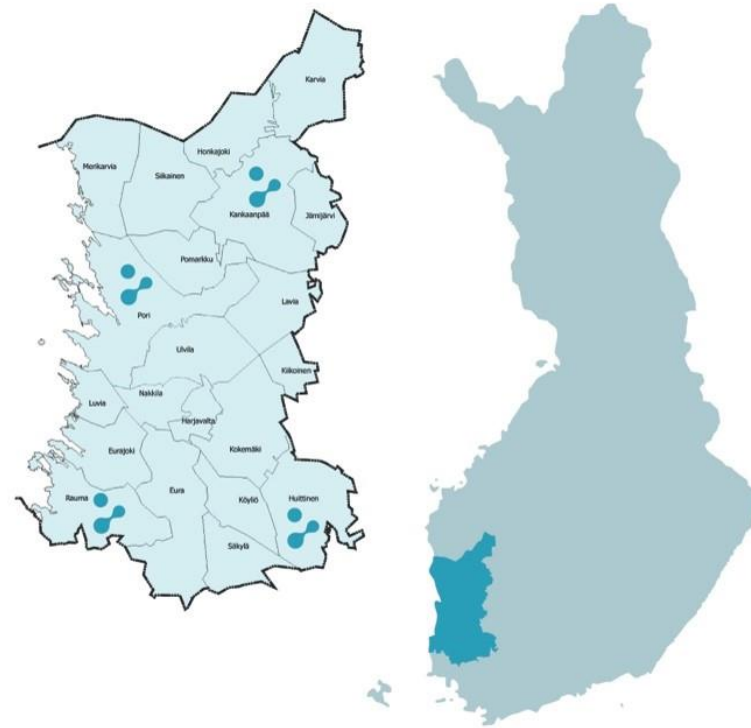




LET'S TALK ABOUT CHILDREN – SERVICE MODEL (LT)

INTERNATIONAL PARENTING PROGRAM ONLINE SEMINAR AUTUMN 2020
MERJA AHOSMÄKI SATAKUNTA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

SAMK operates on the West Coast of Finland





Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) PORI campus



STUDENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES STUDYING CLIENT WORK THROUGH SIMULATION

THE LET'S TALK ABOUT CHILDREN - SERVICE MODEL (LT)



- The developing of the model started in the beginning of the year 2000 within **mental health and substance use** services and in **cases of severe somatic conditions**.
- Now it has been implemented widely in schools (both primary and secondary), in early childhood education and in children´s health care clinics.
- Implemented in Finland as a part of children´s and family services.

KEY PERSONS

TYTTI SOLANTAUS (developer)

- Child Psychiatrist, research professor emerita Mental health Finland

MIKA NIEMELÄ (trainer and implementer)

- Professor of practice at Oulu University (Mental health of children and adolescents)



THE LET'S TALK ABOUT CHILDREN - SERVICE MODEL (LT)



- is a low threshold model for promoting child and family wellbeing and resilience
- The aim of the Let's talk -intervention is to **build a shared understanding** between parents, the child and other important persons in the child's life (professionals in different services and the family's own network)
- and to **find ways of working together** to promote wellbeing of children and family and prevent problems.

ACTIONS AT FOUR LEVELS

- Strategy
- Implementation
- Professional knowledge and skills
- Involvement of clients /parents
- (Niemelä 2012, Solantaus 2012)

