behaviours) to creating effective partnerships? The third theme emerged was "Part- nership Experiences versus Expectation". This theme answered the open-ended questions: How have parents and educators experienced partnership in their day care units? And What are the expectations towards an effective partnership? Lastly, "Improving Partnership" this theme was created to include suggestions for parents, teachers as well for day cares managers and ECEC boards based on the literature reviewed and the data collected during this study. Participants were asked to answer the following question, to seek a reply to this theme: what could be the practical applications to develop an effective partnership? This sec- tion, respondents' responses were wealthy and vigorous; filled with positives reviews, inno- vate ideas as well as constructive criticisms. This practical information can affect the devel- opment and performance of the ECEC work partnership in future development and strategies positively.

4.3   Implementing the Web-Based Questionnaire on the Internet

On January 12, a web-based questionnaire was launched and the URL was shared with six participants directly to their e-mails. The URL was closed on January 26, 2016.The selected questionnaire was served to three parents and three early childhood employees. Out of six questionnaires served five people responded the survey online. However it is important to remark that one of the participants could not respond the questionnaire online; thus, the participant answered directly on the paper. The response rate, however, was 100%. The distribution was served at different day care centres. The covering letter was distributed on 10.01.2016. The covering letter, the questionnaire and the reminder note were translated into the Finnish language from English due that the main language used by the respondents was in Finnish. (Appendix 1: The Covering Letter in Finnish and Appendix 2: The Web-Based Questionnaire. The response time determination was established for a two weeks response time from 12.01-26.01.2016, only. The web-based questionnaire was undertaken in the town of Nurmijärvi.

4.4   Permission

On November 18, 2015, the researcher requested from the Nurmijärvi early childhood education and care board permission to conduct the present study on educational partnership. The primary goal of the application was to introduce and communicate the purpose and objectives of the thesis plan. As well as the content of the study so that the survey would be fruitful for both parties. Moreover, to obtain the requested permission by Laurea ethical code signed up by the working life partner. This document is a significant step to commence a thesis planning before. The project manager of Nurmijärvi early childhood education, Mrs Leena Laine granted the solicitation on to continue officially conducting a survey of the educational partnership at different day care centres located in the town of Nurmijärvi. (Appendix 3: Permission to Conduct the Research)

4.5   Validity

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, 105) depict validity as an essential key to effective studies and an important requirement for both qualitative and quantitative research. They also emphasise that even though one´s could strive to be hundred per cent valid, it is impossible for research to reach it. According to Cohen et al. (2000, 105) Grönlund (1981) defines validity as a "matter of degree rather than an absolute". Therefore, it is better to minimise invalidity and maximise validity.

Validity concerns with the findings; therefore, the findings should be coherent with their meanings. A researcher may misinterpret answers when analysing, if the respondent could not understand the questionnaire clearly or in another way than the researcher is seeking for, thus, in this case, the research will not be valid. Punch (2004, 231) says, "Words and their meanings depend on where they are used, by whom and to whom". The responses can also be influenced by different situational factors such as the person's mood, time pressure and technical factors. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2000, 105) add that opinions, attitudes and different points of view together contribute to a degree of bias or inclinations. That is why "A validity must be faithful to its premises and principles. As Cohen et al. (2000, 106) highlight in their work, "it would be absurd to declare a piece of research invalid if it were not striving to meet certain kinds of validity".

Researchers have deemed several different types of validity (Cohen et al. 2000, 106). However, Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005, 80) describe that there are two major forms of validity: The external validity and the internal validity. The first validity refers to the data's ability to be generalised to person, settings, and times. The second validity relates to the capacity of the research instrument to measure what is purposed to measure.

The questionnaire was constructed in the Finnish language, which was readily understandable to all the respondents. Grigoroudis and Siskos (2010, 171-176) state that a questionnaire tool is economical, respondents can answer the questions without pressure, it has easiness to cover different geographical areas and very importantly, respondents decide when and how they want to respond. A few steps to ensure the validity of this study were then taken into consideration.

- All the questionnaire-designed questions were based on existing theories and surveys relates to ECEC.
- The questions are reflected in the literature review of this thesis in Chapter 3 in order to ensure the validity.
- The distribution was served personalised to each participant. The web-based questionnaire (URL) was launched on January 12, and the response time continued until January 26, 2016. The covering letter was distributed on January 11, 2016.
- A covering letter and a reminder note were translated into the Finnish language from English due that the primary language used by the respondents was in Finnish.
- After the questionnaire was served no major things had been changed. In other to validate this work, the questionnaire was tested with two volunteers to ensure that the questions were properly asked and easily perceived by the participants. Moreover, finally,
- A copy of the web-based questionnaire was sent it to the working life partners to ensure the confidence and respect to them as partners.

4.6 Reliability

Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005, 81) point out that reliability refers to the stability of the measure. In other words, research reliability relates to some extent to the degree in which the data collection method would produce similar results if another researcher conducted the same study in another place and time. In other words, reliability provides consistent results. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2002, 53), reliability can be asked to respond the following questions.

- Will the measures produce the same result on other occasions?
- Will other observers reach similar observation?
- Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data?

This research was about to investigate what are the components, whether they are behaviours, qualities, skills and practical actions to develop a successful and an optimal partnership in early childhood education settings. Respondents replay the questionnaire according to their gained experience while working in the field or using the service as clients. The collected data was a straightforward answer from parents and educators' perspective. In other words, it means that the data was an accurate reflection of what they felt, experienced and observed; therefore, the reliability of the gathered information can be assured and trusted.

In the questionnaire design process, it was best tried to keep the questions simple so that the respondents would understand the clear concept of the question. The researcher attempted to accomplish the questionnaire in a similar manner for each participant. The questions structured were carefully selected and designed to help the respondent to answer meaningful and reliable. Punch (2003, 58) says that meaningful refers to the idea that respondents can confidently and positively response category for the item, which suits to them.

5 Findings

This study was guided by one main question, what are the components, whether these are behaviours, qualities, skills and practical applications that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in early childhood education settings? In Finnish childcare context, researchers have pointed partnership in four principles namely listening, respect, trust, and dialogue. (THL 2014, para. 1; Kaskela & Kekkonen 2006, 36; Venninen & Purola 2013, 49; NCCA 2009, 7; Bickley 2008, 1; Lehtinen n.d.) Equally important, researchers have demonstrated that the stable of personal communication is as well a key foundation for parents and educators' interaction (Hedeen et al. 2011,1; Alasuutari 2010, 150; ECEC Nurmijärvi 2010,10; Virginian Department of Education 2002, 16). Therefore, in order to assess these principles defined in the

Finnish early childhood education, an abductive reasoning approach was used. An abductive reasoning approach moves back and forth from findings, theory and analysis (Debois & Gadde 2002; cited in Gummerus & Pihlström 2011, 525).

In this chapter, the results from the respondents' answers to the open-ended questions are presented. The web-based questionnaire involved five open-ended questions. The results of the questions analysed were:

- What parents and educators understand by partnership and being a partner?
- How have parents and educators experienced partnership in their day care units?
- What are the key components (behaviours) to creating effective partnerships?
- What could be the practical ways to develop an effective partnership?
- What are the expectations towards an effective partnership?

Analysis of the 28 written responses produced a total of 99 discrete observations across the data set. Four broad themes emerged from the analysis "Partnership and Partner Definition", "Key Principles in a Partnership", "Partnership Experience versus Expectation" and "Improving Partnership". All the results are aligned with the literature review discussed in Chapter 3.

In order to present the reader with a clear and robust understanding of the data emerged from the content analysis; this chapter is then divided into five parts. The first set of the analyses aims to provide an overview of this study. This section seeks to show some general results obtained from the analysis of the web-based questionnaire.

The second part aims to answer, what parents and childcare professionals understand by partnership. The third part responds the question what are the key components (behaviours, skills, qualities) to creating effective partnerships. The fourth section answers what could be the practical ways to develop an effective partnership. Finally, the last objective of this study is to show what are the expectations towards an effective partnership. This section presents some of the main suggestions provided by both parents and educators for improving partnership in childcare settings.

The original quotes in Finnish, the language that the participants employed in this study, is cited first succeeded by its English translation written in Italics. The role of the respondents is coded with letters P= Parents and E= Educators. The reason to incorporate the participants' voices in this study and in their local language was that all of them took a time to reply and verbalise their answers. As Sorsa, (2014, 24) accentuates in her Master´s academic work, "to make their voices heard". Next, an overview of this study is depicted.

5.1   A Successful Partnership

The research question of this study was to answer what are the components to develop a suc-
cessful and an optimal partnership in childcare settings. The researcher formulated five ques-
tions to respond to the central research question. According to Davis (1993, 46), a successful
relationship building is constructed by interconnections between the tasks. Also, a partner-
ship is not a relationship developed quickly and naturally; it requires time, skills and quali-
ties. To investigate the components, whether these are behaviours, qualities, skills and prac-
tical actions that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in early childhood education
settings, an overall web-based questionnaire was conducted. Knowledge is meaningful only if
it is reflected in action. The human race has found out the hard way that individual are, what
they do, not just what they think. (Fulghum 2004.)

Out of six web-based questionnaires served five people responded the form online, three of
which were parents and two were educators. One of the respondents for personal reasons
answered and wrote down her answers straightforward to the paper and returned personally
to the researcher. The response rate was 100 per cent since the six participants invited to
take part in this study answered and replied the questionnaire.

Chapter three provides a clear overview of the defined term of Educational Partnership in
Finland. Educational partnership in Finnish context has been defined as being beyond to co-
operation between parents and educators. Zenger et al. (2001, 5) Defined partnership as an
institutional arrangement to formally facilitate collaboration between parties.

 The development of the four themes was based on existing academics theories and findings
from researchers Davis (1993), "The FPM" and Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006) "Kasvatuskump-
panuus Kannattelee Lasta". The existing pat-terns in these theories and findings were tested
against observation from the analysis of the respondents' answers to the open-ended ques-
tions. In other words, the researcher explored known theories and tested if the arguments
were valid in the given circumstances. (Snieder & Larner 2009, 16.) The themes under inves-
tigation were ECEC, educational partnership, key principles in ECEC, and innovative alterna-
tives to communication, the use of technology as a practical application to enhance and facil-
itate partnership collaboration and participation.

5.2   Partnership and Partner Definition

In Finland, the National policy definition on ECEC and the National Curriculum Guideline has
defined the educational partnership as the co-operation between parents and childcare edu-
cators (2003, 3). Moreover, Kekkonen (2012, 13.) mentions that the Child Care Act (36/1973)

establishes that day care units has the responsibility to help parents in their work to educate and look after their children. When parents and childcare educators were asked to responds what an educational partnership and partner means or signifies to them, the answers were unsound, "yhteistyötä" which means collaboration as well as "tukemista" which means support. Table: 6, shows some extracts to the meaning of partnership and partner according to the participants' replies.

