



FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

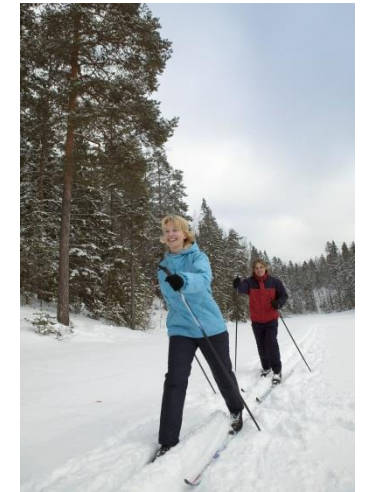
Education in Finland

Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018



Finland in brief

- population 5.5 million (18 inhabitants / sq. km)
- two official languages: Finnish and Swedish
- persons with foreign background :
6.2 % of the population
- education level of the working age population:
 - 13 % basic education
 - 45 % upper secondary education
 - 42 % tertiary education



Underlying educational understanding is based on equity

Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge. The public authorities shall guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship.

(Constitution of Finland)



Education developed in partnership

National
authorities

Local authorities

Teachers' union

Social partners

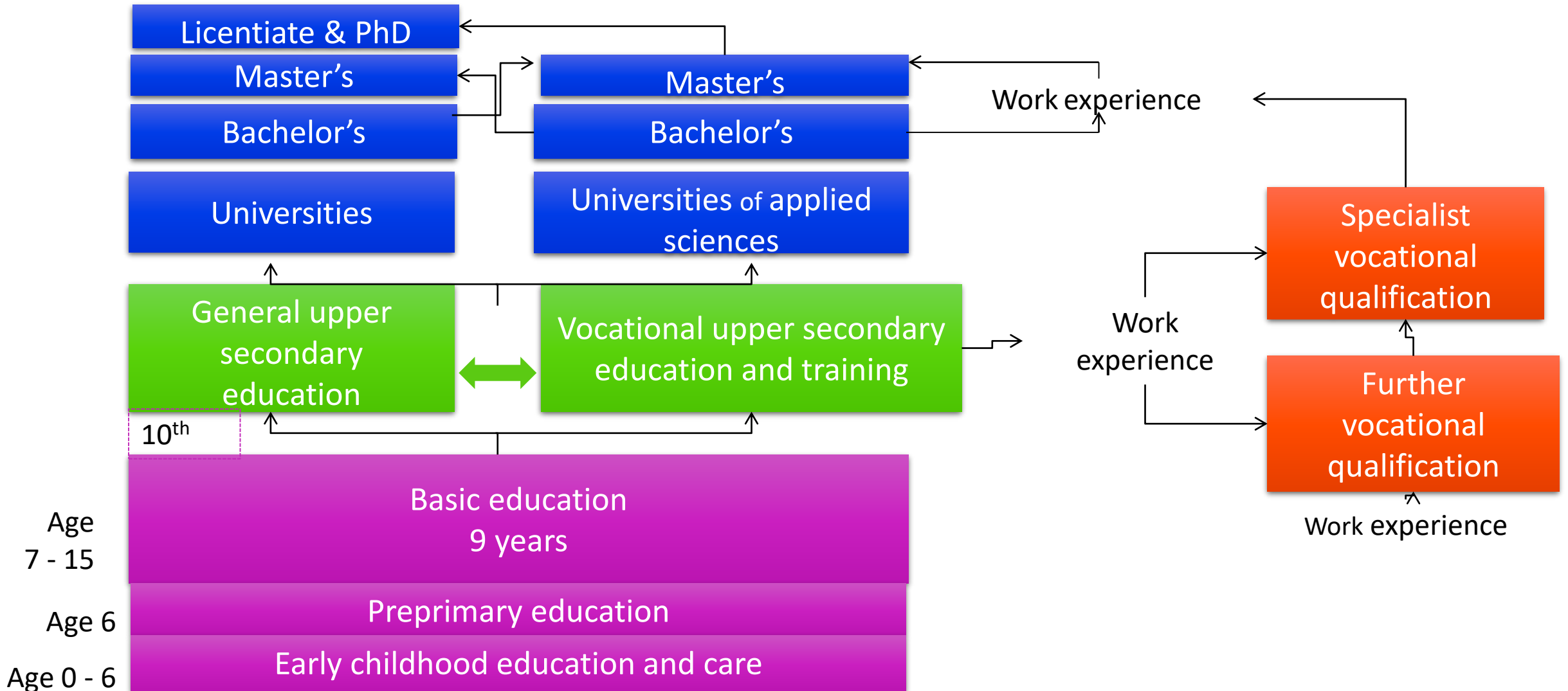
Parents

Pupils and students

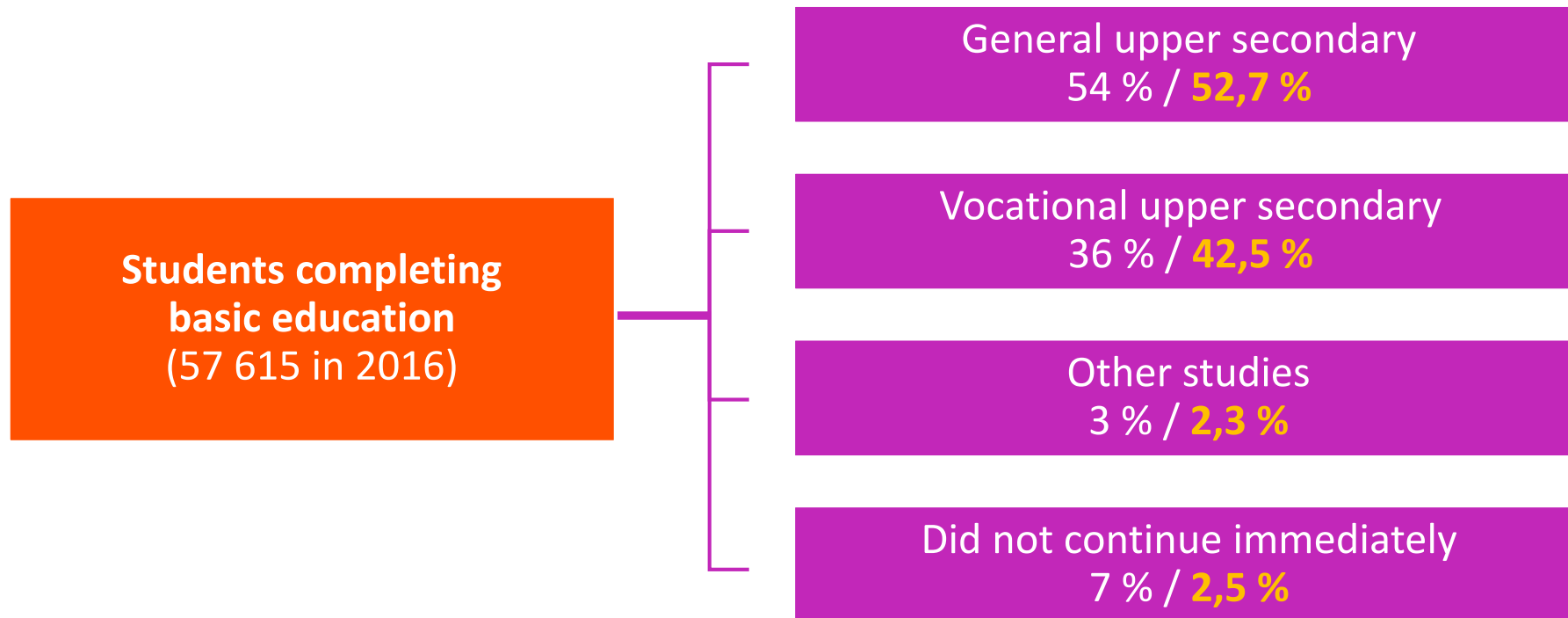
Research
institutions

Relevant
stakeholders

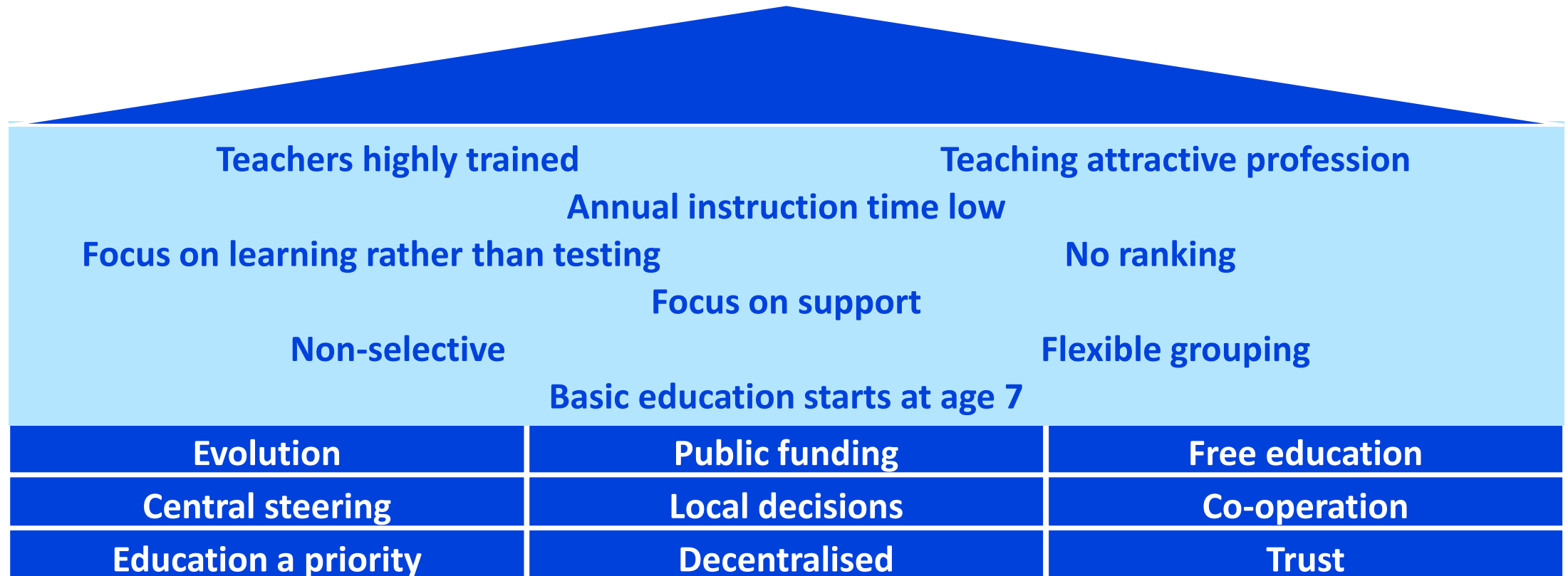
No dead-ends in the education system



