

Helsinki

# Literacy Work in Helsinki

Section 2 –  
Information and examples  
of literacy work

# Helsinki

Literacy Work in Helsinki is a publication that was produced with the input of dozens of professionals from various divisions and enterprises of the City of Helsinki. This publication was produced with project funding from the National Literacy Programme of the Finnish National Agency for Education. A warm thank you for your cooperation!

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# Information on the different aspects of literacy work in Helsinki

There is national and local research, statistical and evaluation data on literacy and related subjects in Finland. Most research and studies are carried out in the context of education, training and learning. Other disciplines, such as psychology, social sciences, and library and information sciences, also produce a wide range of information on reading and related subjects.

The latest international studies on learning outcomes (PIRLS 2021 and PISA 2022) show that literacy levels are declining and there is a widening gap in literacy skills, which are increasingly being passed down through generations. The same phenomenon can be observed in many other OECD countries. Moreover, reading habits are changing rapidly<sup>1</sup>, leisure reading is on the decline<sup>2</sup> and attitudes towards reading are becoming more polarised.<sup>3</sup> More detailed information on the situation in Finland is available in the Finnish National Agency for Education's National Literacy Strategy 2030, the international learning outcome surveys (PISA, PIRLS and PIAAC) or the evaluation reports of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) – this publication focuses specifically on data in the context of the City of Helsinki.

Helsinki City has a wide range of statistics, data resources and evaluations related to different areas of literacy work. What follows is a general overview of what is known about reading or literacy work in different divisions and what types of materials are available. These descriptions serve as a basis for considering what kinds of data can be used, interpreted and analysed in the future when examining phenomena related to the topic.

The data supports the planning and orientation of literacy work, and the information from the different datasets can be used to support management, planning and resourcing. The compilation also makes it easier to see which areas of literacy work have quantitative or qualitative data available. While this compilation is the result of contributions from several operators from different divisions, it is by no means exhaustive and only covers some of the operators involved in literacy work in the City.



# Information from the Education Division

The Education Division has a wealth of information available on literacy and reading among both individuals and various groups (e.g. class, school, district). There is also information on a wide range of activities around literacy work. The data and materials accumulated by the division range from the measurement of specific literacy skills to the usage rates of various services that support reading. A picture of the literacy levels of learners and groups is mainly formed by the staff at educational institutions, but some data is also available at the district and city levels.

Information about individual learners' literacy levels and support needs is, of course, confidential, and is intended for use by families and professionals. However, there are some more comprehensive anonymised datasets available, as well as other public data related to literacy or reading.

## Information on literacy levels

### Early childhood and pre-primary education

Early childhood education and pre-primary education do not aim to directly teach children literacy, but rather to support the development of their linguistic skills and capabilities.<sup>4</sup> The evaluation of early childhood education focuses on the goals set for the activities as well as the work of the teaching and educational staff. However, planning and evaluating activities that are meaningful for children's learning and development also require monitoring the children's language development as well as their linguistic and literacy skills.

The unit's action plan and the group's pedagogical plan are important tools for monitoring literacy work in early childhood education. Daycare centres use these to plan activities tailored to the needs of the group of children and assess whether the activities have been meaningful in terms of the goals and the children's learning. The City reviews the implementation of the action plans through City-level audits every two years.

Other materials are also used for monitoring and evaluation. The curricula for Helsinki's pre-primary education and early childhood education include the use of the LangPeda tool in the planning and evaluation of language-aware learning environments and activities. Furthermore, LangPeda is used to monitor the language skills of multilingual children and transfer information to primary and lower secondary education. Helsinki's daycare centres use the national quality evaluation system for early childhood education (VALSSI). One aspect of the evaluation tool relates to reciprocal and linguistic interaction (e.g. language use and verbalisation), and data on this topic has been collected from daycare centres in Helsinki. Based on the evaluation, the staff's strengths lie in their attentiveness and interaction with the children. As for areas in need of further development, children's active participation in the diverse creation of stories and texts stands out. Information on the quality of early childhood education and the various aspects of literacy work can also be obtained from national evaluations.

While a wide variety of materials and methods are used to support the development of language skills and reading capabilities in early childhood education and pre-primary education, the data collected does not provide a comprehensive or consistent picture of children's language or literacy skills for the organiser of the activities. Early childhood education and pre-primary education providers primarily collect data to improve their operations and promote children's wellbeing and learning, and this benefits the children, teachers, other professionals and guardians.

### Primary and lower secondary education

Primary and lower secondary education is particularly rich in data on literacy levels. The Education Division assesses the need for literacy support annually in grades 3 and 7. Additionally, schools may conduct assessments in other grade levels if they wish. The assessments use the FUNA-RW (Reading and Writing) test developed by the Uni-



versity of Turku.<sup>5</sup> FUNA is first and foremost a tool for teachers and schools, but it also provides data at the municipal level. For example, in 2025, approximately 11,000 pupils from schools run by the City of Helsinki participated in the assessments, so the number of respondents and the data are comprehensive.

Despite the large sample size, the FUNA results are not entirely comprehensive. Different pupils participate in each individual assessment session every year, the types of tasks are updated, and certain pupils, such as those whose need for support is already known, and thus may be excluded from the assessment for pedagogical reasons. The FUNA assessment does not measure literacy as a whole. Instead, it focuses on specific sub-skills of literacy. Consequently, the data obtained with the FUNA tool is indicative and does not provide precise information on the literary level of any age group, especially in relation to the diverse objectives of the curriculum regarding literacy.

However, based on the FUNA assessments (2023–2025), it is possible to draw some conclusions about the literacy of third- and seventh-graders in Helsinki. The FUNA reference data, against which Helsinki's results are compared, is collected from many other large cities, so it can be considered sufficiently comprehensive for the purpose of comparison.

- On average, the mastery of basic reading skills among third- and seventh-graders in Helsinki is at the same level as that of their peers in other parts of Finland.
- Girls' results in both the third and seventh grades are better than those of boys.
- There are differences between schools and districts. The socio-economic background of guardians and the support needs and foreign-language background of pupils affect the results.
- There is considerable variation within groups (e.g. gender, foreign-language speakers), and poor performance cannot be explained by any single factor (e.g. gender, speaking a foreign language).

Our FUNA assessments show exactly the same trends in literacy as those observed at the national level. For example, according to reports by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC), children in Helsinki perform on average at the level of the reference data, girls perform better on average than boys, there are differences between schools, no single background factor explains better or weaker results and a pupil's background is increasingly reflected in their results. However, it is worth noting that speakers of foreign languages generally perform significantly worse in the assessments than those whose first language is Finnish or Swedish.

In addition to the FUNA assessments, primary and lower secondary education uses a range of tests and tools procured centrally by the division or by the schools themselves, including both paper-based resources (e.g. the ALLU test, the Luenpa and Opinpa books) and digital resources (e.g. the digital ALLU test, Lukuseula and Digital Reading and Spelling Screening). These tools provide information on pupils' literacy levels to school staff, the pupils themselves and possibly their guardians, but not to the education provider.

City of Helsinki municipal comprehensive schools actively participate in FINEEC's national assessments of learning outcomes (such as the longitudinal assessment of learning outcomes in primary and lower secondary education), which measure learning in mother tongue and literature, and thus in certain areas of literacy. These assessments always include a selection of Finnish- and Swedish-language schools (e.g. the 2024 assessment of sixth-graders included 11 City-run schools), meaning that only a small sample of City-run comprehensive schools are represented. Consequently, the results of the assessments cannot be directly generalised to all schools in Helsinki, even though the sample includes schools from demographically diverse areas.

The information generated by the assessments is most useful to the schools participating in them and the body organising the assessments. In addition to this, the City's sample can provide useful information to the leadership of the Education Divi-

sion or those working in planning and development to support the needs-based allocation of various development projects, training programmes or other resources, for example.

Sample-based information is also provided by international assessments of learning outcomes, such as the PISA and PIRLS studies, which always include randomly selected schools in Helsinki. Nowadays, Helsinki strives to extract its own results from sources such as the PISA assessments (which measure the proficiency of ninth-graders at the end-of-school assessment stage), enabling comparisons with national results, for example.

Furthermore, we receive information on comprehensive school grades and their development in different subjects, but grades in subjects such as mother tongue and literature are not an unequivocal indicator of literacy. The grade for a subject is based on multiple learning objectives, and because the principle of compensation applies across these objectives, no conclusions regarding literacy can be drawn based on grades alone. Furthermore, it has been noted that very different levels of proficiency can result in the same grade in Finland<sup>6</sup>, which makes it even more difficult to interpret grades in the subject of mother tongue and literature in relation to literacy.

## **Upper secondary education and liberal adult education**

The upper secondary level does not assess learning outcomes as comprehensively as the primary and lower secondary level. In general upper secondary schools, it is possible to track trends in matriculation examination grades for mother tongue and literature, but these do not specifically reflect literacy. In addition to this, Helsinki's general upper secondary schools can assess students' language skills and level of literacy with tools such as the Digital Reading and Spelling Screening tool developed by the Niilo Mäki Institute. However, no City-wide, comprehensive data on the literacy levels of students in the City's general upper secondary education is available. Additionally, general upper secondary schools and other educational institutions receive data from the School Health

Promotion study on the extent to which students, in their own assessment, have difficulty with tasks that require them to read or write.

FINEEC's longitudinal evaluation From Basic Education to the Matriculation Examination examines how the competences of ninth-graders predict their choices of matriculation examinations and their performance in those examinations. Helsinki's general upper secondary education will receive city-specific information on this at the turn of 2026 and 2027.

