

Age-appropriate sexuality education

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- There was poor country, suffering the consequences of war
- STIs were common
- Contraception hardly existing
- Women dying of illegal abortion

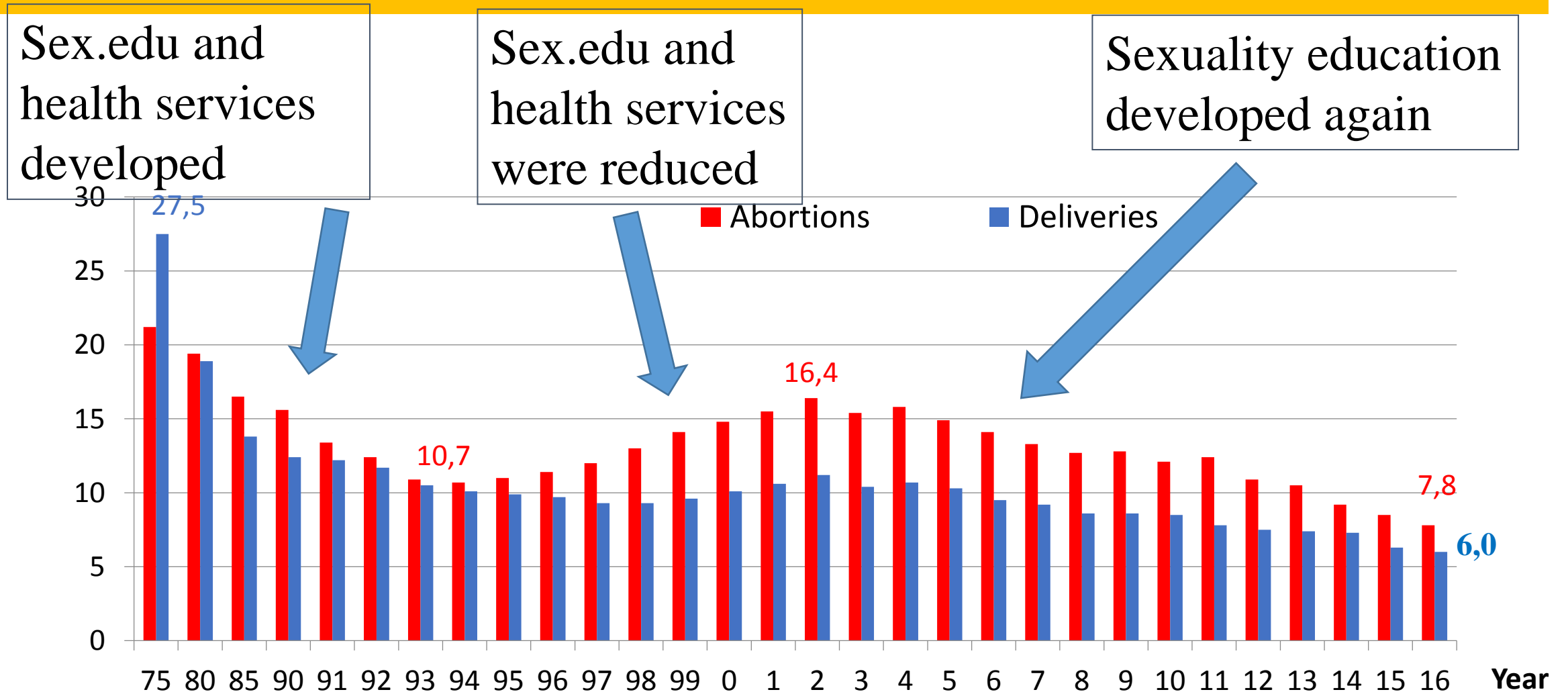
Finland 70 years ago

Since 2003 sexuality education has been a part of a larger topic: Health education (HE)

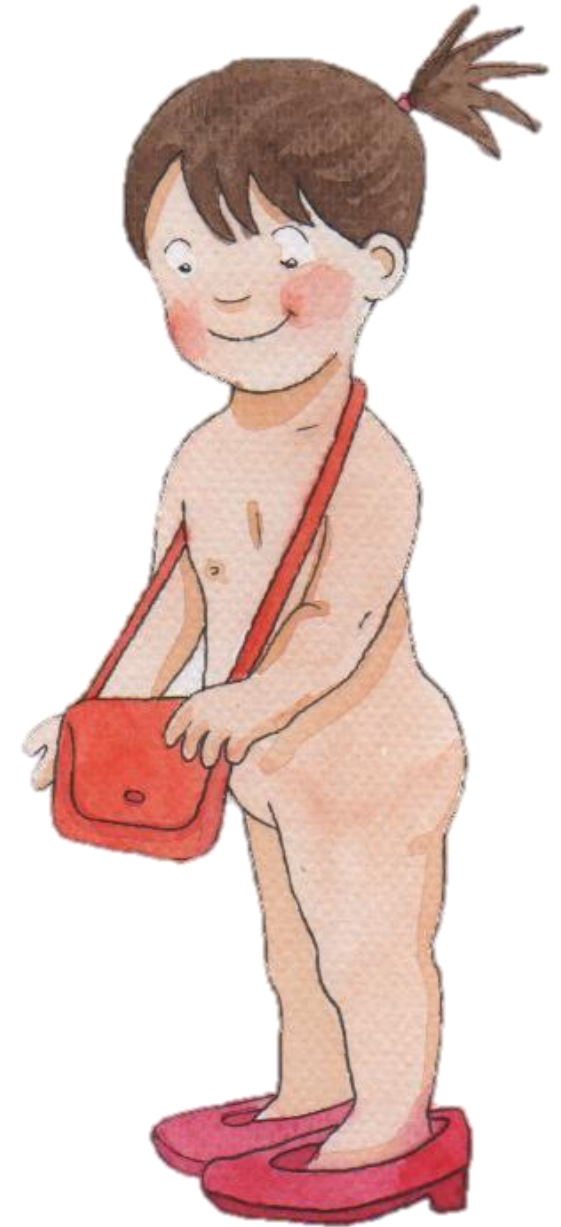
- Possibilities for planning and producing text books for HE
- Possibilities for training of HE teachers, as there are teachers of mathematics, languages and other topics.
- HE teachers interested self-select into this topic
- Works well!



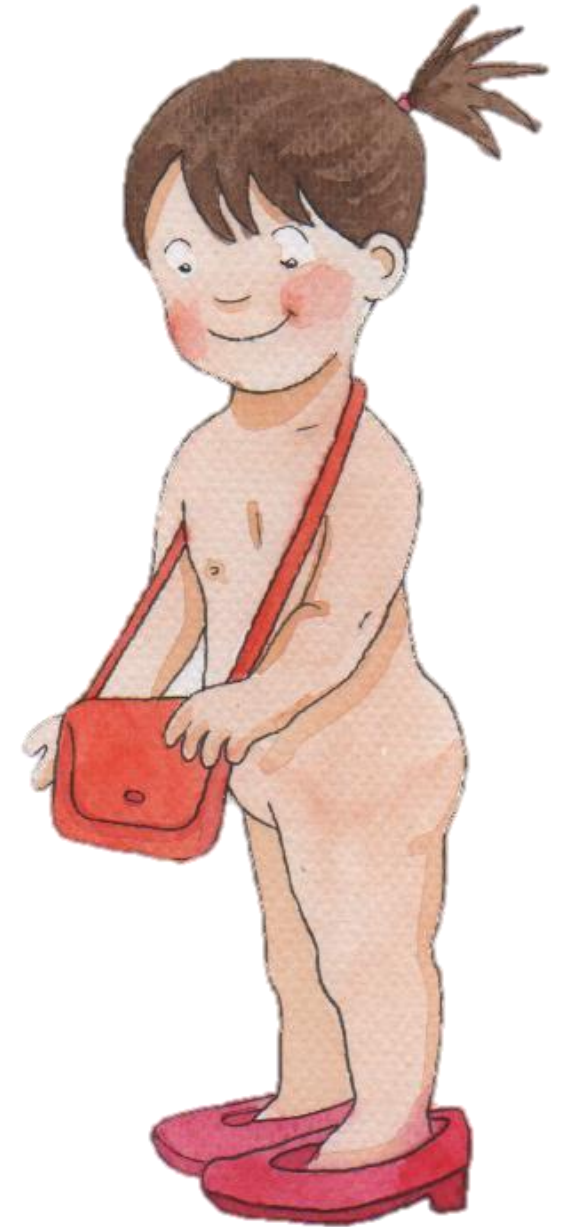
Abortions and deliveries (per 1000) in 15-19 yr old girls in Finland (1975-2016)



Young children's
Sexual Health
&
Sexual Rights
?



How can we promote /
quarantee young
children's
Sexual Health
& Sexual Rights?

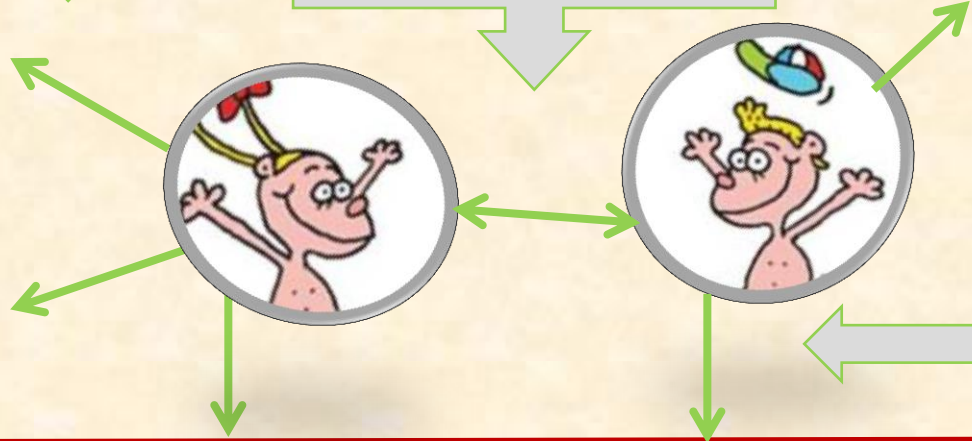


CHILDS PERSPECTIVE

Alone

Between each other

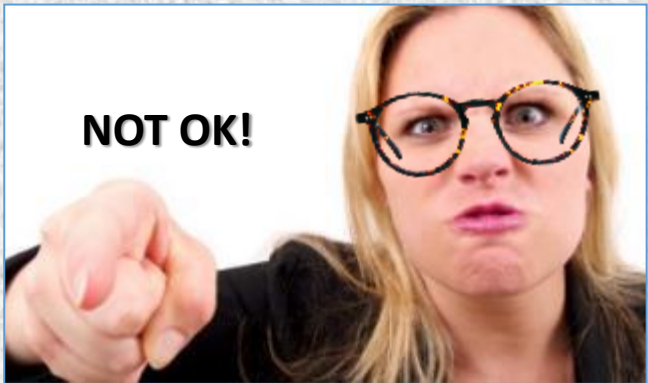
Children express,
adults interpret



Openly

ADULTS PERSPECTIVE

Training
rules
SE
model



Adults own
glasses:
knowledge,
attitudes,
beliefs,
experiences,
socio cultural
obstacles,
taboos, fears...

