

# Do we find the language impaired children?

## A mapping and critical analysis of the national language screening program in Denmark

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This article provides a historical overview of the national language screening program in Denmark since its foundation in 2007. The article explores the intensified language evaluation practices in preschool and kindergarten classes and investigates whether the program has had the desired effect. The article compares the Danish national language screening program with practices in other countries. The three main questions investigated are: 1) whether the language screening program identifies children with language difficulties, 2) whether the language screening program identifies children at risk of becoming poor readers, and 3) whether Danish legislation and practices align with those in other countries. The results of the mapping show no indications that the Danish national language screening program has contributed to an identification of language impaired children, nor do we find indications that it has improved Danish students' reading skills. Furthermore, Denmark appears to be the odd one out regarding national language screening with regard to both the practices and the content of the screening. Finally, we discuss various explanations for the lack of effectiveness of the national language screening program and propose a research-based model for identifying and supporting language impaired children in Denmark.

**KEYWORDS:** language screening; language assessment; language development; language impairment; reading impairment