The situation is largely the same at Stadin AO, where the student body consists of both compulsory-education students and adults, the latter of whom make up the majority of the student body. At Stadin AO, a widely used tool for assessing literacy skills is Digital Reading and Spelling Screening, which can be used to identify students who would particularly benefit from reading support. The Digital Reading and Spelling Screening tool is used to varying degrees each year and with different groups of learners, and education providers do not accumulate any centralised data on this. The assessments primarily benefit the students and the teachers who instruct them, as well as possibly the directors of the educational institutions when it comes to allocating resources.

Adults who directly participate in services provided by the Education Division include students at Stadin AO, adult students of general upper secondary schools, adults in comprehensive education and students in liberal adult education, for example. Education providers may screen or assess the literacy levels of adult students as part of their studies or courses in cases such as beginner-level language courses or when the information is needed for other purposes. The literacy work carried out by the Education Division with adults concerns only a small proportion of Helsinki's adult population, and the division does not have broader data on the literacy levels of this group. Indicators of adult literacy levels can be obtained from sources such as the PIAAC study or Statistics Finland's data. It might be worthwhile to examine Helsinki's results from this data in more detail in the future, provided that city-specific data can be extracted. At the upper secondary level and



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in liberal adult education, data on the literacy of certain groups, such as adults with an immigrant background, accumulates at the level of individual educational institutions e.g. through comprehensive education for adults and courses on reading and writing skills.

## Other information

In addition to literacy levels, the division accumulates information on literacy work in many other areas through activities such as training sessions and events, the use of digital services and research and development partnerships.

The number of literacy-themed continuing education courses organised by the division and the number of participants in those courses are tracked annually. In total, around 800 people participated in literacy-themed training in 2025. In 2025, a total of approximately 5,400 people participated in training courses organised by the division's Development Services, which were generally open to everyone.

Educational institutions organise a wide range of training (such as development days, VESO and pedagogical meetings) on their own. Such district, team or work community training is linked to City-level know-how development priorities. One of the priorities during this strategy period is to strengthen key competences and skills. However, no detailed statistics are available on the training organised by the units or its content. Furthermore, the Finnish and Swedish Adult Education Centres (Työvis and Arbis), which provide liberal adult edu-

cation, organise a very wide range of public events related to reading and literature each year and monitor their number and attendance.

The Finnish model for leisure activities, as part of the leisure services offered by primary and lower secondary education, organises a variety of activities that promote literacy for children and young people in grades 3–9 (including literature, literary arts, comics, theatre, etc.) The Finnish model for leisure activities regularly collects data on the preferences of children and young people regarding leisure activities, and the range of activities it offers is based on these preferences. This provides insight into the preferences of children and young people regarding this topic – every year, activities that promote literacy reach numerous children and young people in Helsinki, and the number of participants in these groups is monitored regularly.

The number of users of certain digital services in the division can be tracked. One such service is Lukulumo, an e-book and audiobook service used in Helsinki's pre-primary education and instruction in grades 1 and 2. For instruction in grades 1 and 2, usage rates can be tracked by school, district or city through the service provider's data studio. For pre-primary education, City-wide data is available on the number of active users and the number of books accessed through the service. Information like this helps determine whether the resources allocated to literacy work (in this case, annual licence fees) are being directed towards a service that is genuinely being used and perceived as beneficial. The Lukulumo service is widely used in Helsinki: in pre-primary education and instruction in grades 1 and 2, a total of over 200,000 books were accessed through the service in 2025.

In addition to this, information on literacy work in the division is provided by a range of other sources, such as quality assessments, surveys, the content of school year plans, monitoring of the implementation of strategic objectives related to the theme, statistical data on participation in services that promote reading on the cultural route and the number of theme-related events or study units at various educational institutions. We can also moni-

tor the reach of internal and external communication on the themes of literacy work, and whether the theme is being communicated regularly and strategically across our different channels.

Research and development cooperation with universities and research institutes provides the division with valuable information on literacy. The FUNA assessment of the need for literacy support described above is based on a long-term research and development cooperation agreement with the University of Turku. In cooperation with the University of Helsinki's Centre for Educational Assessment, we are developing the VALU tool to support the assessment of subject-specific literacy skills among pupils transitioning from preparatory education to primary and lower secondary education. We are also conducting research projects in cooperation with the EDUCA Flagship research consortium led by the University of Jyväskylä, such as interventions in early childhood education and primary and lower secondary education focused on needs-based funding for literacy instruction, as well as the Lukuportti study, which measures families' reading habits.

Recruitment and measures that support staff attraction and retention can influence the teaching and learning of high-quality literacy skills. It is important for HR services in the Education Division to continuously monitor the availability of qualified staff. The division must undertake long-term efforts to improve the availability and retention of qualified S2 teachers, class teachers and mother tongue and literature teachers.

The division also accumulates information on development activities, such as projects and the work of developer teachers. They provide us with insight into areas such as staff members' wishes and needs regarding training. We can identify staff and parties who have developed literacy work to a high level and who can share their expertise and model their work for others. Additionally, the division produces a large number of internal reports and studies on literacy work as specialist work, which it uses in planning, continuing education, management and reporting.

# Information from Library Services

Library Services maintains a wide range of information, including details on library use, library services and events held at the libraries. The available datasets do not, in and of themselves, allow us to draw conclusions about the literacy levels of city residents, for example, but they do enable us to assess the extent to which the City reaches people through literature. Statistics and data help assess how the library is fulfilling one of its main tasks: promoting literacy for all residents.

Loan statistics provide a view of how many books are borrowed from libraries. The data allows for a breakdown of the number of loans for children's and young adult literature and so-called adult literature. It is also possible to view the statistics by genre and language. Loan statistics also provide trend data, making it possible to compare loan volumes across different years, for example. Furthermore, it is possible to compare statistics between districts and libraries, which provides insight into which types of materials are circulating or not circulating within a given area. One challenge with loan statistics is that they do not reveal what percentage of the borrowed works has actually been read. It should also be noted that library cards can now be used to borrow a wide variety of materials – not just written materials.

The library database shows how many Helsinki residents have a library card and whether they use it. Library cards are divided into adult and children's cards. The database can also be used to identify the number, age groups and gender of people who have used library cards to borrow items over the past year. In addition to this, the statistics allow for separate data requests to determine the number of cards issued to specific groups (such as those obtained by a teacher for a class or a daycare group) and by the language used by the user (Finnish, Swedish, English).

Libraries organise a wide variety of events related to reading and literature. Events directly related to literature include book clubs and author visits, as well as story and nursery rhyme sessions for children and families. There is also a wide variety

of literature and reading events for children and young people around the city every year. Events are one way to promote reading, particularly among adults, and library statistics make it possible to track the number of events held and the number of participants. For example, in 2025, there were more than 350 different book club events for adults, with nearly 2,800 participants. It is not possible to identify the individuals participating in the events in greater detail (e.g. by age, gender, language, etc.), as such information is not collected at public events that are open to everyone.

Many other nationally collected statistics can be compared between cities, providing insight into how and what kind of literacy work Helsinki's libraries are carrying out compared to the rest of Finland. Examples of statistics being compiled include the number of locations and facilities, opening hours, the size of the collection and the number of annual acquisitions.

Skilled staff play a key role in literacy work, and their participation in training is monitored. Every year, the City Library sets priorities for staff knowledge development. In 2026, one of the priorities is to strengthen skills related to reading culture and literacy work. By March 2026, approximately 200 library staff members had participated in training related to this topic. However, it should be noted that the same individuals may have participated in more than one training course. Skills related to literacy work are developed not only through formal training but also through peer learning from colleagues, for example.

## Cooperation with the Education Division

The library and the Education Division have a cooperation agreement that specifies the services provided by the library to primary and lower secondary schools and ensures the allocation of resources for those services. Currently, the library organises visits to the local library for all of the City's first-grade classes, as well as book tips for all third- and seventh-grade pupils. Furthermore, a library session for fifth-graders was added to the service offering for the 2025–2026 school year.

These are the minimum services that the library has committed to providing annually to the City's primary and lower secondary schools, through which the library contributes to promoting reading at all schools. Another goal of this cooperation is to encourage children and young people to use libraries. For other grades, the library organises book tip events and other events depending on available resources. Additionally, all school classes are offered services such as a book bag service, through which teachers can order a pre-selected collection of books around a theme of their choice for their class. During the 2024–2025 school year, teachers ordered over 800 book bags.

The cooperation between the library and primary and lower secondary education provides a wealth of valuable information: how many events are organised for school classes throughout the city, and how many comprehensive schools and classes participate in them. For example, during the 2024–2025 school year, Helsinki's libraries reached over 27,000 comprehensive school pupils. The annual comprehensive feedback on the events and visits provided by teachers in primary and lower secondary education is a valuable source of information that helps improve these joint efforts and assess whether the content of the services meets the needs.

The library also offers a wide range of services for children of other ages (e.g. nursery rhyme sessions, story hours, media story hours). Story sessions organised for daycare groups are one of the most significant ways in which libraries promote reading among children under school age, and the statistics provide information on the number of sessions held and the number of participants at each library. During the 2024–2025 school year, libraries held over 1,200 story sessions for daycare groups. For students at the upper secondary level, the library offers a variety of services, such as library visits and book packages. The library also visits upper secondary institutions on a seasonal basis. Statistics are also collected on these services in terms of the number of participants and how often the services are booked. Statistics can help assess the need for services and improve them based on the information gathered.



