

KESY

Conversation with Symbols
DEMO VERSION



QUICK INSTRUCTIONS

WHAT IS KESY?

- Visual material for and an approach to child-initiated conversation
- Possibility to communicate so that verbal expression is not the main priority
- A window into the pupil's experience domain
- A way to amplify the pupil's voice in decision-making, e.g., in discussions related to the three-tier support system: preparing an individual education plan or a personal study plan or in a development, assessment or rehabilitation discussion, in which the pupil takes part
- A set of pictures and concepts that can be used regardless of whether the pupil's studies are arranged by subjects or by activity areas
- A research-based tool that relies on positive recognition and affective and positive pedagogy

WHY AND HOW DOES KESY SUPPORT THE CONVERSATION?

- The National Core Curriculum recommends a child-centred approach in discussions at school
- Communication is supported, which improves equality
- Strengthens the pupil's ability to be seen, heard and included
- Identifies visible and hidden talent, special attributes and challenges
- Supports the cooperation between the home and the school and multiprofessional players
- Identifies individual goals and strengths and the needs for support
- Illustrates and accepts the pupil's experience of themselves and their interactions.

HOW DOES A KESY CONVERSATION PROCEED?

1. An adult in the school describes the idea behind KESY and asks if the pupil wants to apply it in the conversation.
2. The pupil places picture cards on the board, the pupil plays the main role, adults provide encouraging comments.
3. The pupil places emotion cards and extra cards on the board and the topics are discussed.
4. Things that come up are discussed together and important points, goals, the need for support, strengths, practical measures etc. are written down.
5. The KESY board is photographed and saved, if the pupil agrees to this.

WHAT IS KESY?

The KESY visual material and approach is an easy-to-use tool for child-initiated conversation. It can be applied to an individual education plan or a personal study plan related to three-tier support, a development or assessment discussion, a joint education and rehabilitation or a multiprofessional team meeting etc. KESY's pictures contain the topics addressed in the discussions in school. The theoretical background lies in positive recognition and affective and positive pedagogy.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE IS KESY SUITABLE?

The new National Core Curriculum recommends practices that ensure that the pupil is seen and heard as they are and that they play the main role in discussions in school. The KESY pictures are used as **tools for pupil inclusion and school-home cooperation**. This enables equal, individual encounters while taking mental, physical, social and cultural factors into account. In a KESY conversation, the pupil's experience of themselves and their interactions in various situations become visible and accepted.

KESY helps the pupil express their thoughts, experiences and feelings about their school day, learning, well-being and ability to function. They can actively contribute to the planning and assessment process instead of simply listening to a meeting held in adult language.

Acknowledging the factors that affect self-esteem and self-image, learning and school satisfaction helps the pupil build their personal identity and strengthens their ability to cope in various situations.

A KESY conversation gives the adults **information for considering matters that are meaningful to the child and for planning individual teaching, rehabilitation and support arrangements**. These factors together promote the pupil's well-being and create opportunities for early support.

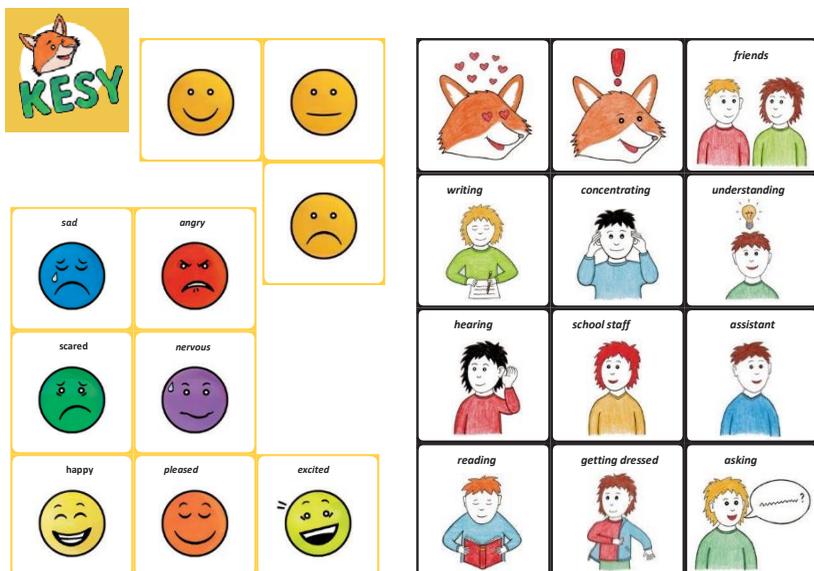
KESY helps to discuss the pupil's environments, schoolgoing, learning and subjects, in addition to their readiness, strengths, emotions, interests and needs. A relaxed atmosphere, verbalization and appreciative interaction are important elements of the session. The conversation focuses on things that are meaningful to the pupil, while still providing room for voicing concerns as well. The users can adapt the KESY material to suit their needs and attach any elements they need to it.

