

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE, ECEC

All children under school-age have a *subjective right to early childhood education and care (ECEC)*. The parents of the child decide whether or not their child participates in ECEC. Many children attend ECEC after the parental leave period, when the child is usually 9 or 10 months.

Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish and both language groups have their own institutions

ECEC is part of the municipal basic services that receive statutory government transfers.

Private ECEC centers and family daycare is founded by the municipality for example with service vouchers and the monthly fee for families usually is on the same level as the fees within public service. The municipal official directs and supervises private ECEC regularly.



Participation in ECEC is subject to a fee which depends on family income and the number of children as well as the amount of hours the child attends in ECEC.

Client fees in municipal ECEC cover about 14 percent of the total costs.

The maximum fee charged for ECEC is now EUR 295€.

Daily meals and materials, activities and support for special needs are included in the fee.



if necessary, the ECEC units are open between 06:00–18:00.

Parents digitally book the needed ECEC hours for one month at a time. Families where the guardians work in shifts can the children participate in ECEC also during evenings, on weekends and, **if necessary, also around the clock.**

Education policy is the responsibility of the **Ministry of Education and Culture**. **The Finnish National Agency for Education** is responsible for the implementation of the policy aims.

The National core curriculum for early childhood education and care is a document that guides and obliges those delivering and developing early childhood education and care. **Local** ECEC curriculums and child's **individual** curriculum follow the **national** core curriculum.

Municipalities make the decisions on allocation of funding, local curricula and recruitment of personnel. The municipalities have also the autonomy to delegate the decisionmaking to the Ecec centers. Typically the head of institution recruit the staff and is responsible for practical teaching arrangements as well as the effectiveness and quality of their education.

The core curriculum has several links to the curricula for pre-primary education of six-year-olds as well as basic education.

ECEC is an entity consisting of education, instruction and care with an emphasis on pedagogy

ECEC is not only care, but goal-oriented and systematic activities that support children's development and learning and are evaluated and developed on a regular basis.

In ECEC, **children's previous experiences and their interests and competences are the starting point for learning.** Children are engaged in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the activities according to their abilities.

An individual ECEC plan is drawn up for each child

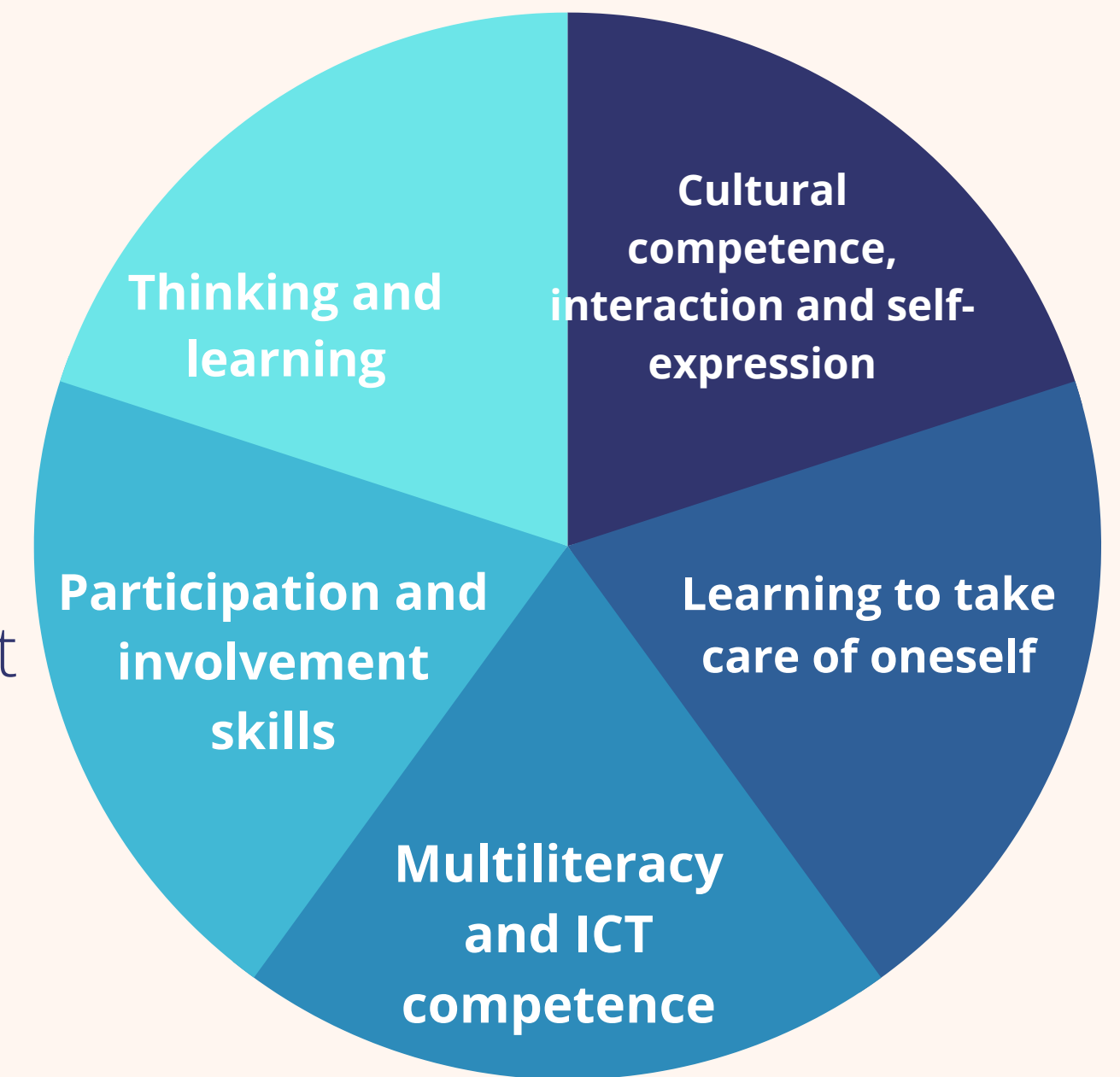
The child's individual plan is an opportunity to make each child's strengths and possible individual needs visible. The child's individual plan is a pedagogical plan for how the child will be taken into account as an individual in ECEC activities. The child's individual plan is evaluated regularly.