**During the 2024–  
2025 school year,  
Helsinki's libraries  
reached**

**27,000**

**comprehensive  
school pupils**



**During the 2024–2025  
school year, teachers  
ordered over**

**800**

**book bags for  
their pupils**

# Information from maternity and child health clinics

The role of the child health clinic is to promote the health and wellbeing of children under school age and their families, and to support parenting. Child health clinics monitor, promote and support children's physical, mental and social growth and development, including their interaction skills and language development, which in turn support the development of literacy skills. Through cooperation between healthcare professionals, families and early childhood education providers, a wide range of information is gathered regarding these skills.

During health checks at the child health clinic, a professional assesses the child's speech and language development, interaction and play by observing the child during the visit, giving them various tasks to complete and interviewing the parents. The professional assesses the child's speech during age-specific examinations by observing how well the child understands speech and follows instructions, as well as how much the child produces and/or understands words or forms sentences relative to their age group. The professional also tests the child's auditory perception through tasks that assess whether the child can distinguish between words that sound similar.

The language and speech development of toddlers and children under school age is monitored at every health check by assessing the child's language skills through observation, tasks and interviews with the parents. At the age of four, a child's speech and language development and interaction are assessed with the help of tasks from the Lene manual, which is used to assess the neurological development of four-year-old children. At the age of five, children undergo a speech and language development assessment (the so-called Lumiukko test) as needed. The purpose of this assessment is to identify children who may require further evaluation or speech therapy due to suspected delays in their language development. In addition to speech development, the child's interaction skills are assessed. Professionals have access to the referral criteria for speech therapy for children

aged 0–6 years and can consult speech therapists about a child's language development if necessary.

The information collected at maternity and child health clinics regarding a child's speech and language development is primarily intended for clinic professionals, such as public health nurses and doctors, who monitor the child's development and ensure that the child is developing in line with their age. This information is used to support the child's wellbeing and development, as well as to identify and address any developmental delays or issues at an early stage. With parental consent, this information may also be used by other healthcare and early childhood education providers.

## Information from cooperation with early childhood education

Early childhood education providers submit an observation form regarding a child's development to the maternity and child health clinic in connection with the three-year check-up, with the parents' consent. The form is saved in the patient information system and used to assess the child's development.

A child's four-year check-up is conducted in accordance with the Hyve model (an assessment of a child's development and wellbeing in cooperation between the guardians, early childhood education and the maternity and child health clinic). In this model, the early childhood education provider assesses the child's growth and development by using the Hyve form and through discussions with the parents. The child's early childhood education plan is updated based on the discussion. After this, the form, completed jointly by the parents and the early childhood education staff, is sent to the maternity and child health clinic, where the child will be examined by a public health nurse and a doctor. After the daycare centre has submitted the Hyve form assessing the child's growth and development, the clinic stores it in the patient information system and uses it as part of the assessment of



the child's growth and development. The maternity and child health clinic records any findings and follow-up measures on the form and returns it to the daycare centre.

Therefore, information on issues that are crucially linked to literacy skills is shared and made available through cooperation between the child health clinic and early childhood education, to both guardians and various professionals. The information is sensitive and confidential, so City-level summaries or data are not available.

### Other information

There is also a wide range of other information available on the services of maternity and child health clinics that is related to or can be used for literacy work. For example, feedback is being collected nationwide on the Book Bag to Every Baby Born in Finland, which is distributed to all families. Helsinki is able to extract its own results from the national feedback survey, which provide valuable insights into parents' views on the usefulness of the Book Bag and other literacy-related content as part of the maternity and child health clinic services. The annual sample size for the feedback survey in Helsinki is small (N = approximately 100), so no far-reaching conclusions can be drawn from it, but the data can be used as a rough guideline. It is also possible to monitor things such as how much and in which languages people use certain materials closely related to the topic (such as the brochure on child development and screen time).

## Information from other divisions and enterprises

The majority of information related to literacy work is accumulated in the Education Division, library services and family services. There is also a variety of information available on this topic and phenomenon in the services provided by the Culture and Leisure Division, such as cultural, museum and youth services. In basic arts education managed by Cultural Services, various types of information related to the arts, in particular literary arts and theatre, can be collected and monitored as part of literacy work.

The City's central administration, i.e. City Executive Office, organises and supports a wide range of activities closely related to literacy work. The Human Resources Department is responsible for City-wide staff training. The Urban Research and Statistics Unit of the Strategy Department plays a major role in producing information, and reports on topics such as service satisfaction, human resources and the consumption of and participation in culture, which indirectly provide insights into literacy work. Services that support integration also play a role in literacy work, and the data collected through these services is used in cooperation with Employment Services, for example.

Employment Services, which operates as an independent public enterprise, collects data on literacy among certain client groups. For example, the reading, writing and language skills of clients participating in integration services are assessed at the Testipiste language assessment centre. Other divisions and public enterprises do not accumulate relevant data on literacy work, or such data is available only in a very fragmented manner.



# Conclusions

A wide range of information on literacy work is available in the City of Helsinki's divisions and services. Most of the information is sensitive and confidential, but some open data is also available. The previous sections have described some of the datasets related to literacy work, but they are not exhaustive. In any case, even this brief description helps highlight the wide variety of information available on the topic and how that information is scattered across different parts of the City organisation.

The Education Division and maternity and family counselling clinics have information available on the literacy levels of individuals and groups, as well as on topics closely related to literacy, such as language development. This information is largely related to the statutory and core responsibilities of the divisions. Library services, on the other hand, provide a wide range of quantitative data that can be used in particular to describe the reading habits of Helsinki residents who already use the services. It is worth noting that, while the

library's data is comprehensive, it does not provide a very good picture of the phenomena related to library use or reading among Helsinki residents on average. This is due to factors such as the fact that most Helsinki residents do not actively use their library cards.

Going forward, it will be important to consider how we can utilise and combine existing data and what kinds of conclusions we can draw from the material. What is important is to harness this information to better serve the equal opportunities of city residents to learn and develop literacy skills, become inspired to read or take up reading as a hobby.

Another important source of information in literacy work are the information and signals shared in various regional and other networks and forums, which are not separately recorded. In addition to large-scale quantitative or qualitative datasets, various methods of generating information, such as dialogues and discussions with different groups, can provide a deeper understanding of topics such as Helsinki residents' wishes, barriers, thoughts or needs regarding literacy and reading. Different approaches to the formation of information and the use of such approaches are worthwhile and often help us examine and understand a phenomenon from a broader perspective.



# Examples of literacy work

Next, this publication will highlight and showcase effective literacy work already underway in the City of Helsinki's various divisions, services and teams. As the large City organisation is a rich source of good examples, many practices are left unmentioned here. The aim is for the examples selected for the publication to illustrate the various types of literacy work carried out in different services. Some of the examples relate to planning, resourcing and objectives, while others pertain to work that directly affects city residents.

The concrete descriptions help illustrate how literacy work can manifest itself in different sectors. The examples will hopefully also provide ideas, inspiration and tips for implementing and developing literacy work and finding new partnerships.

The examples also help concretise the National Literacy Strategy: in a Literate Municipality, literacy work should involve multiple operators, it can be carried out across different divisions and services, and new, even bold, initiatives are needed.

## List of case examples

### Library, Education Division:

- The bedtime story shelf inspires families to read together
- The library's much-praised cooperation with educational institutions
- Multilingual and language-aware literacy work for children and young people in East Helsinki's libraries
- Playfully, but completely seriously! – Multidisciplinary promotion of reading, creativity and play in Swedish-language early childhood education

### Education Division:

- Strengthening Finnish language and literacy skills in daycare centres through needs-based funding
- Comprehensive schools' plans bring enthusiasm and a systematic approach to literacy work
- Literacy work at Stadin AO

### Library:

- Local residents involved in the renewal of Malminkartano Library
- Libraries' evolving book club activities are attracting new audiences
- The City Libraries of Helsinki and Vantaa promote reading among prisoners

### Maternity and family counselling clinics:

- The Book Bag is a hit at Helsinki's maternity and child health clinics

### Youth Services:

- Pioneering efforts to strengthen AI literacy in youth services

### Employment Services:

- Helping newcomers to Helsinki who are unable to read or write find training, and cooperation with training providers

### Entire City:

- Promoting literacy work in the City of Helsinki's own documents



# The bedtime story shelf inspires families to read together

Many daycare centres in Helsinki have been developing various book lending activities for several years. What all these different implementations (bedtime story shelf, lobby library, lending shelf, etc.) have in common is the idea that, when a guardian comes to pick up their child from a daycare centre, they and their child can easily borrow some books to read at home.<sup>7</sup>

There is no precise data on the number of different book-lending activities at City-run daycare centres, but according to estimates by regional teachers of Finnish as a second language, at least 70 daycare centres already have such activities in place. Some daycare centres around the city run their lending activities entirely with their own books and materials, while others collaborate with the City Library. This example focuses in particular on activities carried out in cooperation with the City Library. The activities are closely linked to the *Kirjaston suunta 2033* (Direction of the Library 2033) vision, one of the key actions of which is to create a culture of reading for people of all ages. The goal of the vision is to make reading entertaining and beneficial for every resident of Helsinki by 2033. Cooperation with early childhood education helps reach a large number of families and children, for whom the aim is to create positive reading experiences from an early age.

Helsinki City Library has been offering a bedtime story shelf service to some of the City's daycare centres since the autumn of 2024. This shelf is stocked with books in multiple languages, based on the languages spoken by the children attending the daycare centre. The idea is to encourage families to read together, especially in their own home language. At the same time, it promotes a culture of reading by encouraging parents to read aloud to their children. Launched in 2024, these

activities are systematic, and the goal is to make the bedtime story shelves a permanent part of the library's range of services for daycare centres.

