

Implementation of health promoting kindergarten model on the basis of the survey conducted in Estonian pre-school child care institutions

„Health-related prerequisites and conditions in pre-school child care institutions“

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Background

Network of Health Promoting Kindergartens (hereinafter: “HPKs”) was commenced in Estonia in 2000 by the support of national health programme. Today 132 kindergartens from 645 have joined the Network of Health Promoting Kindergartens. The purpose of HPK is to create possibilities and conditions for optimal mental, physical and social development. HPKs are based on principles like promoting partnerships, creating comfortable conditions for children and personnel welfare and shaping healthy lifestyles.

Aim of the study

In 2006 a survey was conducted by the NIHD, in order to assess:

- health promotion activities to be implemented in preschool child care institutions;
- situation of psycho-social/physical environment and the differences between HPKs and the kindergartens which have not joined the Network (hereinafter: “non-HPKs”).

Method and participants

Data collection was carried out as a questionnaire survey from January to February 2006 by post. Data of 69 HPKs and 64 non-HPKs (21,8% of the population of preschool child care institutions) were used in the analysis.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Health team and strategical leading

- The health teams are formed in 94% of HPKs and only in 11% of non-HPKs.
- 84% of HPKs and 65% of non-HPKs have prepared the action plans for health promotion.
- 81% of HPKs and 50% of non-HPKs have measures written to action plans for preventing injuries and promoting safety.
- 2/3 of HPKs and ¼ of non-HPKs have carried out risk analysis.

Cooperation with different interest groups

The cooperation with specific interested groups in health promotion is better in HPKs:

- 91% of HPKs and 69% of non-HPKs have involved advisory body to solve health problems.
- Most HPKs and half non-HPKs have shared their experiences about health promoting activities with other kindergartens from county within last 3 years.
- HPKs have made more cooperation and shared their experiences with county governments.