Young children's sexuality education

Our studies in Finland 2013 - 2014

- **Situation analysis**
- **Needs assessment**
- **Among parents and professionals**



DAY-CARE PROFESSIONALS (nurses,
preschool teachers) for 0-6-year olds
2013, N=507

5 background questions
88 multiple choice questions
13 open questions

PARENTS of 0-6-year-old children
2014, N=614

14 background questions
85 multiple choice questions
25 open questions

- **If and what kind of expressions children show**
- **What children ask and how adults respond**
- **What are problems in supporting and protecting healthy (sexual) development**

Studies of childhood sexuality

EUROPE

- Lindblad et al. **1995**, Preschoolers' sexual behavior at daycare centers: An epidemiological study, **SWEDEN**
- Volbert & Homburg. **1996**, Was wissen zwei bis sechsjährige kindern uber sexualitet. **GERMANY**
- Brilleslijper – Kater & Baartman. **2000**, What do young children know about sex? Research on the sexual knowledge of children between the ages of 2 and 6 years. **THE NETHERLANDS**
- Davies et al. **2000**, Children's sexual play and behavior in pre-school settings: Staff, s perceptions, reports and responses. **UNITED KINGDOM**
- de Graaf & Rademakers **2011**, The psychological measurement of childhood sexual development in western societies: Methodological challenges, review **THE NETHERLANDS**
- Larsson & Svedin. **2002**, Teachers and parents reports on 3 – to 6-year-old children's sexual behavior – a comparison, **SWEDEN**
- Lopez et al. **2002**, Prepubertal sexuality, **SPAIN**
- Sandnabba et al. **2003**, Age and gender specific sexual behaviors in children. **FINLAND**
- Kakavoulis **2007**, Early childhood sexual development and sex education: A survey of attitudes of nursery school teachers. **GREECE**
- Miragoli et al. **2017**, Child sexual behaviors in school context: Age and gender differences. **ITALY**

USA

- Gordon et al. **1990**, Age and social-class differences in children's knowledge of sexuality, USA
- Friedrich et al. **1991**, Normative sexual behavior in children, USA
- Kaeser et al. **2000**, Sexual behaviors of young children that occur in schools. USA
- De Lamater & Friedrich. **2002**, Human Sexual Development. USA
- Friedrich **2003**, Studies of sexuality of nonabused children. USA
- Hornor **2004**, Sexual behavior in children: Normal or not? USA
- Martin **2014**, Making sense of children's sexual behavior in child care: An analysis of adult responses in special investigation reports, USA

AUSTRALIA

- Walker & Milton. **2006**, Teachers' and parents' roles in the sexuality education of primary school children: A comparison of experiences in Leeds, UK and in Sydney, AUSTRALIA
- Davies & Robinson. **2010**, Hatching babies and stork deliveries: Risk and regulation in the construction of children's sexual knowledge, AUSTRALIA

CANADA

- Balter et al. **2016**, The development of sexuality in childhood in early learning settings: An exploration of early childhood educators' perceptions, CANADA

Result: There is a need

- Lack of information
- Terms, words; They do educate, but don't like the word "sexuality education"
- Professionals and parents don't talk about SE with each other
- No models
- Misbeliefs and ignorance
- Own sexuality education history



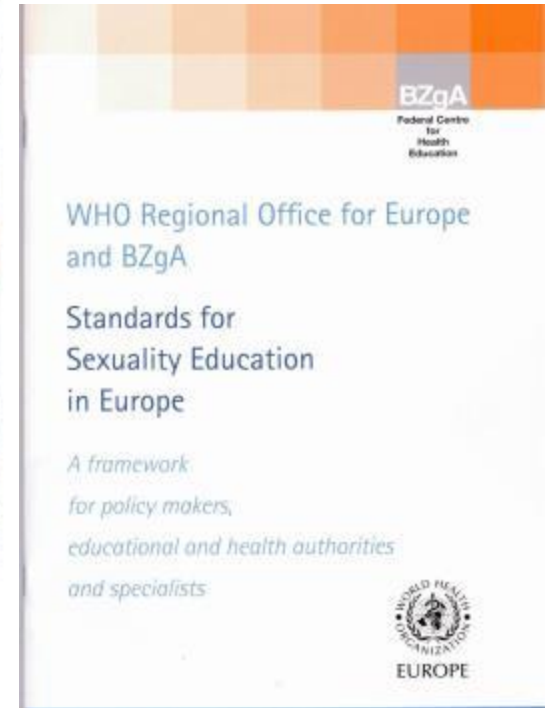


2010 WHO's Regional Office for Europe together with BZgA (Federal Centre for Health Education)



23.05.2010

BZgA on behalf of the expert group



WHO's Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe 2010

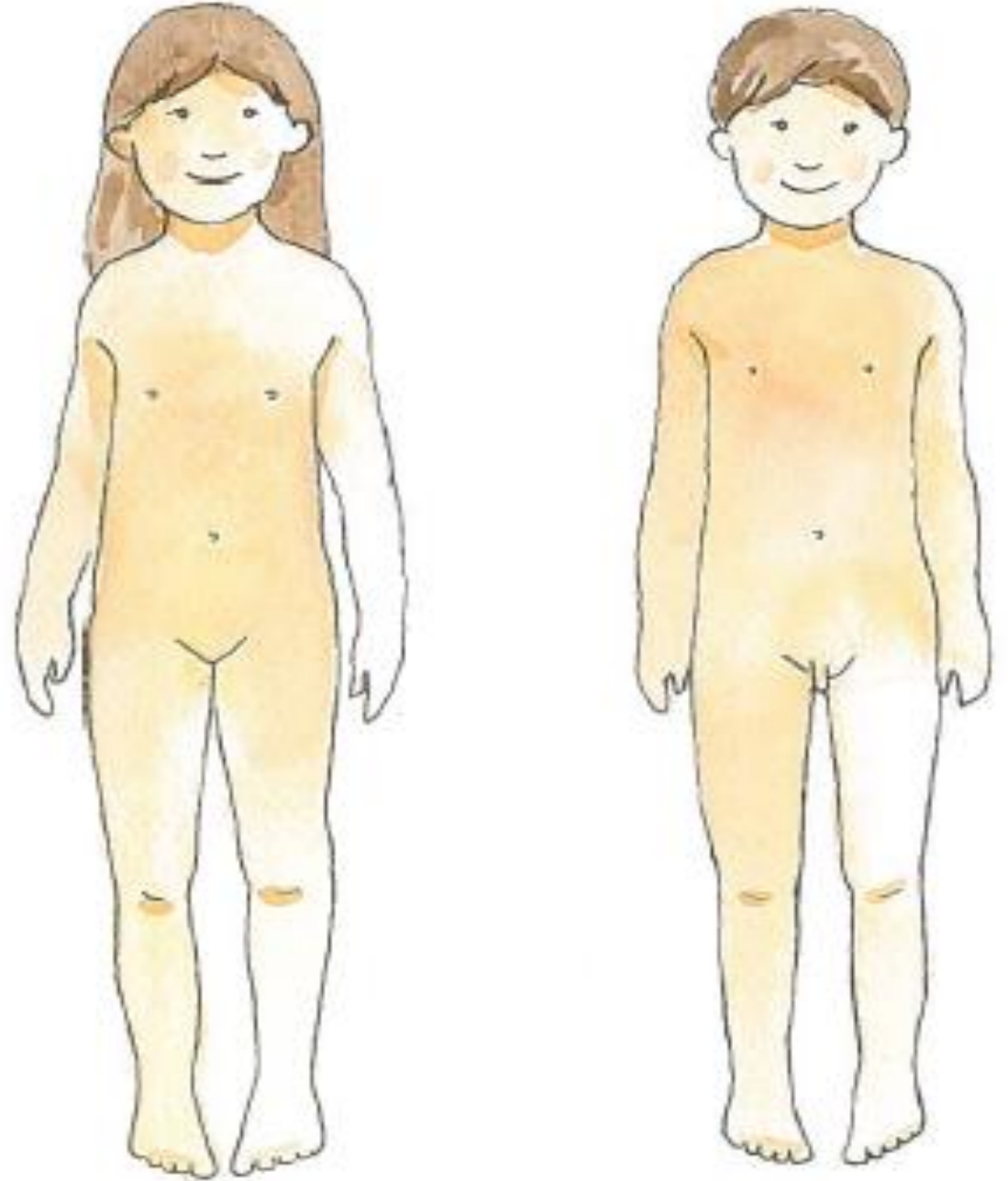
Age-appropriate contents, with 8 topics of SE

- 0-4 year olds
- 4-6 year olds
- 6-9 year olds
- 9-12 year olds
- 12-15 year olds
- > 15 year olds



Knowledge

- How to take care of your body and hygiene
- Names to all body parts
- Bodies are diverse



Skill

If someone touches or behaves towards you in an unpleasant way



1. Say NO!
2. Go away!
3. Tell an adult you trust!



Positive attitude



- My body is my own!
- Different kind of bodies are equal and must be respected
- All body parts are important and worthy
- Under the swimsuit are the most own and valuable places

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



Demands respect for the views of the child

Children's rights include having their needs and opinions taken into account

An access to age-appropriate information.



Who gives SE to young children?

