

Literacy Forum champions reading

The National Literacy Forum appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in autumn 2017 has been seeking solutions to developing young people's literacy skills and interest in reading. The Forum's members include a great number of reading and literacy experts.

Work aiming to promote literacy and interest in reading and to create opportunities for reading is being carried out on wide-ranging basis, across administrative and sectoral boundaries.

The starting point for developing literacy and enthusiasm for reading is to capture the interest of children and young people. To awaken this interest, cooperation is needed between all those who work with children and young people in their daily lives.

The promotion of reading is our common tasks.

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LITERACY - POWERING THE MIND

; Literacy is both
a necessity and a source
of enjoyment.

—Juha Itkonen

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Need to Read Movement

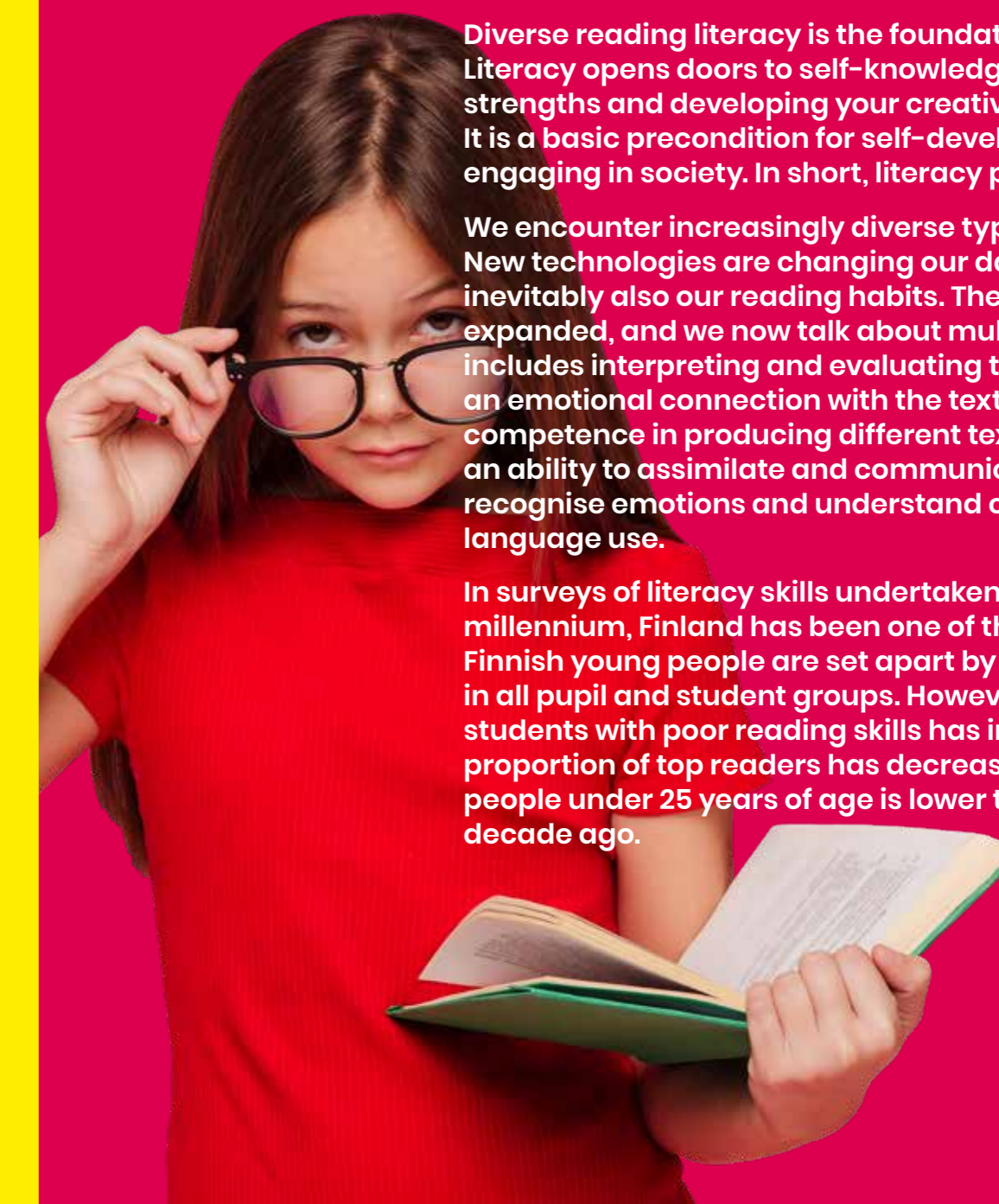
**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING
THE READING LITERACY OF
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

; Literacy
provides a
foundation
for life

Diverse reading literacy is the foundation of all learning. Literacy opens doors to self-knowledge, finding your personal strengths and developing your creativity and social skills. It is a basic precondition for self-development and actively engaging in society. In short, literacy powers the mind.

We encounter increasingly diverse types of text every day. New technologies are changing our daily lives, work and inevitably also our reading habits. The scope of literacy has expanded, and we now talk about multiliteracy. Multiliteracy includes interpreting and evaluating texts and developing an emotional connection with the text. It also includes competence in producing different text genres. It is about an ability to assimilate and communicate information, recognise emotions and understand contexts and modes of language use.