A KESY conversation can also be held with the pupil before a joint discussion with the guardian and/or a multiprofessional team. In this case, the saved KESY board will serve as the basis for the discussion in the next meeting.

WHAT IS DONE BEFORE A KESY CONVERSATION?

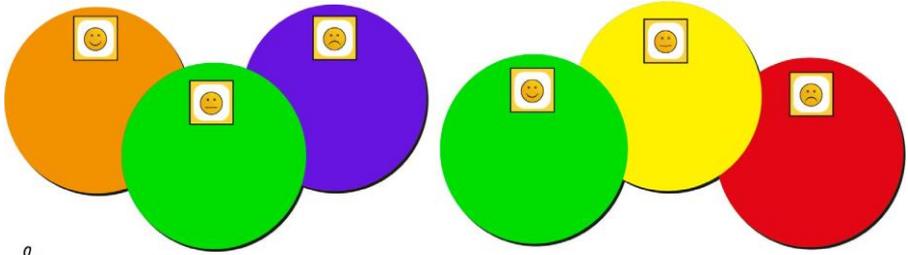
1. **Participants, time and place.** Agree on the time, the place and the participants of the conversation. Ideally, the pupil can choose a familiar adult and the space they prefer in the school.
2. **Information needs.** The adult checks any instructions and forms to see what things should be clarified and recorded for this particular pupil. They choose the cards that match the pupil's age and situation and divide them into suitable groups, if needed. You should limit the number of cards. The pupil's specific attributes are taken into consideration when making arrangements. If the conversation stretches out too long, you can interrupt and continue later.
3. **Board and other tools.** Before the conversation, prepare suitable coloured cardboard sheets or some other board on which the three smiley faces and the cards are placed. You also need a camera or a phone for taking photos and you may need post-it notes for adding goals and other information on the board.

If they want, the pupil can bring pictures and create a name tag in advance, choose the colours of the board or illustrate the board after the conversation. However, you should try to keep the board visually clear. If needed, you can also attach additional material and background information from other sources to KESY.



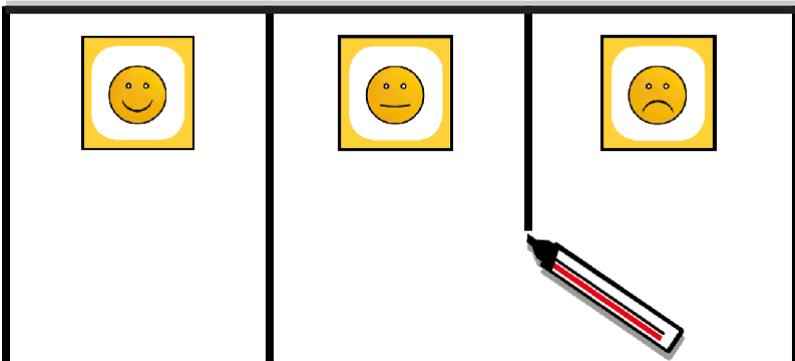
Cut out all the cards.

Board options

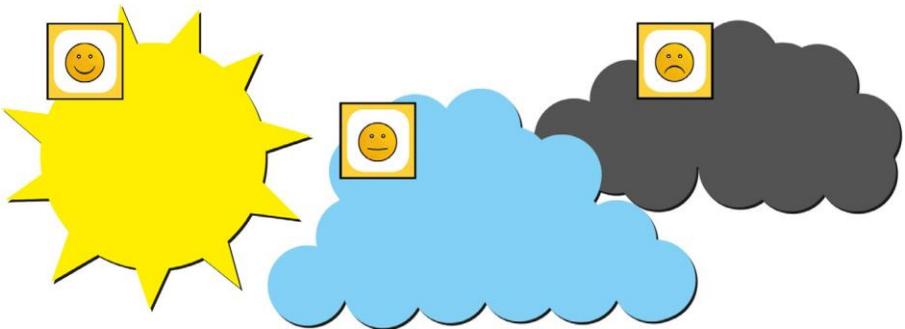


The recommended diameter of the cardboard sheet is 30 cm minimum.

