

CONFÉRENCE
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ÉCOLE INCLUSIVE
POUR LES ÉLÈVES EN
SITUATION DE HANDICAP

THE EVALUATION OF INCLUSIVE POLICY
IN FINLAND: findings and lessons

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Background

- The history of special education begins when special schools for persons with blindness or deafness were organized by church or (charity) associations
- In late 1960 s the basic education reform started, school for all begun and gradually special education was linked with the regular school system
- The amount of pupils in special education was years **under 3% of all children**
- Late 90's and early 2000 the number of students transferred from regular mainstream classes to special education classes/groups was growing every term.
 - In 2004 the amount was 6.7% , and 2008 8.4%!!
- Reasons: Financing? Teacher autonomy? Teacher professionalism? Values? Better diagnostics?

Last ten years: developmental work begins

- Strategy group for special education in 2007 was established by Ministry of Education and group recommended developmental work for inclusive practices in schools
- Developmental work was organized by governmental and community authorities and universities
- Almost every city participated in this effort, “*which guided Finnish special education towards more inclusive education practices*”
- At the same time legislation as well as Core curriculum was renewed



How was special education and inclusiveness defined

- *“The strategy for the development of special needs and inclusive education emphasizes the importance of the wide basic education network which supports the right of every child to attend the nearest mainstream school”.*
- *“The nearest mainstream school refers to a school where a pupil would regularly be assigned. .. Inclusive education refers to the provision of education in such a manner that all children’s successful learning and development can be secured”.*
- *“If a pupil cannot be taught in a regular teaching group, he or she must be admitted to special needs education. This education is provided at regular schools (and in the nearest school) wherever possible”. (Finnish Education in a Nutshell 2015)*

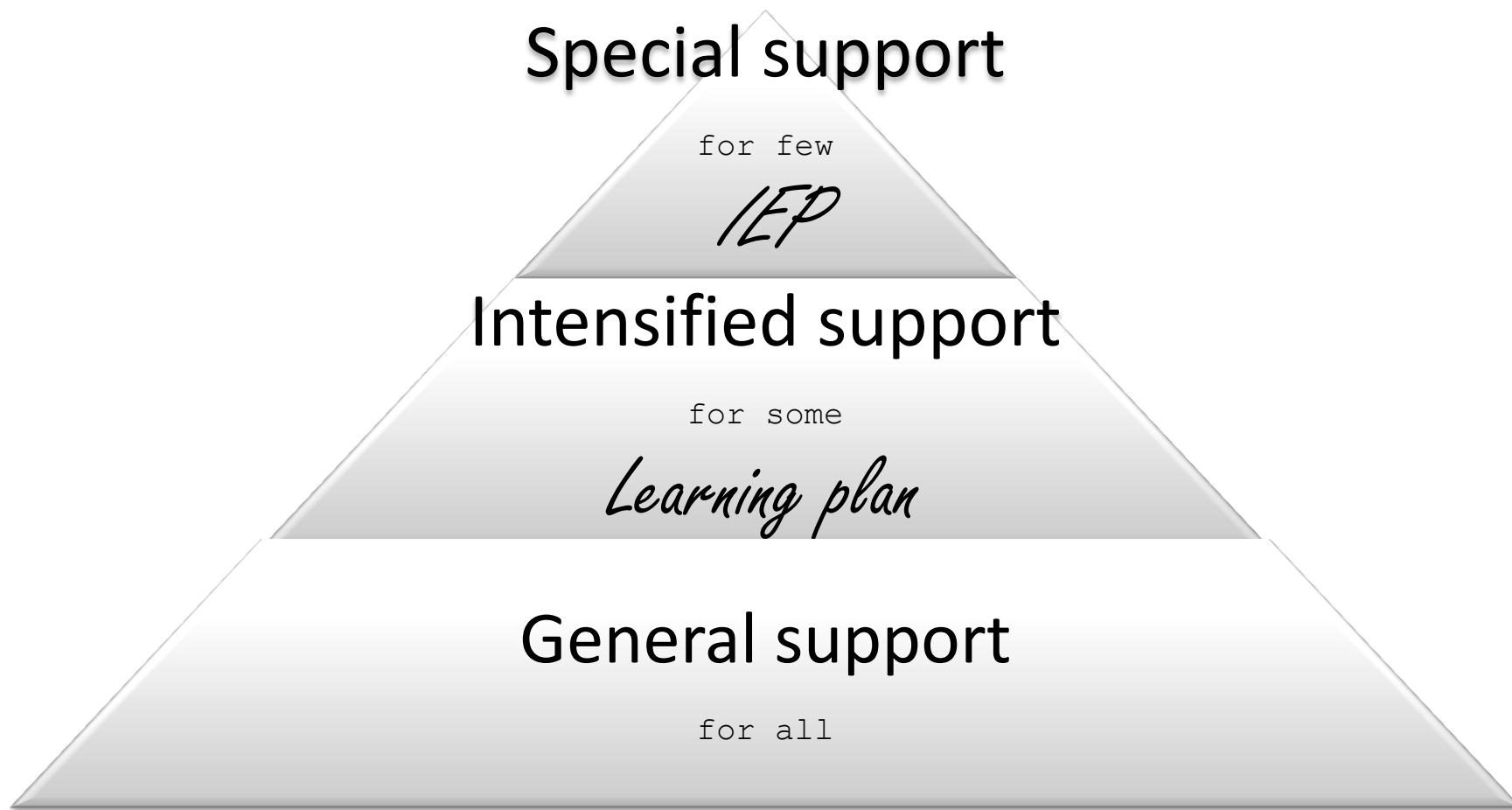
Last ten years: main changes (laws, regulations)