THE ENVIROMENT OF SERVICES IN PARENT'S LIFE

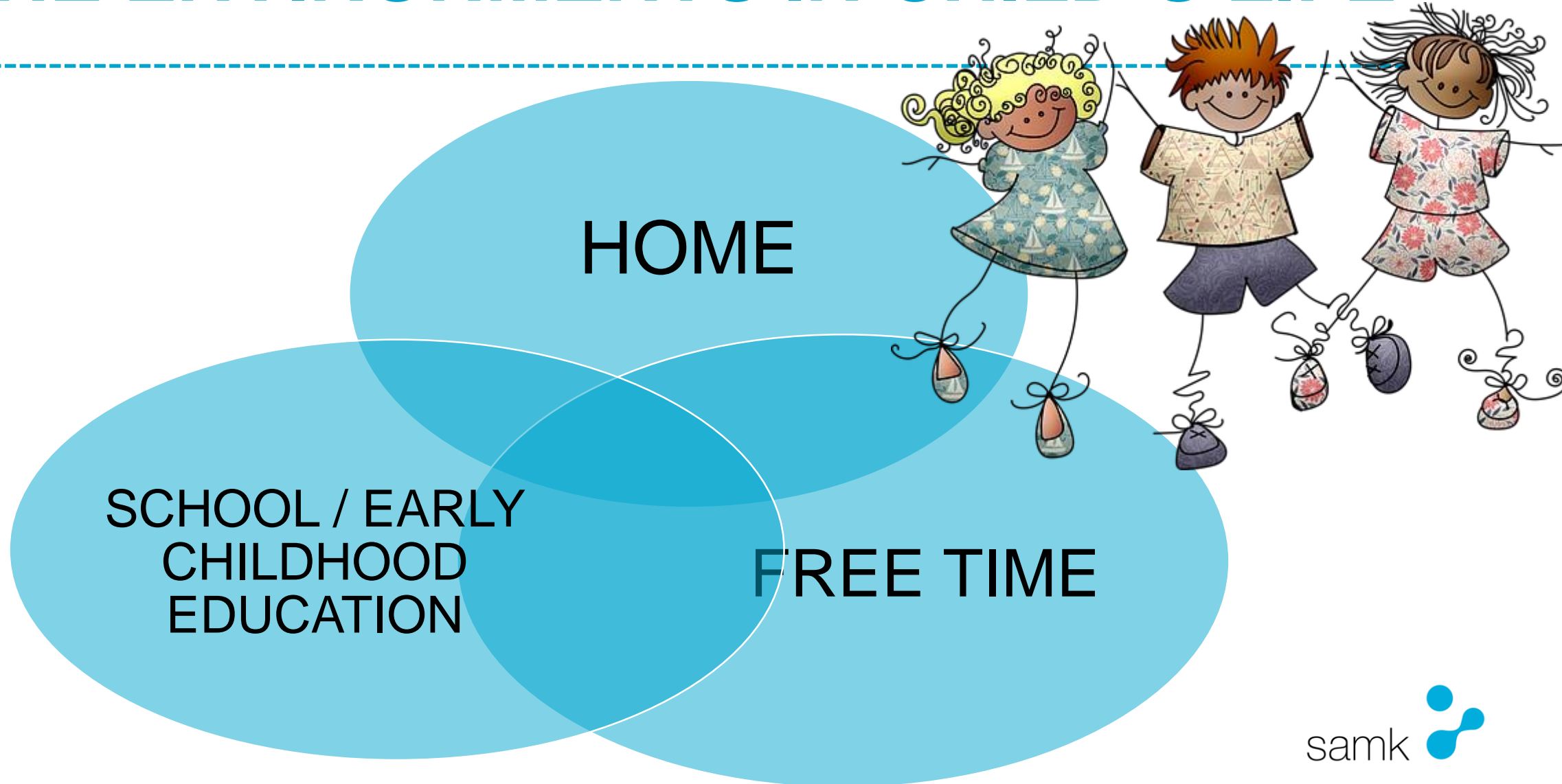


LT IN DIFFERENT SERVICES where the child is not a customer

- in adult services the starting point of client work are the issues that bring the parent to seek help in the services.
- *The LT offers **parents an opportunity to reflect on the family situation** and **to develop their own strategies** regarding their child and family.*
- In children's services, the LT is used to **deepen the understanding about the child's and family's everyday life** and current situation and aim at providing support for parents.



THE ENVIRONMENTS IN CHILD'S LIFE



LT IN CHILD'S OWN SETTINGS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND SCHOOL



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- *LT is a tool for both the parents and professionals.*
 - It is used to build a **comprehensive understanding of the child** and his/her situation in everyday life, and to plan actions based on the understanding.
 - The aim is also to **build a collaborative relationship based on respect and mutual support.**

KEY PRINCIPLES FROM THE PARENT' S POINT OF VIEW

- **Equality:** Parents are **experts** on their child/children. Sharing the expertise between parents and professionals (common/private expertise)
- **Voluntarity:** All parents need support. LT-discussion is a possibility which is offered to parents (and children)
- **Trust**
- **Non-judgemental** approach

KEY PRINCIPLES FROM THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

- **Involvement of the child:** The child is allowed to be present personally in the discussion or through parents. (Parents decision)
- **Understanding:** If not getting the information the child will make his/her own interpretations. The information according to age helps the child to understand family situation.