**Older children
and youth**

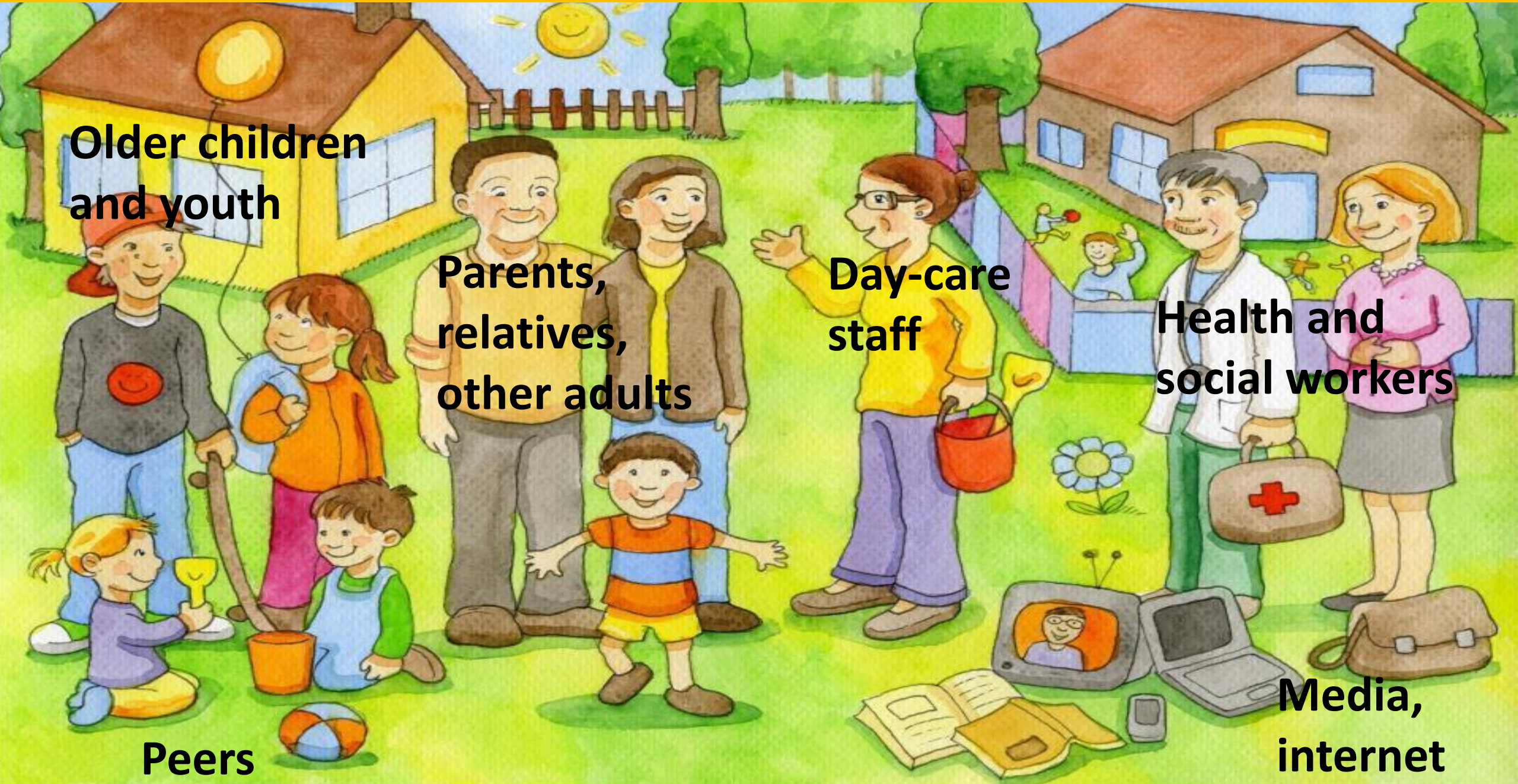
**Parents,
relatives,
other adults**

**Day-care
staff**

**Health and
social workers**

Peers

**Media,
internet**



Adults respond randomly

- SE occurs in day-care occasionally, usually unplanned.
- The WHO's Standards are not known by professionals or parents.



Day-care professionals' ways to respond to the need of SE

1.

Active

- Common, important
- Normal part of the work.

2.

Enabling
Reactive

- Atmosphere to make it possible for children to ask.

3.

Passive,
Reactive

- Only if the child asks.
- Limited answers, only to that child.

4.

Denier

- In day-care SE is not needed.
- Family issue.

According to our study:

- Adults' competencies and willingness to implement SE vary
- Children will not receive age-appropriate responses and knowledge to ensure safe sexual development and well-being
- Normal sexual behavior and curiosity may even be punished
- Symptoms of health problems or abuse may remain ignored or judged. This is not safe for children and families!

Parents want to protect child sexuality, which is:

- Without shyness
- Physical and loving
- Positive and valuable
- Poo and pee stuff
- Affections between children
- Wondering and understanding
- Pleasure, joy of one self



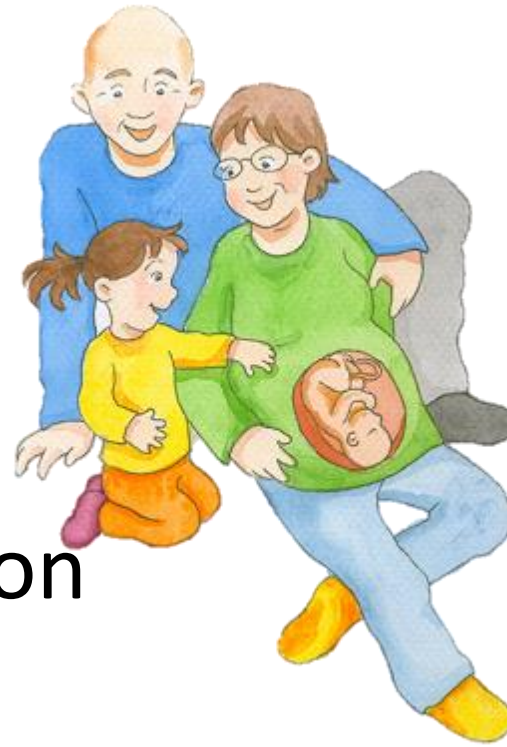
Parents were afraid of **bad** quality education, as

- Judging and punishing attitude
- Shame and guilty around sexuality and own body
- Unequal gender-roles
- Frightening information
- Too early information
- Information that suggests too early actions

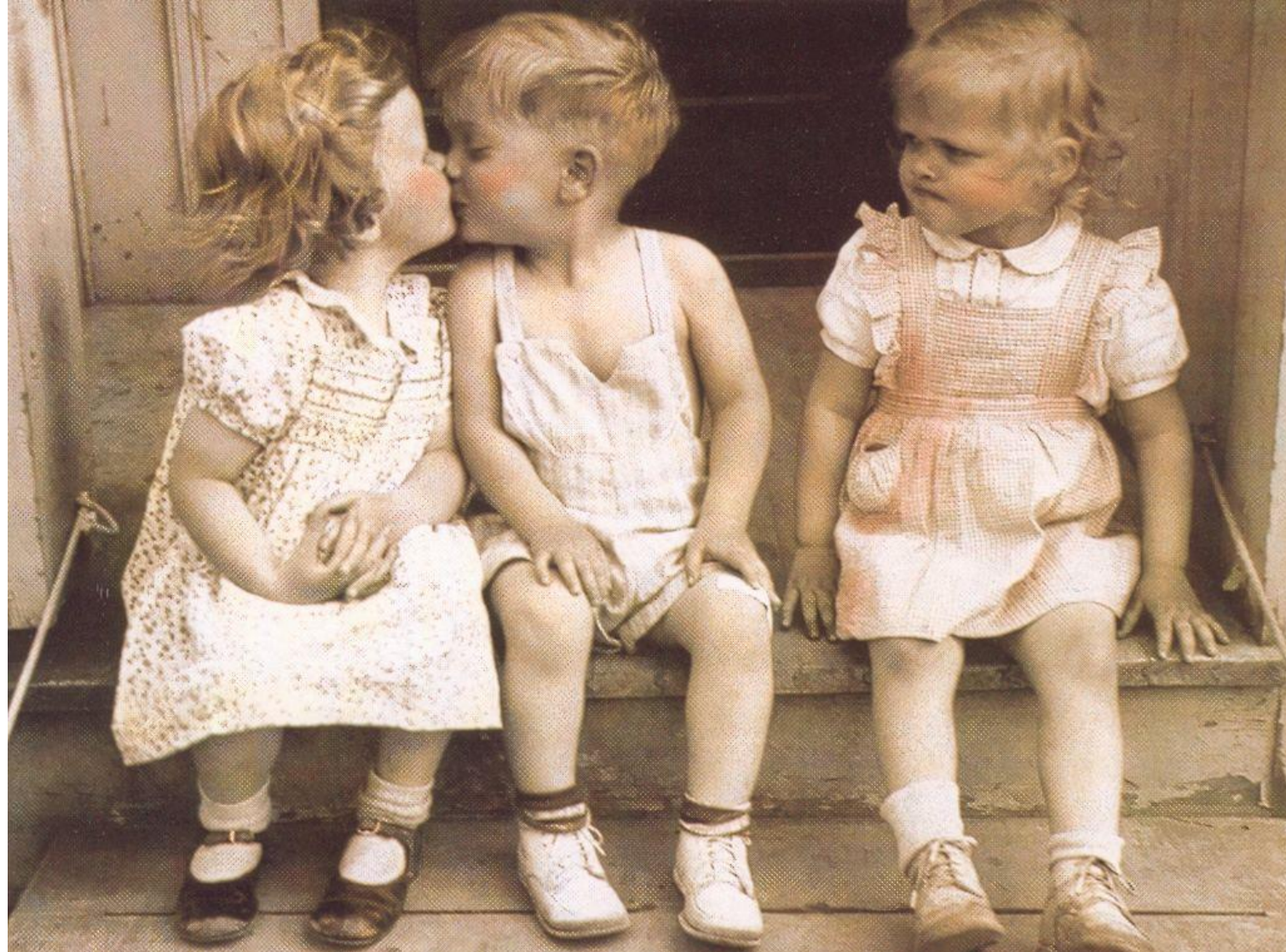


Difficult issues for adults:

1. Reproduction / fertilization
2. Dangerous adults / safety skills
3. Masturbation / self touching



How to cope with disappointment?



Resistance against SE

IGNORANCE

- What is childhood sexuality?
- What is good-quality, developmentally adequate SE?

FEARS

- There is an innocence that is destroyed with any information.
- Giving information inspire children to do adult-sexual acts.
- Providing SE to children predispose children to sexual abuse.

MISCONCEPTIONS

- Children should be answered only if they ask and the thing they ask.
- Sexuality is a private issue, not possible to teach about.
- Sexuality starts only in adolescence.

IGNORANCE

FEARS

MISCONCEPTIONS

Resistance against SE

Because of these misconceptions and fears, parents have difficulties to promote sexual health of children.

Discussion is rare.

Children's needs and empowering of children are missing.

What did we learn?

- Adults constantly face children's sexuality-related expressions and questions.
- Currently, support for children's sexuality is uneven and sporadic.
- Parents and professionals lack models and information.
- Parents and professionals discuss the matter narrowly, if any.



Our aims

- To empower parents & professionals
- To create evidence based tools
- To increase public awareness
- To promote sexuality education
- To improve sexual health and well-being



What it is?



How to deal with?



Remember feelings



Choose own words



Information DATABASE online

'Child and sexuality'

www.vaestoliitto.fi/lapsijaseksuaalisuus

BASED ON WHO'S
Standards for
Sexuality Education
in Europe

Age-appropriate SE in PICTURE BOOKS

BASED ON WHO'S
*Standards for
Sexuality Education
in Europe*



Relationships



Body



Reproduction

POSTER: "PROMOTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT"

Age-appropriate sexuality education of 0-6-yr olds

- Development of the child
- What the child may do or ask?
- How to support and guide the child?



Several languages

POSTER: "SAFETY SKILLS AND YOUR BODY"

- knowledge, skills and attitude

- Names of body parts
- The swimsuit/underwear rule
- The touch rule
- The three-step rule

Several languages

SAFETY SKILLS AND YOUR BODY

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDE

NAMES OF BODY PARTS

WHAT A CHILD SHOULD KNOW

Tell the child about all parts of the human body.

Teach the child the names of various body parts.

Help the child get familiar with the human body by various means: by looking at pictures, by drawing, by playing.

WHAT A CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

The child knows that it is all right to talk about all body parts, with grown-ups and with other children.

The child is able to talk about his or her own body.

The child can use appropriate and acceptable words about body parts.

HOW A CHILD SHOULD FEEL ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY

All parts of the human body are equally good.

It is important that you appreciate your body and take care of your body.

All kinds of bodies are equally good.

It is a good thing that there are different kinds of bodies.

THE SWIMSUIT RULE

WHAT A CHILD SHOULD KNOW

Tell the child that the body parts under the swimsuit are private things.

Only the child may decide about them.