Due to reasons related to the library's resources (such as the limited size of the collection and working hours), it is not yet possible to provide these shelves to every daycare centre in the city. The library is currently offering bedtime story shelves in five areas of Helsinki: Malminkartano, Kannelmäki, Malmi, Mellunmäki and Meri-Rastila. These areas are part of the suburban regeneration areas outlined in the Helsinki City Strategy. Suburban regeneration areas are areas whose development the City is paying special attention to. The bedtime story shelf service offered to local daycare centres is one of the ways in which the library contributes to the development of these areas and the prevention of segregation. In the autumn of 2025, approximately 20 daycare groups participated in the library's bedtime story shelf activities.

The local library liaises with the daycare centre and selects books for the bedtime story shelf based on language preferences. The aim is to have something to read on the shelf in every child's home language. When selecting books, the library cooperates with the Multilingual Library. The Multilingual Library is a nationwide service from which all Finnish libraries can order materials for their customers. Daycare centres have already requested books in 50 different languages, and it has not yet been possible to fulfil all of these requests. The most requested languages in Helsinki are Persian, Somali, Arabic, Estonian and Russian. The shelves are stocked with 20–30 books at a time.

Once the books have been compiled, a staff member will notify the daycare centre that the books are ready for pickup at the local library.



In autumn 2025,  
the service offered by  
the library was already  
being used by about

**20**  
daycare groups

The daycare centre can keep the books on loan for 2–3 months instead of the usual 28-day loan period. This ensures that as many families as possible have a chance to use the shelf. If the families finish the books quickly, the library can provide new ones during the service period upon request. Books borrowed by the daycare centre will not be subject to debt collection if they are lost or damaged.

Each daycare centre decides for itself where to place the bedtime story shelf and how to handle lending books to take home. The books can also be used and read during the children's early childhood education day at the daycare centre. The staff of the daycare centre explain and communicate the significance and use of the bedtime story shelf to the families and children – the success of the service requires commitment from the daycare staff. If the staff do not actively guide parents and children in the use of the shelf, it is easy for the books to go unborrowed.

The library is constantly and purposefully expanding its collection of books in foreign languages, but the process is rather slow. By expanding the collection gradually, the library can also assess how extensive a service its resources can support. The goal should be for all daycare centres in Helsinki to eventually have the opportunity to try out some form of book lending service, either a more permanent one using their own collection or one that works in cooperation with the library. In fact, this goal has already taken a step forward. In the spring of 2026, libraries will seek to develop their bedtime story shelf service to cover more daycare centres in Helsinki.

**Text and enquiries:** Emma-Lotta Tynkkynen (*Senior Pedagogical Informatician, Library Services*) & Antti Aaltonen (*Project Manager, Education Division*)

# The library's much-praised cooperation with educational institutions

In Helsinki, the City Library works very closely with daycare centres, schools and upper secondary level institutions. The range of services for early childhood education and pre-primary education includes story hours, media hours, guided group visits, book bags and story diplomas. Groups visit libraries regularly, both independently and in the form of customised library visits. During the 2024–2025 school year, libraries held approximately 1,200 story hours for daycare groups, reaching over 22,000 children.

In Helsinki, cooperation between the library and primary and lower secondary education is defined in a separate cooperation agreement (Perusopetuspalveluiden ja kirjaston yhteistyösopimus, 2023). It sets out the services that the library must provide each school year for specific grade levels. The cooperation agreement ensures that sufficient annual resources (human resources, expertise, budget, materials, facilities, etc.) are available for the activities. The library provides these services in both Finnish and Swedish.

Currently, the library provides the following services annually to primary and lower secondary education in accordance with the agreement:

- **Library start for first-graders:** A guided initial visit to a school's local library during the first year of school. During the visit, the pupils will receive a book as part of the Helmet libraries' campaign for first-graders.
- **Book tip event for third-graders:** A book tip event, where the library staff will introduce third-grade pupils to a number of interesting titles.

- **Book tip event for seventh-graders:** A book tip event during seventh grade. The content and description of the event will be specified each year.

In the 2025–2026 school year, the library added a new library session for fifth-graders to its range of services. The current focus of the session is on environmental education and media literacy. The goal is to include the session in the cooperation agreement.

The agreement was established to ensure that every school in Helsinki has equal access to library services. The agreement also reinforces the core missions of both schools and libraries: literacy work and the promotion of reading.

The services provided by the library to schools are working very well. For example, in the 2024–2025 school year, they reached approximately 95% of first-graders, which is nearly 6,000 pupils. Nearly 100% of third-graders were reached, amounting to over 6,000 pupils. The library's book tip event for seventh-graders reached over 2,000 pupils. When book tip events other than those covered by the agreement are also included, approximately 3,000 seventh-graders were reached, representing 75% of the grade level.

The library collects feedback on its services, and it is clear from this feedback that teachers consider these sessions to be extremely important for helping pupils become familiar with the library and fostering interest in reading. The library aims to expand the collection of feedback and make better use of it in the future. Library staff also find this cooperation meaningful, as it allows them to



influence children's and young people's reading habits, and one of the library's main tasks, namely promoting reading, is effectively put into practice through this work.

In addition to the services included in the cooperation agreement, the City's different libraries also provide many other services to comprehensive schools within the limits of their current resources (e.g. book bags, book club books, reading diplomas and challenges, other guided group visits, the mobile library), and school groups actively use the library and its facilities for a wide variety of other purposes.

The library also wants to invest more heavily in services aimed at students on the upper secondary level. This is concretely reflected in the expanding and increasingly established range of services, which currently includes services such as guided library tours, book tip events and book bags. In addition to this, library staff visit educational institutions, during which 'pop-up library staff' introduce library services, issue library cards to students and engage with them to foster a positive image

The library collects feedback on its services, and it is clear from this feedback that teachers consider these sessions to be extremely important for helping pupils become familiar with the library and fostering interest in reading.

of the library and its staff. For example, in August and September 2025, the library organised pop-up visits at 19 upper secondary institutions, reaching over 1,300 upper secondary level students.

**Text and enquiries:** Emma-Lotta Tynkkynen (*Senior Pedagogical Informatician, Library Services*) & Antti Aaltonen (*Project Manager, Education Division*)

# Multilingual and language-aware literacy work for children and young people in East Helsinki's libraries

The libraries of East Helsinki aim to take into account the diversity of the area in their services. Among the manifestations of diversity are multilingualism and multiculturalism. In the eastern library district, the number of residents whose mother tongue is neither Finnish nor Swedish is already close to 50,000, and that number is growing. According to the 2025–2029 Helsinki City Strategy, the City's services take multiple languages into account and utilise multilingual services to reach out to Helsinki residents. The City's services and communications aim to use clear language and ensure they are easy to understand. There is a great deal of cooperation with the Education Division. Key partners include multilingual daycare centre instructors, the Welcome Families project, and the KOTIVA groups at the Finnish Adult Education Centre, for example.

Linguistic diversity is taken into account in a wide variety of activities. During story hours and book tip events, staff use clear language and speak clearly, and provide visual aids when necessary. The books for the story hours are selected in such a way that children and young people with limited Finnish language skills are also always taken into account. Some of the services are specifically tailored for children, young people and families who do not speak Finnish or Swedish as their mother tongue.

In the spring of 2026, East Helsinki's libraries hosted the second Ilo lukea! book carnival as part of Multilingual Month, celebrating the richness and diversity of languages with the children in the area. The event tours four eastern libraries over a

four-week period, and second-graders from the area are invited to each event. The carnival aims to awaken the joy of reading and spark interest in books in different languages by displaying the materials in an appealing way. Children have the opportunity to go from station to station to chat with library staff who speak different languages (Arabic, English, Chinese, Somali, Sorani, Russian, etc.) and find something to read in their own home language or languages. When registering for the event, teachers are asked to provide information in advance about all of the languages spoken in their classes. The library strives to order age-appropriate literature in these languages from the Multilingual Library so that every pupil can find something to read in their own language at the event.

The event also always includes a quiet reading area where pupils can retreat to look at, explore or read interesting books that they have found, either on their own or with a friend. At the end of the carnival, there is a short storytelling session where the same passage from a story is read aloud in different languages, and the children's task is to guess which language is being spoken. The groups always have the opportunity to borrow books from the event, and both teachers and pupils are very active in taking advantage of this opportunity. According to the experience of library staff and the results of a feedback survey conducted among teachers, participating in the event has not only been an enjoyable library experience for the pupils, but has also increased their language awareness and strengthened their linguistic self-confidence and interest in reading.



**According to the 2025–2029 Helsinki City Strategy, the City’s services take multiple languages into account and utilise multilingual services to reach out to Helsinki residents.**

In addition to the services included in the cultural route, the library services for children and young people in East Helsinki have prioritised the reception of preparatory education classes from the 2023–2024 school year onwards. The library invites all preparatory education classes in the area to visit annually and offers them the services that preparatory education teachers have requested in a survey conducted for them. Every visit includes a presentation of the library and its services, explained in simplified language as far as possible. At these events, the library provides age-appropriate, easy-to-read books in Finnish, as well as so-called silent books, whose stories can be followed by looking at the pictures and verbalising the books in the pupils' own mother tongues. The main goal is for as many pupils as possible to leave with their own library card if they do not already have one. The library also wants to convey the message that everyone is welcome and that its collections include reading material in many different languages. The visits by preparatory education classes have also involved experiments in cooperation with other operators, such as youth and cultural services, and these experiments have been fruitful.