What happens immediately after compulsory education? 2001 / 2016



Specificities of the Finnish education system



Two-tier national administration

Ministry of Education and Culture

- Education policy
- Preparation of legislation
- State funding

Finnish National Agency for Education

- National development agency
 - National core curricula & qualification requirements
 - Support for evidence-based policy-making
 - Support for reform and development
 - Services for learners
 - Supporting internationalisation
- 

Central steering



Central

- Educational priorities
- Minimum time allocation
- National core curricula
- Size of state subsidies

Local decisions



Local

- Educational priorities
- Local curricula
- Allocation of subsidies
- Class size
- Recruitment
- Teacher "evaluation"
- Quality assurance

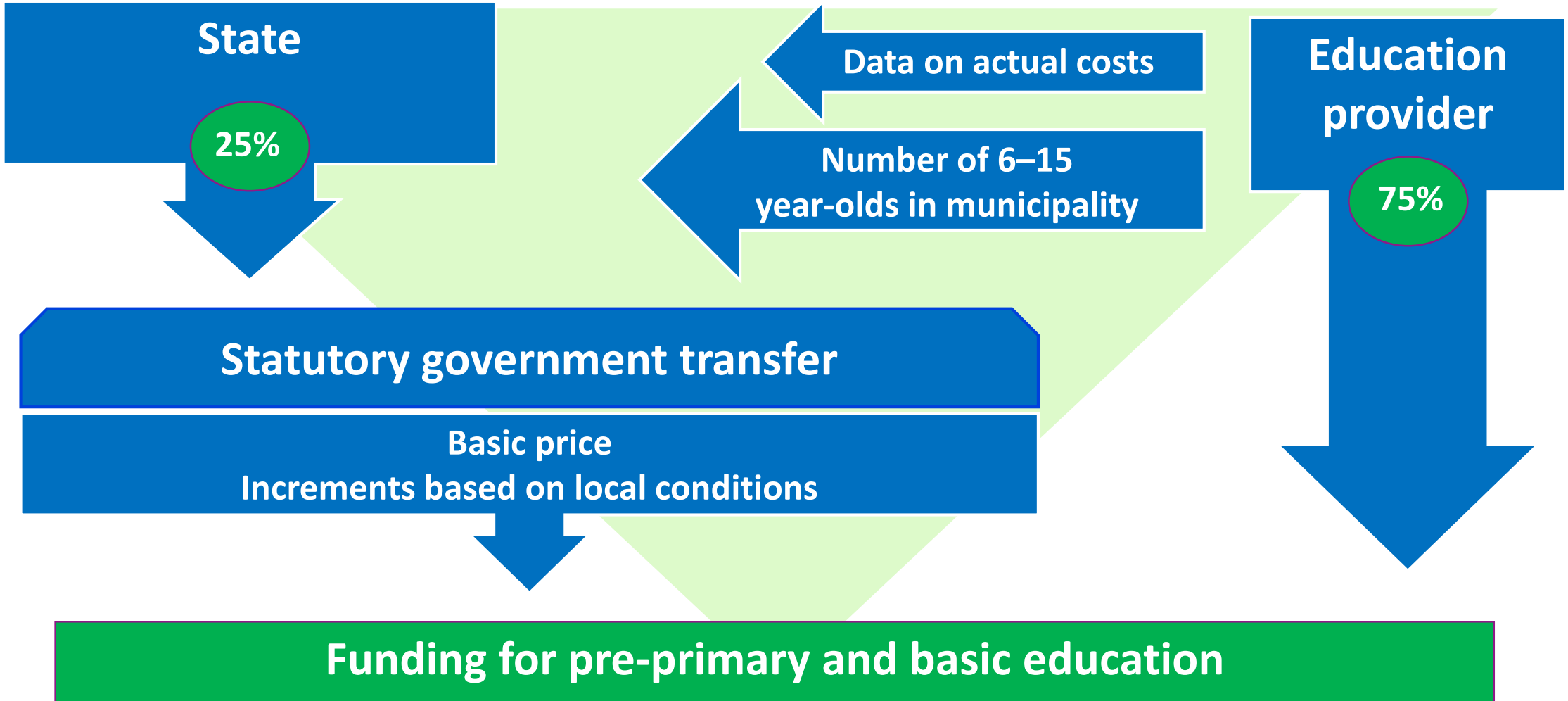
Current issues

- early childhood education and care reform
- learners with migrant background
- digitalisation of matriculation examination
- vocational education and training reform
- admission to higher education
- funding
- ICT in focus, learning environments



