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Public project result summary of Art Seeds and Tutors in Culture Education

The Art Seeds and Tutors in Culture Education project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF+) and the city of Oulu was implemented September 1, 2023 – April 30, 2026. The primary goal of the project was to reinforce and expand the art education skills of early childhood education staff. The project was implemented by developing an additional training model for culture and art education in the form of tutoring and multiple training modules. The tutor-form art education modules reached over 1 800 participants in over 100 Early childhood education and care (ECEC) centres in Oulu. The Joy of Expression materials were developed to support maintaining and evaluating the newly learned skills. The materials include a poster, a guide, and a video that encourage playful and participatory culture education. In the project, the Joy of Expression materials were distributed to each ECEC centre in Oulu. The materials were also published online. Utilizing the materials has been written into the city of Oulu's early childhood education curriculum and preschool curriculum. The materials serve as the early childhood cultural education plan in Oulu's city-specific cultural education plan.

Additional training for cultural and art education

Most of the project's additional training was implemented as tutoring. During the tutoring, art education specialists visited ECEC centres three times and worked with child groups for 30–60 minutes at a time. The early childhood education staff trained by participating in the activities with the children, usually with the entire team. The contents supported play, expression, and participation, while following the curriculum principles. The methods could be utilized after the tutoring ended, and no previous training was needed. The project's coordinators' and cooperation partners' art educators served as tutors. 15 three-time tutoring modules were offered from a wide range of fields of art. The tutoring modules considered the forms of expression listed in the early childhood education curriculum: visual, verbal, manual, musical, and bodily expression. The tutors visited a total of 102 ECEC centres in Oulu. ¹



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Additionally, various trainings were organized at ECEC centres for staff to reinforce learned skills, communality, and work well-being. Also, five larger evening training sessions were organized in cooperation with the Oulu Children's Cultural Centre and Oulu Art Museum. Also, low-threshold inspiration productions were implemented during the project: such as on-line lectures on playfulness, Instagram tips, and a fixed art education material bank for early childhood educators.

Joy of Expression materials

To support cultural education and to maintain and evaluate the skills learned at the project's training, a quality measurement tool was compiled: the Joy of Expression materials. The materials consist of a poster, a guide, and a public video that encourage experiential, playful, and participatory cultural education. The materials follow the goals of the early childhood education curriculum and preschool curriculum.

The Joy of Expression guide directs early childhood personnel in implementing high-quality, participatory, and diverse cultural education in everyday education. It includes concrete methods to support children's creativity, expression, and cultural identity. The guide presents the development units that support cultural education, Oulu's cultural institutions, and national operators. The guide also offers tools for evaluating cultural education and explains cultural vocabulary.

The Joy of Expression poster makes the meaning of culture visible to both children and early childhood education staff. It inspires to discuss culture in ECEC centres and to create art in diverse ways. The most important cultural education milieu is set in the middle of the poster: the ECEC centres and surrounding areas. Regular activities in these places are the basis of cultural and art education. The poster also presents cultural education cooperation partners, such as cultural institutions in Oulu.



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To support the Joy of Expression materials, training for utilizing the poster and cultural education was organized. The training toured 45 ECEC centres, ensuring that the materials are adopted. At the participatory training, the meaning of cultural education in ECEC centres was discussed, and swift methods of art education were taught. The training also utilized the Joy of Expression materials.

Continual effect evaluation was done throughout the project. An efficiency chain was compiled that monitored the realization of goals and the spread of competence with additional training. The operations were re-evaluated and re-directed continually based on feedback, interviews, and evaluation surveys. The efficiency chain compiled the additional training's efficiency progress into four phases: learning and expanding art education skills, increasing the use of methods in the unit, adapting the methods, and sharing skills. According to the evaluation, additional training for art education through tutoring increases skill learning and skill expansion, as well as increases the use of the methods in ECEC units. The Joy of Expression materials help in adapting the art education methods and sharing the methods to other units and beyond.