LT-DISCUSSION IS *OFFERED*

Universal possibility to all families. For family and professionals to get acquainted with each other, Preventive

When the child already has some emotional difficulties or problems of behavior

When there are changes in child's life such as parents' divorce, disease,



LT –METHOD AT TWO STAGES

LT-NETWORK MEETING

When additional support is needed

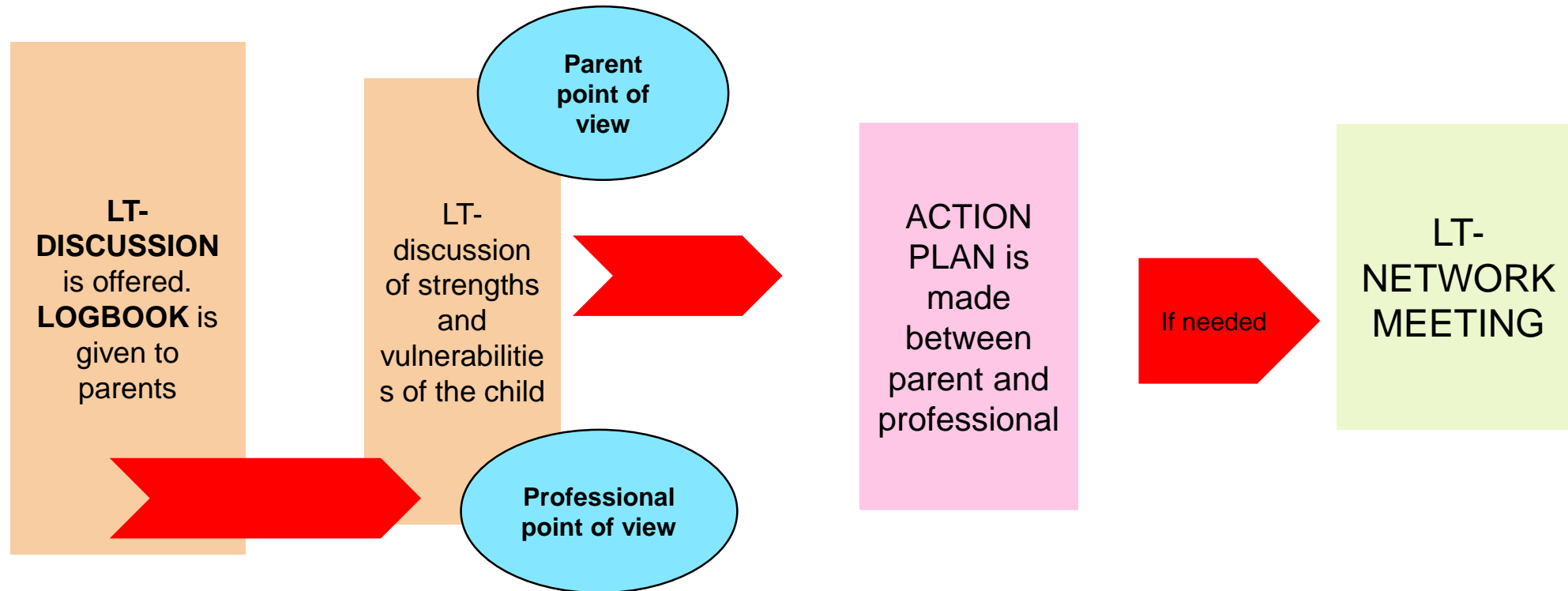
With the family's own network and professionals

To plan concrete actions to be delivered in next 4-6 weeks

LT-DISCUSSIONS (1-3)

The aim is to find strengths and vulnerabilities and find the ways to support resilience in everyday life. Is offered universally to all families.

LT –PROCESS IN PRACTICE



LT-DISCUSSION

- A set of thematic discussions
- Enquiring questions
- **Logbooks** for school, early childhood education and services
- All the logbooks are available on the internet and parents are advised to get to know the material before the discussion
- Parents are allowed to decide the topics they want to discuss
- Logbook is a basis for discussion, it´s not for gathering information or evaluation

EXAMPLE: LOGBOOK FOR SCHOOLS/THEMES OF DISCUSSIONS

- Discussion about the child, family and school – do you want to tell something about your family?
- How is the child – feelings, mood at home, at school, with friends
- Actions and behavior of the child at home, at school, at free time
- Ordinary days at home
- Schooldays and the atmosphere at school