A Partnership is	A Partner is
Collaboration Support Intensive and interactive relationship Open Communication Open and a trustful co-operation between partners Based on relationships with people	A Helper A Supporter A someone to work together

Table 6: Extract to the Meaning of Partnership and Partner

Both educators and parents alike seemed to agree to a significant extent with the defined term given by the ECEC in Finland, which describes partnership as a general approach in the collaboration between ECEC and Parents. (Alasuutari 2010, 150.) Two of these answers are outlined next.

Yhteistyötä ja avointa keskustelua pk:n henkilökunnan kanssa.
Co-operation and open communication with the childcare staff –P-

Yhteistyötä ja tukemista.
Co-operation and support. –P-

Tiivistä ja vuorovaikutuksellista suhdetta ihmisten kanssa jotka, osallistuvat lapseni kasvatukseen.

An intensive and interactive relationship with the people that take part in the education of my child. –P-

According to Rockwell et al. (2010, 277) researchers, Prior, and Gerard in 2007 observed that the process of communicating with parents is a fundamental component of being an effective educator. An effective educator then must exhibit competence in human relations and planning skills. Therefore, from the beginning of any initial relationship the importance of establishing open lines of communication that facilitate the development of relationships and the

enablement of these conversations to take place is essentially a must. In this study, educators perceived an educational partnership as:

> *Keskustelua lapsesta vanhemman/vanhempien kanssa.*
> *Having conversation with the child´s parent or parents. -E-*

> *Yhdessä tehdään töitä lapsen parhaaksi.*
> *Working together for the child´s best. -E-*

> *Yhteistä säveltä lapsen hoidossa ja kasvun tukemisessa kunnioittaen vanhempien tuntemusta lapsen asioiden asiantuntijana*

> *Same tone in the caring of the children and supporting the growth by respecting the parent's knowledge of being expert in the issues regarding their child. -E-*

According to Davis and Meltzer (2007, 8) the first step in a partnership building is to establish a working relationship between the defined parties. This move perhaps is the most important of all the tasks when building a relationship with partners or teams, as the nature and quality of this relationship will affect everything that happens subsequently. This relationship then involves them getting to know each other and agreeing whether and how they are going to work together. Basically this means that both parents and educators work as a team in the child´s education and care. The culture of involvement must be nurtured and prioritised. As one respondent expressed:

> *Kumppani välittää lapsestani ja on kiinnostunut hänen hyvinvoinnistaan ja kehittymisestä ihmisenä.*

> *A partner is someone who cares and is interested in my child´s wellbeing, growth and as a human being -P-*

Parents depicted partner as someone who assist or support them in their task to raise their children, a helper or a supporter. While educators depicted as someone to work together. A good partner relationship will depend largely upon the extent to which they feel able to trust to each other and think that the other partners has something to offer. However, if one of the partners is unable to engage in the work for whatever reasons, the relationship can be negatively affected by limitations to what can be achieved at any subsequent stage in the process.

Davis and Meltzer (2007, 13) suggest a list of skills and qualities that are needed by anyone who being a helper or supporter to require in order to establish and by that to facilitate partnership relationship and enable the process as a whole. It is presumed that the success of helping is based to a large extent upon the professional's communication skills that enable her/him to relate to the parent, to understand the problems and to help the parent change effectively. Even though it is salient to understand these skills and qualities in being an effective helper, however, it is more important to be able to use them naturally with an appropriate training practice (See Section 3.2.2 Relationship Building for further information)

5.3   Key Principles in Partnership

This study explored the fundamental principles that surround ECEC partnership, to develop fruitful and optimal partnerships between parents and educators. Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006, 32-39) define educational partnership by the terms of four principles, namely listening, respect, trust, and dialogue. Each of this principle should work interrelated to one another. According to Hedeen et al. (2011, 1), Amendt recognised that greater partnership between parents and educators developed in stages along a progression, no as a singular event.
The creation of a confidential and open atmosphere for all type of dialogue is the central key to the partnership relationship.

> Avoin ilmapiiri, kummankin osapuolen kuutelu lapsen asioissa.
> *Open atmosphere, both parties listening to child matters -E-*

> Kiireetön ilmapiiri.
> *A relaxed atmosphere –P-*

Venninen and Purola (2013, 50) in their academic researcher have discovered that one of the main aspect that parents consider about partnership relationship, it often thought on the physical participation of them in meetings or committees, and joint family events with other parents. Nevertheless and according to Venninen and Purola findings, literature slightly often ignores the importance of daily discussion between parents and educators. According to ELPPEG (2010,13), Meade and Cubey in 1995 stated that when educators work together with parents in share ideas about how to support and extend children´s development is when young children achieve more and are happier.

> Kasvatuskumppanuus merkitsee minulle avointa ja luottamuksellista yhteistyötä vanhempien ja kasvattajien välillä

ECEC means to support the overall growth and development of the child and this is successfully accomplished in co-operation with the parents. -E-

Knowing families well is also a key to actually listening and responding to what parents and educators want from each other, and how, when and want to participate. ELPPEG (2010, 13) refer to Freire in 1970, who wrote "Being willing to listen and learn from each other takes an approach where professionals can identify with others, and recognise the fact that naming the world is not the task of an elite. Moreover, it values the contribution of others and listens to them with humility, respecting the particular view of the world held by different people. The bellow comments illustrate the importance of knowing each other.

Tarvitaan aikaa, halua ja kiinnostusta vuorovaikutukselle, niin lapsen kuin hänen vanhempiensa kanssa. Hyvä ja huono vuorovaikutustilanne vaatii yhtä paljon aikaa. Tehokkuus voisi tässä tapauksessa tarkoittaa keskittymistä ja pysähtymistä hetkeen. Pysähtyminen tuottaa tietoa, jota voimme jakaa syventääksemme kumppanuutta.

Interaction takes time, desire and interest. Good and bad interactive circumstances demands equal time. Efficiency, could, in this case, mean focusing and stopping. Stopping time produce information that enables partnership relationship to deepen. -P-

Henkilökunnan kiinnostus ja aktiivisuus.
Educators´ interest and active participation. -P-

Pitäminen jatkuva kommunikaation vanhempien ja kasvattajien kanssa on ratkaiseva juttu. Kun molemmat vanhemmat ja kasvattajat tekevät vilpitöntä työtä tuntemaan toisensa ja tekevät todellisen yhteyden, loput putoaa paikalleen.

Keeping a continuous line of communication between parents and educators is crucial. When both parents and educators make a sincere effort to know each other and make a genuine connection, the rest falls into place. -E-

Davis and Tsiantis (2005, 10) state that the relationship to which partners aspire is perceived explicitly as a partnership, defined concerning working closely, sharing knowledge, expertise and power, negotiation and coherent, respect, and communication. Parents and educators seem to a greater extent to agree with the findings of Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006, 32-39),

which explained and depicted that listening, trust, respect and dialogue are the central principles to engage in successful partnership.

> Avoimuus, rehellisyys luottamus, kunnioitus ja dialogisuus. Hyvä kasvatuskumppanuus on avointa vuoropuhelua kasvattajan, lapsen ja hänen vanhempiensa välillä. Suhde ei voi kehittyä, jollei näiden tekijöiden välillä ole avointa, rehellistä ja luottamuksellista vuoropuhelua.

> *Openness, honesty, trust, respect and dialogue. An excellent educational partnership is based upon open dialogue between the educator, the child and their child´s parent. A relationship cannot develop unless these principles openness, honesty, trust and dialogue work among them. -E-*

It was also identified other necessary and significant components such as time, interest, genuine desires to learn from one another, integrity, confidentiality, and open and relaxed atmosphere. According to the NCCA (2009, 7), the role of understanding the terms of confidentiality is a critical issue to establish robust partnership relationship. Parents and educators should know that there are times in life when confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, especially if the life of the child is in danger, for instance in cases of involving child protection issues.

> Tehokas kumppanuus on sellainen, jossa kummallakin puolella luottetaan muiden motiiveihin, jossa opettaja osoittaa aitoa välittämistä lapsen ja vanhemman näyttelyesineitä tukea opettajalle, ja molemmat osapuolet töitä säilyttää positiivinen ja avoin tiedonkulku.

> *An effective partnership is one in which each side trusts the motives of the other, where the teacher exhibits genuine caring for the child and the parent exhibits support for the teacher, and both sides work hard to maintain a positive and open flow of communication. -E-*

> Kun tämä kumppanuus toimii yhdessä viestimällä, ymmärryksellä ja rakentamalla tarpeeksi vahvan lapsille, niin lastemme tulevaisuus onnistuu.

> *When this partnership works together by communicating, understanding, and building a foundation strong enough for children, then the future of our children would be successful. -P-*

For instance, one respondent expressed as well, that in order to establishing a partnership relationship with the educators is fundamental that the professional is aware of his/her com-

munication and personal skills to approach and to be approached. This quotation is also supported by Davis and Tsiantis (2005, 11), who state that communication skills are essential to build relationships that facilitate and enable partners throughout processes. In addition, Davis and Tsiantis (2005, 10) refer to the work of Rogers in 1959, who listed some qualities that every professional in any field should demonstrate and manage, such as respect, genuineness, empathy, humility, enthusiasm and personal integrity. Also, it is included attending and active listening, prompting, and exploring.

> Työntekijän ollessa helposti lähestyttävä. Myös, pienillä positiivisilla juttutuokiolla rakennat luottamusta vanhempaan ja päinvastoin.

> *An easy and an approachable worker. Also, trust is built with small and positive (sense of humour) chats between parents and vice versa. -P-*

Together, these comments provide valuable insights into the kind of skills and qualities in which a relationship should be built. It is apparent from this quote that a building relationship is not only based on defined term concepts or theories but is also based on actions, attitudes, skills and behaviours as well. The NCCA (2009, 7) defines partnership as the involvement of parents, families, and educators working together to benefit children in which, each party recognises, respects and values each other. Zenger et al. (2001, 5) are even more explicit in their definition; they define partnership as an institutional arrangement to formally facilitate co-operation and co-ordination with a focus on intervention, problems identification, strategy formulation and implementation.

5.4   Partnership Experience versus Expectation

> Relationships shape perceptions (Knopf & Swick 2007, 292).

Venninen and Purola (2013, 50) state that a partnership relationship needs two parties and likely the behaviour of another will affect the act and the experience and the expectation of the other side. Gelfer (1991, 164) in his academic study discovered that early childhood educational curriculum is made up of children, parents, and educators. However, both parents and teachers must understand their roles in children´s learning, growth and care as mutually interdependent. Knopf and Swick (2007, 292) write that parental perceptions are influenced by the way educators treat them. Also, they refer to the work of Comer in 2001 that indicates that parental involvement increases when parents and educators are inviting and supportive in their relations with parents only. One informant expressed that the need to open up the concept of ECEC partnership to the rest of the staff and the parents should be emphasised by the ECEC board and managers. She commented:

Saatamme ymmärtää mistä on kyse tai sitten ei, mutta ennen kuin ihmiset voi-
vat toimia kasvatuskumppaneina heillä tulee olla edes jonkinlainen yhteinen
käsitys sen sisällöstä ja minkä laajuisessa kontekstissa sitä halutaan toteutetta-
van

*We might understand what it is all about or not. However, before people can
work as an ECEC partner, they must have some common idea of what does it
included and the limits that should be. -E-*

Avoimuus, luottamus, kunnioitus ja dialogisuus leimaavat tätäkin yhteistyötä.