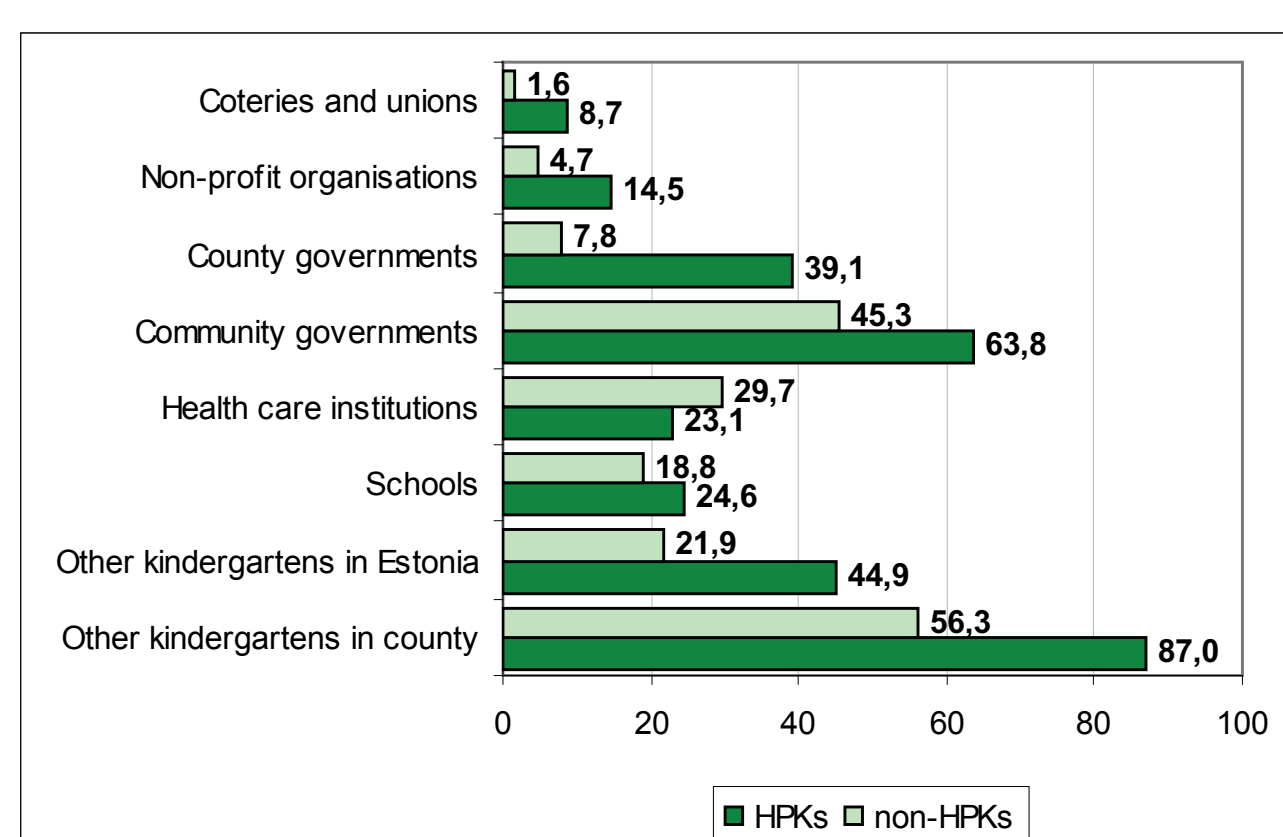


Figure 1. Institutions with whom kindergartens have shared experiences about health promoting activities within last three years (%)

Personnel welfare and personal example setting

- All HPKs are dealing with the health promotion of their personnel (80% of non-HPKs).
- 90% of HPKs and 75% of non-HPKs said that their employees are acting as good examples in health promotion to children and parents.
- Approximately 75% HPKs and 58% non-HPKs found that they value their health more than 3 years ago.
- Employees from HPKs have participated more in health and health promotion trainings (91% HPKs and 69% non-HPKs).

Health promoting project work

HPKs have created and participated more than non-HPKs in local health promotion projects.

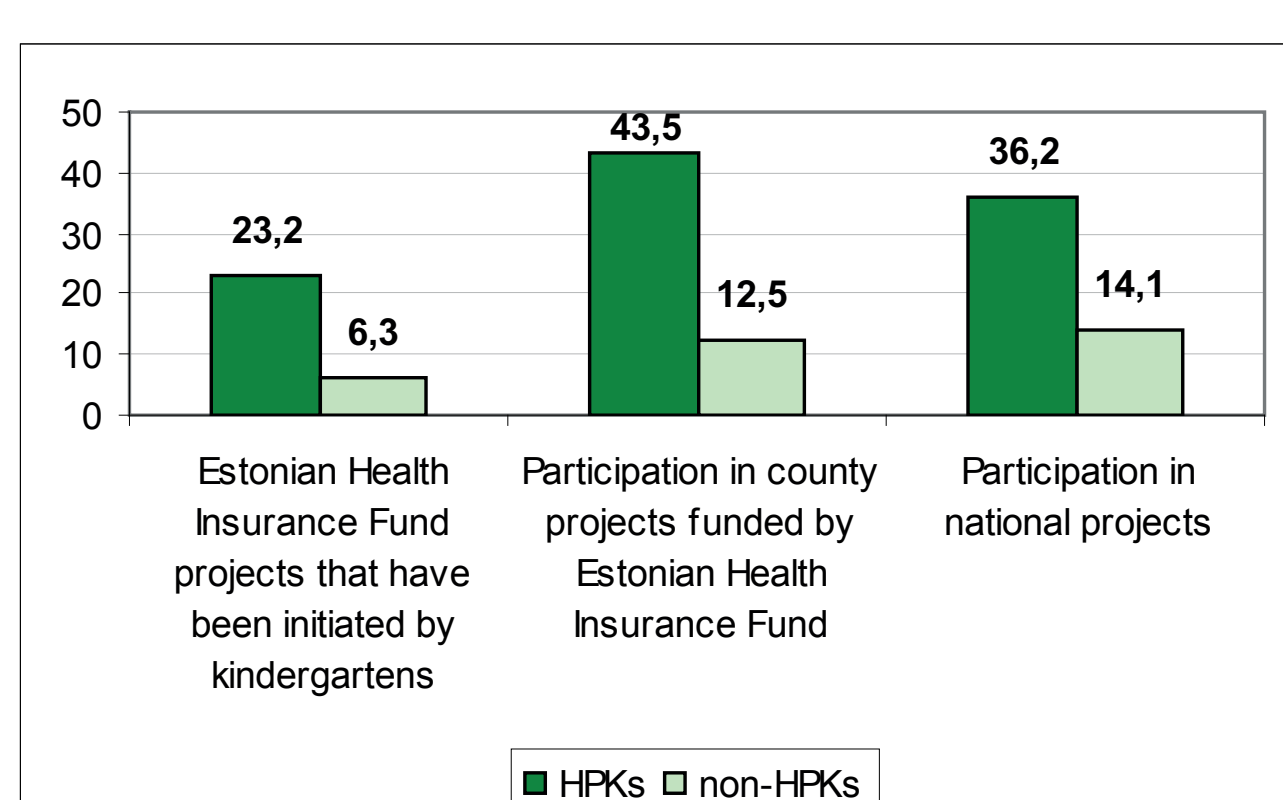


Figure 2. Kindergartens initiating and participating in projects within last 5 years (%)