Nobody may touch the body parts under the swimsuit or look at them or talk about them if the child does not want to.

Help the child get familiar with the Swimsuit Rule by various means: by looking at pictures, by drawing, by playing.

WHAT A CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

The child knows which body parts are private and that they should not be shown to anyone if the child does not want to.

The child knows that looking and exploring things under a friend's swimsuit is all right only if both of you feel it's all right and comfortable.

The child knows the Swimsuit Rule and can say no if someone tries to break the rule.

HOW A CHILD SHOULD FEEL ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY

There are different body parts. Some of them are special, private, and valuable.

You may and you should protect them.

You don't let everyone see them, even if they are good and valuable.

THE TOUCH RULE

WHAT A CHILD SHOULD KNOW

Tell the child about various ways you can touch others.

You may only touch if your friend feels that it is nice and that it is all right.

Touching should not make you feel bad about your body or make you uncomfortable.

You know about the Touch Rule.

WHAT A CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

The child learns that before touching someone else it is best to ask if it is all right, for example before kissing or before touching private body parts.

The child knows that there are different kinds of touching and that a touch can give different feelings.

HOW A CHILD SHOULD FEEL ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY

The child can decide who may touch the child's body.

You must always respect the body of another person.

Everyone has the right to decide about one's own body, and this right must always be respected.

BASED ON WHO'S Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe

Problem of term: It is not 'sexual'

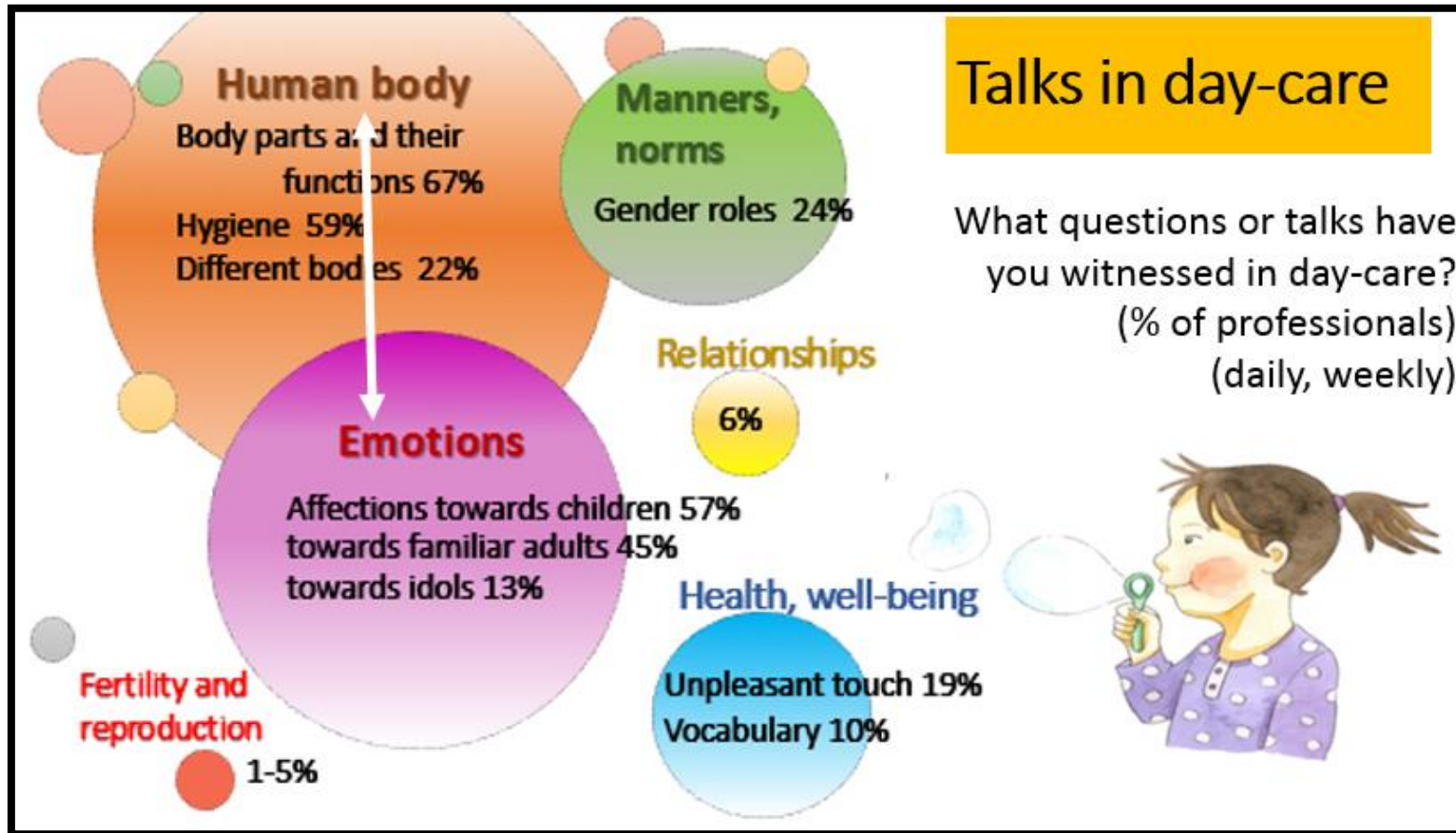
Many said that children's behaviour is not 'sexual'.
Not in the way that adults understand the word. **That is true.**

Child sexuality differs from adolescent and adult sexuality:

- Curiosity
- Learning to respect own and others body
- Exploring emotions and pleasure
- Names to all body-parts
- Learning accepted behaviour and norms
- Basic safety-skills

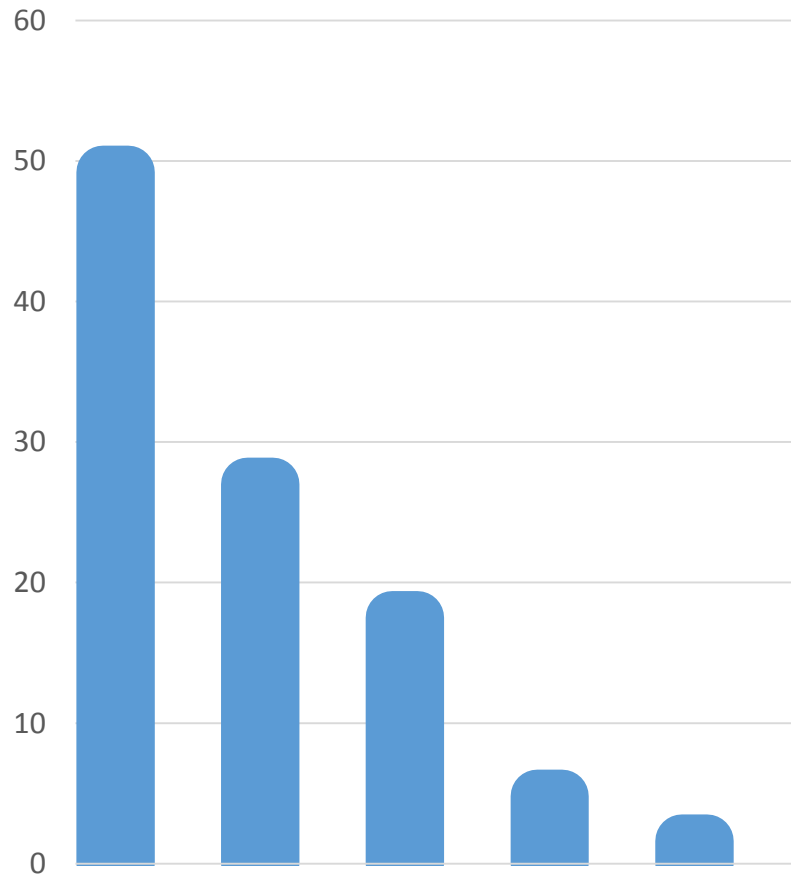


NEW TERM: "Body-emotion-education"



Opinions: the word 'body-emotion-education'

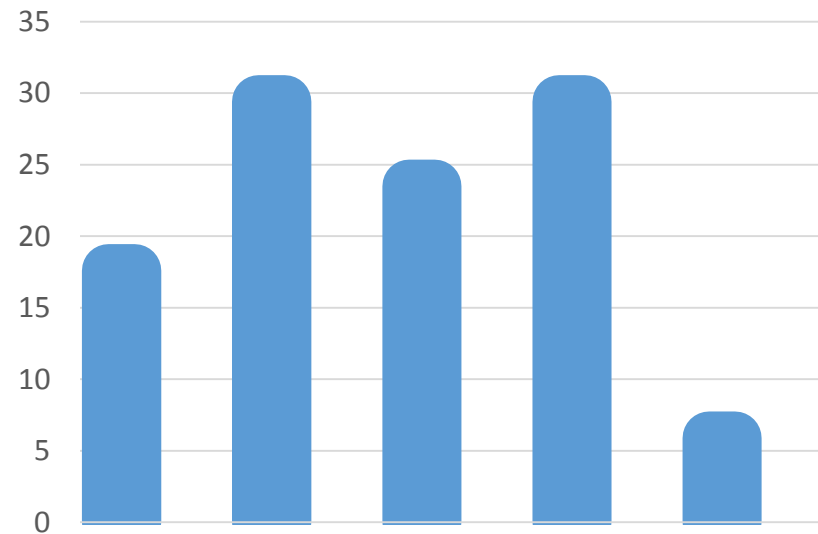
Day-care professionals (N=63)



Better than 'SE'