*ECEC partnership is based on honesty, openness, trustfulness and dialogue be-
tween the partners. -E-*

In this study, when asked parents and educators to respond how have parents and educators
experienced partnership in their day care units and what are the expectations that they have
regarding ECEC partnership. About as an experience, four participants revealed that their ex-
periences with their partners were doing "well." One of them grounded her "well" reply since
discussing matters about her child with the staff was on the basis an easy on-going.

Hyvin. Lapseen liittyvistä asioista on helppo keskustella henkilökunnan kanssa.
Well. Issues relating to my kid are easy to talk with the team. -P-

Children learn from their parents, educators as well as their peers, neighbourhoods and com-
munities. In various studies have been demonstrated that parents participation in their chil-
dren's education process; children have a greater chance of success. Thus, if parents and edu-
cators are going to engage in partnership, the relationship between them should be based on
equal status and non-bureaucratic interaction as well as in valuing parental knowledge. (ECEC
2003; Cameron 2007, cited in Alasuutari 2010, 158; Konzal 2001, 97.) Besides, Knopf and
Swick (2007, 292) reflect that real interaction between parents and educators provides par-
ents with the basis for positive experiences concerning their children and their education.

The interaction between parents and educators contain thoughts, actions and feelings. Both
bring their views, expectation and atmosphere. An effective partnership always invites par-
ents and educators to the dialogue table to make decisions together for the benefit of the
children. (Nummenmaa & Karila 2011, cited in Venninen & Purola 2013, 50.) For example one
respondent commented:

> Toiveita kuunnellaan ja kunnioitetaan. Kysytään lisätietoa lapsesta/ Lapsen käytöksestä ja yhdessä pohditaan syitä ja seurauksia. Keskustelua hyvässä hengessä.

> *Wishes are listened to and respected. More information about the child/children behaviour is asked and together we ponder the causes and consequences. Discussions are conducted in an excellent spirit. –E-*

Two participants, however, had different views on their partnership´s perception and experience. The first bellow quotation, the respondent, for instance, offered a glimpse of the situation that may occur at day care centres particularly at the time of pick up and drop off. Regular communication is seemed to be challenging and divisive to engage since the lack of storage. Her answer showed to some extent disappointment in the way of how VASU conversations, the annual encounter, appear to receive more attention than the import of daily discussion between educators and parents. She stated:

> Kumppanuuden toteutuminen näyttäytyy päiväkodin arjessa harvoin. Syvällisemmät keskustelut jäävät vasuihin ja lapsen arjen jakaminen keskittyy usein perustarpeiden ympärille. Tämäkin toki on tärkeää.

> *Partnership implementation appears to be rare in daily routines in preschool. Deeper discussions have then remained explicitly to VASU conversation. Sharing the child's everyday life is often centred on the basic needs. This, of course, is important as well. –P-*

According to the study of Endsley and Minish (1989, 2), parents and educators' communication is expressly directed to the child's pick-up or drop off moments. Also, they indicate that the average time for discussion at these meetings is approximately 12 seconds only. Most of these conversations are usually very routinely, in which the discourse is overall of the child's health or behaviour during the nurturing time. Besides, it revealed that parents seemed to be less active in the morning than in the afternoon.

The second quotation, the participant argued that her experience as a partner, in general, could be described as good. However, she also stressed that there had been times when she was forced to remain in silent, not because she wanted to but because it was imposed.

Building, broadening and deepening trustworthiness should be based upon repeated trustful interactions, structures, and strategies that show consistency with agreed values and vision (Day 2009, 728.) Parents and educators alike considered trusting a very significant part of ef-

fective partnership centred on improving children´s learning and wellbeing. However, it was found that building trust not always is as easy as it sound. Trust is highly complex; it could mean different thong to different people and it has been demonstrated that it is emotionally provocative. (Reina & Reina 2005, 5.)

> Pääsääntöisesti hyvin… välillä joutui valehtelemaan vanhemmille Ryhmän/päiväkodin muutoksista… ei saanut kertoa… Tämä ei ole mielestäni ns. Kasvatuskumppanuutta.

> *As a general rule, well ... sometimes I am forced to lie to parents about changes in the group or day care issues ... I was not allow to say... This, in my opinion, is not the so-called educational partnership. -E-*

As it observed in the above quotation, some educators seem to face struggles in their relationship parent-educator, when decision making of third parties affected to a great extent over the shared decisions or shared information between them. Tschannen-Moran (2001,308) argues that often the educational and care reform efforts increasingly promote collaboration to include parents and educators in democratic processes and encouraging educators to work toward meaningful collaboration with other parties.

However, despite the level of enthusiasm at a theoretical level, the outcomes of attempts to implement collaborative and trustful decision-making have been disappointed. Reina and Reina (2005, 10) state that trust is reciprocal, and it built step-by-step.
Conflict can arise when educators and parents have differences of opinion or point of views, but also when educators and day care managers have differences in the way of working or dealing with significant issues related to their tasks.

Reina and Reina (2005, 5-10) have observed that a common mistake leaders make, is to assume that their position, role or title earns them their trustworthiness. In their view, the only way in which a leader may gain loyalty is by practising such behaviours as respecting agreements; being coherent with he says and does, even during t challenging of trial times. Moreover, when he acknowledges his workers and trust in their capabilities and knowledge.

The Virginian Department of Education (2002, 28-30) notes that differences in opinion and point of views are inevitable in encounters, however, when parents and educators as well managers are actively involved, regarding their differences, in problem-solving and decision making is when trusting partnership are born.

The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (2003) depicts partnership as a general method in the collaboration between ECEC managers, educators, and parents. Besides, the dimension of trust, respect and equality define ECEC partnership in Finland. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland 2003, Cited in Alasuutari 2010, 150)

Venninen and Purola (2013, 60), refers to the work by Ebbeck and Wanniganayake in 2003 that state, "Confidence in early childhood education and educators is built up in everyday situations. This quote means that educators require developing a variety of flexible and family sensitive models for co-operation. The lack of these elements undoubtedly affected the partnership relationship perception of both parents and educators.

Also, it is equally important to understand the changes that occur inside of any company or organisation. Change involves the moving of the unbalanced system in the desired direction or goal. However, McClellan claims that is necessary for managers and practitioners to consider the complex relationship between communication and change. On the other hand, Burnes (2011, 448) cited to Jonathan Raelin and Christina Cataldo that say that the role of middle managers is crucial in the change process. The middle manager is an employee who manages and enables communication between single management teams and subordinate managers and staff. The duties of a middle manager typically include carrying out the strategic directives of upper-level managers at the operational level, supervising subordinate managers and employees to ensure smooth functioning of the enterprise (Melissa Korn 2013). However, the lack of empowerment to their role means often ineffectiveness in promoting change. Raelin and Cataldo state that empowerment is critical for middle managers to understand and by that preventing change failure. Talking about this issue one respondent commented:

> Työntekijänä pidän tärkeänä, että taitoihini kasvattajana luotetaan ja saan tarvittaessa tukea niin kanssakasvattajilta kuin päiväkodin johtajalta.

> *As a worker, I take it as an important issue, that my skills as an educator are trusted, and I get support from my working friends and from my boss.*

Moreover, another participant stated:

> Jokainen meistä työntekijöistä myös pomo sitoutuu rehelliseen työskentelyyn vanhempien kanssa.

> *Every one of us including day care managers is committed to work in an honesty environment with the parents. -E-*

The educational partnership concept was introduced in 2003 into the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland. The ideal partnership is in form of relationship in which both parents and educators are equal in position and in valuing parental knowledge (Cameron 2007, cited in Alasuutari 2010, 50.) In Finland planning for the child´s ECEC does not only mean discussions about the child´s individual growth, learning and abilities but deals also with families issues. (Alasuutari & Karila 2009, cited in Alasuutari 2010, 159.) Hedeen et al. (2011, 8) discover that every child´s education takes place within a relationship of families and professionals. As one educator put it:

> Minulle on ollut melkein aina suhteellisen helppoa luoda luottamuksellisen suhde hoitolapsiini ja heidän vanhempiinsa. Joskus tuntuu siltä että olemme heti alusta alkaen vanhempien kanssa samoilla linjoilla, joskus taas hyvän ja luottamuksellisen suhteen eteen täytyy tehdä enemmän töitä. Avoimuus ja rehellisyys ovat tärkeitä sekä toisen osapuolen kunnioittaminen. Hyvää kasvatuskumppanuus suhde on pohja yhteiselle kasvatustyölle. Siksi sen muodostamiseen kannattaa panostaa.

> *For me, it has always been relatively easy to create confidential relationships with my pupils and their parents. Sometimes it seems that we are with parents straightaway in the same line of thinking, at times, it is needed to do more work before to creating healthy and trustful relationships. Transparency and honesty are important, as well as respect for the other party. Good educational partnership relationship is the groundwork of the childcare education. That is why it is worth investing in it. -E-*

Parents and educator´s experiences and expectations should be greatly considered since the way they perceive them will be the level of interaction and trust that they will develop during the process. Changes in decisions makings certainly may cause different types of reaction among people. It can be said that change is like the faith, faith is the substance of things hopes for, the evidence of things not seen, but it is necessary to believe that is going to happen. That is faith. Now, change is a very scary action. People may resist change only because there is not enough information between them and the need for change. There are many reasons for what people may resist changing. Torben (2011) listed some causes for what people resist change, in this way:

- Uncertainly is a very common reason for resistance, fear of the unknown.
- Fear not to being capable of making the transition very well.
- Too connected to the old way.
- When people do not believe in their managers or company.

- When people have not being consulted to be part of the change. Instead, they have being forced to be part of the modification, without much explanation.
- When people feel or perceive that the change has favoured other teams, people or groups and not them, and
- When the rewards for making changes are not seen as beneficial for all the trouble involved.

When managers communicate the threat of not changing, involve the people in decision making, minimise uncertainty, celebrate success in moving towards the goal, keep explaining the reason for to change, be as transparent as possible. Only then change would be less scary. Informed employees incline to have a higher level of job satisfaction than those uniformed employees. When there is not proper information, people often assume that their managers are plotting terrible things, behind their backs. The appropriate planning, tools, processes and communication will ensure to implement change and its successful adoption effectively.

The Kikai proverb says: "When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers" in other words if the relationship between managers and educators is affected it will also be affected the relationship with families and as result children will pay the negatives consequences of it.