Psychosocial and physical environment

- The indicators related to the psycho-social environment are at the same level in HPKs and non-HPKs.
- Physical environment is healthier and more secure now in many kindergartens than it was in last years. But there are still some problems related to the risk of injuries.

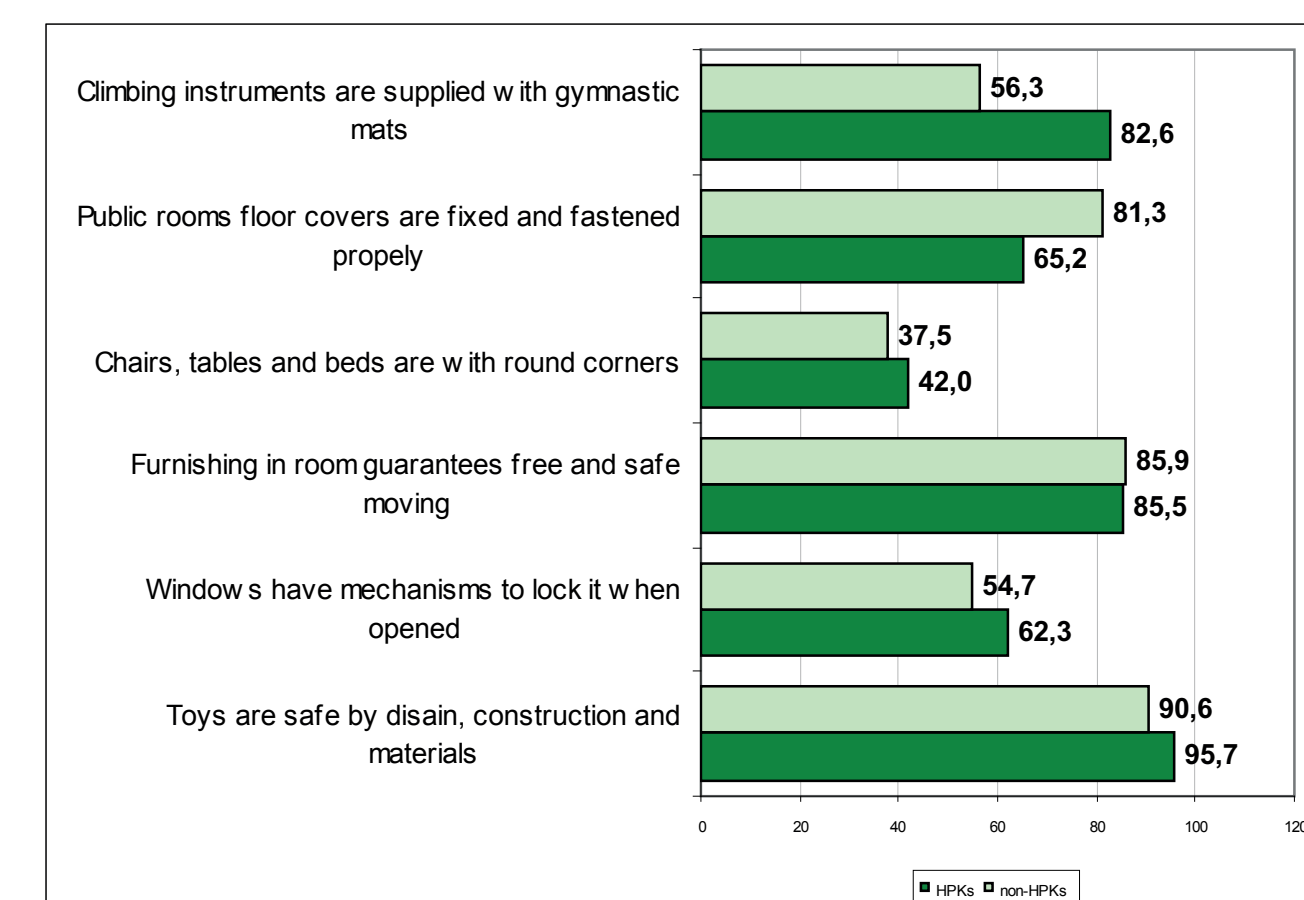


Figure 3. Kindergartens which have filled evaluation criterias for injury prevention (%)

Children with special needs

Only in 46% of HPKs and 22% of non-HPKs a specific character and special needs of children are taken into consideration.