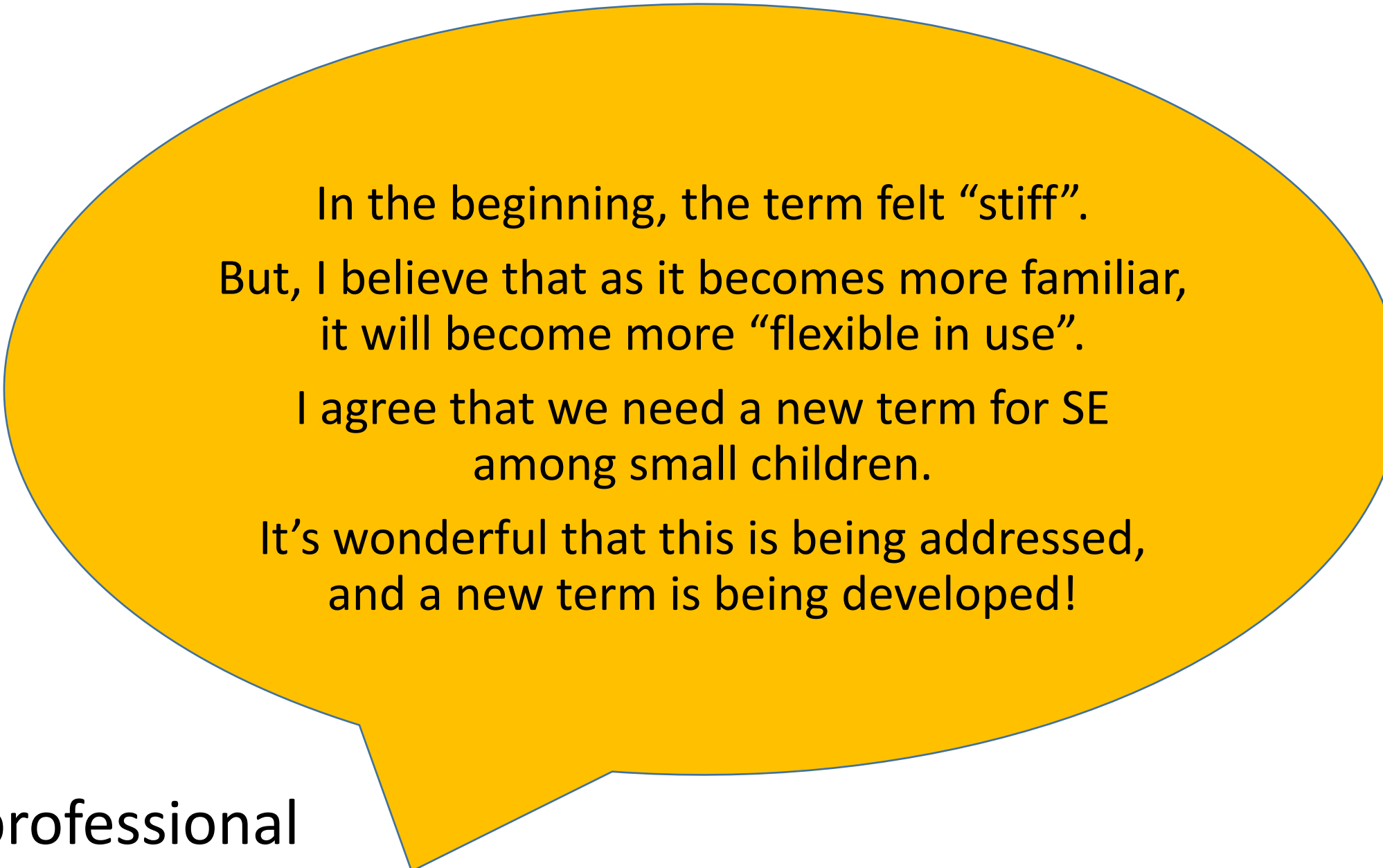
Worse than 'SE'

Sexuality educators (N=17)



Better than 'SE'

Worse than 'SE'

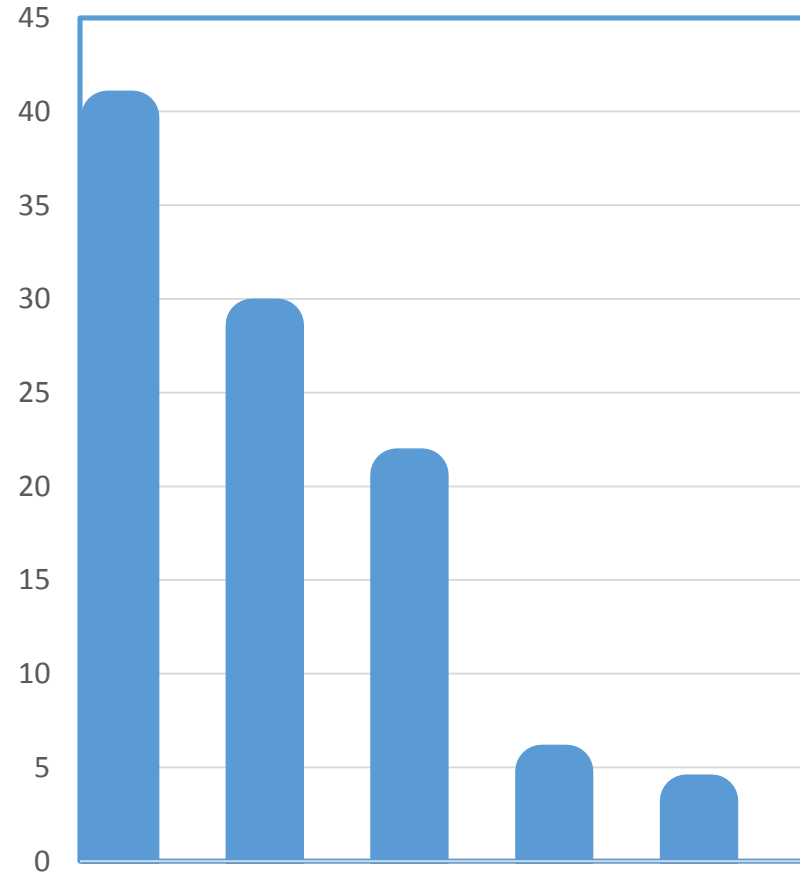


In the beginning, the term felt “stiff”.
But, I believe that as it becomes more familiar,
it will become more “flexible in use”.
I agree that we need a new term for SE
among small children.
It’s wonderful that this is being addressed,
and a new term is being developed!

Day care professional

Opinions: the word 'body-emotion-education'

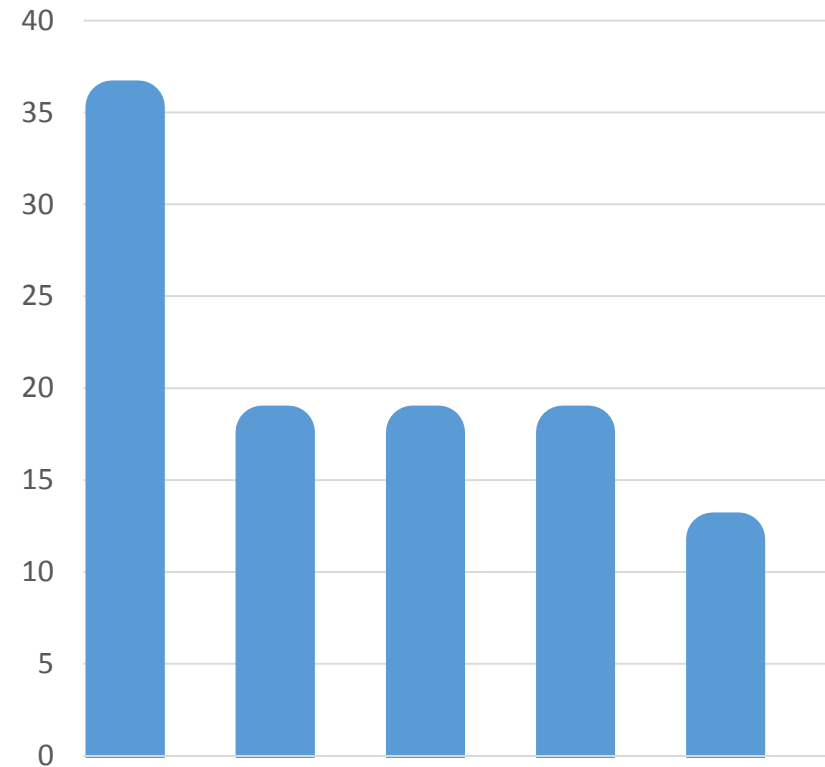
Day-care professionals % (N=63)



I might use

I wouldn't use

Sexuality educators % (N=17)



I might use

I wouldn't use

Training Day for Professionals

- Lectures, video taped to web page
- "Learning cafe" group works
- Follow up contacts
- Supervised chat's



Published in WHO Regional Office for Europe and BZgA:
Training matters: A framework for core competencies of sexuality educators. Training of sexuality educators: examples of good practice across the European region. Case Finland. 2017

HANDBOOK for professionals "Body and play"

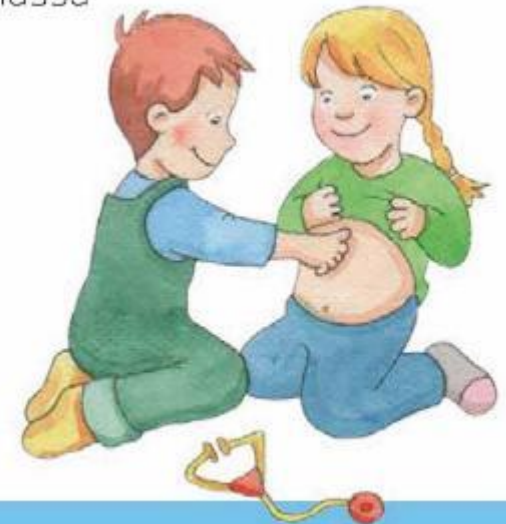
- Content based on our surveys
- Written by 17 experts
- Research / Knowledge / Skills

BASED ON WHO'S
Standards for
Sexuality Education
in Europe

Susanne Ingman-Friberg
Raisa Cacciatore (toim.)

KEHO ON LEIKKI

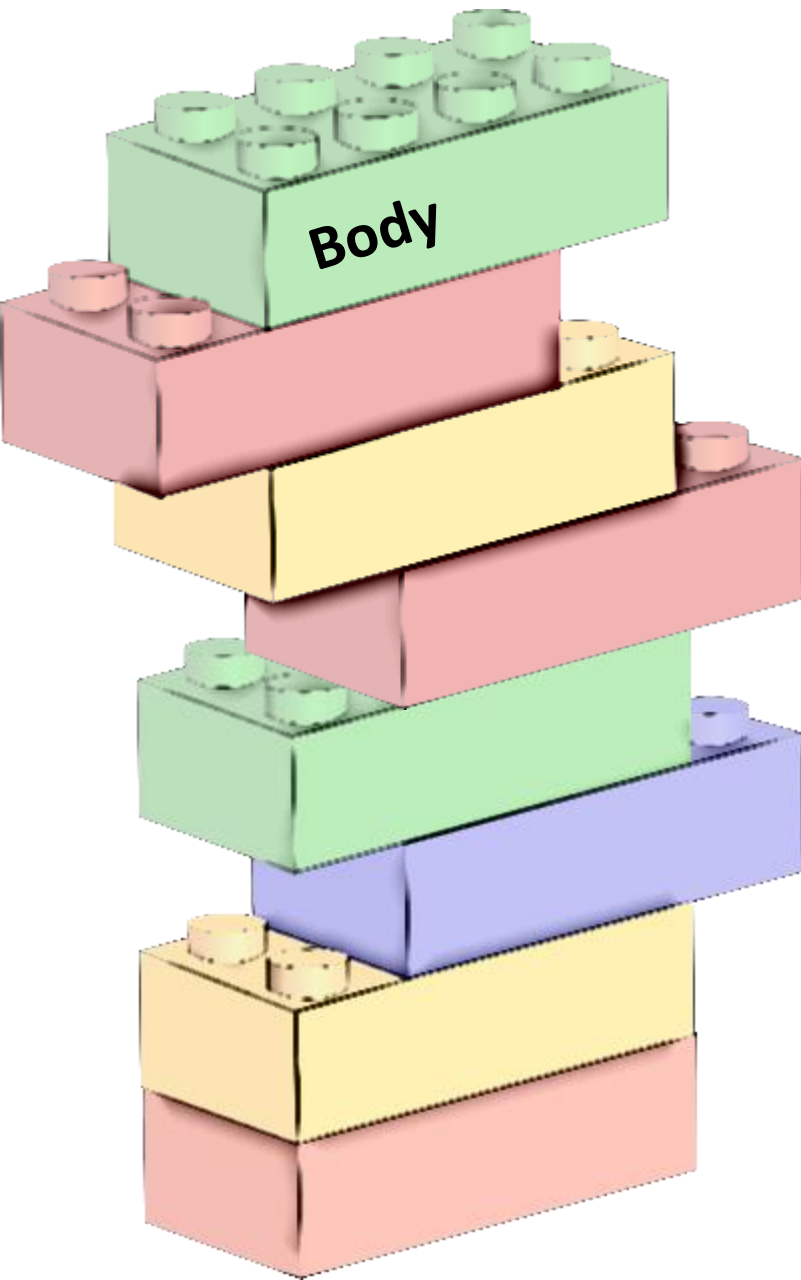
Avain luonnolliseen
seksuaalikasvatukseen
alle kouluikässä