5.5   Improving Partnership

> Collaborative partnership with lots of COMMUNICATION, trust honesty, listening and willing to do whatever it takes to do what is in the best interest of the CHILD. (Owens & Taylor 2010)

As explored in Section 3.4 The Benefits of Partnership, exist a myriad of advantages when building a trusting relationship. (Virginian Department of Education 2002, 8.) By working together and sharing information parents and educators can help their children to overcome difficulties or to support children´s educational development and interest. As one respondent expressed

> Vanhemmille kerrotaan lasta koskevat havainnot ja tapahtumat.
> *Parents are informed all of observation relate to their child and happening –P-*

On-going discussions emphasise to a great deal the impetus of creating practical conditions to enhance parents and educators communication. Emerging practices, for example, include, to invite parents to keep journals about their children´s day care experiences, sharing sources with parents, lending story books and tapes of song and rhymes, sharing easy-to-read books on child development. The benefit of these actions are great when they come into realisation, but it is required a rethinking of not only how parents and educators interact, but also

under what conditions and under what types of practices. (Konzal 2001, 99.)

Traditionally in childcare settings, communication is developed through face-to-face interaction between parents and educators. In ECEC partnership context, most of the services provided to enhance successful ECEC partnership are developed through encounters whether these are carried out in parental evenings, informal and formal conversations, and very occasionally, in some workshop for parents.

As discussed above, the stable of solid communication between parents and educators has been observed to be the pivotal foundation of interaction; however, the introduction of innovative alternatives such as the use of a mobile service, an e- services like HELMI, could empower and profound this communication to be highly effective. Creating conditions to enhance family and ECEC connections for children´s learning and growth could be an excellent action plan to facilitate and ameliorate some existing gaps or disconnection between parents, educators, peers, communities and other caring disciplines.

In respond to the question: what could be the practical applications to develop effective partnerships. Parents and educators agreed to a great deal that the utilisation of multiple forms of communication in person, in line, in writing and multiple languages are required. As one respondent suggested:

> Kasvatuskeskustelut ja alkukeskustelut (kotona?), vanhempainillat, yhteiset tapahtumat, avoin tiedotus ja päivittäiset keskustelut lapsen päivän kulusta
>
> *Educational conversation and initial conversations (home visit?), parents evening meetings, events, open communication and daily communication about the child´s day. -E-*

Recently in several municipalities around Finland have already tested or are right now testing a mobile service as part of their strategy and future operating conditions in day care units. (Toivainen 2014; Kaarina 2009.) For instance, in January 2013, ECEC Nurmijärvi commenced testing a mobile service called Päikky (a short term for day-care in Finnish) The mobile service was tested in three facilities and five children´s day-care in private families. The so co-called mobile service had a particular feature of making possible non-traditional arrangements and the administration of the early childhood education and cares to become one department. The primary goal of this innovative alternative was to connect parents, educators, and management board into one unit department. Moreover, to encourage and empower parents to participate in their children´s education and care.

This connection was possible by using smartphones or tablets likewise computer and The Internet as shown in Figure 9 (MukavaIT 2013), and Figure 10.

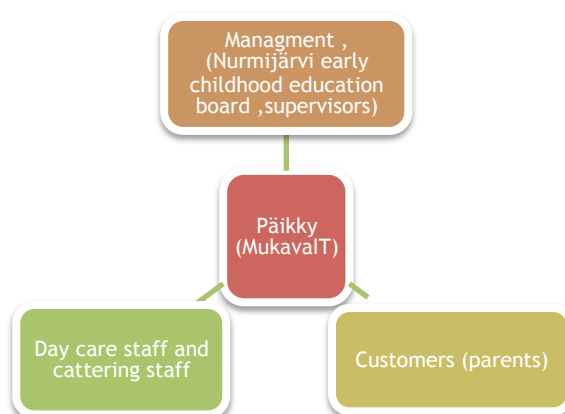Fig. 9: Päikky Service in Connexion with Devices

Fig.10: Connecting Parents, Educators and Management Board Into One Unit.

The use of the service was considered highly important and necessary. Parents and educators seemed to agree, however, this type of communication does not replace the face-to-face contact it will only enforce it and work as an assistance tool.

For instance, parents need time with educators to learn about how their children learn to read and to write and how they can help and motivate their children with new strategies. Without these meaningful encounters, parents have not clue on how to help their children with basic lessons that come in children´s life each day. (Konzal 2001, 97.) Partnership relationship is not only about theories, concepts, behaviours and skills but it also about practical applications.

Both parents and educators expressed their desires to get involved in a sense of more openness to each other, which come through the sharing information and collaboration on decisions. They also added that to access to this "sense of openness" the utilisation of new technologies could enhance educators and parents as well as managers to participate actively in the ECEC process.

According to the Office of Community Services (2012, 20), the use of technology can support and strength partnership norms, communication practices, and collaborative work plan. Here, some of the practical applications that educators and parents suggested:

- *Electronic Newsletters*
- *Shared Documents in platforms as Helmi*
- *System for real-time interaction as Päikky or Muksunetti*
- *Online chatting and Internet forums*
- *Online meetings, workshop, conference and Trainings, as GoToWebinar*

Equally important, both parents and educators mentioned the importance of these features, and they recognised them as been part of this present technological era. However, they still agreed that collaboration and partnership are based on mutual respect, two-way listening, trust, and dialogue, as one participant expressed very well, technology is an efficient tool to reduce an enormous amount of work, but it will never replace the real interaction between real people.

> Että se vähentää täytettävien paperien määrää tulevaisuudessa ja antaa reaali-aikaista tietoa lapsen hoitopäivästä. Mutta, ettei koskaan korvaa jutustelua päiväkodin väen kanssa, vaan toimii apukeinona.
>
> *It reduces the amount of filled paper in the future and it gives real-time information of the child´s day at care. However, It will never replace the chit-chat with the staff, it only works as an assistance tool. -P-*

The benefits of having a strong relationship, based on collaboration and active communication can provide with better opportunities and information for both parents and teachers during the early childhood education process, and throughout the children´s educational experience. (McCubbins 2004, 69.) Next, the discussion section is outlined.

6   Discussion

> We constantly try to understand our environment and how our world appears to our senses. We tend to do this in three ways: experience, reasoning and research. This means that sometimes we know what is happening because we have had experience of it before, sometimes we can reason why it is happening and at other times we need to find out by searching for information. (Collins 2010, 10.)

This research sought to gain an understanding of different perspectives and interpretations and to explore new ways that could enhance parents and educators partnership relationship.

The central purpose of this study was to seek an answer to the following question: What are the components, whether these are behaviours, qualities, skills or practical applications that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in early childhood education settings. The material of this study consisted of a qualitative web-based questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted in January 2015. This study, made with Google Drive application, was performed through an online questionnaire. The participants invited to take part in this work were three educators and three parents (to protect their confidentiality all participants are referred by P (parents) and E, (educator) moreover by "she" in the text). All of the educators had been working in a day care for several years, most often 10-20 years. Two of them were qualified kindergarten teachers and had a bachelor´s degree in early childhood education. One of the respondents was trained as a nursemaid and had a secondary level education. (OECD 2006, 164.) Equally important, parents had a long experience history working with day care, the average of children per parent were 3-5 children. The response rate was 100 per cent.

The nature of this research was based on a qualitative method for designing the web-based questionnaire and collecting the data. The data was analysed by employing a content analysis in tandem with an abductive reasoning approach. These methodologies assisted in facilitating and bestowing the best interpretation of the collected data. (Walton 2004, 34.)
A qualitative method is used to back up the points underlying, and thus to enhance the validity of the findings (Punch 2004, 247). This study was focused on the ECEC partnership and the key components that govern partnerships in the Finnish ECEC context. Additionally, a qualitative approach allows researchers to be more natural and flexible in exploring a phenomenon in standard environments. (McCubbins 2004, 35.)

The decision to adopting a qualitative web-based questionnaire with five open-ended questions was based on a previously gained experience by the researcher of this study. The analysis amount of 28 valid written responses garnered from the Web-based questionnaire produced a total of 99 discrete observations across the data set. The nature of this study was to explore and seek answers to the central research question what are the components whether these are behaviours, qualities, skill or practical applications that govern a successful and an optimal partnership in day care setting. The collected data and the literature review were reading and re-reading to obtain the best results and to develop themes, which emerged from the participants' responses. (Brink & Wood 1994, cited in Keatinge, Fowler & Briggs 2007, 31.) The primary focus of the literature review and the open-ended questions concentrated on parents and educators' partnership in childcare settings. This work offers results that corroborate to a great extent to the previous work of researchers Davis (1993), Kekkonen (2012), Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006), and Davis and Meltzer (2007), related to partnership relationship buildings and its practices.

This study indicated that a partnership is established by informal and formal discussions as well as the close liaison of fundamental principles that support, define and build a partnership between parents and educators and yield positive effects on children´s achievements. According to Venninen and Purola (2013, 60), the flow of information meets the basis for co-operation or collaboration between parents and educators. In this study, respondents provided significant and valuable information while working in partnership with one another. Likewise, their critical and constructive view to enhancing better work relationship provided significant aspect and suggested improvement ideas and practical applications to increase the meaningful relationship between them and other partners. Next, the findings are outlined. To understand the research´s findings are presented according to the research questions. The first question was, what do parents and educators know by a partnership and being a partner? According to the respondents partnership was described to a great extent as an action of collaboration, as to working together, as open and two-way communication while a partner was depicted as someone who helps or provides support for the strengthening of cooperation between parents and educators.

The second question was how have parents and educators experienced partnership in their day care units. Parents and educators seemed to be "happy" with the kind of partnership that they have developed. However, they also expressed that should be done more to improve the partnership between partners. In day care settings the importance of the flow of communication is seen as the heart of the partnership relationship. (McCubbins 2004, 32.) According to the respondents, the communication between parent and educators seem to work smoothly and easy. However, it was also observed that there were times when decision-making of third parties affected to a great extent over the shared decisions or shared information between parents and educators. Tschannen-Moran (2001,308) argues that often the educational and care reform efforts increasingly promote collaboration to include parents and educators in democratic processes and encouraging educators to work toward meaningful collaboration with other parties. However, despite the level of enthusiasm at a theoretical level, the outcomes of attempts to implement collaborative and trustful decision-making have been disappointed. Reina and Reina (2005, 10) state that trust is reciprocal, and it built step-by-step. A common mistake leaders make, is to assume that their position, role or title earns them their trust-worthiness. In their view, the only way in which a leader may gain loyalty is by practicing such behaviours as respecting agreements; being coherent with he says and does, even during t challenging of trial times. Moreover, when he acknowledges his workers and trust in their capabilities and knowledge. The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (2003) depicts partnership as a general method in the collaboration between ECEC managers, educators, and parents. Besides, the dimension of trust, respect and equality define ECEC partnership in Finland. (The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early

Childhood Education and Care in Finland 2003, Cited in Alasuutari 2010, 150.) Venninen and Purola (2013, 60), refers to the work by Ebbeck and Wanniganayake in 2003 that state, "Confidence in early childhood education and educators is built up in everyday situations. This quote means that educators require developing a variety of flexible and family sensitive models for co-operation. The lack of these elements undoubtedly affected the partnership relationship perception of both parents and educators.