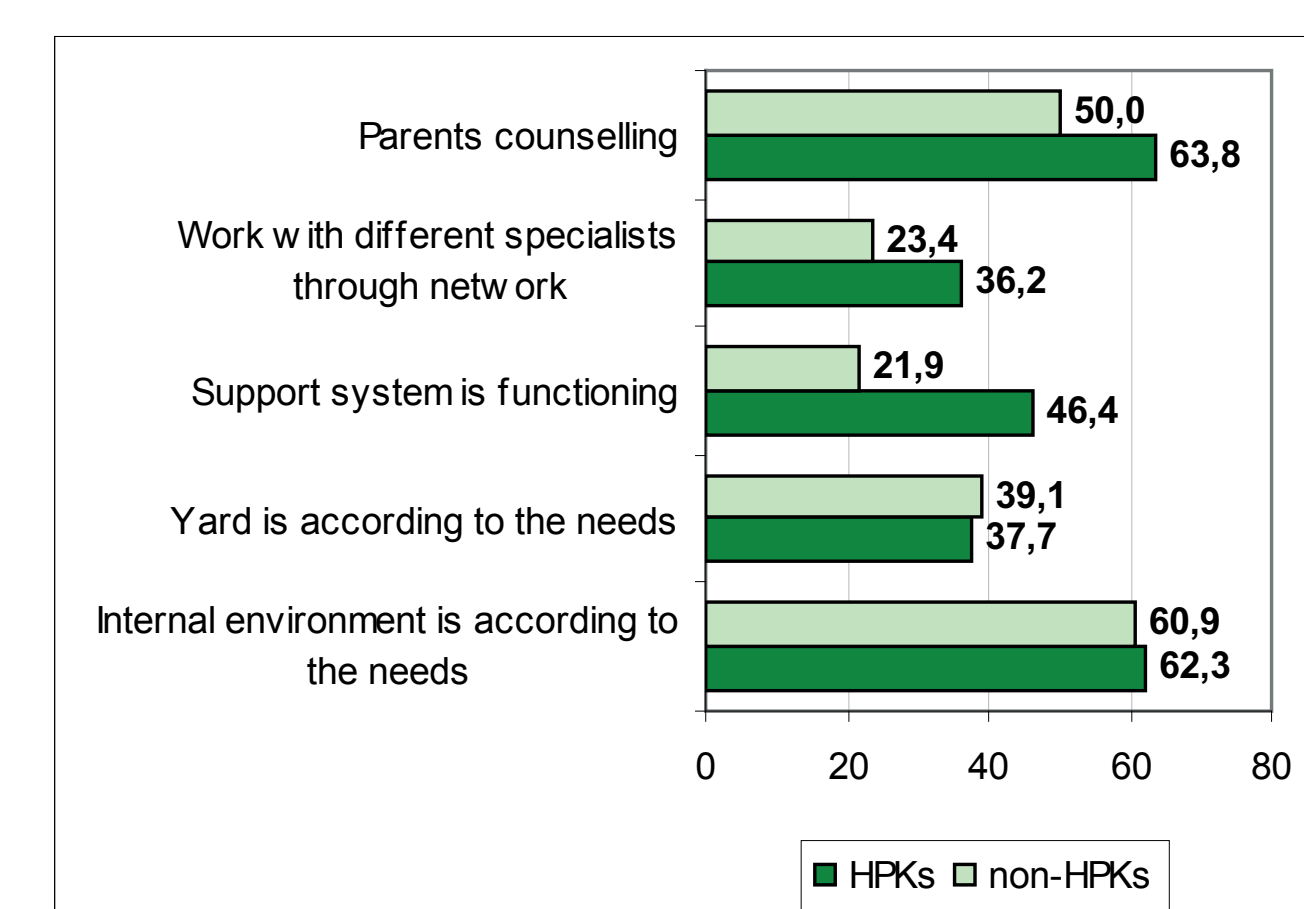


Figure 4. Kindergartens where children special needs are considered (%)

Healthy food and catering

- 81% of HPKs and 61% of non-HPKs are of the opinion that the food offered in the kindergarten is healthy – well-balanced, varied and according to the children’s needs.
- In 90% HPKs and 80% non-HPKs the menu has changed healthier within last three years.