The right to play, learn and participate

Integrative pedagogical activities that combine different areas of learning enable broad-based examination of matters and phenomena. Working methods and learning environments should promote children's enthusiasm for exploring, experimenting and practising things. Children also have the right to receive suitable guidance and support for learning.

Play motivates children and brings joy while allowing them to learn new skills and create meanings about themselves and the surrounding world. Children's social relationships are supported and everyone's opportunities to take part in play and shared activities are ensured.

Children are active agents and members of their group. They have thoughts and opinions of their own, which should be listened to and taken into consideration. Children should have the opportunity to have a say in matters related to their everyday life and to be understood and accepted as they are.



ECEC builds transversal competences

Transversal competence is an entity consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will.

Competence also means an ability to apply knowledge and skills and act in a given situation.

Transversal competences include multiliteracy, taking care of oneself, and other everyday skills. They also include cultural competence and interaction skills, which are needed in the increasingly diverse world.

Staff

The basic staff structure in the children's groups

- 1 teacher in early childhood education
- 2 child care workers

Each group of children also receives regular support by a consulting special teacher and if necessary the group can be resourceed with

- a full time special teacher in early childhood education
- assistant or child care worker

A head of the ECEC center leads and is responsible for the early childhood education, staff and finances.

Each unit also has a deputy head.

Each ECEC area is led by the head of the area: leads the municipal activities and supervisors and monitors the privately produced early childhood education.



Childgroups

New children are accepted to ECEC all year round. In ECEC the staff dimension is a standard regulated by law.

A group of three adults allows 21 places in the children's group, two adults allow 14 places.

Children under three years old are occupy 1.75 places, nevertheless can a childs special need support mean that one child occupies several places.

Thereafter, **the group size is usually 12 for age 1-3 years and 21 for children 3-6 years.** In some **groups where several special needs children are integrated** the **amount of children is 14**(age 3-6 years), and the staff consist of special teacher, teacher and two child care workers.



Preprimary education

refers to planned education and care provided the year before the start of compulsory education and starts in august the year the child turns six years.

Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Basic Education Act to organize preprimary education for all their residents.

Preprimary education is directly related to early childhood education and care as well as primary education.

Children with special educational needs have the right to enter preprimary education the calendar year they turn five.

The Basic Education Act includes provisions on preprimary education. Preprimary education normally lasts for one year and it consists of a minimum of 700 hours a year.

The Finnish National Agency for Education prepares and approves the **National Core Curriculum for Preprimary Education**, which sets out the objectives for preprimary education, steers the planning of the content education.



The National Center for Educational Evaluation (NCU) is responsible for and controls the educational evaluation using various questionnaires in order to evaluate the educational functions both at municipality and unit level. **Locally, we evaluate** the educational activities in the **municipality, within the area, within the unit, in groups and also at the individual level**. Children are not evaluated, **focus is on the adults, their methods and ways of interacting with the children**. Criteria for evaluation is based on indicators found in the core curriculum for Early Childhood Education.

Since 2017 Turku has used a **scientific observation tool "Progressive Feedback"** to evaluate educational activities in ECEC. Our focus is to receive information about how children's daily life is affected by educational decisions:

- The data will tell about children, teachers and the learning environment
How the pedagogical solutions are connected to the actions of children.

More information about Finnish ECEC

<https://www.oph.fi/en/education-system/early-childhood-education-and-care-finland>

<https://www.educationfinland.fi/what-we-offer/early-childhood-education-and-care>

<https://miniedu.fi/en/early-childhood-education-and-care>

"Progressive Feedback" Evaluation method <https://www.reunamoedu.fi/en/>

More information about ECEC in Turku <https://www.turku.fi/en/daycare-and-education/day-care-and-early-childhood-education>

Platform for Swedish-language early childhood education in Turku (Swedish only) <https://peda.net/turku/barnen>

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Open for Erasmus+, Nordplus and other forms of international cooperation.

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Curriculum for early childhood education and pre-primary education leading operation

Early childhood education is based on the national core curriculum for early childhood education and pre-primary education and local curricula.

Early childhood education and pre-primary education in Turku follow the city's plan and the group-specific plan that entail:

- collaboration with families
- supporting participation
- taking into consideration the child's subjects of interest
- matters related to the learning environment of a child group

Key elements in early childhood education

- seeing the child as they are, as bringing joy
- the child being heard
- encouraging interaction
- the child's freedom to study and succeed
- wellbeing (sufficient nutrition, rest and exercise)

Areas of learning:

- the rich world of languages
- many forms of expression
- me and our community
- I study and function in my environment
- I grow, move and develop

www.turku.fi/en/daycare

The City of Turku curriculum for early childhood education