Basic education is free for
pupils and families

Funding of pre-primary and basic education in a nutshell



Expenditure on education 2016



- **Operative costs per pupil/student**
 - pre-primary education **5 855 €**
 - basic education **9 016 €**
 - general upper secondary **7 697 €**
 - vocational upper secondary **10 446 €**

well-being promotes learning

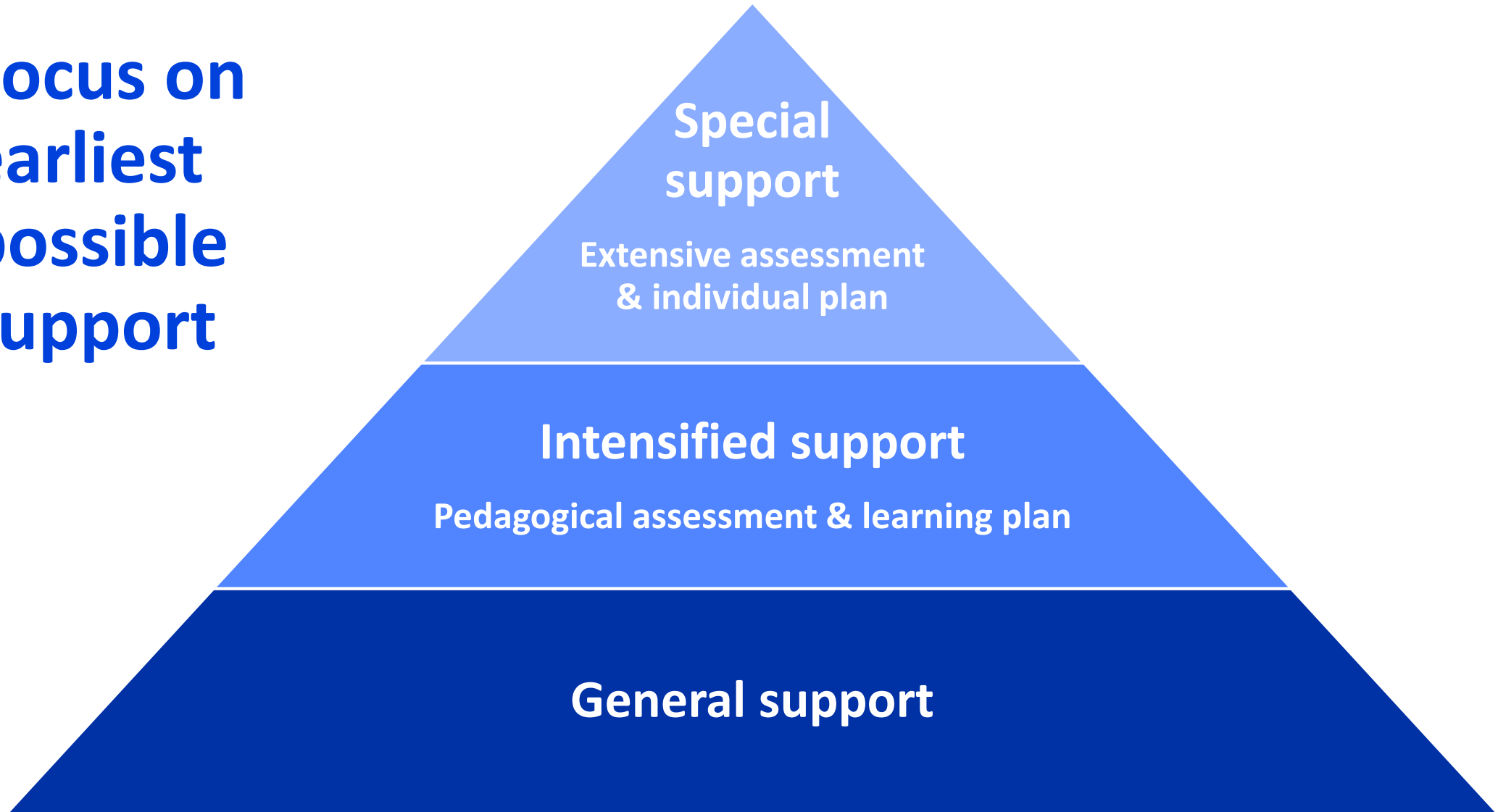
Support to well-being & learning

Maternity &
child health
clinics

Early childhood
education
and care

School

**Focus on
earliest
possible
support**



Pupil and student welfare

**Collective and
individual
approach**

Health care

School meals

Safety

School meals

School meals generally consist of typical Finnish foods.
A good school meal consists of



warm main course



vegetables



bread and table spread



drink

water



Guidance and counselling

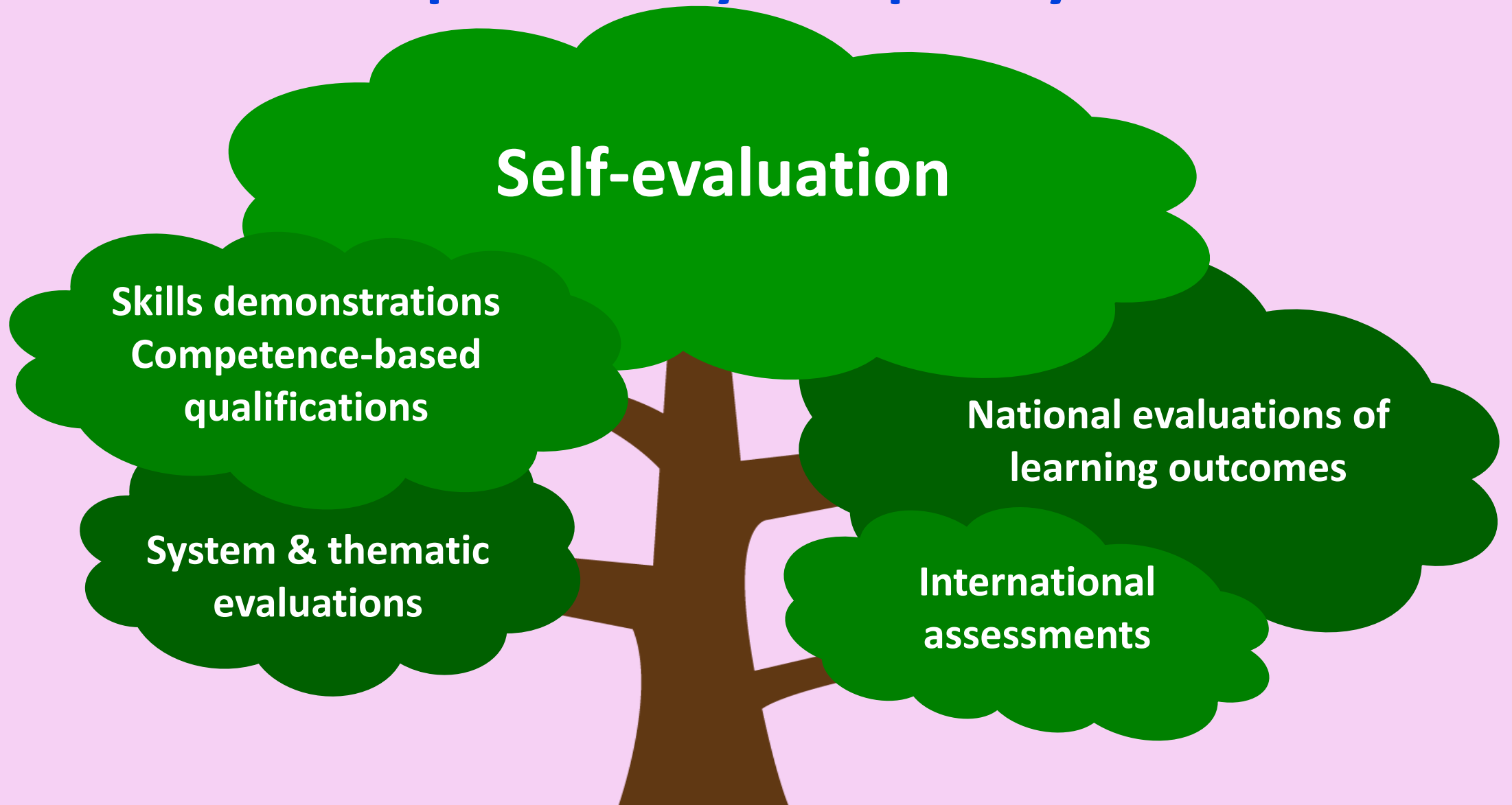


- Subjective right
- Part of the curriculum
- Collective and individual approach
- Develops learning skills
- Supports self-confidence, participation and personal growth
- Focus on transition points

