

# Special needs education at Rjúpnahæð

- *Inclusive education* is the ideology behind special needs education at the preschool Rjúpnahæð.
- Main goal of the special needs education is to support every child in their development, on the child's terms – to support them to learn their way, at their speed but most of all, for them to enjoy their time in preschool.
- The Director of special education is Jóhanna Pálsdóttir.



# Early intervention and response to deviations in development

- If parents or head teacher are concerned with the development of a child the Director of special education is called in.
- The Director of special education watches the child in daily activities and assess together with the parents if another specialist should be called.
- We cooperate with Kópavogsbær's speech-therapists, psychologists and occupational therapists.
- While waiting for the needed specialist's advice early intervention is started in the preschool, whether it be working with speech development or the child's behavior. The sooner intervention is started the more chance of success.

# The role of Director of special education

- Plan, administer and follow through with special education.
- Main projects:
  - Advice on early intervention
  - Work with other specialists
  - Make petitions for help from specialists
  - Make reports for the involvement of the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre
  - Prepare and follow through on individual curriculum and reassessment
  - Calculate scores from developmental questionnaires
  - Send the child's information to the next school the child goes to
  - Provide language development screening
  - Book transport with the transport for people with disabilities
  - Book translators
  - Meet with the teams for each child
  - Prepare and provide educational material for special needs education
  - Make reports to child protection services
  - Communicate with and work with special needs advisors on the field of education

# Periodic evaluations, screenings and observations

- The Director of special education and head teachers follow the children's developmental progress.
- At Rjúpnahæð we deploy three standardized assessment tools to map strengths and weaknesses of each student to implement early intervention when needed.
  - TRAS inventory for ages 2-5 years
  - EFI-2 language screening for children turning four years
  - Hljóm-2 evaluation for senior year of preschool
- Parents give written consent before EFI-2 and Hljóm-2 screenings are implemented.

# TRAS

## Recording of young children's language development

- TRAS is a standardized data sheet for preschool teachers to follow the language development of 2-5 year old children.
- The teachers fill out the same data sheet throughout the child's preschool experience and as such each child's sheet follows it between home rooms.
- The goal with the *TRAS* data sheet is to intervene with decisive and early intervention if concern of a developmental issue arises.
- Head teachers of the child's home room review the recordings with parents in parental interviews.



# EFI-2 language development screening



- Language development screening for children turning 4 which surveys understanding and expression
- The screening is based on a picture book with seven pictures that a child and teacher look at together.
- The child's answers give an indication of where he or she is in the language development process compared to his / her peers.
- The process usually takes approx. 10-15 minutes and this is a pleasant time that the child has with the teacher.
- The purpose of this screening is to find the children with delayed language development so that they can be referred for further examination and we can intervene early.

# Hljóm-2



Athugun á  
hljóð- og  
málvitund  
leikskólabarna

Inglbjörg Simonardóttir  
Jóhanna Einarsdóttir  
Amelía Björnsdóttir

- *Hljóm-2* is an observation in the form of a game that is used to examine the phonological awareness of the oldest children.
- *Hljóm-2* is considered to have predictive value for how children will fare when it comes to learning how to read.
- The observation is divided into seven sections: Rhymes, consonants, compound words, auditory discrimination, multifaceted words, deleting parts of words and phoneme blending.
- Parents receive results during parental interviews.
- The children who are falling behind peers in phonological awareness development are grouped together where a teacher helps them practice those skills through cards and games.

# Visual layout

- Our goal is to construct the learning environment as guiding and predictable as possible for the children with the purpose of encouraging their autonomy and self-confidence.
- In every home room there is a visual layout of the day's activities and a detailed itinerary which is laid out at the start of the day.
- The weather reporter visually reports the weather and appropriate clothing where he/she places pictures of the clothes needed on a designated spot on the wall. They report both verbally and visually by using *key word signing* (tákn með tali; TMT).
- This way the children have information about what is ahead during the day which helps them feel self-assured as the day progresses through different activities.
- Some children have special needs and have their personal visual layout, dependant on their own needs.







fiðrildi  
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# Key Word Signing

- At Rjúpnahæð we communicate with the standardized method of *Key word signing* (Tákn með tali; TMT)
- The method was designed with simple signs which are used purposefully to visually support spoken language.
- Originally the method was developed for students with language- and developmental disorders but was found to support language development for all children and as such is perfect for preschool.
- Every child at Rjúpnahæð gets their own sign when they start preschool and we strive to use TMT at most situations in the preschool.



góður  
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# Phonological work-shop of Lubbi

- Phonological work-shop of Lubbi is phonologically stimulating material which focuses on the Icelandic language sounds.
- The material is suitable for children ages one and older as early intervention and is published by speech therapists.
- The phonological work-shop includes the book Lubbi finnur málbein. The book is designed for language stimulation and phonological education which develops children's phonological awareness which ultimately lays a strong foundation for learning how to read.
- The book follows the Icelandic sheep herding dog Lubbi who invites the children to an adventurous journey around Iceland to find 35 phonological-bones with the objective of learning the Icelandic speech sounds.
- At Rjúpnahæð we focus on each speech sound for two weeks at a time in every home room and the dog Lubbi visits with the children, either at story time or reflective circle.
- At every home room we introduce the Lubbi material age appropriately so the material becomes more advanced as the children get older.