The third question asked, in their opinion, what are the key components to creating active partnership ii childcare settings. All of them seemed to agree that in other to a build healthy and a strong partnership the central key governing sustainable partners is in the flow of communication and information. Moreover, they expressed elements such as trust, openness, respect, dialogue, genuine interest in their children´s development, active listening, a nurturing relationship between partners.

Both parents and educators expressed that the importance of developing an honest and a sound communication while interacting or working together as partners are crucial. Also, they seemed to a great deal agreeing that open communication is the key component when building trusting and fruitful relationship between parents and educators. Also, parents and educators' partnership is observed as an essential way to support positively children´s outcomes. The partnership brings a myriad of benefits in children's learning, development, and abilities as well as benefits to children´s families.

This study also showed that to acquire authentically and interactive communication between parents and educators, dimensions such as behaviours, skills, and qualities makes a significant contribution towards achieving successful partnerships. McCubbins (2004, 22,33) state that the communication is strengthened when parents and educators are aware of their values, views of one another, perceptions of the children and the values that they attribute to education. Especially when parents and educators understand their position and other position in the children´s life.

The fourth question was, what could be the practical application to develop and facilitate a productive partnership. Equally relevant to the above-mentioned critical dimensions to enhance partnership in childhood education, participants suggested that the need for practical tools or practical applications were seen as necessary and requisite alternatives to better, strengthen and facilitate the two-way communication. They also observed that to become real successful ECEC partnership, manager, educators and parents should consider how technology could support this relationship. For instance, the introduction of an innovative, practical application such as a mobile service can strength, enhance and add important values,

benefits, and concretive equal partnerships to facilitate the two-way communication and collaboration. (Hedeen et al. 2011, 8.)

The last question was what are the expectation towards a productive partnership, parents and educators alike observed the continuous degree of collaboration between parents and educators, the importance of partnership, and the importance of creating effective communication practices. When referring to creating effective communication practices do not mean to create a comprehensive list of things to be done to establish meaningful relationships, but they should be considered an excellent beginning. (Knopf & Swick 2007, 296.)

The participant´s replies were of high quality, useful and precious information that contributed significantly to the achievement of this study and future work as well. The majority of the respondents appeared to be confident about most aspects of their educational partnership relationship whether as a parent or as an educator. However, it was also true that the dissatisfaction and disappointment levels, of both parents and educators, in the aspect of the lack of informal conversation or tasks in which are defined only for educational people and not for parents were present; but they remained small.

Central to this work was the theoretical, training and practice frameworks and findings of researchers Davis (1993), Kaskela and Kekkonen (2006), and Kekkonen (2012). They propose conceptual frameworks to explain the basis on which partnership should be based to maximise effectiveness and in the long term enable an understanding of the processes involved.
To conclude, this study fulfilled to a large degree the expectations of the researcher and the ultimate purposes of this study. Moreover, it gave to her vast knowledge of how to improve and provide meaningful relationships between educators and parents. Not only by implementing skills, qualities or behaviours, but also by creating optimal conditions or practices to enhance ultimately parents involvement and children´s enthusiasm for learning.

As the main researcher in this work, I wanted to explore in detail the four terms defined by the ECEC in Finland which are listening, trust, respect, and dialogue and by that to discover new dimensions that make possible a successful partnership. In previous literature, these terms have been discussed. However, few of then (or little) have explored them deeper. In the Finnish context, when it is asked what are the terms that make possible a positive relationship, it is automatically, it is answered the above mentioned. Nevertheless, when it is asked what these concepts actually mean, then, it is felt that there are not concretive answers.   Therefore, to seek an answer to this issue, I decided to explore the defined terms and by that to explore new dimensions. Moreover, I wanted to hear parents and educators' voices to possible improve the ECEC partnership experiences and expectations.

Measures of family and educators' partnership satisfaction, as well as customer perceived value, service improvement, and more and better support and training for parents and educators in their tasks, are highly recommended. Finally, it is critical to perceiving that partnership view encompasses that parents and educators alike should know their knowledge and expertise and should use it and apply it as necessary when working together to benefit children´s overall well being.

6.1   Ethical Issues

Researchers should be knowledgeable about the ethical issues when they begin to research and evaluation projects. These are the initial formulation of the research question, informed consent, sample selection and institutional review. (Thyer 2010, 566.)
The first phase of the implementation plan of this study was one of the most important steps in the conduction and preparation of this study. The aim of the first step was to prepare a covering letter. Questionnaires are frequently sent out with a covering letter in which an explanation of the purpose of the survey questionnaire is a must. (Gillham 2000, 37; Collins 2010, 85.) The purpose of the covering letter had four important issues to communicate.

- The purpose of conducting the study and survey,
- Who is conducting the study and why,
- To inform the respondents where they can find the survey and how to access it.
- Finally, to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents.

The second step was the distribution of the qualitative questionnaire replies. To ensure the responses obtained were only from those respondents that were invited to take part in this study, the web-based questionnaire was sent personalised to the participants' e-mail. This performance guarantees the respondents had straightforward access to the questionnaire link by accessing into their email address. Once, the questionnaire was completed online the responses were stored in an online database (Google Drive) for statistical processing later. This application resource helps the researcher to visualise in real-time the responses and outcomes. The time given to the respondents to answering the survey was not more than two weeks. The third step was to collect and analyse the results of the investigation and finalise the thesis.

6.2   Trustworthiness

Research for this study began with an experience that the researcher gained in a previous study in 2014, to graduate from Master of Social Services. To provide a reliable and valid in-

vestigation, the researcher used Finnea, information portal, to gain access to academic data-bases. Also, all the books utilised in this study were borrowed from the University of Applied Science where the researcher is subscribed and from the local library where the author lives. The primary sources used through Finnea portal were: EBook, EBSCO, SAGE and Researchgate journals. Peer-reviewed journals add to the credibility since that they go through a rigorous approach to most scholarship examination (Collins 2010, 94). Moreover, the researcher also collected data on the Web. Most of these collected data on the Internet were easy to access, no cost and of high quality. The entire gathering data used in this study was the excellent quality and trustworthy. The investigation and valuable information done previously by other researchers provided this study relevant knowledge on educational partnership and early childhood education and care´s practices. Their efforts presence in this review added validity and reliability to this study as well.

Chapter four explains the nature of the research methodology being used. This study used a qualitative research method to elaborate a Web-based questionnaire. Moreover, to achieve the purpose of this study in the most accurate and trustworthy way, two approaches were employed in the data analysis. First, the researcher used a conventional content analysis that gives robust and reliable information. A conventional content analysis is used to explore ele-ments and new possible ones. Further information is explained is Section 4, Method. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2011, 113.) Second an abductive reasoning approach was used. The abductive rea-soning approach helps to move back and forth from findings, theory and analysis and to pro-vide the best interpretation of the collected data. (Walton 2004, 34.)

6.3   Limitations

This study was limited in several ways; however, they did not affect the outcomes, either the validity and credibility of the research. Instead, they added an extra quote of motivation to push forward this study and the findings in the best way as possible. Consequently, the high amount of assiduous work and hours invested in the elaboration of this thesis provides to a great extent significant and meaningful material to future studies.

The principal aim of this study was to conduct a qualitative questionnaire on educational partnership in childcare settings. Although several limitations rose, whether because of lack time, skills, language and small sample (six participants, only); however, they were very rele-vant to identify and show in this discussion. Since these restrictions can assist other scholars to be aware of them in future studies

Although limitations of this study that explored only six participant´s experiences and inter-pretations of the educational partnership in childcare settings, do not represent the opinions and perceptions of all parents, and educators from the town of Nurmijärvi. However, the op-

portunity to survey these participants enabled this study to identify relevant knowledge and useful practices to enhance successful partnership in childcare context.

The elaboration and process of this thesis were challenging. However, the result achieved by this work was fruitful and adds great value to the researcher´s professional career and personal achievement. I highly recommend using the Family Partnership Model of Hilton Davis. This framework consisted of:

- An explicit theory of the helping process to guide the development of partnership with parents,
- A training course for exploring these ideas and developing the necessary skills,
- A service system integrating psychosocial aims into the routine work of primary care staff,
- A clinical supervision system.

This model is considered to have the potential for being promotional and supportive. (Davis & Spurr 1998, cited in Davis & Tsiantis 2012, 9.)

Fourth, language was another limitation as it was difficult translating some quotations and statements from Finnish into English entirely. This issue is because the researcher mother tongue is neither Finnish nor English. However, to assure the reader of the best translations, two Finnish native speakers carefully examined all the quotations and through the Grammarly © application (2016). Next, Suggestions for improvements are presented.

6.4   Suggestions

Based on the study, the researcher has formulated some suggestions for enhancing a successful ECEC partnership. The recommendations are direct off- shoots of the results from the qualitative web-based questionnaire.

Suggestion 1: ECEC Customer Education
Customer education is the process by which people are taught about various goods and services in detail so that the user would get the maximum satisfaction and utilisation of it (Dakhal 2013, 44). There are lots of advantages of customer education such as it acts as the feedback for the business, the interaction between consumer and producer helps to standardise the products and services.

I would suggest that managers in tandem with educators carry out more parents' education and awareness programmes through different media. This suggestion is based on the answer of the two parents who claim not yet to have a precise definition of what an ECEC partnership is all about. Additionally, information about the benefits and salience performs when working

together as partners. Therefore, it would be a great start for educators and its partners to create awareness campaign where they could guide parents about educational partnership and the benefits of its different functions.

Suggestion 2: Overall Training or workshop programmes

A training programme is essential to the development and standardisation of the products and services. An ECEC partnership influences nearly every aspect of the child´s family and the child itself. Thus, overall and specific training programmes in communication skills and collaborative approaches should be a priority for ECEC partners. Harper (2003, 2) points out that the increased amount of data on human behaviour related to the use of technology, as a mediator of communication, is enormous and significant enough to warrant attention. Thus, it is crucial for managers, parents and educators to be aware of the benefits that actually innovative alternative might promote through the combination of in-person and online channel.

Suggestion 3: Employee training programmes

In the business field Employees are see the pivotal element of the business firm; they play a relevant role in the management of the company. The high quality of the service can be assured if the employees are well trained, only. The employees should first know about the benefits, decision-making, and the changes of the educational partnership. Thus, in tandem with its working life partners should conduct regular training programmes for staff in order to create excellent quality services.

Moreover, it is said to belong to the crowd creates motivation. It is paramount that day-care staff receives timely information and communication to understand the company's policy of decision-making. It is, therefore, critical that leaders make such programmes where staff would receive sufficient information about the company's practices and communications. In addition, the appropriate control is always necessary. (Dhakal 2013, 50)

Suggestion 4: Further research

Davis (1993) have created and offered a useful framework for thinking and identifying elements in the process of helping perception of mobility. The FPM structure provides understandings of the context of collaboration and partnership, helping process and other essential practices to consider. Future research in this area of ECEC partnership is then highly needed and recommended, despite the high number of academics research done on this phenomenon. Moreover, these scholars invoke other researchers to investigate the technical issues related to ECEC partnership. Therefore, this study is also a part of this calling to examine those matters related to ECEC partnership.