Quality assurance is

a tool for development

Education providers have main responsibility for quality



Evaluation of learning outcomes function as traffic lights

National evaluation plan

Sample-based

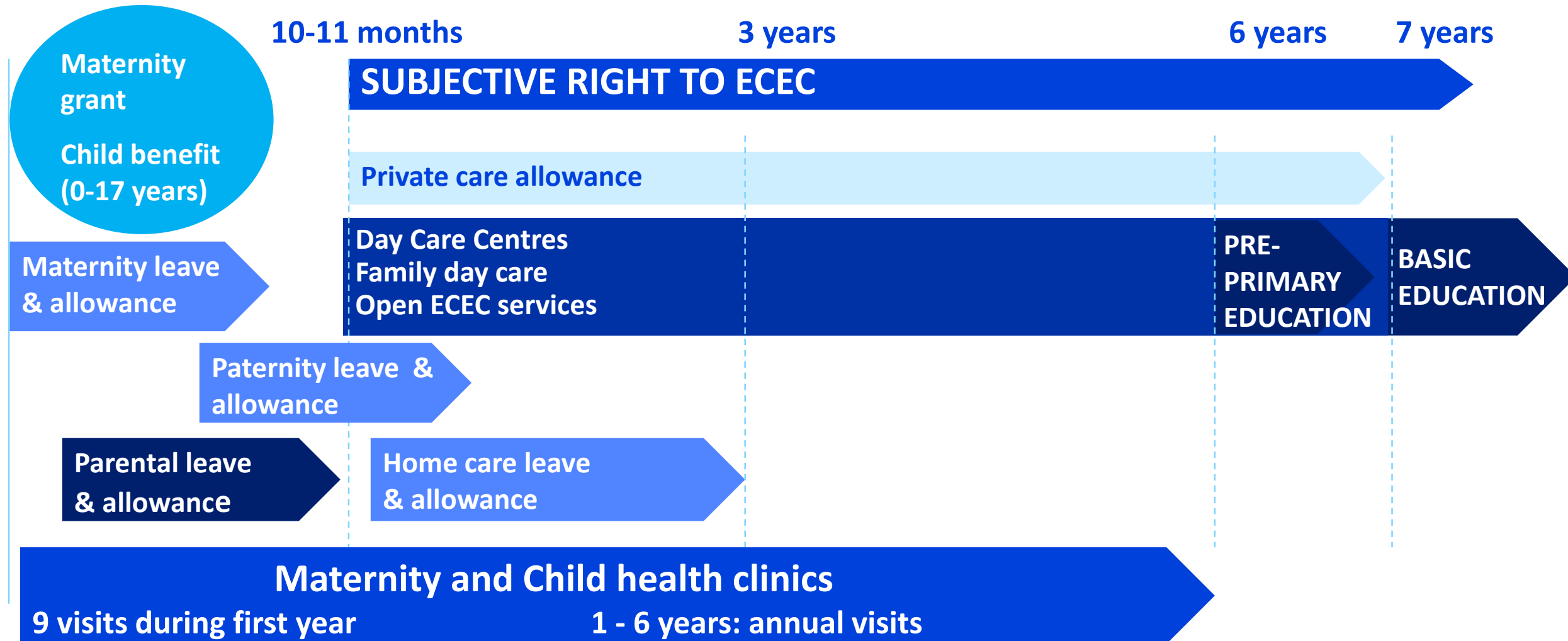
Stratified

Mother tongue and
mathematics every other
year

Other subjects according
to policy priorities

Child's overall development
and joy of learning
emphasised in Early Childhood
Education and Care

Early childhood education and care (ECEC)



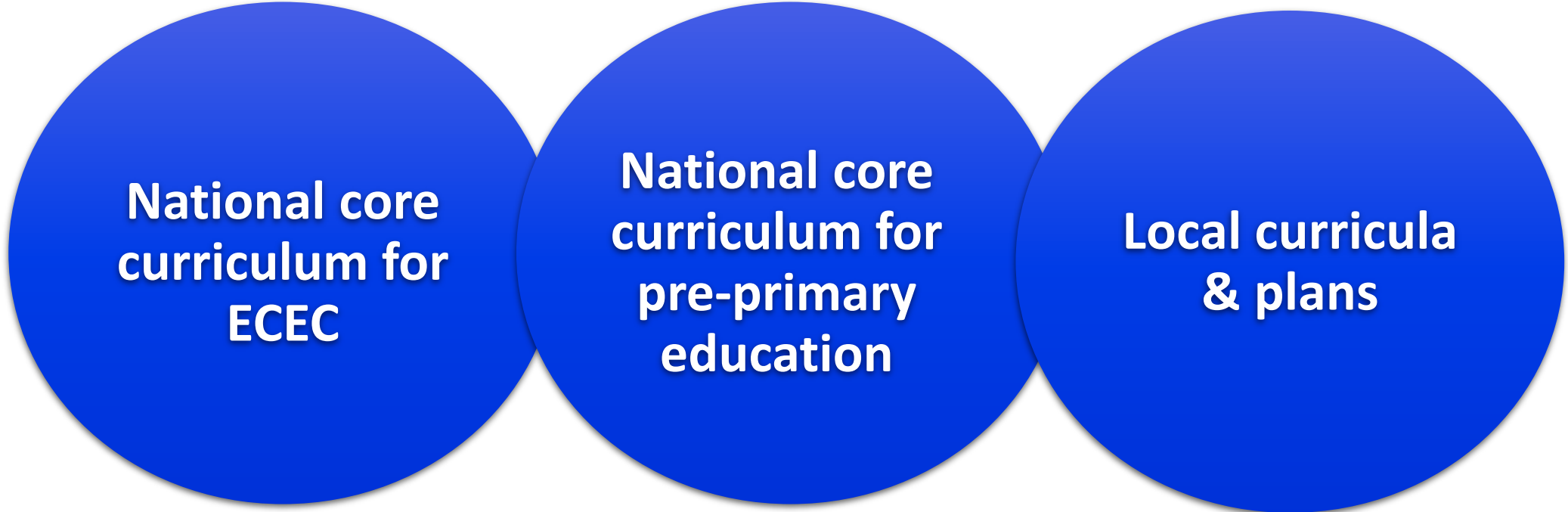
Early childhood education and care (ECEC)



Photo: Liikuntapäiväkoti

- Universal entitlement (0-6 years)
- Main forms:
 - ECEC centres
 - family day care
- Integrated approach to education, care & teaching => EduCare model
- Moderate fees

ECEC plans and curriculum



The diagram consists of three overlapping blue circles arranged horizontally. The leftmost circle contains the text 'National core curriculum for ECEC'. The middle circle contains the text 'National core curriculum for pre-primary education'. The rightmost circle contains the text 'Local curricula & plans'. The circles overlap such that the middle circle is partially covered by the left and right circles, and the right circle is partially covered by the middle circle. A decorative blue and green curved line is visible at the bottom right of the slide.