EXAMPLE: LOGBOOK FOR SCHOOLS/THEMES OF DISCUSSIONS

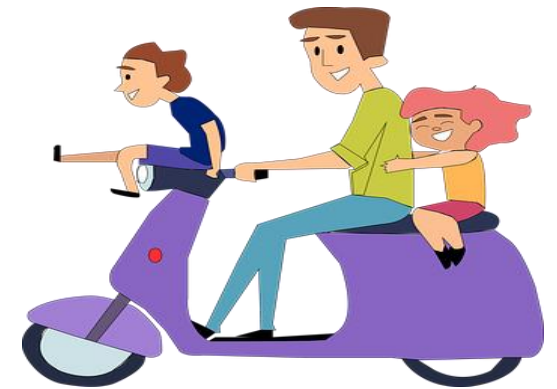
- Learning at school
- Activities at freetime
- Possible worries
- The significant network of the child
- Goals of the upbringing at home/ at school

CENTRAL CONCEPTS

- **Strength** = things that function randomly (conventionally) in child's life in spite of possible difficulties of the family.
Investments in strengths supports child's daily life
- **Vulnerability**= can be or become a problem in child's life if nothing is done (preventive point of view).

DISCUSSION

- All the themes (or all the themes that parents have chosen) are discussed from the point of view of strengths and vulnerabilities
- It´s possible and acceptable that there can rise different points of views between parents and professionals
- The aim of the discussion is empowering parents



LT-NETWORK MEETING

- When the action plan is difficult to carry out without further participants
- the LT-Network meeting is planned with parents (and sometimes also the child).
- LT-Network meeting provides a forum for case-based cross-sectoral collaboration, including also the families and their social network.