Cut out a circle from a coloured cardboard sheet. The colours can be chosen by the pupil or you can use the colours of traffic lights, for example.



You can draw columns for the cards on the board or a large sheet of paper and attach the cards on the vertical surface using, e.g., Blu-tack.



Cut out a sun and two clouds from the paper, one of the clouds is darker and smaller.

4 groups of cards

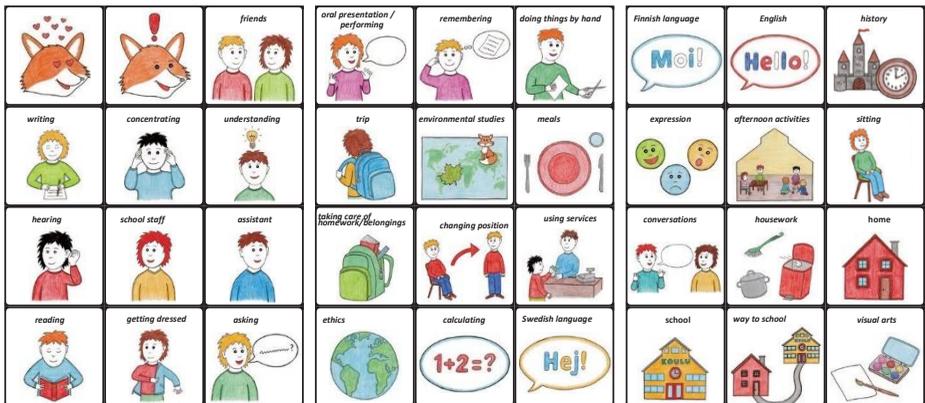
A. Picture cards by topic

1. 15 subjects

- mother tongue
- Finnish language
- Swedish language
- English language
- mathematics
- music
- crafts (technical and textile)
- physical education
- environmental studies
- religion
- ethics
- visual arts
- social studies
- history
- guidance counselling

2. 15 study skills

- asking
- expressing (emotions and thoughts)
- understanding
- concentrating
- writing
- reading (mechanical and comprehension, literature)
- calculating
- doing tasks (planning, performing, finishing)
- doing things together (groupwork and taking others into consideration)
- oral presentation and performing
- behaviour
- teacher's instruction
- taking care of homework and belongings
- following instructions
- computer, tablet, phone (studying on a digital device)



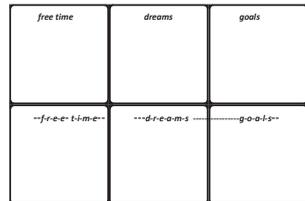
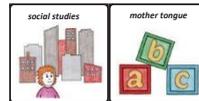
3. 21 life skills and leisure

- sleeping and rest
- meals
- going to the toilet
- washing
- tidiness (brushing your hair, brushing your teeth)
- getting dressed
- movement
- sitting
- changing position
- taking care of your health (medication, stretching, road safety skills)
- conversations
- seeing
- hearing
- doing things by hand
- using services (shop or library)
- housework (tidying up after yourself)

- social media and games (social media and, e.g., computer games)
- gaming
- playing
- remembering
- trip

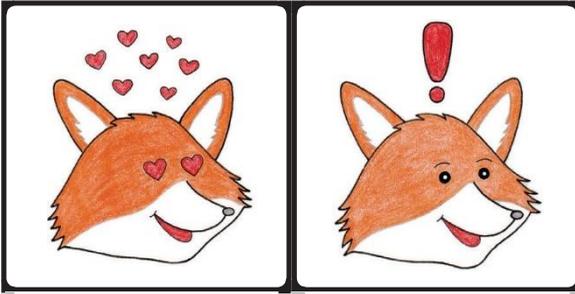
4. 9 environments and relationships

- way to school
- afternoon and morning activities
- recess
- home
- school
- friends
- family
- school staff (who is important, who don't you get along with)
- assistant (personal assistant and/or support person)