**National core
curriculum for
ECEC**

**National core
curriculum for
pre-primary
education**

**Local curricula
& plans**



Child's overall well-being in focus

Integrative education

Individual ECEC plan, no learning standards

Learning through play essential

Language, physical activity, exploration, artistic experiences and self-expression

ECEC partnership

Pre-primary education at the age of six

- free and compulsory
- provided in ECEC centres or schools
- minimum 700 hours per year
- promoting child's prerequisites for growth, development and learning
- a continuous learning path from ECEC to school
- integrative education
- learning through play, joy of learning



Basic education:

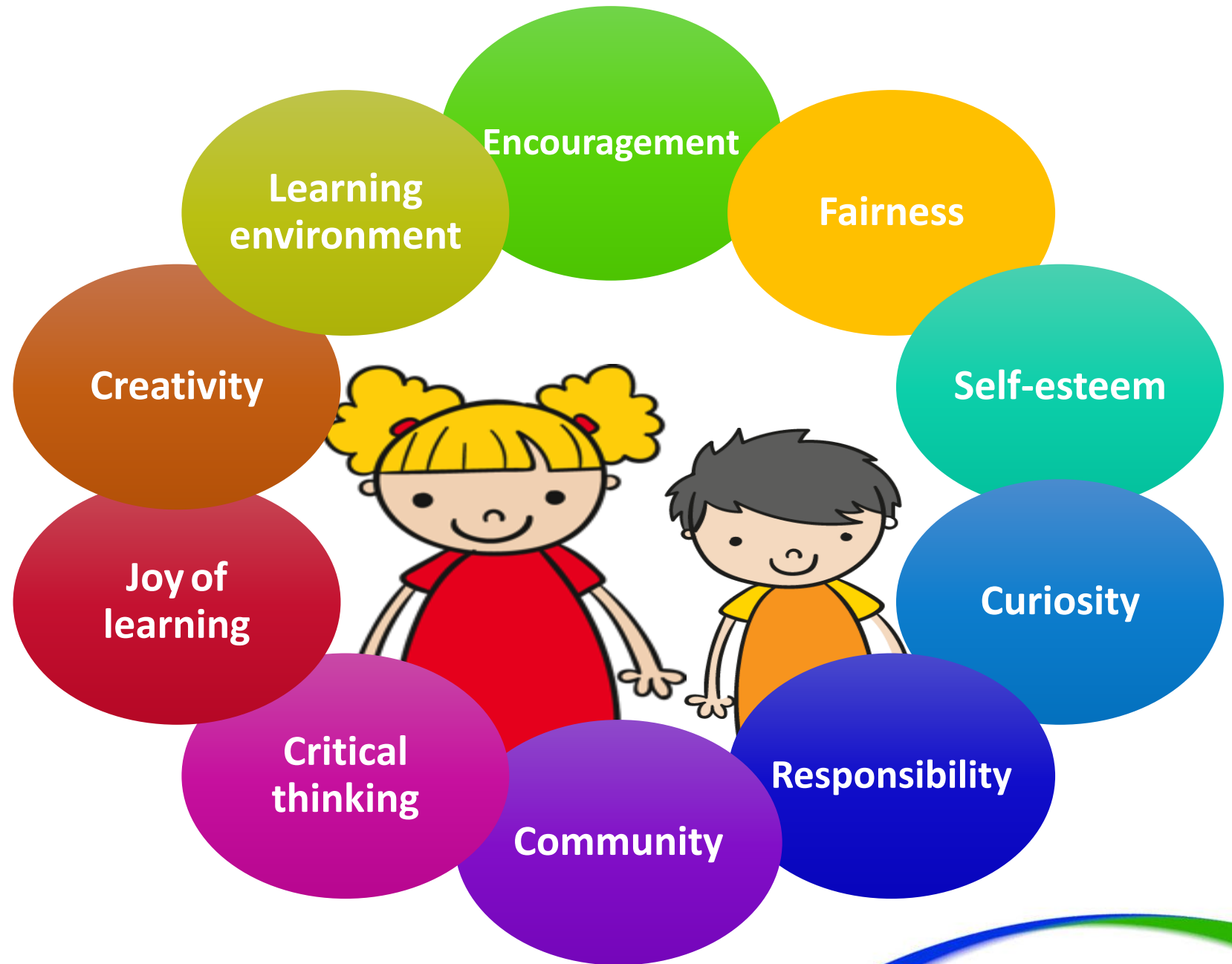
Every pupil is unique and

has the right to

high-quality education

**Maximising
potential:**

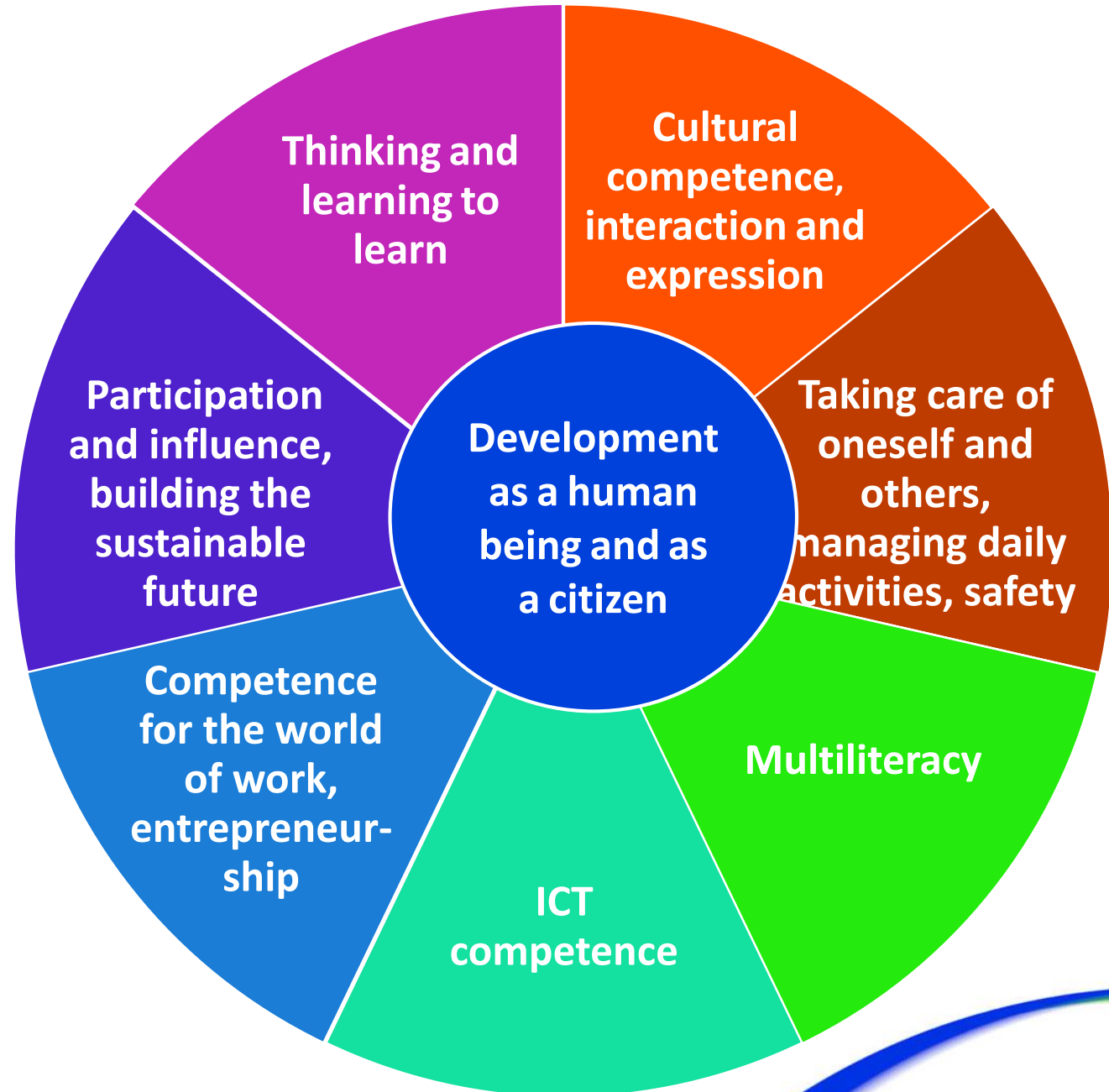
**every
child is
unique**



Rethinking competences

National Goals for Basic Education and Transversal Competences

- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will



National minimum time allocation sample of subjects (annual weekly lessons¹)