- Funding reform 2010
- Basic Education amendment 2011
- New regulations about students' welfare 2013
- New Core Curriculum 2015

What changed in schools

- New way of organizing supports: earlier we did have only
 - general support and special education
- Now: Support for growth, learning and school attendance is shaped into three categories:
 - general support, intensified support and special support.

> Three tiered supports



Main supports in practice

- **Part-time special education**
- Prevention of problems
- Early interventions
- Full time special education
- Co-teaching
- Personal/technical devices
- Differentiation, specialized individual programs
- Welfare work
- Counselling and guidance
- Assistants
- Flexible groupings
- Assesments, individual planning
- Co-operation



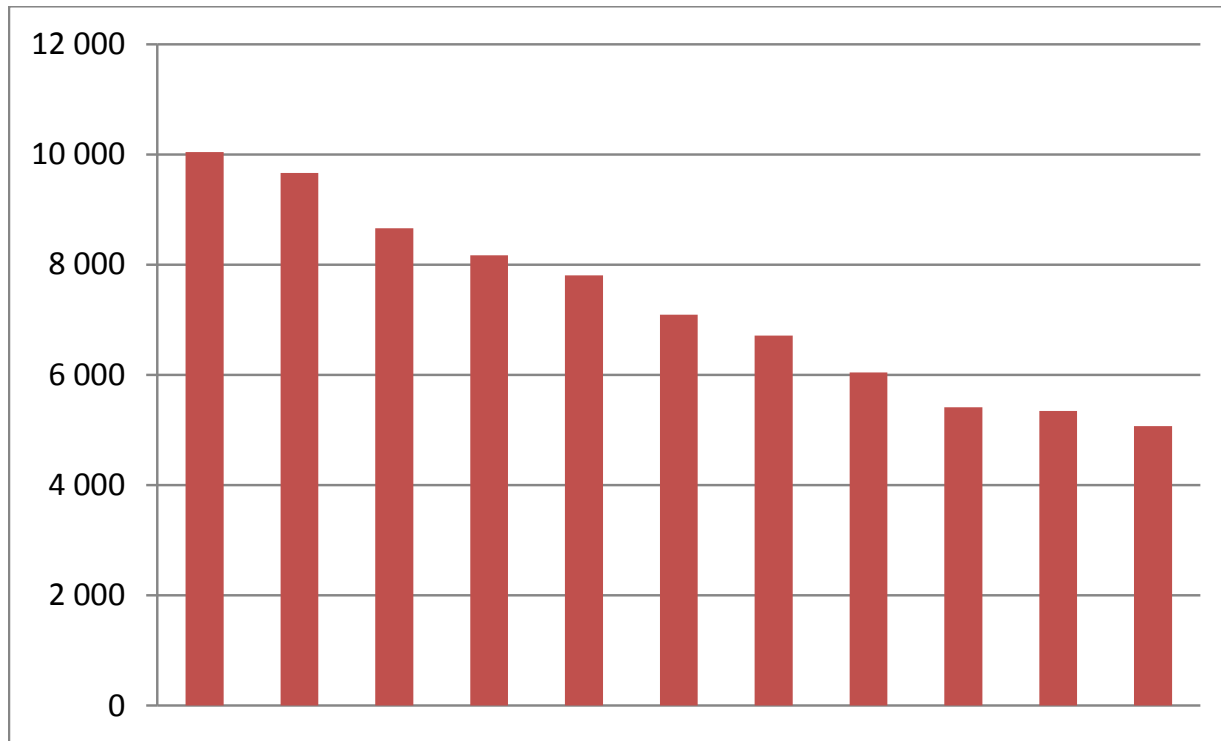
Statistics Finland (2014): Basic education pupils having received intensified or special support

Grade/sex	Pupils having received intensified support %	Pupils having received special support %	Total %
Grades 1 - 6	7.8	6.3	14.1
Grades 7 - 9	7.2	9.1	16.3
Add. education	5.1	24.0	29.1
Total	7.5	7.3	15.0
<i>Boys</i>	9.5	9.8	19.3
<i>Girls</i>	5.3	4.5	9.8