Furthermore, upon request, library staff in the area visit e.g. daycare centres' parents' evenings and family houses to talk to guardians about the importance of reading to children and introduce library services, the Multilingual Library and children's literature available in various languages. The audience at these events usually consists of a diverse group of guardians. The library cooperates extensively with the Education Division, including multilingual instructors at daycare centres, the Welcome Families project and the KOTIVA groups at the Finnish Adult Education Centre. For example, library staff can put together multilingual book packages for meetings, offer shadow theatre workshops and give practical demonstrations of the library's activities to daycare centre staff, teachers, pupils, families and parents caring for their children at home who are studying Finnish at an adult education centre.

**Text and enquiries:** Johanna Martikainen (*Pedagogical Informatician, Library Services*)

# Playfully, but completely seriously! – Multidisciplinary promotion of reading, creativity and play in Swedish-language early childhood education

Reading books, culture, art and experiences in creative environments are included in the curriculum for early childhood education and care and the national core curriculum for pre-primary education. Art reflects human life and society in many ways. Play, imagination and the joy of creating are rooted in language, stories and communication, and they are essential building blocks in a child's development.

For the past two decades, Swedish-language early childhood education in Helsinki has been cooperating with the City of Helsinki's Cultural Services and the library. The activities began with the organisation of joint development days, which focused on various topics related to language and cultural education. Since then, it has evolved into a regular partnership with permanent structures.

Each daycare centre has designated language and culture coordinators who meet regularly at the invitation of Cultural or Library Services and share information about current cultural activities at their units. This allows information about recent events, children's books or good practices, for example, to be shared regularly to support staff in their daily work.

The long-term, multidisciplinary cooperation is based on a shared vision of language-aware activities, in which play, nursery rhymes, rhyming, poetry, theatre, visual arts and movement serve as inspiration for children's own language and self-expression. Providing children with this kind of

content helps strengthen their expressive abilities, fosters curiosity, encourages play and creativity and also leads to a broader interest in books and reading in the long term.

Over the years, the City has offered staff and groups of children visits and workshops at cultural centres, libraries, theatres, museums, book fairs and other venues throughout the city. There have been performances, exhibitions and events with a variety of audience engagement activities and side activities. These efforts are focused on areas where the need for language support is particularly high.

All of this cooperation involves sharing information and emphasising that daily reading sessions in the groups, the availability of children's books and playful and participatory cultural education are important cornerstones for a child's linguistic and emotional development, as well as for fostering a child's interest in various texts, books and reading.

## Book tasting for language and culture coordinators as an example

The library hosts an annual book tasting event for daycare centres' language and culture coordinators. The idea behind the book tasting is to introduce participants to picture books published in the previous year.

During the event, children's library staff introduce current trends in picture books (which topics and themes are popular) and share their own favourite



books. The books are attractively displayed at the event so that participants can easily browse, explore and borrow them. In addition to the picture book presentation, the event often features other activities, such as book review panels or picture book quizzes. Participants can also recommend their favourite books to others.

The event also provides a natural setting for day-care centres' language and culture coordinators and librarians to engage in discussions about literature and share their experiences with reading, particularly in the context of early childhood education. The idea is for language and culture coordinators to share information about new books and recommendations with their colleagues. Some also use the book tasting tips at parents' evenings, which helps spread the word about recent publications to families as well. The book tastings alone reach dozens of teachers every year, and the feedback from the event has been very positive.

Helsinki is able to continue implementing multi-disciplinary cooperation with Swedish-language early childhood education, cultural operators and the library to promote children's language devel-



Play, imagination and the joy of creating are rooted in language, stories and communication, and they are essential building blocks in a child's development.

opment, creativity and interest in reading within the framework of its core operations and human resources.

**Text and enquiries:** Nina Gran (*Senior Planning Officer, Cultural Services*), Cecilia Eriksson (*Pedagogical Informatician, Library Services*) & Johanna Karlsson (*Pedagogical Specialist, Education Division*)

# Strengthening Finnish language and literacy skills in daycare centres through needs-based funding

In 2025, Helsinki granted needs-based funding for Finnish-language early childhood education and pre-primary education to a total of 52 early childhood education units and three playground units. The amount of funding is calculated based on two variables (children in the 0-fee category and a high percentage of foreign-language speakers), with the final amount determined by the total number of children in the unit. These units are mainly located in areas where the socio-economic status of the residents is lower than elsewhere. The goal of this funding is to create permanent and long-term solutions that support children's social and language skills, enable pedagogically justified and planned small groups and provide more time and support for children. All of this aims to slow the trend of segregation, prevent marginalisation and reduce the differences in children's skills.

Research shows that early childhood education units are even more segregated than schools. Daycare centres serve smaller areas, and their unit sizes are significantly smaller than those of primary and lower secondary education. While needs-based funding is granted to all 52 early childhood education units based on the same variables, even these units differ greatly from one another, and their needs in terms of the allocation of additional funding vary. There may even be differences between different groups within the same daycare centre due to factors such as challenges in the availability of qualified staff.

In early 2025, early childhood education units receiving needs-based funding drew up plans

to prevent segregation. The plans outlined the phenomena identified within the unit that contribute to segregation, set goals for reducing them and defined measures to achieve those goals. The children's language skills were identified as a factor contributing to segregation in 32 plans. The units are concerned about children with a poor command of Finnish, whether they come from native Finnish families or families with an immigrant background.

Supporting language development and organising language-aware activities are part of the basic work of early childhood education. In Helsinki, strengthening core knowledge and skills and working towards equal learning opportunities are also included in the division's own goals and the City Strategy. However, linguistically and culturally diverse groups of children, a lack of family engagement in early childhood education and gaps in staff competence pose challenges in many daycare centres when it comes to achieving these goals and implementing these measures. The aim of needs-based funding is to curb segregation. For example, daycare centres have used the funds to hire additional staff, including teachers of Finnish as a second language, early childhood education teachers, social pedagogues, special educational needs teachers in early childhood education, child minders and assistants. They make it possible to organise more small group activities, for example, which help children develop their Finnish-language skills and play skills. Employees hired by the units who have received pedagogical training have promoted language-aware activities in the groups by



strengthening the staff's skills through methods such as modelling or co-teaching.

In particular, teachers of Finnish as a second language have trained staff to use tools already available in the units that support language development and strengthen Finnish-language skills, such as the Roihuset materials or the Lukulumo app for pre-primary education groups. Almost all units receiving needs-based funding have increased their systematic use of visual aids in daily activities. They have also added visual aids to daycare centre playgrounds to help children express themselves, participate and voice their own thoughts and wishes.

Needs-based funding makes it possible to develop the learning environment in daycare centres so that it better encourages reading and play. Many daycare centres have set up reading nooks, increased access to books by acquiring book carts and encouraged guardians to read to their children in their mother tongue at home by putting together book bags containing books in various languages for families to borrow. Some daycare centres have even begun compiling their own multilingual libraries for use at the daycare centre and at home. The units take into account the diversity of children and families when selecting books.

Most units receiving needs-based funding have increased and strengthened parental involvement. The organisation of various reading events is popular – even an entire month during which guardians are invited to the daycare centre to read fairy tales to the children in their mother tongue. Guardians, staff and children alike have found these events to be very worthwhile and enjoyable. The best part has been that the children can take pride in their own mother tongue, and everyone has had the chance to explore different languages. Some of the children's guardians have never visited a Finnish library, in which case an employee hired through needs-based funding has been able to take the guardians on a tour of the library and help them

**Employees hired by the units who have received pedagogical training have promoted language-aware activities in the groups by means such as strengthening the staff's skills.**

obtain a library card. Guardians who are illiterate have been encouraged to look at the pictures in books together with their children and tell stories and verbalise them in their own mother tongue.

The effectiveness of the measures outlined above made possible specifically by needs-based funding in narrowing the skills gap can only be assessed several years later, once the children have started comprehensive school. In any case, positive effects on the children's current daily life at daycare, the development of their language skills and reading readiness, and their commitment to activities have already been observed in a short period of time. Helsinki wants to continue and improve the distribution of needs-based funding, which will ensure more equal opportunities for children who are starting out on their learning path, especially those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Text and enquiries:** Heidi Kiljunen (*Senior Planning Officer, Early Childhood Education and Pre-primary Education*) & Tero Laine (*Senior Planning Officer, Early Childhood Education and Pre-primary Education*)

# Comprehensive schools' plans bring enthusiasm and a systematic approach to literacy work

In its proposed measures for the Literate School programme under the National Literacy Strategy 2030, the Finnish National Agency for Education suggests that every school should have a long-term literacy programme or plan.<sup>8</sup> Of the approximately 100 comprehensive schools run by the City, about 95% currently have some kind of programme, strategy or plan to support literacy (such as the school's own literacy strategy or something similar). This information is based on a survey on literacy work conducted at schools in late 2025, which assessed literacy work carried out at schools at the level of individuals and the work community. The survey is part of the binding target for primary and lower secondary education in 2026. Schools select 2–4 areas for improvement based on their own results, which are then included in their school year plans.

The schools' own literacy plans take various forms: strategies, programmes, guidelines, plans or manuals. According to the developer teachers, the schools' own plans include elements such as

- various circular planners (e.g. assessments, surveys)
- descriptions of the content and priorities of the school's literacy work
- team structures and information about the responsible bodies or persons
- information on the materials available and their utilisation
- information on and plans for the school's literacy events and campaigns
- information on the implementation and realisation of library cooperation.

The plans are primarily aimed at professionals working at the school, and the activities arising from these plans are directed specifically at children and young people, and in some cases also at guardians and other parties involved in the school's daily activities (such as recreational or hobby service providers).