Forms	1–2	3–6	7–9	Total
Mother tongue & literature	14	18	10	42
Mathematics	6	15	11	32
A language (1st foreign language)	–	9	7	16
B language (2nd national language)	–	2	4	6

Forms	1–6	7–9	Total
Environment and science	14	17	31
History & civics	5	7	12
Arts, crafts & sports			62
¹ Total annual no of lessons x 38	Total min		222

Basic education curriculum reform

Core ideas



Conception of learning

Learner's active role

- Sets targets
- Reflects & analyses
- Solves problems

Interaction

- Learns with others and in different environments
- Understands consequences

Learning to learn

- Recognises own way of learning
- Applies this to promote learning

Self-conception and confidence

- Helps setting targets
- Receives feedback

General upper secondary education
aims at
broad-based knowledge

Upper secondary education

Flexible

Personalised

Individualisation

Modular/course structure

Combining general & vocational studies

Eligibility for higher education



Distribution of lesson hours in general upper secondary education

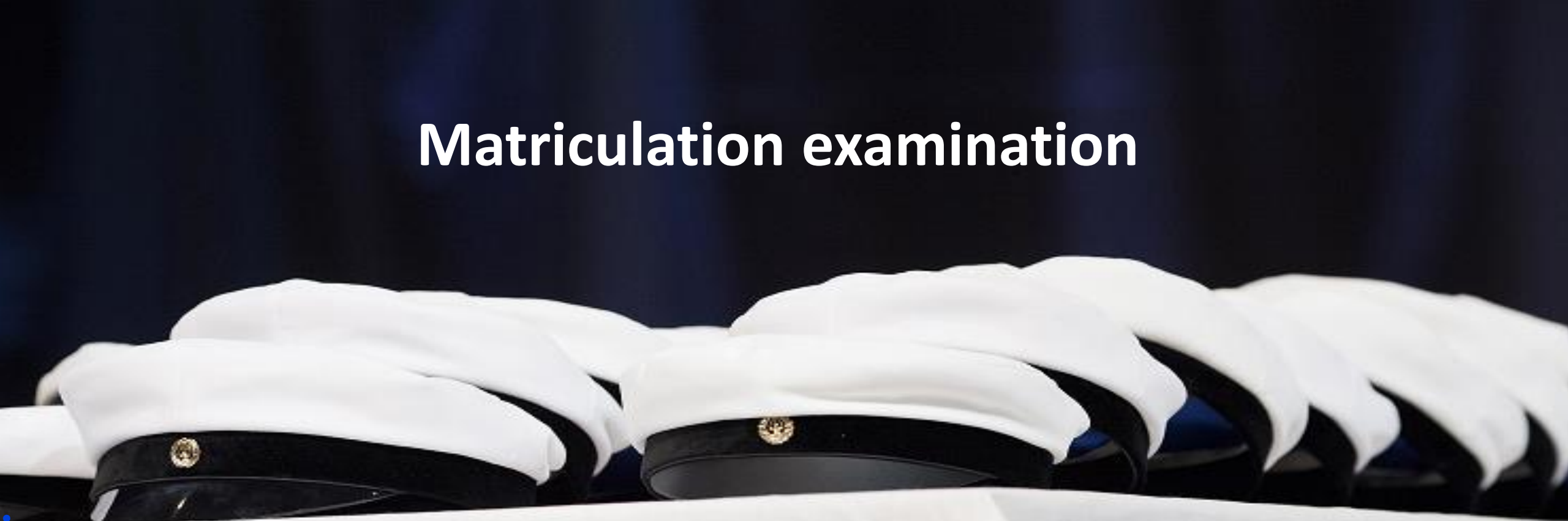
Compulsory courses	47–51
Minimum total of specialisation courses	10
Minimum total number of courses	75

Distribution of courses

sample of subjects

Subject	Compulsory courses	Specialisation courses
Mother tongue & literature	6	3
A-language	6	2
B-language	5	2
Other languages		8+8
Mathematics	6-10	2-3
Environment & science	5	16
Humanities & social sciences	11	14
Arts, crafts & sports	4-6	7

Matriculation examination

- 
- Minimum 4 tests
 - Mother tongue + 3 of the following:
 - 2nd national language
 - foreign language
 - mathematics
 - general studies(one subject in sciences and humanities)
 - One or more optional tests possible
 - Biannual

vocational education

and training:

focus on competences and
individual learner

Funding of vocational education and training (2022)

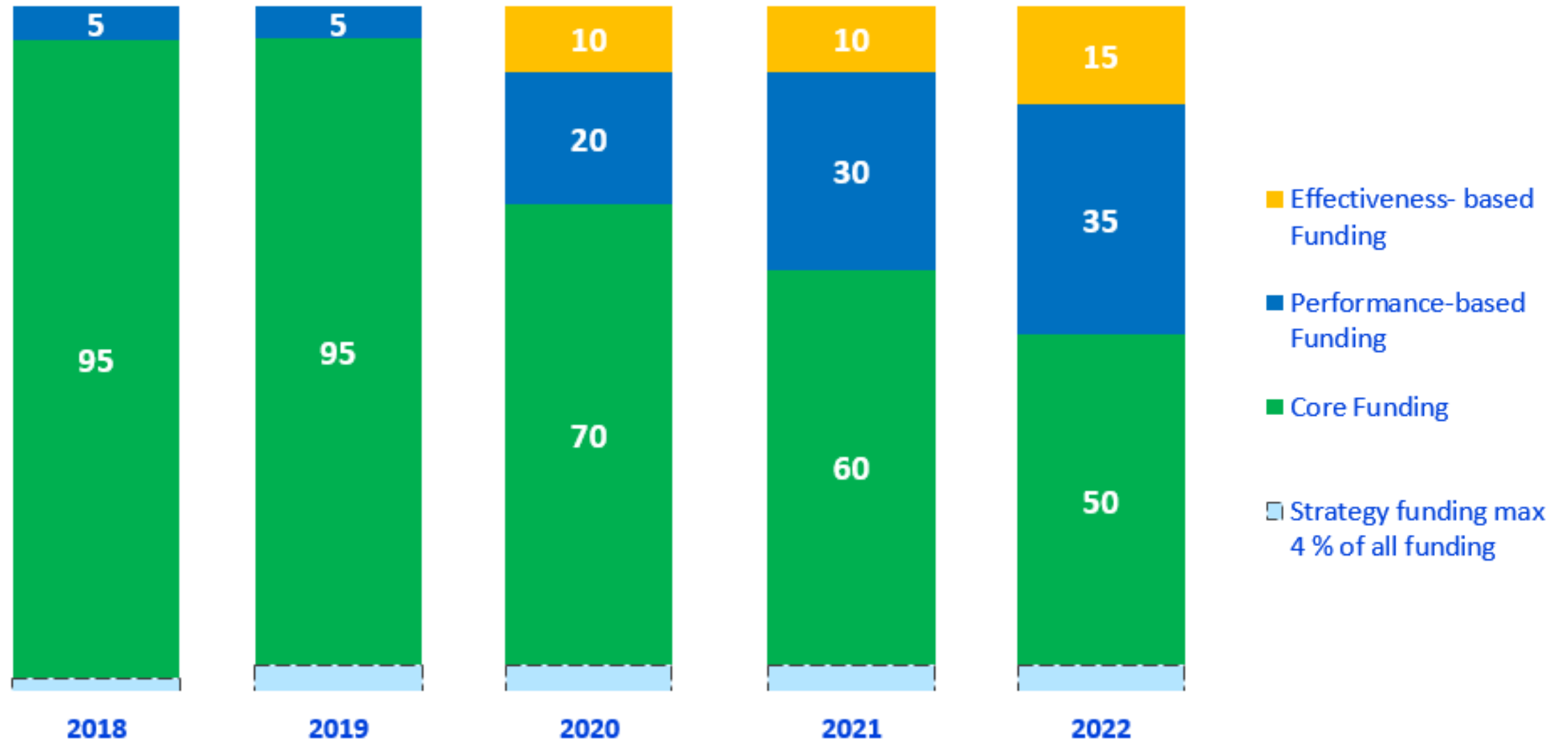
Strategy funding Maximum 4 % of total funding