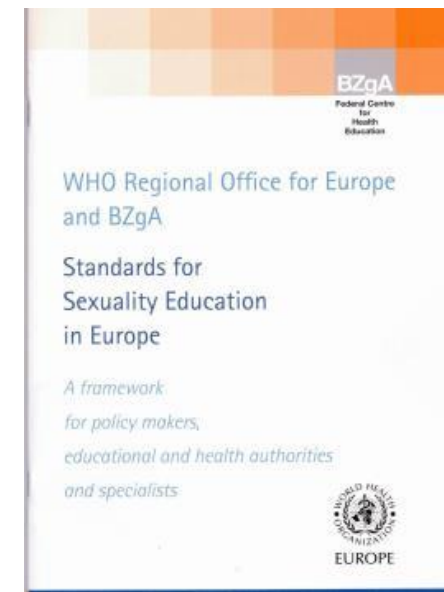
Finnish National Curriculum for Early Education (2016, Finnish National Board of Education)



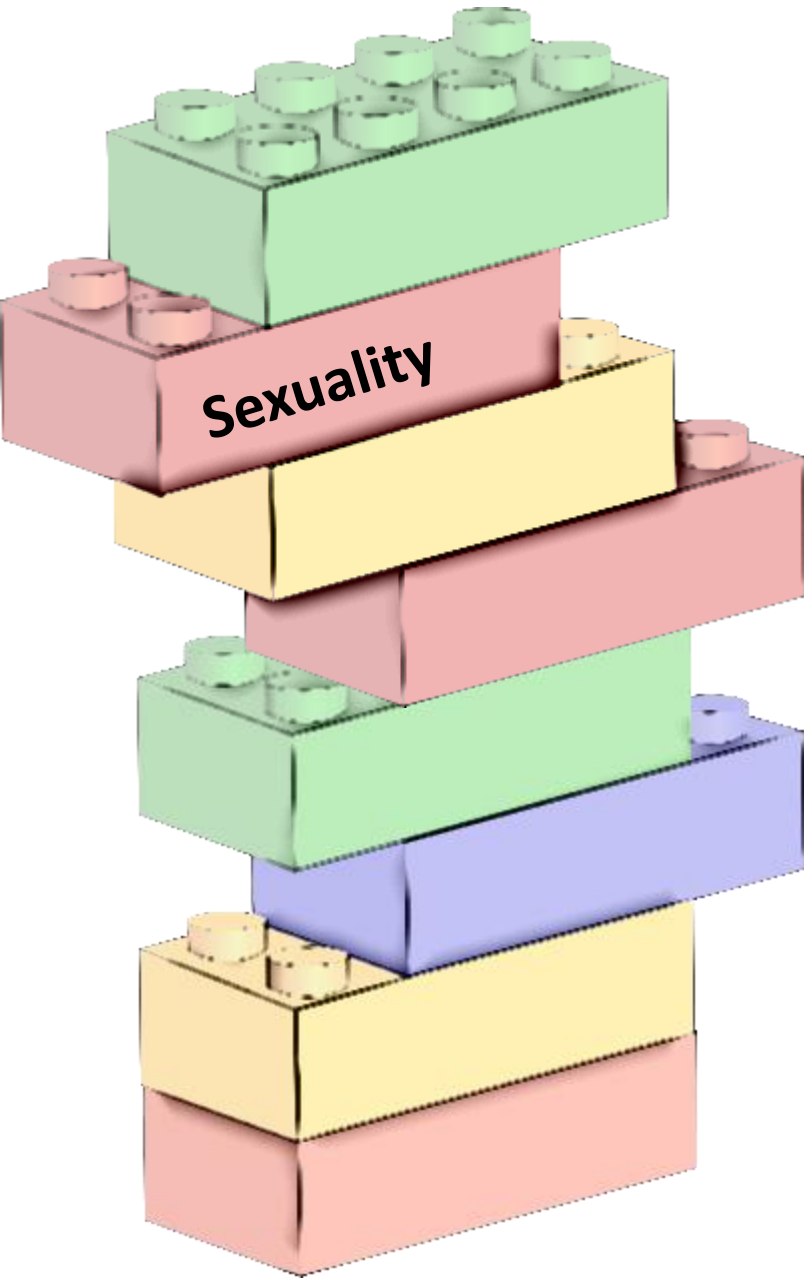
Finnish curriculum and WHO's topics



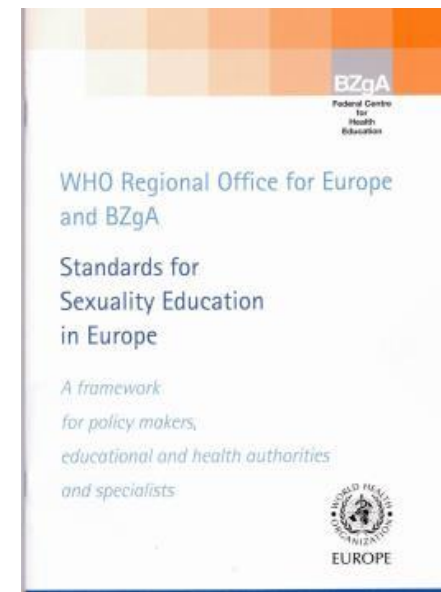
**To understand of and to manage with the body.
To respect and protect their own and others' bodies.
To take care of their health and personal hygiene.**



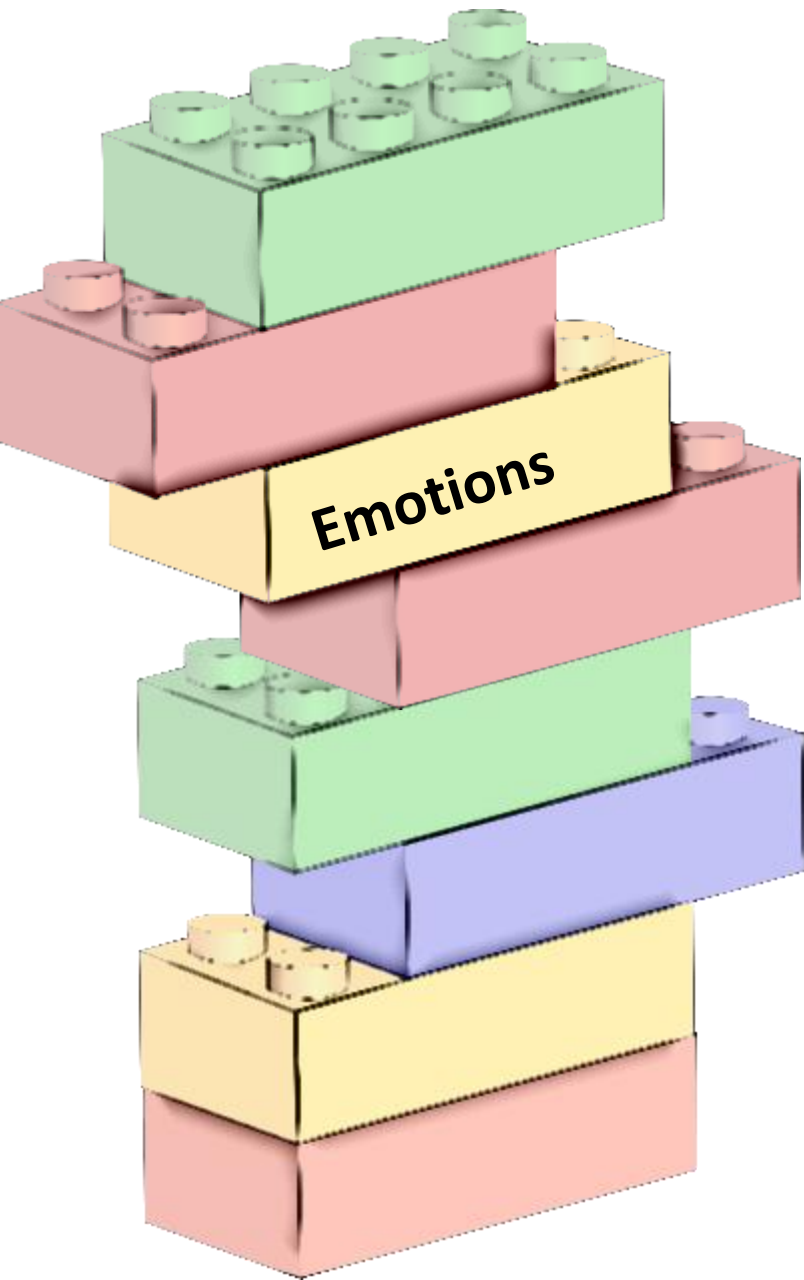
Finnish curriculum and WHO's topics



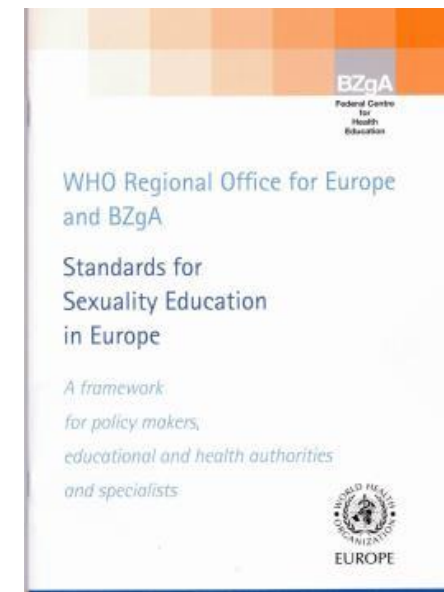
**Child's views and wishes taken into account.
Play is a way to be and to perceive the world.**