In surveys of literacy skills undertaken since the turn of the millennium, Finland has been one of the top performers. Finnish young people are set apart by their high performance in all pupil and student groups. However, the number of students with poor reading skills has increased, while the proportion of top readers has decreased. The literacy level of people under 25 years of age is lower than it was just over a decade ago.



Guidelines for developing children's and young people's literacy and enthusiasm for reading

We will encourage children and young people to read

Literacy is the foundation of all learning. Children's and young people's interest in reading has declined. Reading must be made part of the changing everyday lives of children and young people; it must be part of their early childhood education and care, schooling and leisure time.

Offering literature and diverse texts on different everyday platforms. We will improve digital services for reading and writing, ensuring their availability and accessibility.

Participatory and collective reading. We will offer models and platforms for participatory and collective reading. We will encourage children and young people to discuss, evaluate and interpret what they read and express their opinions based on this.

Increasing the availability of diverse texts. We will address the needs of different readers and use diverse texts as reading materials. We will improve the availability of versatile, multimodal and plain-language texts.

Role models for readers. We will encourage children's and young people's role models to talk about their enthusiasm for reading and what reading means to them.

Promoting reading through emotional engagement and reading experiences. We will support emotional engagement where this promotes enthusiasm for reading, by using experimental, participatory and action-based methods. We will create new ways of sharing reading experiences.

From readers to authors. We will encourage children and young people to produce their own stories and texts and to distribute them.

We will encourage learning communities to actively support reading

The extent to which children and young people read, and the way their literacy skills and enthusiasm for reading develop, is strongly influenced by family, friends and leisure-time activities, as well as their school and early childhood education and care.

Making versatile reading part of early childhood. We will offer versatile reading experiences from early childhood onwards.

Informing families about the importance of reading. We will provide guidance, support and information and produce materials to support interest in reading and linguistic interaction.

Involving organisers of leisure-time activities. We will encourage organisers of relevant leisure-time activities to work together with homes, schools and libraries to promote reading. We will focus on subjects and role models that are of interest to children and young people in the efforts to encourage them to read.

More prominence to literary art. We will increase the role of literary art in recreational activities and as part of the school day.

A school culture that promotes multiliteracy. We will support language awareness and multiliteracy development in teaching. We will strengthen the multidisciplinary nature of teaching to promote multiliteracy and step up cooperation with organisations and operators outside the school.

We will enhance competences and cooperation among professionals

The education and training provided for professionals working with children and young people lay the foundation for the skills and motivation of such professionals. To promote literacy and interest in reading, it will be necessary to ensure methodical and multiprofessional cooperation, continuous competence development across sectoral boundaries and a learning environment mentality.

We will stress the importance of multiliteracy in the education and training for professionals. We will build up multiliteracy competence based on a wide range of text genres and use of a diversity of texts in the basic education and training of professionals and in their in-service training programmes.

Supporting linguistic and cultural awareness. We will reinforce professionals' understanding of the importance of language and multiliteracy in children's and young people's development.

Greater diversity of methods for the teaching of reading and writing. We will develop different action-based methods and practices to support reading and writing skills, including methods involving literary art and drama.

Recognising and supporting different learners. We will provide sufficient resources to support professionals in recognising different learners, readers and reading-related problems.

Supporting different linguistic groups. We will support children's and young people's multilingualism and offer reading materials and opportunities to discuss in different languages what they have read.

Safeguarding the continuum of children's linguistic development and interest in reading at different ages. We will support children's linguistic development and reading at key transition points from early childhood education and care to basic education, from lower to higher comprehensive school and from basic education to secondary level.

Cooperation among educational and cultural services. We will build up systematic cooperation between library services, early childhood education and care, schools, other educational institutions and youth, sports and cultural services.

Libraries and other open learning environments. We will support the opportunities for early childhood education and care, schools and other educational institutions to expand their learning environments by using the physical and digital services of libraries, museums and other organisations.

We will create structures to promote reading

An excellent level of literacy is a matter of pride for Finland and is vital for future success. Long-term commitment beyond individual government terms and systematic guidance and support are prerequisites for improving literacy and interest in reading in a rapidly changing operating environment.

Development underpinned by research. We will systematically collect research-based knowledge and use it to support decision-making and activities that promote reading among children and young people.

Developing the discretionary government grant system. We will develop the discretionary government grant system to enable joint projects across sectoral boundaries.

National development of library services in support of reading. We will assign to a single public library the special task of developing library services that promote children's and young people's reading and literacy. We will develop cooperation models for libraries in their work with early childhood education and care, schools and educational institutions.

Supporting leadership. We will support leadership in municipalities' educational and cultural services in the creation of a collaborative operating culture that encourages reading.

Ensuring implementation and monitoring of guidelines. We will appoint a coordinator and a monitoring group. The monitoring group will report annually to the Ministry of Education and Culture on progress made with guideline implementation.

Why is improving literacy so important?

▶ Education

Reading is essential for education and culture.

▶ Equality

Multiliteracy is a prerequisite for an equitable society.

▶ Wellbeing

Literacy creates wellbeing. It is both a necessity and a source of enjoyment.

