



INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (IECE) COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE – DENMARK

1. ACCESS, PROCEDURES AND PARTICIPATION

Key principles

1.1 Provision that is available and affordable to all families and their children.

1.2 Provision that encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.

| Guiding questions | Country response |
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| <p><i>Legislation and policy at national level</i></p> <p>1. Is there a national policy and legislation that gives the right to all children, without exception, from at least 3 years onwards, to attend mainstream Early Childhood Education (ECE)?</p> <p>2. Is there support available to enable every child to attend ECE?</p> <p>3. Is there a period of compulsory ECE before school starts?</p> <p>4. Are arrangements in place for transition from home to ECE and from ECE to primary education for all children?</p> <p>5. Is inclusion stated as a goal of ECE provision?</p> | <p>The Danish ECE sector falls under the Day-Care Facilities Act (introduced in 2007).</p> <p>All children of parents who are legally resident in Denmark are entitled to a place in ECE from when the child is 26 weeks old until starting school.</p> <p>To ensure all children have access to an ECE facility, parents with an income below a certain limit may receive an extra subsidy from the local authority to reduce their own payment, in addition to the general subsidy for a place in an ECE facility of a minimum 25% of the gross operating costs. Parents can be granted a subsidy of 100% of their payment, thereby eliminating parental payment.</p> <p>In Denmark, there are ten years of compulsory education. Compulsory education starts in the August of the calendar year when the child turns six. The first year of compulsory school consists of kindergarten class. It is possible to let children start one year later than compulsory education starts (kindergarten class). The local authority must approve the postponement of the school start date – either initiated by the parents or by the municipality (with parental consent). There are no centrally determined guidelines for such an assessment of school readiness, and if school start is postponed it is due to an individual, local, specific and contextual assessment of the child’s socio-emotional competences.</p> <p>The Day-Care Facilities Act outlines good transitioning as</p> |



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| <p>Is there a policy making ECE accessible to all children?</p> <p>6. Is there a policy that obliges mainstream publicly funded ECE to make adaptations so that all children can attend and participate? Please describe</p> | <p>one of the aims of ECE facilities. It can be referred to as a framework legislation, as it leaves decisions on a service level to the 98 municipalities. The municipalities are therefore responsible for facilitating the children’s transitions from ECE to primary school and for formalising the co-operation between the local ECE facilities and schools.</p> <p>The municipalities have different traditions, procedures and methods for facilitating the children’s transition from ECE to primary school. School starts every year in August, but in some municipalities children start in an after-school facility during the spring, before starting kindergarten class in August. There are many local traditions, but none are centralised.</p> <p>The local council ensures that children requiring support to thrive and develop in day-care are offered relevant support in the facility.</p> |
| <p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. What percentage of children attend mainstream ECE provision at ages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years • 4 years • 5 years (if not primary) • 6 years (if not primary)? <p>2. What are the main factors preventing some children from accessing mainstream ECE?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 89% of all 0–2-year olds are enrolled in ECE (2014). – 98% of all 3–5-year olds are enrolled in ECE (2014). <p>Both mainstream and special day-care facilities can admit children with intellectual or physical disabilities, as long as the day-care has the capacity and is adapted to their needs. The majority of children are in mainstream day-care.</p> <p>Day-care, after-school and club facilities will be established for children and young people under the age of 18, who due to substantially and permanently diminished physical or intellectual capacity require special support, treatment, etc. that cannot be covered using the facilities under the Day-Care Facilities Act, in pursuance of the provisions of the Social Services Act.</p> |



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| <p>3. Are there children who attend special ECE settings? Please provide data if available.</p> <p>4. Describe arrangements for inter-service collaboration to enable children's attendance and participation?</p> <p>5. What proportion of children is formally identified as having additional needs at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years • 4 years • 5 years • 6 years | <p>Enrolled in special day-care and club facilities (2014) (Statistics Denmark)</p> | | |
| | Age | Number of children enrolled | Coverage |
| | 0–2 | 152 | 0.1% |
| | 3–5 | 734 | 0.4% |
| | <p>The coverage ratio is calculated as the number of children enrolled in a given age group relative to the total number of children in the age group.</p> | | |
| <p>The staff in ECE identify the most common opportunity to work with other professionals on the inclusion of children with special needs is with PPR (Pedagogical Psychological Counselling, '<i>Pædagogisk Psykologisk Rådgivning</i>') or health care professionals (The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2014).</p> <p>Among other functions, PPR employ a body of language consultants and psychologists that are often included in supporting and assessing the child's development before the child starts school.</p> <p>The Ministry does not have the exact numbers of children with special needs in different age groups.</p> | | | |