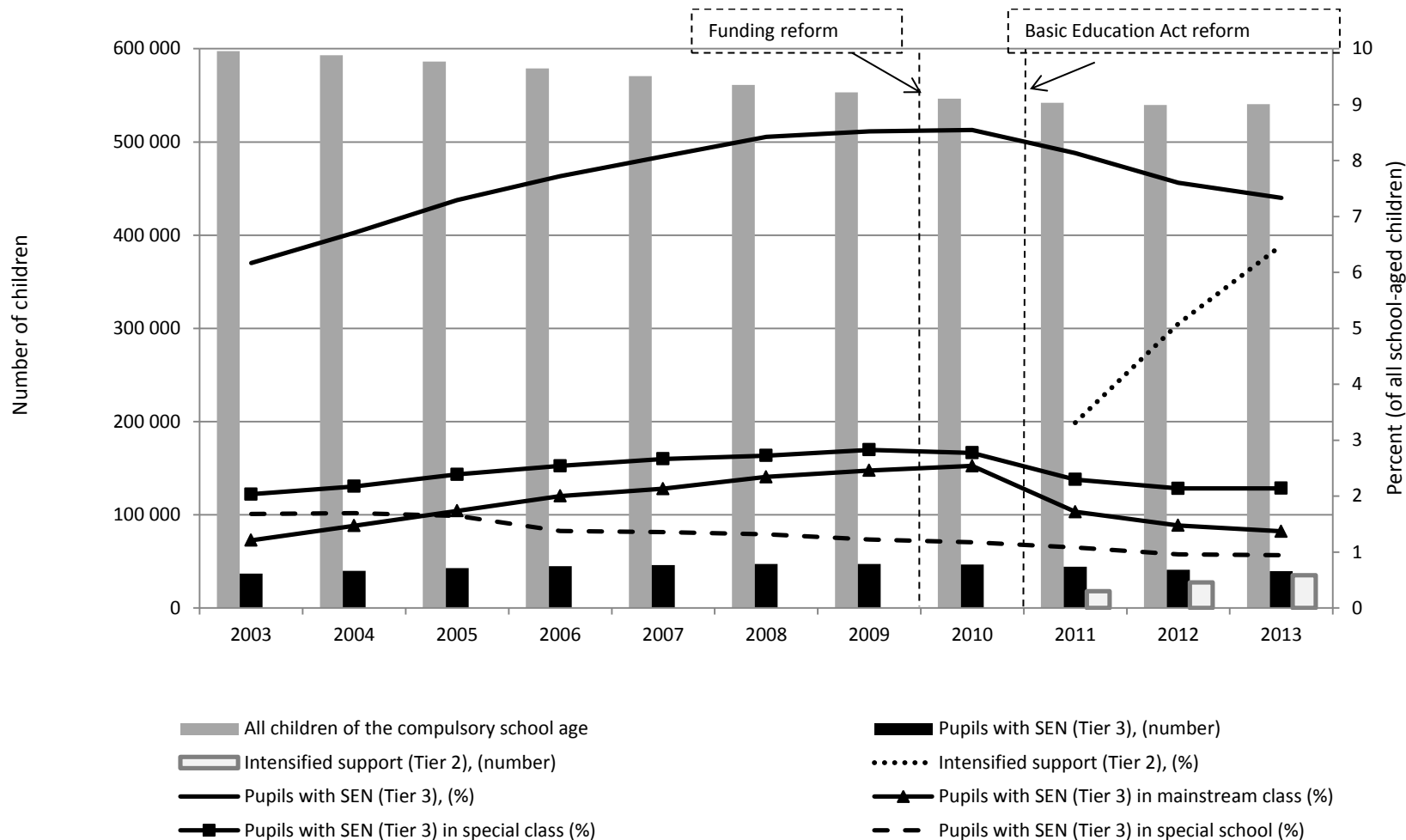
Pupils in special schools. Years 2004-2014 (Statistics Finland 2015)

Decreased from 1,7% to 0,9% (=5.070 pupils in special schools)



Pupils and placement trends of pupils with SEN

(Pulkkinen & Jahnukainen 2015, Statistics Finland)





The situation of the pupils with most severely disabilities (1)

- This group entered in the basic education system in 1997
- They usually study instead of subjects, skills which are divided into functional domains, which is now part of the general core curriculum
- Teacher training is still different from other teacher education
- Pupils have integrated slowly. Now 31% of classes are in the same facilities as other pupils.
- Teachers prefer part time integration.
- Teaching is estimated effective if it is mainly organized in own special education groups and sometimes integrated with other pupils if considered possible.



The situation of the pupils with most severely disabilities (2)

In which situations are pupils integrated	How many % of respondents mentioned
<u>Celebrations and other happenings</u>	<u>88,1%</u>
<u>Breaks</u>	<u>59,5</u>
<u>Lunch time</u>	<u>57,1</u>
Music	47,6
School transportation	40,5
Morning and afternoon care	26,2
PE	23,8
Arts	19,0
Home economics	14,3
Extra curricular activities	14,3
Some other subjects	9,5

Summary

“The biggest change in all schoolwork is a new kind of thinking. It is no longer that the weak (pupil is) transferred directly to another group, out of the way. But now we have to think first about what I can do about it. That is an excellent innovation” (Kokko et al. 2013).

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Thank you for your attention!

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