Teachers, principals and regional managers in primary and lower secondary education report that the plans offer a wide range of benefits. With clear plans in place, the assessment of literacy skills and the need for support, for example, is consistent and systematic. The plans have also increased the number of literacy and language awareness teams at schools. Many schools have strengthened their cooperation with the library and have allocated human resources and budget funds to the development of school libraries. Joint events have likewise had a positive impact on the schools' reading culture. It is particularly effective when the implementation of the plans is evaluated and monitored regularly, e.g. by teams and management groups, and updated as needed.



**Text and enquiries:** Kiia Hakkala (*Pedagogical Specialist*) and Lotta Lempinen (*Senior Planning Officer, Primary and Lower Secondary Education*)



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The schools' own literacy plans take various forms: strategies, programmes, guidelines, plans or manuals.



Education Division

# Literacy work at Stadin AO

The Helsinki City Strategy (2021–2025) included a goal to make Helsinki the capital of reading and literacy. As a result, Helsinki Vocational College (Stadin AO) began to pay even more attention to its joint literacy work. The need for such action is also supported by studies conducted in recent years on the declining literacy levels among young people and adults. Another factor encouraging literacy work is that approximately 50% of Stadin AO's students speak a language other than Finnish as their mother tongue, and about 25% of students have special support plans for a variety of reasons. Stadin AO is a multidisciplinary educational institution with approximately 22,000 students annually, according to 2025 statistics, studying towards over 50 professional qualifications at 14 different locations.

The aim of the literacy work at Stadin AO is to provide activities that are suitable for everyone and emphasise the importance of literacy. It is also

Stadin AO is annually attended by approximately

**22,000**  
students

linked to the institution's strategic goals for social and cultural sustainability. For these reasons, Stadin AO has decided to organise a joint reading week twice a year starting in 2022. The first one takes place in April, coinciding with National Reading Week, and the second one is in November.

A designated coordinator is responsible for planning the educational institution's joint reading weeks and convenes the teachers in charge at each location. Under the coordinator's leadership, the teachers agree on the themes for the reading weeks as well as communications for each institution and location. During the joint meetings, the teachers in charge at each location review the feedback from the previous reading weeks and share good ideas for activities.

At many locations, the teachers in charge of the reading week cooperate with student welfare services in organising events designed to boost

students' interest in and joy of reading. These activities are organised in such a way that they are accessible to all students, regardless of their mother tongue or need for support. The reading weeks have been a great success because they are clearly and centrally coordinated, take place simultaneously at all locations and have a low threshold, making it easy for a large number of teachers and students to participate in the activities.

The reading weeks challenge all teachers to set aside time during their lessons and guidance sessions for reading breaks, during which students can read and listen to books, learning materials or other texts. Teachers receive a list of tips for these breaks, including ideas for reading materials in simplified language. The purpose of these reading breaks is to reinforce the importance of literacy as a professional skill in every field.

Popular activities during the reading weeks include book cafés, which usually take place once during the week. Recurring activities at these book cafés have included various ways of sharing book recommendations, book exchanges, writing workshops, poetry fishing, poetry karaoke, various text crafts, quiet reading areas, contests and raffles, for example. Furthermore, guest authors and other experts in literacy work visit the locations.

The reading week activities also encourage creative ways to promote the joy of reading among young people and adults: some locations have had visits from reading dogs, to whom students find it easy to read aloud. There have also been successful trials of replacing the dog with a welfare technology seal robot, for example. At one of the locations, teachers dressed up as animal characters, and students got to read to them. Ideas like these have boosted confidence and fostered a positive attitude towards reading.

In addition to the reading weeks, Stadin AO engages in literacy work on many other fronts. A couple of years ago, Stadin AO began working more closely with Helsinki City Library, as the library has been developing and systematising its range of services for the upper secondary level. As a result, library staff have been visiting Stadin AO's locations (so-called pop-up library staff service)



The aim of the literacy work at Stadin AO is to provide activities that are suitable and accessible for everyone and emphasise the importance of literacy.

to meet with students, tell them about the library's services and issue library cards. An increasing number of student groups have visited their local libraries – not all of Stadin AO's locations have their own library. Additionally, mobile library visits, book recommendations, book packages available for order, and reading diplomas have been utilised throughout the year.

Stadin AO has participated in the Ministry of Education and Culture's VIERKO project (a project to develop foreign-language and language-aware education and guidance) and is currently coordinating target work in the VIERKO 2 project, which aims to promote interest in reading, among other things. The project aims to disseminate Stadin AO's good practices in literacy work and compile and implement models developed at the educational institutions participating in the project across Finland. The materials produced as part of the VIERKO 2 project are published in the Library of Open Educational Resources (aoe.fi), and materials related to interest in reading that have already been published include a collection of short stories titled *Opiskelijan hetkiä* (Moments of a Student) in simplified language, complete with discussion questions, as well as a summary of AI literacy in simplified language and a model for organising a reading week.

Stadin AO has set its own focus areas for the coming years regarding the selection of elective joint studies, one of which is the promotion of literacy. The joint literacy work that is already underway will continue, as will the brainstorming of new ideas!

**Text and enquiries:** Tuija Takala & Hanna Järvisalo (*teachers of mother tongue and S2, Stadin AO*)

# Local residents involved in the renewal of Malminkartano Library

Helsinki is building a new campus area in Malminkartano, which will include a separate building for the library. According to the current schedule, the new campus, the Heart of Malminkartano, is set to be completed at the turn of 2029–2030. The project planning phase is complete, and as of the time of this publication, the general and implementation planning has begun.

The City has wanted to involve local residents in the creation of the new library from the very beginning. To support the project planning, the City gathered insights from residents and users through participatory methods in cooperation with Pentagon Design from May to September 2024. The key target groups selected for gathering resident insights were children and families, young people, multilingual residents, older people and working-age residents. The new Malminkartano Library aims to serve all residents of the area as well as possible, but it places special emphasis on serving children and families with children, young people and multilingual Helsinki residents. The project involved future users from various groups, totalling as many as 500 residents. Of these, 156 were children or families with children, 74 were young people, 214 were of working age and 44 were older people. There were 66 multilingual respondents.

Four key themes emerged from the needs and wishes expressed by residents: the joy of reading, creative activities and hobbies, communal urban space and support for daily life. We will take a closer look at the first of these as an example.

Declining literacy levels, varying levels of literacy and concerns about literacy levels were high-

lighted in the views of both adults and children and young people. Residents feel that there are fewer and fewer average readers and more and more people who read poorly. Several different groups of residents also raised concerns about the area's children and young people more generally: there was a strong sense that poor literacy is linked to marginalisation and, consequently, to the polarisation of society. City residents hope that the new library, in particular, will offer fresh solutions to the issue instead of the same old problem talk. Residents perceived problem talk about reading and marginalisation as a negative, self-fulfilling cycle.

Children and young people themselves say that they feel that reading is often a solitary activity. They often say that reading involves a sense of drudgery and obligation. The question arose as to how the new library could change the perception of reading, restore the joy of reading and help get people hooked on reading. Children mentioned that they would like to bring the imaginative worlds of books to life in a concrete way in the new library. They would like to see a creative, stimulating and vibrant new library that offers new ways to immerse oneself in reading and discover books, topics and skills that interest them.

People expressed a desire for the library to offer a wide variety of ways of 'being a reader,' especially for children and young people, combining it with elements such as adventure, gamification and ways to share reading experiences. Overall, the hope was that events, various activities and reading challenges could make reading a more social experience. Respondents felt that the library should also support multiliteracy, particularly ways of reading and producing text in ways other than



The project involved  
a total of

# 500

residents from  
different future user  
groups.

writing, such as speaking, images, moving images and sound. Respondents also want the library to support media literacy.

The expectations for the new Malminkartano Library are therefore diverse when it comes to reading: the library is seen as playing a major role in promoting literacy, reading as a hobby and the joy of reading. At the same time, the library is expected to take a new approach to implementing and experimenting with more diverse ways of being a reader. The new Malminkartano Library is tasked with meeting these reading needs. Rather than simply waiting for the new facility to be completed, Malminkartano Library is already putting these ideas into practice in its current building and temporary space, while taking into account the limitations of the premises.

For example, in 2025, the library's Multilingual Day brought together multilingual and multicultural operators in the area to introduce their activities to local residents. The partners participating in the

day were the Welcome Families! project, Familia ry, the Helsinki Model operators FiBO and Red Nose Company, and multilingual and multicultural service centre services. The day celebrated the many languages spoken in Malminkartano. The library offered a wide variety of activities, ranging from Lego and craft workshops to story hours. The library also had children's literature on display in many different languages.

Another example is the library's Tarinakerho (Story Club), which started in 2024 as the Maltsun kirjoittajat writing club for 10–14-year-olds. The purpose of the club was to promote creative writing as a hobby, with as relaxed and experimental an approach as possible. The club also included reading, and at the end of the season, texts chosen by the participants themselves were compiled into a joint anthology to take home and for reading in libraries. In the autumn of 2025, at the participants' request, the Maltsun kirjoittajat club was transformed into the Tarinakerho club, expanding its activities beyond writing to include illustration, character design, model building, comic book creation, ceramics, collage art, visual poetry and other multidisciplinary methods of creativity and storytelling, depending on the participants' own interests.

**Text and enquiries:** Sanna Sivonen (*Chief Librarian, Library Services*)

# Libraries' evolving book club activities are attracting new audiences

Book clubs are a traditional type of event offered by libraries, with the primary goal of promoting reading and a reading culture. The libraries of Helsinki City Library offer a wide variety of book clubs, differing in content, themes and languages. The audience reached by traditional Finnish- or Swedish-language fiction book clubs is fairly homogeneous, so diverse book clubs are needed to attract new participants. The range of book clubs varies by district and library, and Helsinki City Library currently offers book clubs on topics such as crime fiction, the history of Helsinki, climate, fiction, poetry, comics and non-fiction. In addition to Finnish and Swedish, there are events in at least Easy Finnish, as well as Arabic, English and Estonian.