2. WORKFORCE

Key principles

2.1. Well-qualified staff whose initial and continuing training enables them to fulfil their professional role.

2.2. Supportive working conditions including professional leadership that creates opportunities for observation, reflection, planning, teamwork and co-operation with parents.

| Guiding questions | Country response |
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| <p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. What level of qualification is required to work in ECE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>2. What regulation is there for staff-child ratios in ECE?</p> <p>3. What provision is there for additional staffing to support children with diverse and additional needs?</p> <p>4. Does the initial training of staff include understanding and supporting children with diverse and additional needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>5. Does initial training include preparation for working in partnership with families:</p> | <p>No national requirements exist for the educational level of staff, except for staff conducting the language assessment. The municipalities are responsible for the on-going training of staff in their ECE facilities, but there are no specific requirements from the state.</p> <p>The state is responsible for the bachelor’s degree programmes in pedagogy, which qualify students to work in schools and ECE as pedagogues. The Ministry of Higher Education reformed the pedagogy education in 2015.</p> <p>The state is also responsible for vocational training (pedagogical assistant education). The vocational training programme was implemented in 2007 and is aimed at pedagogical staff with no prior education, especially staff in home-based care. The share of staff with this vocational training is still relatively low, as the training programme is less than ten years old.</p> <p>The manager in charge of education in a kindergarten class will typically be an educated pedagogue, thereby having the same educational background as ECE staff. Furthermore, teachers can perform delimited teaching assignments in kindergarten classes.</p> <p>There are no regulated staff-child ratios in ECE. In kindergarten classes, the maximum number of children per group is 28 (this is also the maximum number of children per teacher).</p> <p>The local council is obliged to offer support in ECE facilities for children who are considered to have a need for it. The local offer of support is usually provided by a specialist</p> |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>6. Is there a policy for in-service training? Does it cover inclusive education skills?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? | <p>pedagogue (<i>støttepædagog</i>), but can also be carried out in other ways.</p> <p>The learning outcomes for students of the bachelor's degree programmes in pedagogy require students to acquire knowledge about children with special needs, children in vulnerable positions, social and special pedagogical interventions and inclusive practice. Approaches to the involvement of and co-operation with parents are also a part of the training.</p> |
| <p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. What proportion of staff has the required qualification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers? • for other staff? <p>2. Please describe any proposed changes to the required qualifications.</p> <p>3. Describe the role of leaders of ECE settings in ensuring inclusive practice?</p> <p>4. Provide any data on staff–child ratio.</p> <p>5. Please describe the range of specialist support that is available and how it is organised?</p> <p>6. How do regular and support staff collaborate in IECE</p> | <p>Local self-government in Denmark means that the 98 municipalities handle many tasks locally, including the organisation of ECE and primary education. Denmark values and acknowledges the strong tradition of local individuality and self-government in the 98 Danish municipalities. This is reflected in the local freedom in organising and planning ECE.</p> <p>For questions 5–7 see section 2: Workforce.</p> |



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| settings? 7. Describe the role of support assistants in the ECE setting? | |



3. CURRICULUM

Key principles

3.1. A curriculum based on pedagogic goals, values and approaches that enable children to reach their full potential in a holistic way.

3.2. A curriculum that requires staff to collaborate with children, colleagues and parents and to reflect on their own practice.