50%
Core funding
Student years

35%
Performance-based funding
Qualifications and qualification units

15 %
Effectiveness-based funding
Employment and further studies

Distribution of total funding VET (%)



An illustration of two hands holding a tablet. The hands are a light brown color with simple, rounded fingers. The tablet is black with a dark grey screen. The background is a solid light orange color.

Vocational education and training (VET)

Close cooperation with the labour market

Work-based learning

Flexible learning pathways

Open pathways from VET
to higher and further education

Developing VET

**Improving
effectiveness**

**Drop-out &
exclusion**

**Quality
improvement**

Flexibility & individualisation,
Recognition of prior learning,

Learning environments
Youth guarantee, funding
reform, work-based learning

Local development plans,
quality strategies,
competence-based

Key competences for lifelong learning

Learning and problem solving

Interaction and cooperation

Vocational ethics

Health, safety and ability to function

Initiative and entrepreneurship

Sustainable development

Aesthetics

Communication and media skills

Mathematics and sciences

Technology and ICT

Active citizenship and different cultures

Adult education is popular

Adult Education and Training

- General upper secondary education for adults
- Vocational adult education and training
- Adult education in higher education institutions
- Liberal adult education
- Labour market training



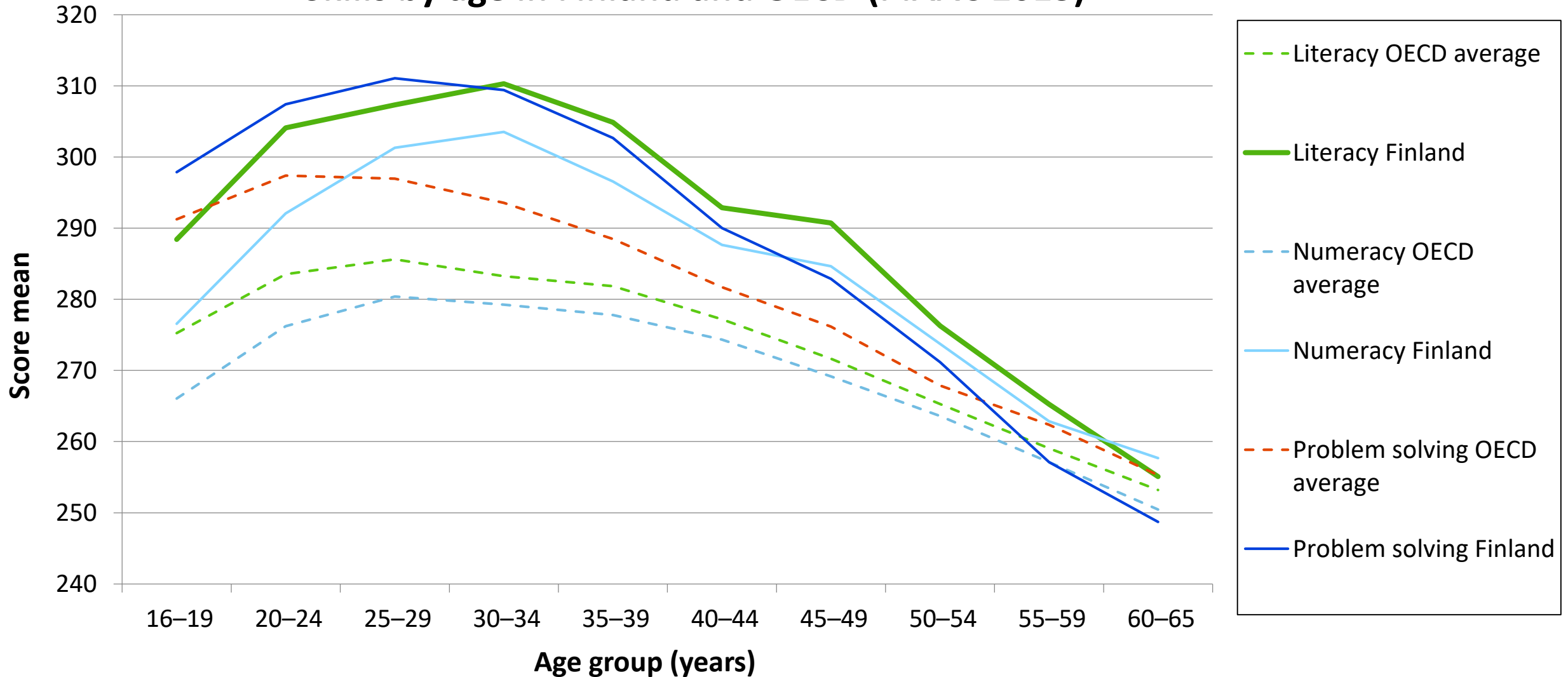
2.2 million participants in adult education not leading to a qualification

% of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in non-formal adult education (2016)

	Total	Male	Female
Finland	26.1	22.3	30.0
EU-28	10.8	9.8	11.7

Skills and age: Finland and OECD average

Skills by age in Finland and OECD (PIAAC 2013)



Dual model in higher education

Higher education

14 universities

- Conduct research and provide education based on research
- Universities interact with society and promote the effectiveness of research results

25 universities of applied sciences

- Education is based on labour market needs
- R&D of UAS aims to support instruction and promote regional development

Steering in higher education

- 4-year agreements between HE institution and Ministry of Education and Culture target results, monitoring and resources
- Government funding ca 64% of university budgets

HE institutions decide on

- Administration
 - Admission
 - Content of study programmes
 - State funding
- 

Finnish teachers are
trusted professionals

Finnish teachers are supportive

Finnish teachers believe in:

- **equity and encouragement**
- **individual support**
- **strengthening the pupils' thinking skills**
- **developing the pupils' self-confidence and tolerance**



Source: From goals to interaction.
Evaluation of pedagogy in Finnish basic education 2008
(National Council for Evaluation in Education in Finland)

Most teachers are required a master's degree

Kindergarten teachers
180 ECTS (3 years)

Class teachers
300 ECTS (5 years)

Subject teachers
300 ECTS (5–6 years)