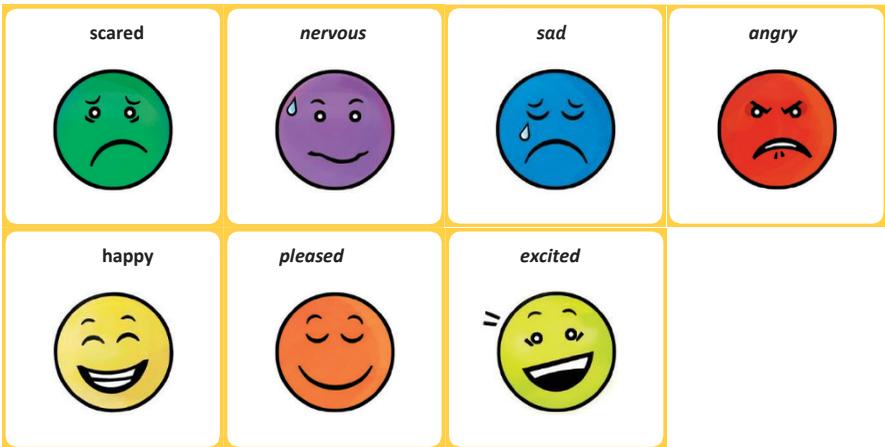


B. Fox cards

- heart fox: what the pupil especially likes
- exclamation mark fox: what adults should take into consideration and provide support with



C. Emotion cards



D. Grey and blank cards

- dreams: talk about the pupil's dreams
- goals: are set with the child by choosing from the things next to the sad face
- free time: hobbies and events that are important to the pupil
- blank card for the pupil or the adult to use

HOW THE CONVERSATION PROCEEDS

The conversation proceeds so that the pupil places cards on the board and talks about them with the adult's support. The model is applied while taking the pupil's attributes and age level into consideration.

1. The cards can be named the Fox game or the KESY game. You can also have a soft fox toy for the pupil to talk to. **"Will you come and play a game and chat with me? Where would be a good place to play? This is a game where we think about what it's like for you at school. It's important for us to know what you're thinking and how you're doing. We want to know your opinions about going to school and some other things as well. Finally, we'll take a picture of the game. This is your game."**
2. The adult introduces the idea behind the conversation, the board and the groups of cards. The cards are divided into four piles according to their groups. **The adult asks the pupil to place the picture cards next to a suitable smiley face on the board, depending on how they think and feel about the things pictured on the cards. The aim is that the pupil is the agent and the narrator. "Halfway places" can also be used. If necessary, the adult can explain what the pictures mean.**
3. The pupil places pictures on the board. The adult can make affirmative comments, but should not interrupt or reject the pupil's thoughts. **"I see you like recess. What do you usually do during recess? So, you don't like to write. What makes it hard? I've noticed that you like to draw..."**
4. Finally, the adult comments on the full picture in terms of how the cards are placed. **"It's nice that there are so many things you like and quite a few are okay as well. This shows that you like going to school. But you don't like it so much when..."** The adult asks if the guardian, if present, would have placed the cards more or less in the same way and if they want to add something. Discuss the things that come up. The cards are left where the pupil wants them to be.
5. The pupil places the exclamation mark fox to a place where they wish for adult support and attention and the heart fox next to the card that they like the most. In addition, they can draw or write a hobby that they enjoy, a dream etc. on a blank card. The participants' signatures can also be attached using post-it notes.
6. The adult asks the pupil if they have something on their mind or if something has been left unsaid.
7. The pupil is shown one **emotion card** at a time and they use them to mark the things that they want. Some of the smiley faces may be left unused. **"Is one of these things something that scares you a lot or often? What do you do to make yourself feel better? Would you like the adults to take that into consideration?"** Here, you can discuss how to identify and deal with emotions and coping mechanisms. This may be the most important point of the conversation, where any hidden needs for support and attention are revealed.
8. Based on how the cards are placed, discuss **important things and concrete goals** related to schoolgoing, subjects, working skills and behaviour and everyday activities, and **write them down in speech bubbles which are stuck to the bottom of the board.** For the sake of motivation, it is important that the pupil can influence these things. For example, *I will limit my gaming to one hour a day. I will revise maths also at home. I will take care of my homework. I will keep the skills I learn.* Responsibility for the goals is shared between the participants: Maija studies for word tests, the Mother quizzes her on the words, the Teacher reminds her of the test the day before.