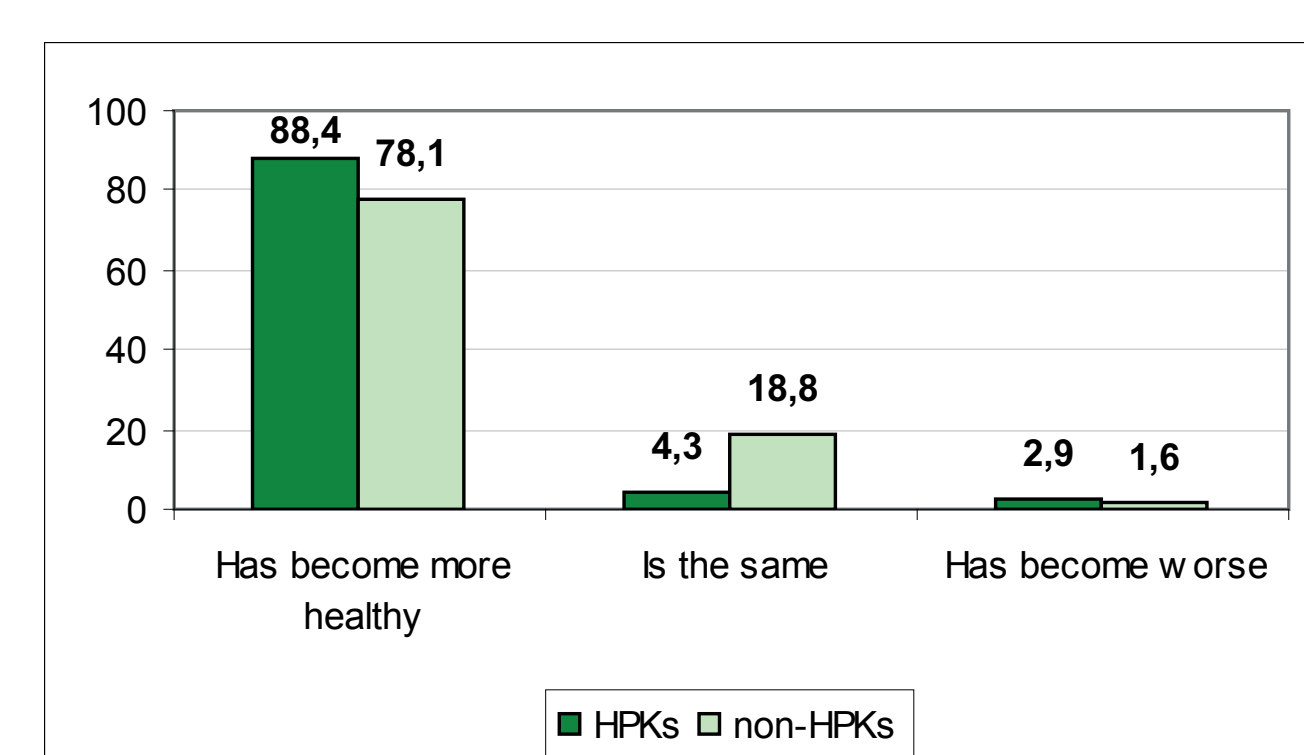


Figure 5. Menu changes in kindergartens within last 3 years (%)

Health education

- Compared to non-HPKs there are more kindergartens who have participated in international and national health-days and health-weeks.
- 90% of the kindergartens are dealing with the development of social skills of children.

Physical activity

Physical activities are conducted 2-3 times a week in nearly all kindergartens.

The possibilities for the promotion of physical activeness of children are more varied in HPKs:

- 28 % HPKs and 6 % non-HPKs are promoting physical activities through movement activities, swimming and trainings.
- 83% of HPKs and 66% of non-HPKs has a movement teacher.
- Children have more possibilities for swimming in HPKs.

Conclusion

There have been developed better prerequisites in HPKs for the promotion and preservation of health. Upon planning the intervention operations in Estonian preschool child care institutions, it is necessary to pay more attention to the development of safe environment, promotion of cooperation and supporting the development of the children with special needs.