7   Conclusion

The educational partnership is not only an important part of tomorrow's day cares services to ensure children and parents' wellbeing, but it is also the central practice of the national regulation and policy document in Finland. (ECEC 2003, 10-11.) As Zenger et al. (2009, 5) very well defined that a partnership in political and organisations context is considered as an institutional arrangement to formally facilitate co-operation and coordination.
Researchers, practitioners and individuals that are interested in early childhood education and its practices and consequently, want to deepen their understanding in this phenomenon in ECEC partnership, I highly recommend them to read and apply the work of Professor Hilton Davis. By implementing his Model and practices, professionals in any caring field would be able to educate and encourage other colleagues in the field to do the same and raise the standards of partnership. (Keatinge, Fowler, & Briggs 2007, 33.)

To conclude, Educational partnership is an excellent tool for day-care services; however, there is room for improvement the service. The educational partnership was perceived as good, but not yet excellent. Therefore, measurements of parents and educators' perception and satisfaction, service quality improvements, more support and better training for both parents and educators would be highly recommended. Educational partnership is highly needed, and relevant between ECEC partnerships. Besides ECEC partnership is a vital part of the new reform law in the early childhood education and care (ECEC 2003).

Currently, the educational partnership has received much interest in the early childhood education and care. Much discussion emphasises family involvement and childcare professionals participation, which, underlie an importance part of the early childhood education and care in Finland. An ECEC partnership in Finnish context hallmarks that families are partners with childcare educators in their children´s development. (Alasuutari, 2010, 150.) Moreover, it is depicted as the relationship between parties to promote children´s balanced growth, development, learning and the level of shared thinking, inquiry, ideas, concerns, and questions.

However, creating a successful partnership takes time and effort as well as involving responsibility and creative collaboration on both sides (Venninen & Purola 2013, 48-49; NCCA 2009, 7; Bickley 2008, 1). At the introduction of this study, a question was made, what partnership does really mean? After reading this study, the reader will be able to respond this question. The last but no the least, Bidmead et al. (2002, 259) state, "A true power sharing relationship is based on mutual respect, a non-judgmental attitude, honesty, flexibility, and negotiation of every step of the partnership. Every Child´s education takes place within a relationship of families and professionals. As parents and educators learn the values and methods of collabo-

ration, they can create together an educational environment that supports the abilities of all children to succeed.

References

Alasuutari, M. 2010. Striving at Partnership: Parent-Practitioner Relationship in Finnish early educators´talk. Europeran Early Childhood education Research Journal. Vol 18 (2). 149-161. Accessed 29 October 2015.
http://site.ebrary.com/lib/laurea

Alasuutari, M. & Karila, K. 2009. Framing the picture of the child. Children and Society. 24 (2) 100–111.

Axelrod, R. 2010. Terms of Engagement: Changing the way We Change Organizations. 2do Ed. San Francisco: Berett-Koehler Publisher.

Archer, T. M. 2003. Web-based surveys. Journal of Extension 41 (4) 1-5. Accessed 18 August 2014 .

Aveyard, H. 2007. Doing a Literature Review in Health and Social care: A practical Guide. Second edition. Berkshire: the McGraw-Hill.

Beal, V. 2014. Asynchronous. Webopedia. Accessed 19 November 2014
http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/A/asynchronous.html

Bernstein, E. 12.01.2015. How "Active Listening Makes Both Participants in a Conversation feel Better". The Wall Street Journal. Accessed 14 February.2016.
http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-active-listening-makes-both-sides-of-a-conversation-feel-better-1421082684

Berry, L. Shankar. V. Parish, J., Cadwallader, S. & Dotzel, T. 2006. Creating New Markets Through Service Innovation. MIT Sloan Management Review, 47(2) 56-63.

Bickley, M. 2008. Building a Partnership with Your Child Care Service. A NCAC factsheet for Families. Accessed 23 January 2016.
http://www.ncac.gov.au

Bodie, G., & Jones, S. 2012.The Nature of Supportive Listening II: The Role of Verbal Person Centeredness and Nonverbal Immediacy. Western journal of Communication. Vol. 76 (3) 250-269. Accessed 14 February 2016.

Bojer, M.M. 2010. Dialogue: The place of dialogue in capacity development. In (Ed) Ubels, J., Acquaye-Baddoo, N., & Fowler, A. Capacity development Practice. London: Earthscan

Bouwman, H., Haaker, T. & De Vos, H. 2008. Mobile Service Innovation and Business Model. Netherlands: Springer

Bradford, C. 2014. 10 ways Mobile devices have Changed the World for Business, IT, and the Everyday Joe. StorageCraft. Accessed 11 April 2015.
http://www.storagecraft.com/blog/10-ways-mobile-devices-changed-world/

Bradley, M. 2015. Backbone. About.com. About tech. Accessed 22 January.2015
http://compnetworking.about.com/od/internetaccessbestuses/g/backbone.htm

Burnes, B. 2011. Introduction: Why Does Change Fail, and What Can We Do About It?. Journal Of Change Management. London: Routledge. Vol 11, No. 4, 445-450. Accessed 10 February 2014.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2011.630507

CGI. 2013. Experience the Commitment. Ainestot. Esiteet. Pro-Consona:Tenavanetti. Accessed 28 November 2013

http://www.cgi.fi/esitteet/pro_consona_tenavanetti

Cohen, L. Manion, L. & Morrison, K. 2000.Research Methods in Education. London: Routledge.

Collins, H. 2010. Creative Research: the theory and practice or research for the Creative industries. London: AVA

Davis, H. & Tsiantis, J. 2012. Promoting Children´s Mental Health: The European Early Promotion Project (EEPP). International Journal of Mental Health promotion. Vol 7 (1). Accessed 12 April 2016.
http://www.researchgate.net/publication/241726672

Davis, H. & Meltzer, L. 2007. Working in Partnership Through Early Support: Distance Learning Text. Working With Parents in Partnership. Department for Education and Skills.

Davis, H., Day, C. & Bidmead, C. 2002. Working in Partnership with Parents: the Parent Adviser Model. London: Harcourt Assessment.

Davis, H. 1993. Councelling Parents of Children with Chronical Illness or Disabilities. Leicester:Wiley-Blackwell. Davis, Hilton (2003). Miten tukea sairaan ja vammaisen lapsen vanhempia? Suomen sairaanhoitajaliitto ry.

Day, C. 2009. Building and Sustaining successful principalship in England: The importance of Trust. Journal of Educational Administration. Vol 7 (6). 719-730. Accessed 8 February 2016.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09578230910993104

Deyell-Gingold, P. 2008. Successful Transition to Kindergarten: The Role of teachers and Parents. Early Childhood News. The professional Resource for Teachers and parents. Accessed 24 February 2016.
http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=477

Downe-Wamboldt, B. 1992. Content analysis: Method, applications, and issues. Health Care for Women International, 13, 313-321.

Dhakal, P. 2013. Customer Satisfaction Research of Nepal SBI Bank Ltd. Bachelor´s Thesis. Haaga-Helia. University of Applied Sciences. Accessed 29 July 2014
http://www.theseus.fi/search?query=prakash&submit=Hae

Downe-Wamboldt, B. 1992. Content analysis: Method, applications, and issues. Health Care for Women. Internation- al, 13, 313-321.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P. 2012. Management Research. 4th Edition. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

ECEC in Helsinki. 2007. Early Childhood Education and Care in Helsinki. City of Helsinki. Social Services department. Helsinki: Speedmaster Oy.
http://www.hel.fi/sosv

ECEC Nurmijärvi. 2010. Varhaiskasvatus Suunnitelma. Accessed 14 February 2016.
http://www.nurmijarvi.fi/filebank/3125-Nurmijarven_kunnan_varhaiskasvatussuunnitelma_2010.pdf

ECEC. 2014. Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland. Brochures of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2004:14. Third Edition. Hyvinkää: Suomen Printman

Ekström, M. 2014. Change Management [lecture notes]. Held on 15 April 2014. Laurea University of Applied Sciences.

ELPPEG. 2010. Principles for Engaging With Families. A Framework for local authorities and national organisations to evaluate and improve engagement with families. Accessed 14 February 2016.
Principles for Engaging With Families. A Framework for local authorities and national organisations to evaluate and improve engagement with families.

Endsley, R. & Minish, P. 1998. Staff Communication in Day Care Centers during Morning and Afternoon Transitions. Accessed 29 December 2014
http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED308980.pdf

European Commission.2012. ECEC for children from disadvantaged backgrounds: findings from a European literature review and two case studies. Accessed 20 April 2016.
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/ecec-report_en.pdf

Fine, S. & Glasser, P. 1996. The First Helping Interview: Engaging the Client and Building Trust. London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Finnish National Board of Education. 2016. Early Childhood Education and Care. Accessed 9 March 2016.
http://www.oph.fi/english/education_system/early_childhood_education

Fritsch, K. 2011. What is Service Design. A simplified guide to aid in today´s confusion about a new discipline of business. Bachelor Thesis. Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Fowler, K. 2005. Mind Tools: Essential Skills for an excellent career. Accessed 14 February 2016.
http://www.mindtools.com

Free Management. 2013. Active Listening: Communication Skills. Accessed 14.February 2016.
http://www.free-management-ebooks.com

Freire, P.1970. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Fulghum, Robert. 2004. All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten. 25th anniversary edition.

Ghauri, P. & Grønhaug, K. 2005. Research Methods in Business Studies: A practical Guide, Third Edition; Pearson Education Limited. Great Britain

Gillham, B. 2000. Developing A Questionnaire. London: Continuum.

Grammarly©. 2016.
www.grammarly.com

Gregory, I. 2003. Ethics in Research. Cornwall: Continuum.

Grigoroudis, E. & Siskos. 2010. Customer Satisfaction Evaluation, Methods for measuring and implementing service quality. Springer

Grönroos, C. 2011. Value Co-Creation in Service Logic: A Critical Analysis, Sage Publications.

Gummerus, J. 2011. Customer value in e-service: Conceptual Foundation and Empirical Evidence. Helsinki: Hanken School of Economics.

Gummerus, J. & Pihlström, M. 2011. Context and Mobile Services´s value-in-use. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (18) 521-533.

Gurlui, I. 2014. Educational Partnership In primary Education. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences. 180 (2015) 606-611.

Hagerman, L. 2012. Engaging Your Employees. Professional & Organizational development University of Washigton. Leading Edge: For and about leaders at the UW. Accessed 04 February 2016.
http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/publications/email/pod/convio/leadingedge/sp12/leadingedge-engaging.html

Harju, S. & Kiuru, S. 2015. Päämäärä samassa suunnassa" Kasvatuskumppanuus vanhempien kokemana Nurmijärven kunnan päiväkodissa. BB Accessed 14 November 2016.