9. If the guardians have filled in a questionnaire beforehand or there is a pre-made form for the discussion, check at this point if the points on it have been addressed. If the meeting concerns an individual education plan or some other form of special support, make sure the issues recorded in it have been addressed.
10. **Finally, the KESY board is photographed** to be printed for the participants and used later, if the pupil agrees to this. The adult records the required information in pedagogical documents.

Board with the picture cards only



Completed KESY board



KESY'S LINK TO THE NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM, OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

The KESY material has been born at the grassroots level, in the classroom, from a practical need. Long-term experience of discussions in school led to a search for tools where the child's inclusion would be truly enabled, instead of just being a goal on paper. We believe that the meeting can be a pleasant, even an empowering experience for the child, their guardian and the teacher and other participants.

During a KESY conversation, the pupil is seen, heard and included regardless of their ability to engage in linguistic interaction. The pictures allow guardians with linguistic and communicative limitations to also be better involved.

In the KESY approach, participants move away from staring at the paper and writing things down to verbal and nonverbal interaction supported by symbols where your look and posture and the atmosphere as well as the material elements of the situation play a key role. The KESY session creates a positive space for the pupil's and the family's identities. This forms a basis for cooperation that takes individualities into consideration.

In addition to the National Core Curriculum, municipalities and schools have further specified objectives, assessment, inclusion and school-home cooperation. The following texts contain relevant information selected from the National Core Curriculum 2016 and the assessment instructions of the City of Oulu (Oulun kaupungin Arvioinnin ABC 2018).

According to the annual calendar for assessment, the development discussions of grades 1-6 take place near the start of the autumn term. The guardian and the pupil can view the outline of the discussion in advance in the student information system. The discussion involves setting goals related to the learning progress, working skills or behaviour that promote learning. These goals are recorded in the learning plan. Subject-specific goals are not entered in the student information system unless there is a particular need to do so. Discussions concerning intensified and special support are held in the context of their designated content and also entered in the student information system.

The assessment discussions of grades 1-5 are held in December-January. There is a framework for these discussions and they should also include demonstrations of competence, portfolios and other similar outputs. The discussion can also be based on a self-assessment form that is filled in beforehand. The goals of this discussion are also updated in the learning plan in the student information system. The assessment discussion helps the pupil see and understand what they are meant to learn, what they have learned and how they can promote their learning. In the spring, the pupil receives a school year certificate, which is a summary of the full-year assessment.

According to the Basic Education Act, the aim of pupil assessment is to guide and encourage learning. The assessment shall be varied and focus on the pupil's learning, work and behaviour, not their personality or personal attributes. The assessment shall be conversational and interactive. It shall promote learning and develop the pupil towards self- and peer assessment. It shall take account of various learning and working methods and ensure the accessibility of demonstrating progress and

competence.

In the assessment, it is important to help the pupil understand their learning process. The information obtained through it is utilized when planning instruction and other schoolwork. Assessment is carried out in cooperation with the home. Discussions with the guardian and the pupil build trust and convey information about the pupil.

During the school year, assessment is documented by updating the learning plan recorded in the student information system and by using methods of continuous assessment. The school year certificate is the summary of these levels of assessment.

The KESY material can be used to outline the pupil's overall situation and find the concrete goals that are suitable for them and their needs in the autumn development discussion. These goals and the general elements of schoolgoing are revisited throughout the school year, particularly in the assessment discussion at the turn of the year and in the spring using the photo of the KESY board and the information entered in the student information system.

KESY produces knowledge about the pupil's experience domain, challenges and strengths for meetings concerning intensified and special support to make it easier to arrange instruction and support measures. The need to differentiate learning towards a more independent, extensive direction will also emerge in a KESY discussion and make the opportunities for individual arrangements concrete.

The KESY picture cards help the pupil understand what the conversation is about and to bring up topics that are meaningful to them. While the pupil places pictures on the board, they are also carrying out self-assessment and receive immediate feedback. The pictures give the pupil a concrete view of their environment and the activities and skills they have already learned, are currently learning and will learn. During the KESY session, the pupil is accepted at the point where they feel they are right now, and their potential is made concrete by setting goals and providing encouraging feedback.