**Teachers
of vocational
studies:**

**Master's , Bachelor's
+ work experience+
pedagogical studies
of 60 ECTS
(1 year)**

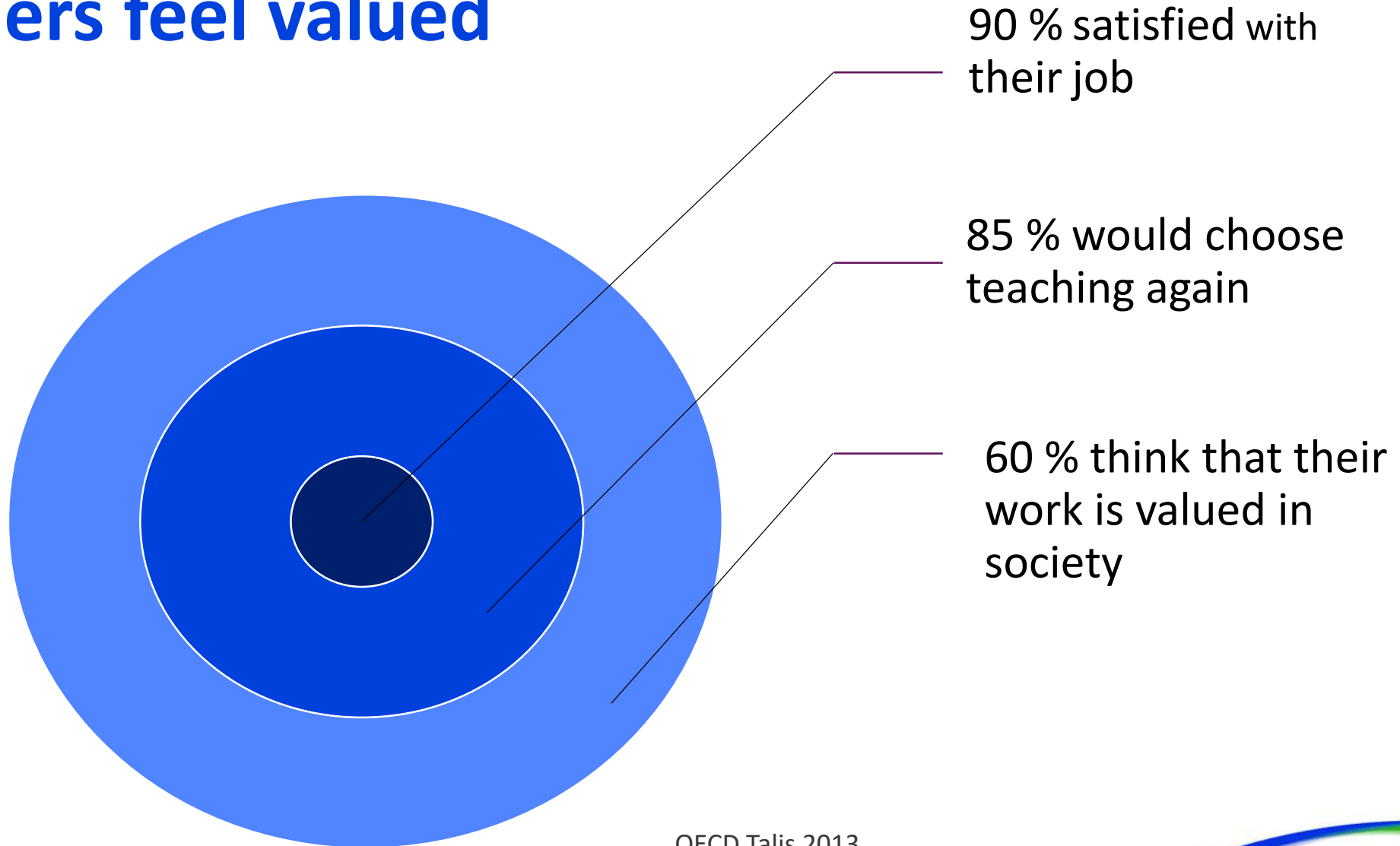
Principals:
teacher education
+ e.g. certificate
in educational
administration

Teacher training institutions can select heavily

Intake into teacher education 2016 (% of those who applied)

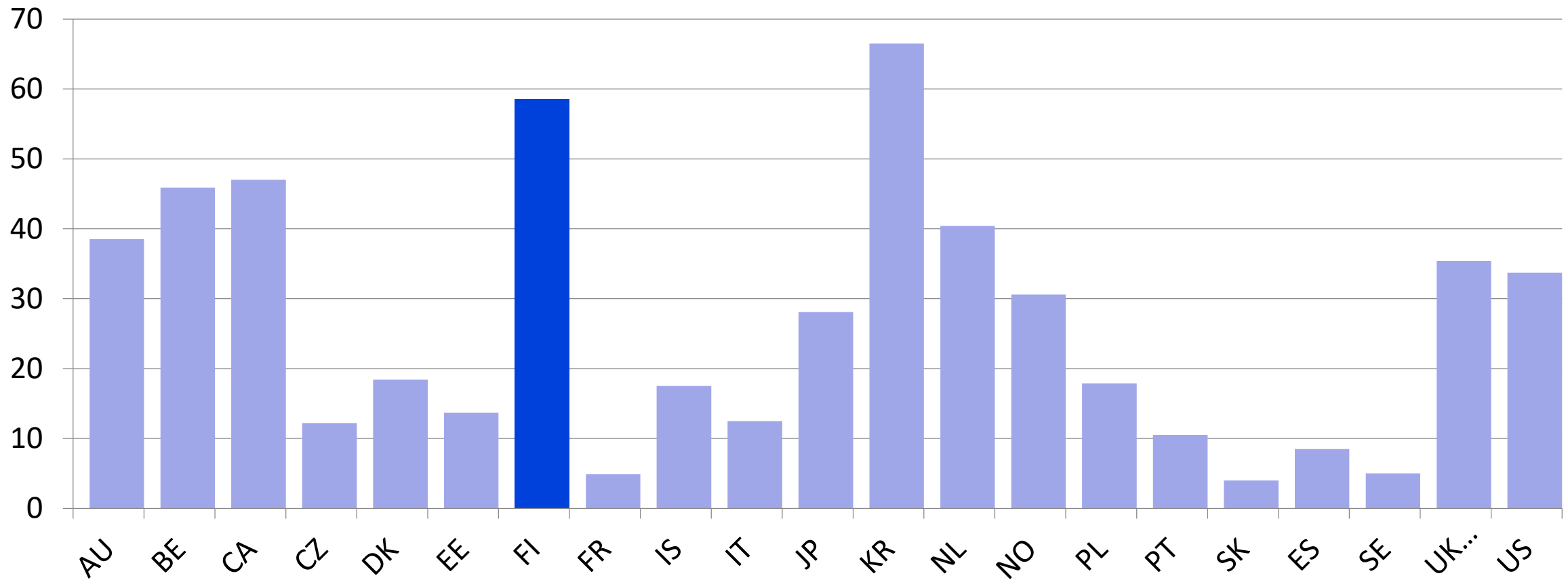
Class teacher education	12 %
Subject teacher education	10 % – 53 %
Vocational teacher education	31 %

Teachers feel valued



OECD Talis 2013

TALIS 2013: I think that the teaching profession is valued in society



OECD Talis 2013
US sample not representative

Teacher and principal salaries in Finland

(permanent contract, average actual gross salaries per month 2016)

- kindergarten teacher 2 600 €
- class teacher, primary education 3 500 €
- subject teacher, general upper secondary 4 500 €
- vocational studies teacher (VET) 3 900 €
- principal, lower secondary education 5 500 €
- principal, general upper secondary 5 900 €

Average salary in the municipal sector in Finland 2016: 3 050 €

Salary is not the reason to become a teacher

Average actual monthly salary in the municipal sector

* lower secondary subject teacher

Source: Statistics Finland



Comparing Finnish education

Finnish education in international comparison

**Instruction
time low**

**Differences
between schools
small**

**Girls outperform
boys**

**Moderate
costs**

**Socio-economic
effect moderate**

**Teachers feel highly
valued**

PISA 2015: differences between schools small



- OECD average 30 %
- Finland 8 %

Variance of performance between schools as a proportion of total performance across OECD countries

What do the high-performing school systems have in common?

- 1 They get the right people to become teachers.
- 2 They develop these people into effective instructors.
- 3 They put in place systems and targeted support to ensure that every child is able to benefit from excellent instruction.

McKinsey&Company 2007:
How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top, p.13