One of the latest innovations is the Aku Ankka reading club, which focuses on reading the Finnish Donald Duck magazine *Aku Ankka* and is aimed at children of primary school age. Its activities are described in more detail, as the number of participants in this club is growing, and more and more libraries are interested in implementing these activities. The event concept was born out of a desire to create activities for schoolchildren centred around reading. The *Aku Ankka* magazine is an accessible choice for a book club and is already familiar to many. Comics offer an easier way to reach a wider audience and engage children who are not already avid readers.

The club participants read a single pre-selected story from the same issue of *Aku Ankka* together. Once the participants have finished reading the story, the facilitator leads a discussion about the reading. The stories in the magazine may relate to real-life phenomena or historical events, for

example, in which case the discussion may touch on these topics. Because the language used in *Aku Ankka* is so rich and varied, it is often interesting to go over the meanings of various expressions and less common words with the participants, thereby expanding the readers' vocabulary. At the end of the sessions, the participants engage in various creative activities and crafts that bring the stories to life.

The reading club is organised in cooperation with the editors of *Aku Ankka* magazine. The libraries receive issues of old magazines for the clubs. Cooperation with the magazine's editors is essential to the success of the activity, as it would be difficult to compile enough copies of the same issue from the library's own collections for multiple participants to read at the same time. Participants may keep the magazines they read during the event.

The activity was launched at Kalasatama Library in the autumn of 2024, attracting a total of 39 participants during the season. In 2025, nine different libraries in Helsinki hosted these events, both as recurring and one-time events. By the end of 2025, the total number of participants in the *Aku Ankka* reading clubs had already reached well over 200.

Helsinki's libraries are constantly working to improve their book club activities, striving to reach new audiences and developing content based on feedback from participants, so that more and more people can enjoy reading together!

**Text and enquiries:** Mikko Steen (*Special Librarian, Library Services*)

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The libraries of Helsinki City Library offer a wide variety of book clubs, differing in content, themes and languages.





informal discussions about literature and reading. The activities feature a wide range of materials, drawing on the librarian's background research, professional training and active monitoring of literature and related trends.

The librarian has also drawn on the theory of bibliotherapy, the 'poetry bingo' developed by them and the Narrative Agency Reading Group Model. In the latter method, the readers delve directly into the text of the work and learn text analysis together. The participants also learn to use various tools for reading and interpreting the entire work on their own. In poetry bingo, various literary texts are read aloud, and the inmates spot phrases on their bingo cards. This game-based method motivates the participants and helps them focus on listening attentively while simultaneously reading the text on paper. The poetry bingo has become a popular event among inmates, who often request it in their feedback.

Helsinki Prison has also hosted visits by authors. For example, in the spring of 2025, author Jarkko Stenius visited the prison, reaching dozens of inmates. The visit generated such positive feedback that the author has since been invited to several prisons across Finland to speak about reading, writing and literature.

The activities have been fruitful. Anonymous feedback was collected from the inmates after each event, and it was overwhelmingly positive. Many of the responses indicated that the inmates had gained new perspectives on reading and discovered new genres of literature as well as new ways of reading. Furthermore, inmates have reported that they have gotten to know other inmates on a deeper level through these activities, as the groups have focused on discussing the benefits of reading and the participants' reading experiences on a more general level, rather than engaging in 'the usual prison banter.' Feedback has also highlighted how the simplified-language literature, prose poetry and narrative poetry presented have helped inmates with reading when they have struggled due to issues such as dyslexia and/or concentration difficulties. One inmate reported becoming so inspired by the poems that were



As a result of these activities, inmates have begun to read more as a hobby, and reading has also become accessible to them in new ways.

recommended and read together that they began writing about difficult issues to a loved one in the form of poetry. Many others have also said that discovering a certain kind of poetry inspired them to start writing themselves. As a result of these activities, inmates have begun to read more as a hobby, and reading has also become accessible to them in new ways. Over the course of the year, the activities have reached several hundred adult and juvenile inmates.

The project has also involved delivering deaccessioned materials to both prisons via Jakomäki Library in order to refresh the prisons' collections. Additionally, both prisons have been provided with publishers' catalogues and audiobooks that have been removed from Helsinki City Library's collection. The activities have also led to networking both nationally and internationally. Good practices, new approaches that foster literacy and interest in reading and the results of these activities are shared openly and have already been enthusiastically adopted by many parties.

**Text and enquiries:** Jussi Nevalainen (*Librarian, Library Services*)

# The Book Bag is a hit at Helsinki's maternity and child health clinics

As part of the Book Bag to Every Baby Born in Finland programme, families with babies receive a Book Bag during their check-up at the maternity and child health clinic. The bag includes a book of nursery rhymes for babies and a collection of bedtime stories for toddlers. In addition to the books, the bag also contains a Read Aloud height chart to hang on the wall and an invitation to the library. Since 2019, the Finnish Reading Center has offered all municipalities the opportunity to support reading, interaction and language development among families with children through the Book Bag programme<sup>9</sup>, and Helsinki has taken advantage of this opportunity from the very beginning.

The City of Helsinki has harnessed the Book Bag programme to support families' reading as a hobby and strengthen the bond between babies and their parents. The focus is on encouraging families with children to make reading a natural part of their daily lives and promote children's language development from an early age. All of our maternity and child health clinics follow the same agreed-upon procedure for distributing the Book Bags.

They distribute the Book Bags to families after they've been discharged from the hospital, either during a home visit or at the clinic. One of the themes of the group sessions held when the children are six months old is the children's language development and how to support it in everyday life. Parents receive tips on the importance of talking, singing, playing and reading for their child's language development and social interaction. Parents are engaged in the discussion by asking them questions such as whether they read to their child and what kinds of reading moments they have as a family. This makes it possible to identify good prac-

tices in families and share them with the group to support and inspire other parents.

Families are encouraged to read together and support their children's language development, particularly in their own mother tongue. The Book Bag gifts have been available in several languages in some years, but most years the materials are available in Finnish and Swedish. Helsinki's population is becoming more linguistically diverse every year, so the Book Bags cannot provide materials in everyone's mother tongue. In any case, the distribution of the Book Bags is very effective: An impact study commissioned by the Finnish Reading Center reveals that over 60% of parents who received the Book Bag gift from the maternity and child health clinic feel that it has had a positive impact on their family's reading habits.

At Helsinki's child health clinics, the success of the programme has been evident in several ways. Firstly, the clinics have actively distributed a large number of bags, with as many as 10,000 bags distributed to families during 2024 and 2025. Maternity and child health clinic professionals in Helsinki are committed to systematically advancing this cause. According to the Finnish Reading Center, 99% of public health nurses at maternity and child health clinics in Finland believe that it is important to discuss the significance of reading with families at the clinics, and 100% want to continue distributing the Book Bags. When viewed in isolation from the national data, Helsinki's responses are entirely consistent with the national data.

This regular process, which has been ongoing in Helsinki for years, has raised families' awareness of the importance of early reading and the Book



Bag gifts, and more and more parents are now asking about them as soon as their baby is born, after hearing about them from other families with children. The distribution of the Book Bag gifts and related discussions are currently seen as particularly important, as professionals working at Helsinki’s maternity and child health clinics have observed that an increasing number of families are using smart devices to calm their children. The tangible book gift and information included in the Book Bag offer parents an easy, low-threshold way to introduce reading in early childhood and provide alternatives to screen time. The results of the Finnish Reading Center’s impact survey show that families not only read more thanks to the Book Bag, but are also better informed about the benefits of early reading.

Helsinki wants to continue this work and in the future also consider how the importance of early reading could be further emphasised in various family services.

**Text and enquiries:** Monica Lindberg (*Manager of Maternity and Child Health Clinic*) & Noora Nurminen (*Project Coordinator*)

The  
**80**  
 Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence guide is available in Finnish, Swedish and English



**Youth Services**

# Pioneering efforts to strengthen AI literacy in youth services

AI literacy is a new skill required in the world of work. In 2025, the EU Artificial Intelligence Act made it mandatory for employers to ensure that their employees have sufficient AI literacy. The Act calls for adequate AI literacy so that users can understand the necessary concepts and make informed decisions regarding these systems. According to the Act, the responsibility for developing these skills lies with both the providers and deployers of the systems. Furthermore, the Act applies to the persons or groups of persons on whom the AI systems are to be used. (EU AI Act, paragraph 20 and Article 4.)

There is no longer any area of society unaffected by systems that utilise artificial intelligence. The current discussion surrounding artificial intelligence often boils down to various language models and other forms of generative AI. What may receive less attention is that systems utilising artificial intelligence are widely used by parties such as government agencies, including the Tax Administration and Kela. Systems considered to be artificial intelligence also influence the media we consume, the products we buy in stores and the flow of traffic. This means that all people, including children and young people, are inevitably affected by artificial intelligence. Indeed, AI literacy is the ability to iden-

tify where and when artificial intelligence affects our lives, as well as the ability to critically evaluate its impacts. Its goal is to enhance our ability to assess and manage the ethical risks associated with the use of artificial intelligence, and to use services in a secure manner while respecting privacy.

## AI Skills Strengthening Youth Agency

The project ‘AI Skills Strengthening Youth Agency’, administered by the City of Helsinki’s Youth Services and funded by the National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI), has supported the development of AI literacy by producing high-quality, easy-to-understand materials for professionals working with young people.