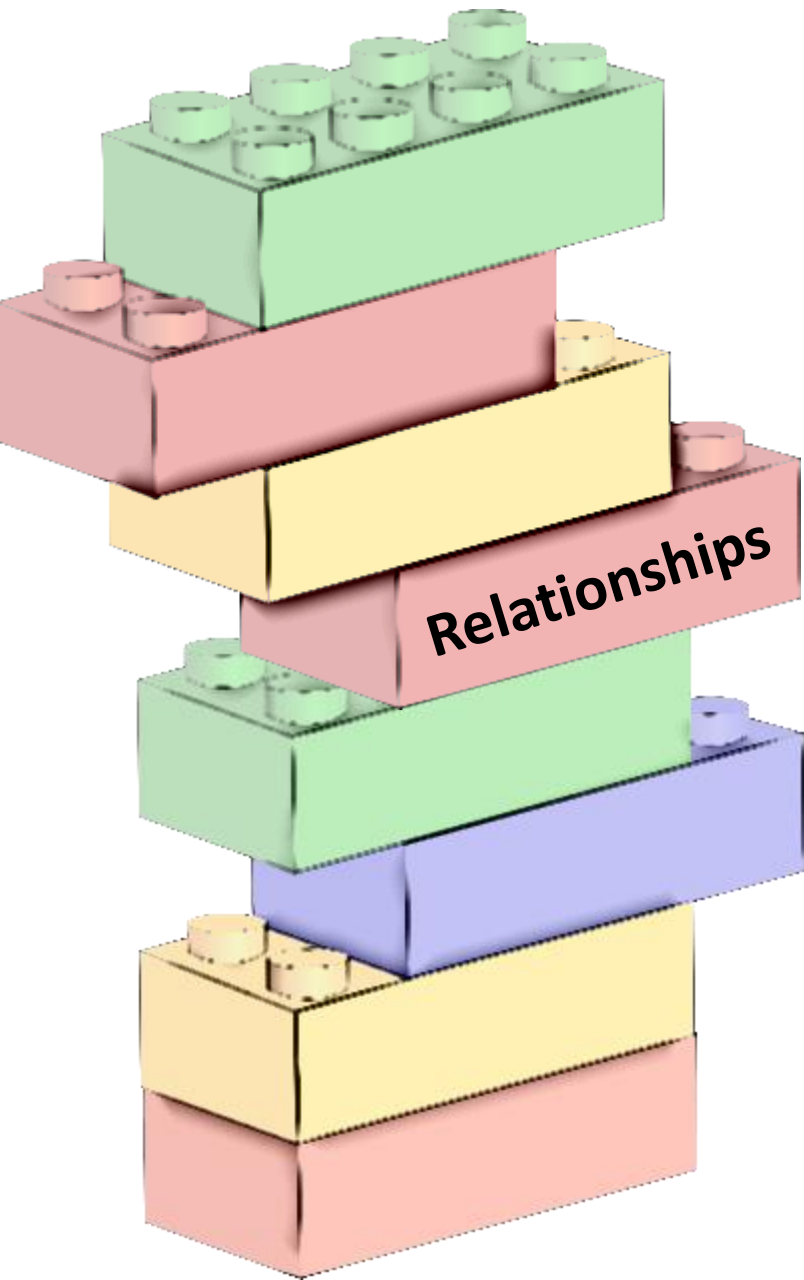
Finnish curriculum and WHO's topics



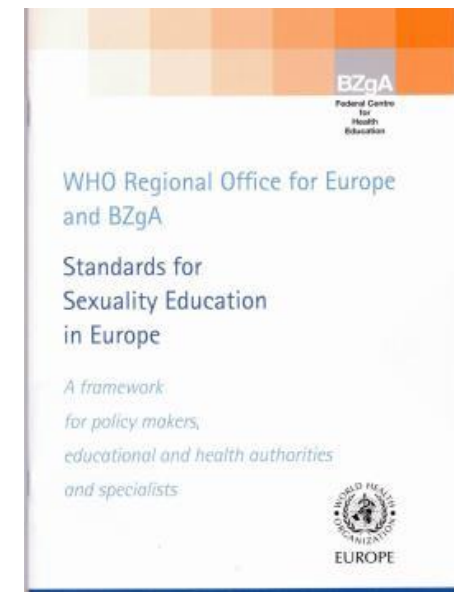
**To explore the world with all senses and entire body.
Variety of emotions are allowed in safe.**



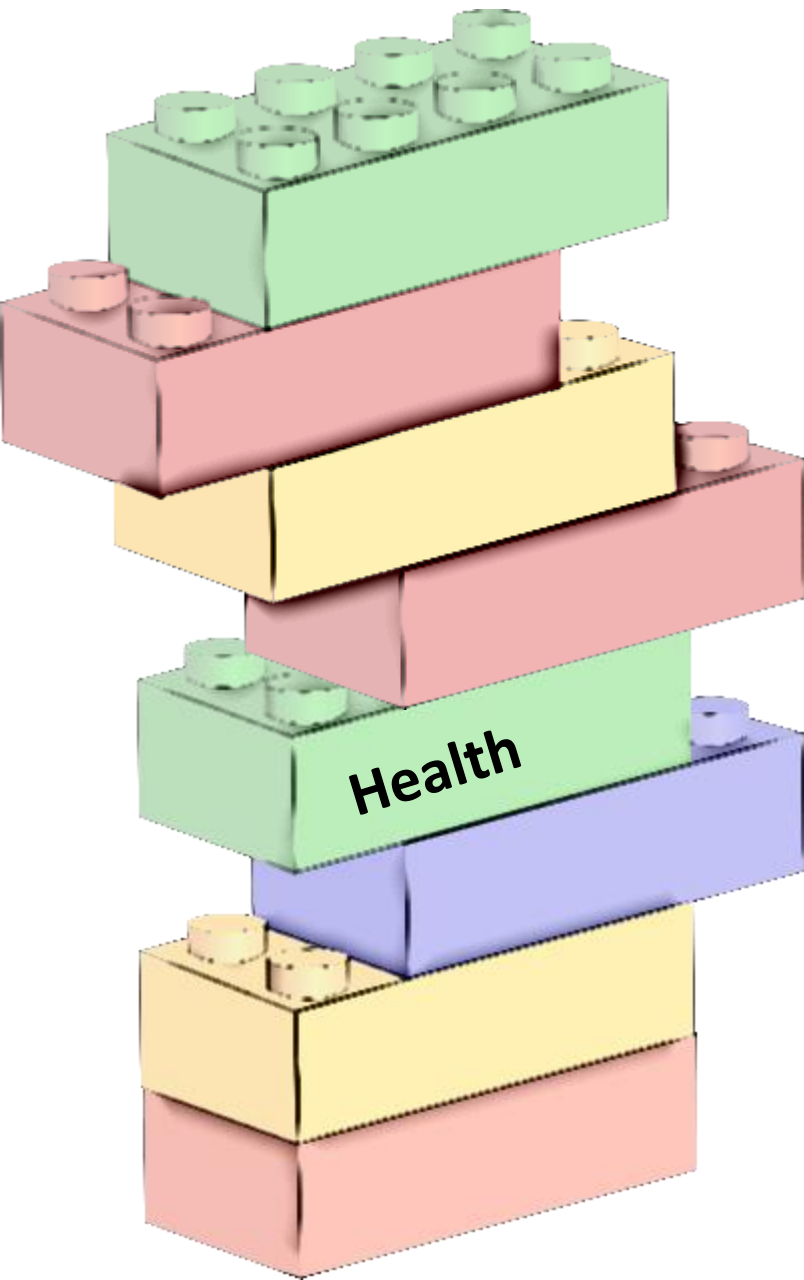
Finnish curriculum and WHO's topics



**Strengthen equality and gender equality.
Allow breaking of gender stereotypes.
Family identity and family relationships supported.
Every child's family is valuable.**



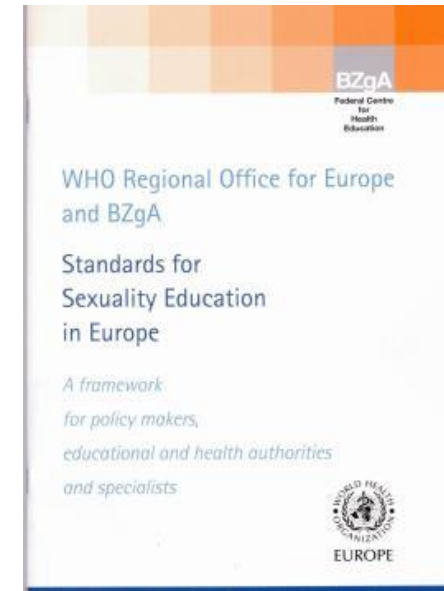
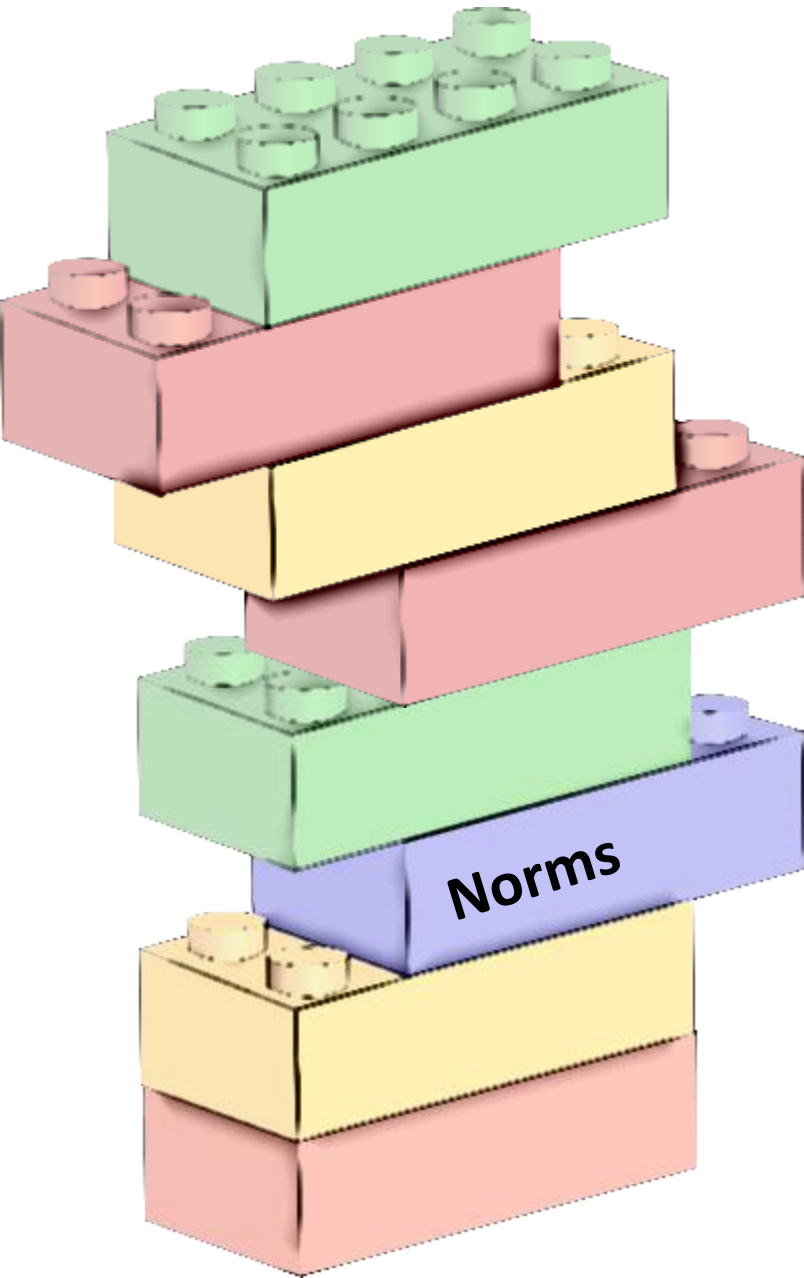
Finnish curriculum and WHO's topics