Hart, C.1998. Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination. London: Sage

Hedeen, T. Moses, P. & Peter, M. 2011. Encouraging Meaningful Parent/Educators Collaboration: A Review of Recent Literature. CADRE. Accessed 23 January 2016.
http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/pdf/CADRE_Meaningful Collaboration.pdf

Hsieh, H. & Shannon, S. 2005. Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. Qualitative Health Research. 15 no. 9 1277-1288. Accessed 13 October 2014.
http://qhr .sagepub.com.nelli.laurea.fi/content/15/9/1277.full.pdf+html

Hylton Rushton, C., Reina, M., Francovich, C., Naumann, P., & Reina, D. 2010. Application of the Reina Trust and Betrayal Model to the Experience of Pediatric Critical Care Clinicians. American Journal of Critical Care. AJCC. Accessed 06 February 2016.
http://ajcc.aacnjournals.org/content/19/4/e41/F1.expansion

Isaacs, W. 1999. Dialogue and the art of Thinking Together: A pioneering Approach to Communicating in Business and in Life. New York: Dubleday.

Joey Pauley. 2011. Trust Triangle. 10.01.2011 Accessed 02 February 1026.
http://joeypauley.com/trust-triangle/

Joey Pauley. 2012. 5 steps to more productive meetings…The Ground Rules.22.03 2012. Accessed 02 February 2016.
http://joeypauley.com/5-steps-productive-meetings-ground-rules/

Järvinen, R. 2009. Päiväkodin ja Vanhempien Välinen Sähköinen Viestintä. Teknillinen Korkeakoulu. Informaatio- ja luonnontieteiden tiedekunta Tietotekniikan Tutkinto-ohjelma. Espoo: Tietotekniikan Laitos.

Kaarina. 2009. Perhepäivähoidon Mobiiliratkaisu Kaarinassa. 11.11.2009.Accessed 22 May 2014. Kanter, R.M. (1983) The Change Masters: Corporate entrepreneurs at work. London: Routledge

Kaskela, M. & Kronqvist, E.L. 2007. Niin ainutlaatuinen. Näkökulmia lapsen yksilölliseen varhaiskasvatussuunnitelmaan. Tampere: Stakes

Kaskela, M. & Kekkonen, M. 2006. Kasvatuskumppanuus Kannattelee Lasta: Opas varhaiskasvatuksen kehittämiseen. Oppaita 63. Helsinki: Stakes.

THL. 2014. Kasvatuskumppanuus. Accessed 6 April 2015
https://www.thl.fi/fi/web/lapset-nuoret-ja-perheet/tyon_tueksi/varhainen-avoin-yhteistoiminta/kasvatuskumppanuus

Kekkonen, Marjatta (2012). Kasvatuskumppanuus puheena: varhaiskasvattajat, vanhemmat ja lapset päivähoidon diskursiivisilla näyttämöillä. Tutkimus 72. Helsinki: Terveyden ja hyvivoinnin laitos (THL).

Keatinge, D.,Fowler, C. & Briggs, C. 2007. Evaluating the Family Partnership Model (FPM) Program and Implementation in Practice in New South Wales, Australia. Australian Journal of Advance Nursing. Vol 25 (2). 28-35.

Kelly, J. & Barnard, K. 1999. Parent education Within a Relationship-focused Model. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education. International Journal of Menthal Health Promotion Vol 19. 151-157. Accessed 12 April 2016.
http://www.researchgate.net

Kindström, D. & Kowalkowski, C. 2014. Service Innovation in Product-centric Firms: A Multi-dimensional Business Mod- el Perspective", Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, Vol. 29 (2) 96-111.

Konzal, J. 2001. Collaborative Inquiry: a means of creating a learning community. The Early Childhood Research Quarterly. Vol 16 (2001) 95-115. Accessed 14 February 2016.
http://www.ebscohost.com/

Korn, M.2013. The Wall Street Journal: Business. What it´s like Being a Middle Manager To-day. Accessed 17 February 2014
http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323420604578650074170664066

Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., Saunders, J. & Wong, V. 1986. Principles of Marketing: The Europe-an Edition, Hemel Hemstead: Prentice Hall Europe.

Lascarides, V. & Hinitz, B. 2011. History of The Early Childhood Education. New York: Routledge.

Lehtinen, T.n.d. Kasvatuskumppanuus - Kumppanuus Maahanmuuttajataustaisten Perheiden Kanssa. Accessed 22 April 2016.
http://taistolehtinen.fi/

McCubbins, L. J. 2004. Transition into Kindergarten: A Collaboration of Family and Education-al Perspectives. Msc. The Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Accessed 23 February 2016.
https://theses.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-04282004-164713/unrestricted/transition.pdf

McNaughton, D. & Vostal, B. 2010. Using Active Listening to Improve Collaboration With Par-ents. Accessed 7 February 2016.
http://www.researchgate.net/publication/230852814

Ministry of Finance. 2013. Government Decision On Central Government Spending Limits For 2014–2017. Accessed 02 March 2014.
https://www.vm.fi/vm/en/04_publications_and_documents/03_documents/20130327Centra/2014-2017_sl_rev.pdf

Mortenson, G., & Relin, D. O. (2006). Three Cups of Tea. New York: Viking–Penguin Group.

Moss, P. & Dahlberg, G. 2008. Beyond quality in Early Childhood Education and Care- Lan-guages of evaluation. New Zealand Journal of Teachers´work, Vol.5 (1) 03-12. Accessed 08 March 2016.
http://www.teacherswork.acnz./journal/volume5_issue1/moss.pdf

MukavaIT. 2013. Yritys. Accessed 22 March 2014.
http://www.mukavait.fi

NCCA. 2009. Aistear. The Early childhood Curriculum Framework: Guidelines for Good Prac-tices. Accessed 10 March 2016.
http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/pdfs/Guidelines_ENG/Guidelines_ENG.pdf

Nicolini, M. 2003. Teachers´perceptions of Parent/Teacher roles in Parent involvement in Education. University of Florida. Accessed 5 March 2016.

Knopf, H. & Swick, K. 2007. How Parents Feels About Their Child´s Teacher/School: Implications for Early Childhood Professionals. Early Childhood Education Journal. Vol 34 (4). Accessed 2 February 2016.
http://www.ebscohost.com/

Nurmijärvi. 2014. In English. Accessed 5 March 2014.
http://www.nurmijarvi.fi/info/in_english

Office of Community Services. 2012. CCF Tools Partnerships: Framework for Working Together. Publised 14.06.2012. Accessed 16 November 2015.
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/partnerships-frameworkd-for-working-together

OECD. 2000. Early childhood education and care policy in Finland. Background report prepared for the OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy. Accessed 23 April 2016.
http://www.oecd.org/finland/2476019.pdf

OECD. 2006. Starting Strong II: Early childhood Education and Care. Paris: Organisation for economic Co-Operation and Development. Accessed 24 April 2016.
http://www.unicef.org/lac/spbarbados/Implementation/ECD/StartingStrongII_OECD_2006.pdf

OECD. 2010. Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care. Research Brief: Parental and Community Engagement Matters. Accessed 23 April 2016.
http://www.oecd.org

Owens, S. & Taylor, K. 2010. Parents and Teachers: What Does an Effective Partnership Look Like? Homeroom. The Official blog of the U.S. Department of Education. Accessed 23 April 2016.
http://blog.ed.gov/2010/10/parents-and-teachers-what-does-an-effective-partnership-look-like/

Phillips, J. 2012. Relentless Innovation. What works, What doesn´t and what that means for your business. The McGraw-Hill company. USA

Pugh, G. 2001. Contemporary Issues in the Early Years, Working Collaboratively for Children. Third edition. Paul Chapman Publishing.

Punch, K. 2004. Introduction to Social Research Quantitative & Qualitative Approach. London, Sage Publications.

Punch, K. 2003. Survey Research: The Basic. London: Sage Publications.

Reina, D. & Reina, M. 2005. Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace: Building effective relationship in your organization. 2do Ed. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Accessed 03 February 2016.
https://www.bkconnection.com/static/Trust_and_Betrayal_in_the_Workplace_EXCERPT.pdf

Reina, M. & Smith, Jane. 2004. The Power of Trust in Law Practices: What Is It and How Do You Get It?. Law Practice Today. Managing by Agreement. Accessed 06 February 2016.
http://apps.americanbar.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mba06041.html

Richmond, V. 2006. Teacher Nonverbal Immediacy: Use and Outcomes. Chapter 6. In Mottet, T., Richmond, V., & McCroskey, J. Handbook of Instructional Communication; Rhetorical and Relational Perspectives. London: Routledge. Accessed 3 February 2016. https://uab.edu/Communicationstudies/richmond_files/Richmond%20Teacher%20Nonverbal%20Immediacy.pdf

Robertson, K. 2005, Active Listening: More than Just Paying Attention. Training Education. Australian Family Physician. Vol 34 (12). Accessed 2 February 2016.

Rockwell, Andre, & Hawley. 2010. Families and Educators as Partners: Issues and Challenges. Second Edition. Belmont: Wadsworth

Rosendahl, J. & Ando, R. 29.08.2013. Finnish government plans to trim generous welfare model. Reuter. The Latest in Business, Financy, and Technology News. Accessed 11 April 2015. http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/29/us-finland-reforms-idUSBRE97S19320130829

Sanna, A.2015. Personnel Manager. ECEC Nurmijärvi. Conversation with the author 25.11.2015. Personal Communication.

Serkkola, A. & Sukuvaara, T. 2007. Sähköinen tiedonvaihto ja kommunikaatio kodin ja päiväkodin välillä:Mobiilimuksun arviointi. Lahti: Teknillinen korkeakoulu Lahden keskus.

Smaby, K. n.d. Customer Service. Being Human is Good Business. Accessed 29 November 2014 http://www.kristinsmaby.com/

SmartSurvey. 2016. 10 advantages of onlines suerveys: Wondering what online suervey can do for you? Read on!. Accessed 23 January 2016. https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/articles/10-advantages-of-online-surveys

Smith, E. 2013. PT3 at South: Parents, teachers talking together to Help Students. Accessed 24 February 2016. http://www.prichardcommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/AUG_2013_16.pdf

Sorsa, A. 2014. Rights of the Children in Hospital Care: Childhood, Parenthood and Family. Msc. Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Accessed 10 January 2015. https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/83865/Rights-of-the-children-in-hospital-care.pdf?sequence=1

Steen, M., Manschot, M. & De Koning, N. 2011. Benefits of co-design in service design. International Journal of De- sign. Vol 5 (2)

Tavory, I. & Timmermans, S. 2012. Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis. SAGE. Accessed 12 February 2015. academia.edu

Tanyi, S. 2011. Interaction between staff of multicultural daycare and immigrant families. Bs. Laurea Univerity of Applied Sciences. Accessed 21 February 2016. https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/32151/Thesis Tanyi Sheila Ar-rah.pdf?sequence=1

Tahvanainen, J. 2015. Meeting early childhood needs in non-standard hour childcare: A re-source pesrpective. Msc. Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Accessed 15 April 2015. https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/96905/JENNIthesis4.pdf?sequence=1

Taguma, M., Litjens, I. & Makowiecki, K. 2012. Quality Matters in Early Childhood Education and Care: Finland 2012. OECD publications. Accessed 19 November 2015. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED530922.pdf

Tieto 2013. Varhaiskasvatus. Päiväkodin Muksunetti. IT-ratkaisu päiväkodin arkeen ja vanhempien kasvatuskump- panuuteen. Accessed 24 November 2013.
http://www.tieto.fi/toimialat/sosiaali-ja-terveydenhuolto/varhaiskasvatuksen-tietojarjestelma/varhaiskasvatuksen-ammattilaisten-ja-vanhempien-tietojarjestelma

The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland. 2003. Helsinki: Stakes.