The materials produced as part of this project are intended for anyone working with young people, and they are also well suited for parents of young people. The 80 Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence guide is available in Finnish, Swedish and English on the websites of the project partners (the Finnish Society on Media Education and Intory). The guide contains 80 short, easy-to-understand perspectives on artificial intelligence. The relatively short texts in the guide can be read one at a time, also making it an excellent read for places like youth centres.

The project has focused particularly on outreach youth work professionals and their clients. The development and widespread adoption of artificial intelligence have progressed so rapidly in recent years that young people at risk of marginalisation are in danger of falling behind as they remain outside the education system or working life. The digital marginalisation of vulnerable groups has been identified in the social sector as a real threat, and addressing it requires that workers be able to provide guidance on digital matters.

The City of Helsinki Youth Services has been at the forefront of digital youth work for years. The integration of artificial intelligence and AI literacy into youth work contents has continued this trend that has attracted a lot of interest both nationally and internationally. The materials produced by the National Development Centre for Online Youth Work (Verke), as well as the materials produced more recently, are in use at numerous educational institutions and are referenced in several EU-level guidance documents. Hundreds of youth workers from across Finland have already participated in the AI-related training sessions and workshops for youth sector professionals organised through the project, and the training materials are being developed into an online course open to everyone, designed to help participants understand the basics of AI.

### AI literacy as a tool for promoting literacy and supporting learning

While the use of artificial intelligence involves major ethical issues, such as those related to copyright, environmental impact or biases in content, the use of AI-powered services should be encouraged among young people, as the benefits and added value it offers can be significant. For example, the risks associated with ethical issues and the adoption of misinformation can be minimised by discussing them with young people and teaching them how to use AI services responsibly.

Large language models can serve as study aids or personal mentors. In Finland, an estimated 20% of the population suffer from learning difficulties of varying degrees, and 6–10% of Finns face some kinds of challenges with reading and writing. The

risks are particularly pronounced among the clients of outreach youth work. Artificial intelligence can help with tasks such as summarising large amounts of information, reading documents aloud or breaking down tasks and practising learning skills. Artificial intelligence can make various types of texts and studying more accessible to many people and can be used judiciously as a ‘tutor’. Ensuring that the views of all kinds of people are heard is one of the key themes of the democracy education organised by Youth Services. At their best, large language models can help promote equal participation in society, such as by making it easier for people with dyslexia to express their views by writing or dictating short inputs.

It is therefore clear that it is in the best interests of Helsinki and society to strive to ensure that everyone can equally keep up with developments in artificial intelligence and AI literacy. Helsinki is and wants to continue to be a pioneer in this work, also in the field of youth work!

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**Text and enquiries:** Panu Räsänen (*Planner, Youth Services*)

# Helping newcomers to Helsinki who are unable to read or write find training, and cooperation with training providers

Since the beginning of 2025, the City of Helsinki has been responsible for services that promote the integration and employment of foreign nationals who have recently moved to Finland. These services are defined in the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration and the Act on the Organisation of Employment Services. Additionally, Helsinki has long provided a variety of services aimed at promoting integration, which fall within the general remit of the municipality.

In Helsinki, the promotion of integration is the responsibility of the Employment Services Enterprise established at the beginning of 2025. Employment Services serves approximately 7,000 integration

clients, who are primarily unemployed individuals, stay-at-home parents, recipients of international protection or individuals receiving social assistance on a non-temporary basis. Each year, approximately 3,000 new immigrants to Helsinki become covered by these services.

Testipiste tests the Finnish language skills, reading and writing skills and learning abilities of new foreign residents in Helsinki, and uses the results to recommend the most suitable training. Each year, 10% of new clients, or about 300 people, are in need of literacy training. The integration pathway for clients who are illiterate typically progresses from literacy training to integration training, vocational training and employment.

The Ministry of Education and Culture funds the literacy training, and as of the time of this publication, 15 different training providers offer the training in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. These courses are offered as part of preparatory instruction and lower secondary education for adults and the integration training provided by liberal adult education providers. The training is organised by a variety of operators, ranging from small education centres to larger providers of preparatory instruction, lower secondary education and general upper secondary education for adults. The field of education is diverse and has highlighted the need for coordination by Employment Services. Employment Services has addressed



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this need by directing clients who are illiterate to training courses through what is known as 'literacy service guidance'. Literacy service guidance was piloted at Stadin AO's Helsinki Skills Centre, and after the centre ceased operations, responsibility for literacy service guidance was transferred to Employment Services. At Employment Services, literacy service guidance is provided by a specialist trained for this role.

The task of Employment Services' literacy service guidance is to identify the training that best suits the needs of integration clients who are illiterate and refer them to these training courses. The literacy service guidance provider works closely with training providers to communicate client needs and the number of clients in order to support the planning of training. Furthermore, the literacy service guidance supports trainers and the work of Employment Services' specialists to streamline training paths and solve the challenges clients face during their training.

To coordinate the regional provision of literacy training and facilitate cooperation among trainers, Employment Services established the Luku network in the autumn of 2025. Its members include Employment Services' specialists working with the clientele, work ability specialists, planners and managers responsible for organising services, as well as senior specialists, teachers at educational institutions, persons in charge and others.

The Luku network provides information on the training needs and number of clients of Employment Services, and trainers use it to coordinate their offerings in terms of training content, group sizes and starting times. The goal of the cooperation between Employment Services and trainers is to ensure that there are training courses available that meet clients' needs, thereby facilitating and accelerating the process of new Helsinki residents learning to read and write and their subsequent integration path.

**Text and enquiries:** Martti Jantunen (*Specialist, Employment Services*)

# Promoting literacy work in the City of Helsinki's own documents

The National Literacy Strategy of the Finnish National Agency for Education provides municipalities with recommendations for measures to promote literacy work at the local level. One of the proposed measures is to *record the promotion of literacy work in the municipality's documents, such as the municipal strategy, the wellbeing report or the cultural education plan.*<sup>8</sup> Helsinki is following this recommendation.

Our City Strategy (2025–2029) envisions Helsinki as the capital of reading. The strategy states that every young person graduating from a school in Helsinki should have the reading, writing and arithmetic skills to manage in continued education and working life. The strategy requires maternity and child health clinics and libraries to become even more closely involved in our goal of making Helsinki a literacy capital. From a safety perspective, the goal is to promote critical literacy and the ability to identify disinformation among all Helsinki residents.<sup>11</sup>

In line with the strategy, this theme is also reflected in the City's budget. A key objective for the Education Division in 2025 was to *improve literacy*, which led to the establishment of binding targets for early childhood education and primary and lower secondary education (involving children more closely in the planning of literacy measures and increasing the amount of time spent on reading). In 2026 as well, the improvement of literacy remains a binding target in early childhood education, primary and lower secondary education and across the entire division, and there are several indicators for this.<sup>12</sup>

In 2026, efforts to promote literacy work are also reflected in the goals of library services and

maternity and family counselling clinics. The library will begin to draw up its own more detailed plan to support literacy work. Maternity and family counselling clinics, meanwhile, will *"ensure the systematic dissemination of information on the importance of literacy in early childhood and implement the measures outlined in the 'Literacy Work in Helsinki' plan, which is scheduled for release in spring 2026, as well as boost cooperation with the library and develop an action plan."*

Literacy work is also prominently featured in the City's various divisions' own publications. The Helsinki Learns – Future Competences publication, which guides pedagogical development in the Education Division, emphasises the importance of literacy work as the foundation of all learning. The publication states that our goal is to make practising literacy skills a part of all subjects. In concrete terms, it proposes that research-based tools and digital assessment services be developed for the regular assessment of literacy skills, or that tools designed to inspire reading be introduced for people of all ages.<sup>13</sup> Progress on these matters is being monitored.

Helsinki's Kirjaston suunta 2033 (Direction of the Library 2033) vision sets 'building a culture of reading for people of all ages' as one of three key priorities for the coming decade.<sup>14</sup> The Cultural Education Plan is based on the City Strategy: at its core is the development of multiliteracy as an integral part of all cultural education.<sup>15</sup>

The local curriculum for early childhood education and care specifies the nature of our literacy work and the materials we have produced that are used in early childhood education (such as the Reading Wheel materials<sup>4</sup>). In the quality assessment of pri-



mary and lower secondary education, some of the indicators now relate to schools' literacy work, and all schools must reflect on the pedagogical and structural methods of literacy work and evaluate their progress based on the action plan.

As the above shows, the inclusion of literacy work in the City Strategy and thereby in several local documents significantly increases the weight given to literacy work. Incorporating this goal into the municipal strategy has an impact on areas such as performance indicators, funding, research and development activities, cooperation, services' own objectives and their assessment, as well as communication. The matter is visible to both employees and residents in many new activities: cultural route services, continuing education, additional funding for physical learning materials, extra local classes in mother tongue and literature or staff job descriptions (e.g. the number of developer teachers or staff working on cooperation between libraries and educational institutions).

Thanks to the strategic objectives, hundreds of City employees have added entries to various documents, action plans and other materials related to literacy work. Thousands of professionals carry out activities in accordance with these entries. The drafting and implementation of the entries involves



**Helsinki's Kirjaston suunta 2033 vision sets 'building a culture of reading for people of all ages' as one of three key priorities for the coming decade.**

a wide range of people, including policymakers, directors of different divisions, managers, specialists, planners, coordinators, principals, daycare centre managers, teachers, librarians, information specialists, communications professionals, project staff and so on. The multidisciplinary and wide-ranging activities arising from the strategy documents target city residents whose services and daily lives are more strongly influenced by literacy work.

**Text and enquiries:** Antti Aaltonen (*Project Manager, Education Division*)



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