SOME FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS

Possibility to
pause and
reflect

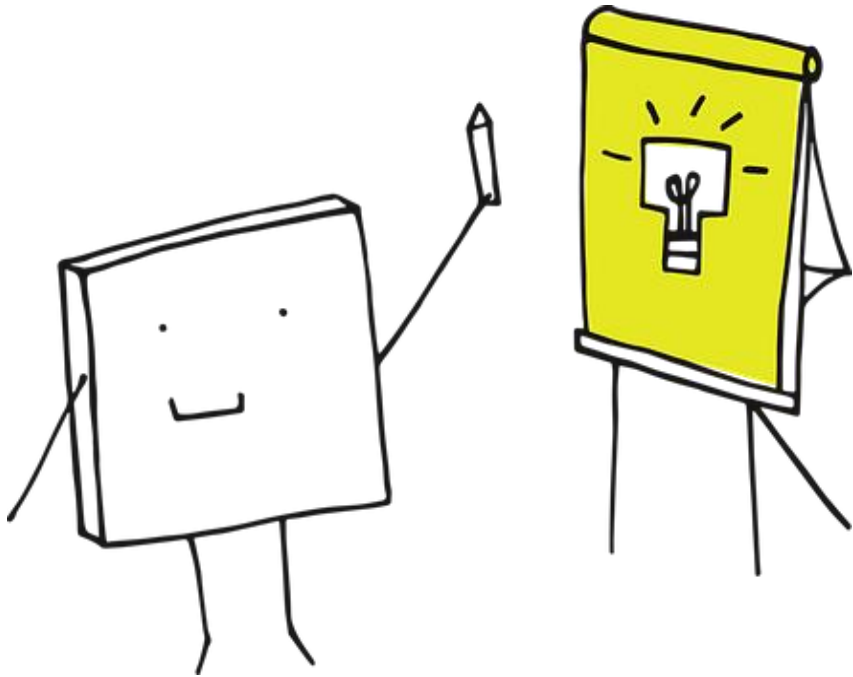
Noticing more
strengths in the
child

Getting
support in
challenges



Getting
self-confidence
as a parent

LT- METHOD TRAINING



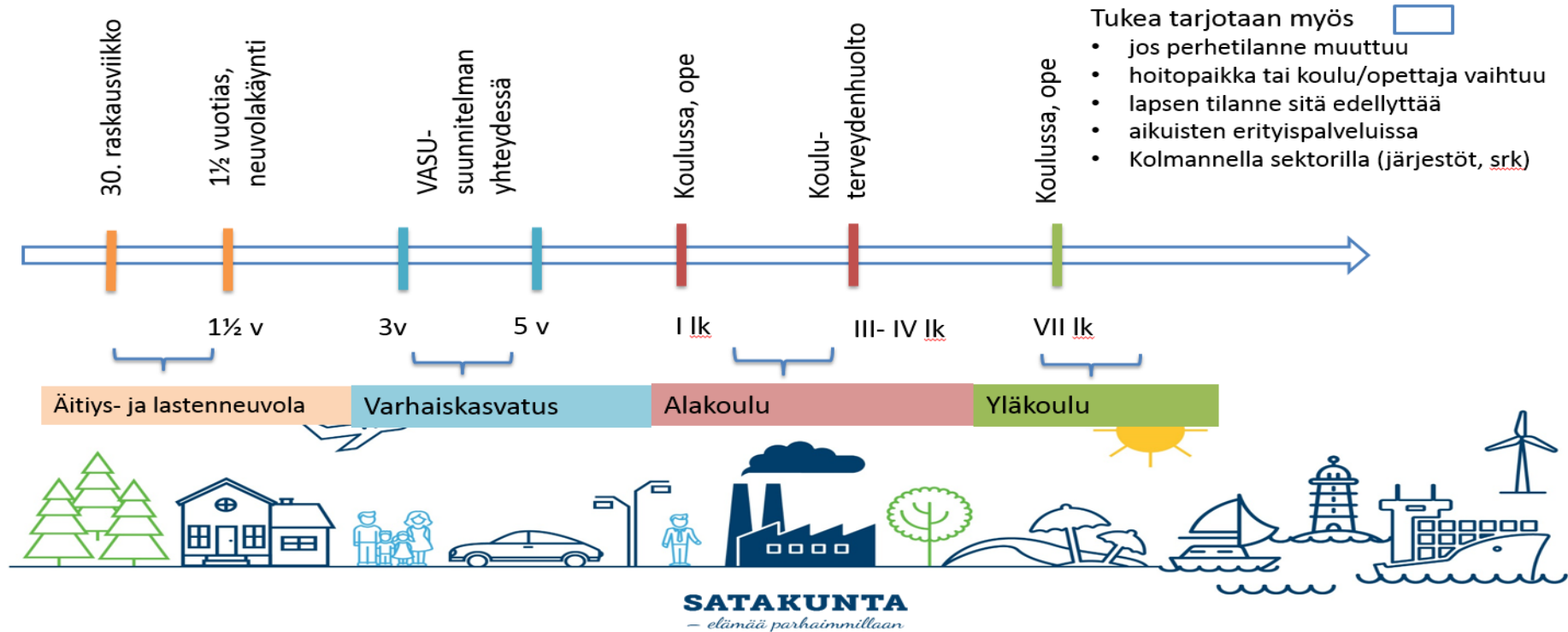
- **Certificate** to use the method in practice (Theory of the method 12 h, 2 LT-discussions and reporting, LT-network meeting)
- **Trainee training:** certificate to train others for example in the workplace
- **SAMK:** all the students in social services and nursing get the training to the method

FUTURE SOCIAL SERVICES IN SATAKUNTA REGION



- Supporting parents is one of the key themes
- Let`s talk about children -service method is one of the methods that the region is committed to

Lapset puheeksi – menetelmän tuki perheelle



- **LETS´TALK** discussion method is enabled in
- **Mothers' and children's health care** (at 30 weeks pregnant and when the child is 1,5 years)
- **In Early childhood education** when the child is 3 and 5 years
- **Primary school** at 1st grade (teacher) and 3rd – 4th grade (school health care)
- **Secondary school** at 9th grade (teacher)

GOVERNMENT'S KEY PROJECT 2016-2018

Basic services are strengthened, and the focus is towards preventive work and early support and care services.

Family centre model

Early childhood education, schools and other educational institutions support the wellbeing of children and young persons

WIM GOOSSENS: SOCIAL DISCOURSE



RESEARCH

Research about effects in preventig work

The need of childprotection work has decreased in areas where the method has been used systematically

Further research is needed

ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

Change of culture

Engaging in preventive work

Municipality level plan how to apply "Lets`talk about children" in the area

Resources needed to implement the method in the work with families in different units

Making possible for professionals to get training for the method

ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONALS

Considering the method useful as working with parents

Ability to build trust to facilitate conversations about parenting and children,

Employ a non-judgemental approach,

Recognise that all parents need support and

That parents as the experts on their child.

THEORIES AND METHODS



THANK YOU!