**Safety in everyday situations practiced and reflected.
To ask and seek help.
To operate safely in different situations.
To develop the cooperation and communication skills.**



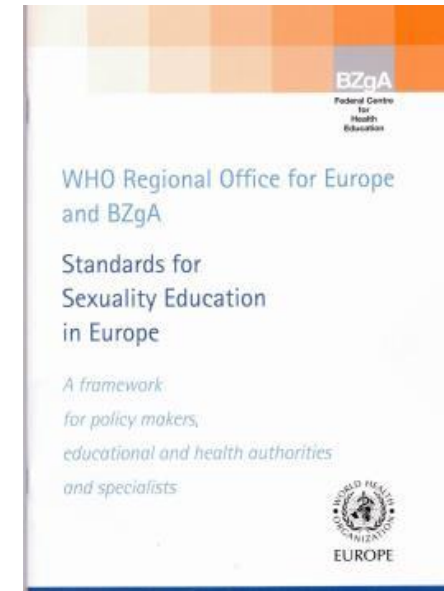
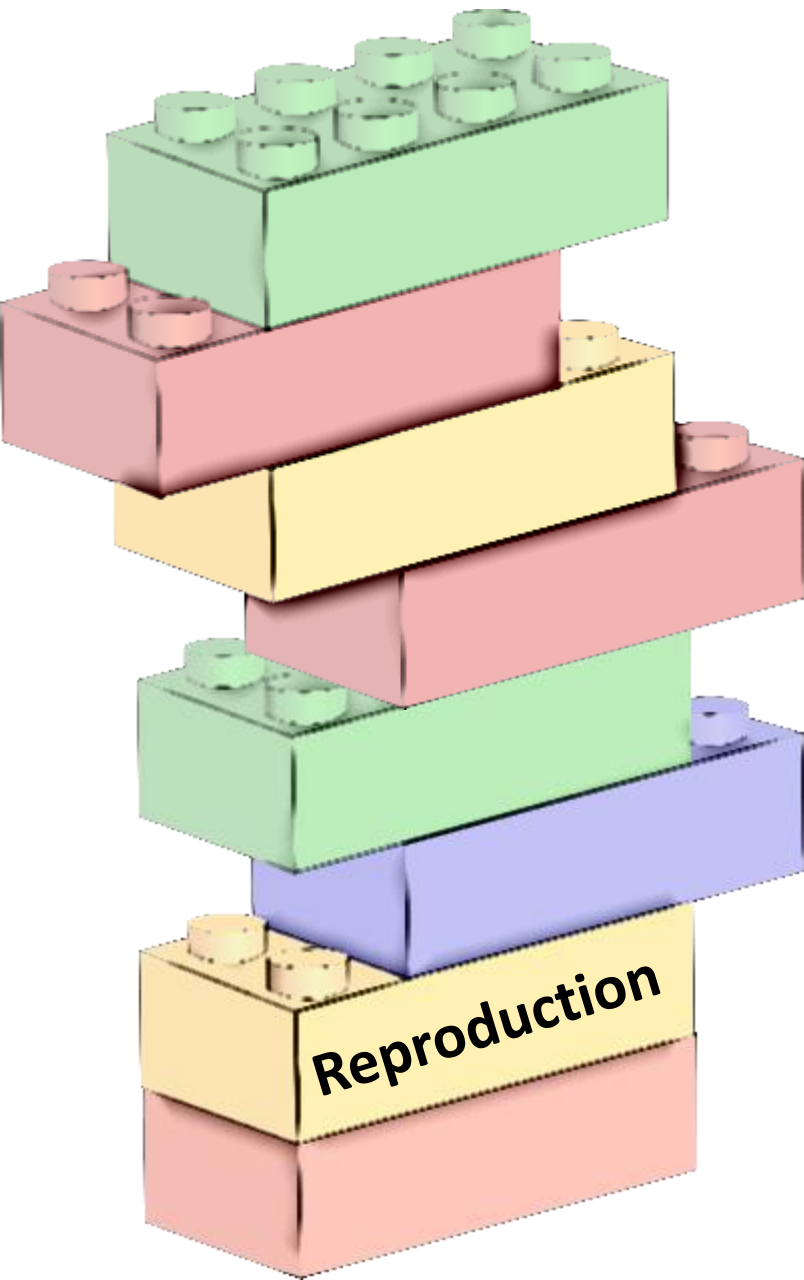
Finnish curriculum and WHO's topics



Criticism towards media.

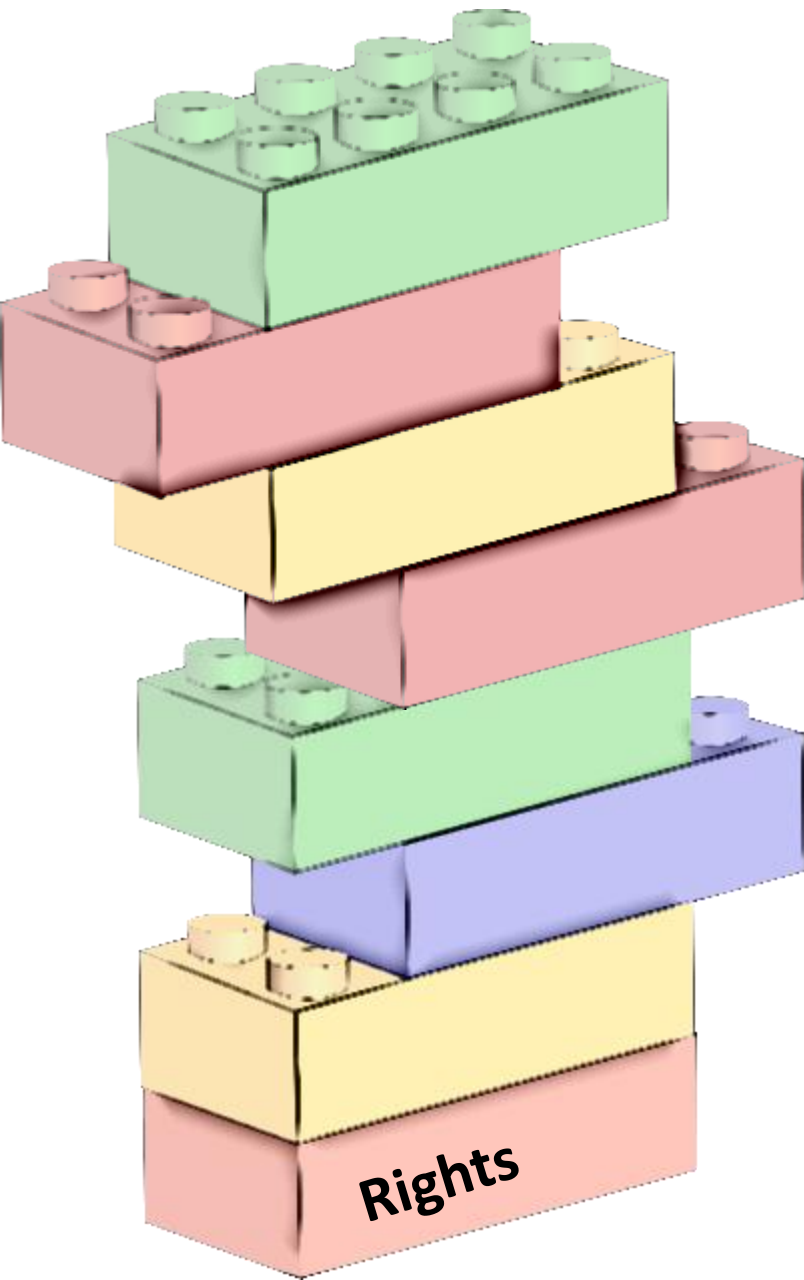
To develop skills and make choices, regardless of gender, ethnicity, cultural background etc.

Finnish curriculum and WHO's topics



Encouraged to ask questions, and children's questions are answered.

Finnish curriculum and WHO's topics

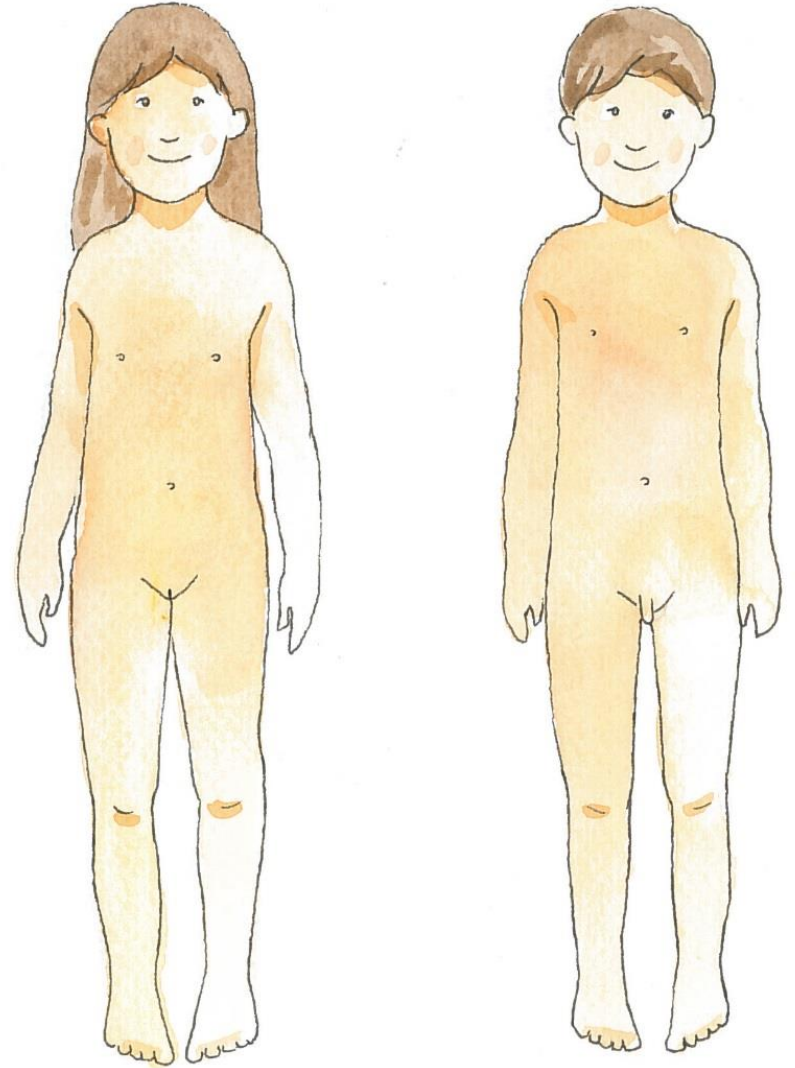


**Good education, care and encouraging feedback.
Receive information in many ways in order to deal with emotions and conflicts as well as to learn new things.
Express themselves, their opinions and ideas, and to be understood by the means of their expressions.**

Finnish National Curriculum for Early Education is legally binding **norm**, set by the Finnish National Agency for Education.

It defines the objectives and core contents to be included.

National programs and agreements are needed.



Children and happiness

Children grow up happy,
when they learn to respect and
protect their own and others'
bodies
and to take care of their health.





THANK YOU !

Laura Cacciatore, 4 years old:
"A woman in love"