Thyer, B. 2010 (ed.). Handbook of social work Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Toivainen, J. 2014. Tampere Kaupunki. Lasten kunnallisen päivähoidon maksut muuttuvat elokuussa. 23.01.2014. Accessed 20 April 2015.
http://www.tampere.fi/perhejasosiaalipalvelut/paivahoito/maksut.html

Tuomi, J, & Sarajärvi, A. 2011. Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi. Helsinki, Tammi

Torben, R. 2011. Change management, 12 reasons why people resist change.
Accessed 18 February 2014.
http://www.torbenrick.eu/blog/change-management/12-reasons-why-people-resist-change/

Turun Sanomat. 2013. Paivahoitoon tuntiperusteiset maksut budjetista sopu. 28.08.2013. Accessed 19 December 2013.
www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/528638/Paivahoitoon+tuntiperusteiset+maksut+++budjetista+sopu

Tyagi, B. 2013. Listening: An Important Skill and Its Varoius Aspects. An International Journal in English. Accessed 7 February 2016.
http://www.the-criterion.com

Vanhanen, A. 2015. Customer perceived value on a new technology-based service: Mobile service innovation. Msc. Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Accessed 15 April 2015.
https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/96780/Thesis April 2015..pdf?sequence=1

Venninen, T. & Purola, K. Educators´Views on parents´participation on three different identified levels. Varhaiskasvatusksen Tiedelehti. Journal of early Childhood education research. Vol 2 (1) 48-62.

Virginia Department of Education. 2002. Collaborative Family-School Relationship for Children´s Learning. Accessed 11 November 2016.
Collaborative Family-School Relationship for Children´s Learning.

WOM. 2014. Mobile NFC Solutions. While on the Move. Accessed 10 August 2014
http://www.whileonthemove.com/yritys_en.html

Wyatt, J. 2000. When to Use Web-based Surveys. Accessed 05 March 2014.
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC61446/

Zenger, T. Lazzarini, S. & Poppo, L. 2001. Informal and Formal Organization in New Institutional Economics. Accessed 25 April 2016.
http://apps.olin.wustl.edu/faculty/zenger/advances6u.pdf

Yle Uutiset. 2014. Daycare changes delayed as teachers criticise plans. 11 December 2014. Accessed 12 November 2014.
http://yle.fi/uutiset/daycare_changes_delayed_as_teachers_criticise_plans/7682539

Figures

Tables

Appendixes

Appendix 1: The Covering Letter in Finnish

Arvoisat kyselyyn osallistujat

"Nyt on aika vaikuttaa kasvatuskumppanuuteen"

Nimeni on Andrea Vanhanen ja olen Mäkituvan päiväkodin lastentarhanopettaja Heinähattu-
jen ryhmässä.
Tällä hetkellä suoritan Lastentarhanopettajan pätevyyttä 60op. Laurea- ammattikorkeakou-
lussa työn ohessa. Olen saanut tutkimusluvan Nurmijärven kunnalta ja opinnäytetyön tavoit-
teena on tutkia varhaiskasvatuskumppanuutta ja sen vaikutusta päivähoitoon.

Syy miksi haluaisin tehdä tämän tutkimuksen on, koska kasvatuskumppanuus on tällä hetkellä
se asia mikä puhuttaa ja kiinnostaa. Opinnäytetyöni otsikko olisi: Parents and Educators:
What are the components that govern a successful partnership in childcare settings?
Arvostan käyttäjäystävällistä tukeanne tässä prosessissa, koska sen avulla on mahdollisuus
kehittää parempaa kasvatuskumppanuutta. Osallistumisesi ja antamasi tiedot auttavat ym-
märtämään kasvatuskumppanuuden tilaa ja kehityksen tarvetta.

Lähetän kyselylomakkeen sähköpostina jokaisen omaan sähköpostiin, 12.01.2016 alkaen. Ky-
selyyn osallistuminen kestää vain muutaman minuutin. Osallistumisesi tähän tutkimukseen on
tärkeätä ja olennaista sekä arvostettua.

Vastatkaa kyselyyn 26.1.2016 mennessä.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/11A6ifIly61Le_yK9KyvIEuRD2NM7mNm7n55ZhTgXfqU/viewfo
rm?c=0&w=1&usp=mail_form_link

Kaikki tiedot pidetään luottamuksellisina eivätkä vastaajien tunnistetiedot tule esille missään
tutkimuksen vaiheessa.
Innolla kanssanne tässä projektissa .

Ystävällisin terveisin

Andrea Vanhanen
Lastentarhanopettaja opiskelija

Appendix 2: The Web-based Questionnaire

Kasvatuskumppanuus Kyselylomake

Arvoisat kyselyyn osallistujat

Sinut on kutsuttu osallistumaan tähän kyselyyn koskien kasvatuskumppanuutta ja sen vaikutusta päivähoitoon
Arvostan käyttäjäystävällistä tukeanne tässä prosessissa , koska sen avulla on mahdollisuus kehittää parempaa kasvatuskumppanuutta. Osallistumisesi ja antamasi tiedot auttavat ymmärtämään kasvatuskumppanuuden tilaa ja kehityksen tarvetta.

Kyselyyn osallistuminen kestää vain muutaman minuutin.Kaikki tiedot pidetään luottamuksellisina eivätkä vastaajien tunnistetiedot tule esille missään tutkimuksen vaiheessa.

Vastatkaa kyselyyn 26.1.2016 mennessä

Jos sinulla on kysyttävää, ota yhteyttä:

Andrea Vanhanen
Lastentarhanopettaja opiskelija.
Laurea University of Applied Sciences
e-mail: andrea.vanhanen@nurmijärven.fi

Kiitos

*Pakollinen

Lomakkeen täytti *

☐ Äiti

☐ Isä

☐ Kasvataja

☐ Muu huoltaja

Mitä termit kasvatuskumppanuus ja kumppani kertovat/merkitsevat sinulle? *

Oma vastauksesi

Miten olet kokenut kasvatuskumppanuutta päiväkodissasi?

Oma vastauksesi

Jos et ole kokenut kasvatuskumppanuutta vasta "en ole kokenut"

☐ En ole kokenut

Mitkä ovat mielestasi avain tekijöitä luomaan tehokkaan kasvatuskumppanuuden ja miksi?

Oma vastauksesi

Mielestäsi mitkä olisivat käytännön toimintoja toutettaa parempaa kasvatuskumppanuutta?

Oma vastauksesi

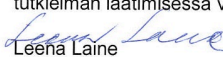**Minkälaisia odotuksia sinulla on kasvatuskumppanuuden suhteen päiväkotiasi kohtaan?**

Oma vastauksesi

LATAA   100 %. Sait sen valmiiksi.

Älä koskaan lähetä salasanaa Google Formsin kautta.

Appendix 3:Permission to Conduct the Research

NURMIJÄRVEN KUNTA	PÄÄTÖS	§ 84

Sivistystoimi
Varhaiskasvatuspäällikkö   18.11.2015

Asia   Tutkimuslupa / Andrea Vanhanen

Selostus   Andrea Vanhanen lastentarhanopettajan pätevyyttä. Hän anoo tutkimus-
                    lupaa tutkiakseen varhaiskasvatuskumppanuudesta ja sen
                    vaikutuksesta päivähoitoon asiakas sekä työntekijä tasolla.

Päätös   Päätän myöntää tutkimusluvan sillä edellytyksellä, että noudattaa
                    tutkielman laatimisessa vaitiolo- ja salassapitosäännöksiä.

Allekirjoitus

                    Leena Laine
                    varhaiskasvatuspäällikkö

Päätöksen nähtäväksi
asettaminen   19.11.2015

OIKAISUVAATIMUS   Päätökseen tyytymätön voi tehdä kirjallisen oikaisuvaatimuksen, joka on toimitettava sivistyslauta-
                    kunnalle 14 päivän kuluessa päätöksen tiedoksisaannista. Oikaisuvaatimuksen saa tehdä se, jo-
                    hon päätös on kohdistettu tai jonka oikeuteen, velvollisuuteen tai etuun päätös välittömästi vaikut-
                    taa (asianosainen) sekä kunnan jäsen.

OHJEET   **Oikaisuvaatimuskirjelmä**
                    Oikaisuvaatimus on tehtävä kirjallisesti ja siinä on ilmoitettava:
                    1. valittajan nimi, ammatti ja postiosoite (asiamiehen osalta vastaavat tiedot);
                    2. päätös, johon haetaan muutosta;
                    3. miltä osin päätökseen haetaan muutosta ja muutos, jota siihen vaaditaan tehtäväksi; sekä
                    4. muutosvaatimuksen perusteet.

                    Kirjelmä on vaatimuksen tekijän itsensä tai hänen valtuuttamansa asiamiehen allekirjoitettava ja sii-
                    hen on liitettävä päätös, johon haetaan muutosta sekä selvitys siitä, mistä päivästä oikaisuvaati-
                    muksen/valituksen tekemisen aika seuraavassa todetun mukaisesti lasketaan.

                    Oikaisuvaatimusaika
                    Oikaisuvaatimus- ja valitusaika lasketaan tiedoksisaannista.

                    Asianosaiselle (se, johon päätös on kohdistettu tai jonka oikeuteen, velvollisuuteen tai etuun päätös
                    välittömästi vaikuttaa) lähetetään päätöstä koskeva pöytäkirjanote erikseen tiedoksi kirjeellä.
                    Asianosaisen katsotaan saaneen päätöksestä tiedon, jollei muuta näytetä, seitsemän päivän kulut-
                    tua kirjeen lähettämisestä. Kunnan jäsenen katsotaan saaneen päätöksestä tiedon, kun pöytäkirja
                    on asetettu yleisesti nähtäville.

                    Oikaisuvaatimuksen toimittaminen muutoksenhakuviranomaiselle

                    Oikaisuvaatimuskirjelmä on muutoksenhakijan itsensä tai hänen valtuuttamansa asiamiehen toimi-
                    tettava taikka postitse lähetettävä oikaisuvaatimusviranomaisen kirjaamoon ennen oikaisuvaati-
                    musajan päättymistä.

                    Oikaisuvaatimusviranomaisen osoite ja postiosoite:
                    Nurmijärven sivistyslautakunta
                    Katuosoite: Keskustie 2B, 01900 Nurmijärvi
                    Postiosoite: PL 37, 01901 Nurmijärvi

JAKELU   hakija(t)
                    aluejohtajat