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| <p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. Is there a national ECE curriculum for <i>all</i> children?</p> <p>2. Does it include skills and competences to be achieved by children?</p> <p>3. Describe how the curriculum facilitates inclusion?</p> <p>4. Is the use of new technologies included in the curriculum?</p> <p>5. Is the curriculum adaptable to meet the needs of all children?</p> <p>6. How are parents involved in the adaptation of the curriculum to individual children?</p> <p>7. Is there awareness of the impact of labelling on children's participation</p> | <p>The legislation supports the development of all children’s cognitive and non-cognitive skills through the pedagogical curriculum, which obliges municipalities and ECE facilities to work within these six objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Comprehensive personal development; – Social competencies; – Language development; – Body and motion; – Nature and natural phenomena; – Cultural values and artistic expression. <p>The curricula are developed and assessed at municipal and local level in ECE. The ECE facilities themselves decide through which learning and development goals, methods and activities they accomplish the six objectives.</p> <p>The pedagogical curriculum specifies relevant pedagogic approaches, activities and any objectives set and initiated in respect of children with special needs.</p> <p>The individual curriculum for each ECE facility is approved and evaluated at least every other year by the local authorities. The manager of the ECE facility includes the parent board in the preparation, evaluation and follow-up of the pedagogical curriculum.</p> <p>The Day-Care Facilities Act states that the ECE facility will co-operate with parents to provide care for the children and support the comprehensive development and self-esteem of the individual child and, in co-operation with</p> |



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| | <p>parents, ECE facilities will ensure a good transition to school by developing and supporting basic competencies and the desire to learn.</p> <p>Children’s participation and learning are not monitored on a national level in Denmark (outcome measures).</p> |
| <p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there assessment of the learning and development of children from age 3 years? 2. What arrangements are there for the screening of children’s functioning? 3. Is children's engagement and participation in ECE activities monitored? 4. How do ECE settings reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of all children? 5. How do staff adapt (prepare and present) the curriculum and the learning activities to make them accessible to all children? 6. How are parents involved in this process? 7. How are children themselves involved in | <p>The local authorities are responsible for performing a language assessment for children aged three, if linguistic, behavioural or other issues indicate that the child may need language stimulation. The municipality is furthermore obliged to perform a language assessment of all children aged three who are not enrolled in ECE.</p> <p>The municipality has to provide language stimulation if the assessment indicates that the child needs it. The stimulation takes the form of either a 15-hour or 30-hour ECE provision for bilingual children. The purpose is, for example, to help bilingual children’s language development and ensure that all children have sufficient language skills to develop and learn in ECE and school.</p> <p>The municipalities decide which (if any) other screening and assessments they will use in ECE.</p> <p>The way in which working with the children’s environment becomes an integrated part of the pedagogical work must be included in the pedagogical curriculum. The environment must be assessed from the children’s perspective. The children’s experiences with the environment must be included, taking into consideration the children’s age and maturity, just as it is natural to include children in working with the pedagogical curriculum and its evaluation.</p> <p>Parents can be involved in the ECE through parent boards, parent meetings in the ECE centre, etc. Parent boards are mandatory for most types of ECE provision, and the majority of ECE facilities in Denmark have a parent board. The parent board is a way for parents to be involved and influence their child’s ECE.</p> |



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| <p>this process?</p> <p>8. How is ICT used to overcome barriers to participation and learning?</p> <p>9. What provisions are there for meeting children's additional needs?</p> <p>10. How is the environment adapted to the needs of all children?</p> | |



4. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Key principles

4.1. Monitoring and evaluating produces information at the relevant local, regional and/or national level to support continuing improvements in the quality of policy and practice.

4.2. Monitoring and evaluation which is in the best interest of the child.

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| <p>Legislation and policy</p> <p>1. What standards are in place for ensuring the quality of ECE at national level?</p> <p>2. Describe the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of ECE provision?</p> <p>3. How is the participation of all children reflected in the national quality standards for ECE?</p> <p>4. How does national policy identify and address inequalities in participation in ECE?</p> <p>5. How does research inform policy and practice in ECE?</p> | <p>As mentioned in part 3 – Curriculum, curricula are developed and assessed at municipal and local level in ECE and the local authorities are responsible for performing language assessments.</p> <p>The manager of the ECE facility is responsible for ensuring that the pedagogical curriculum is evaluated at least every two years. In this respect, the manager is responsible for documenting whether the pedagogic approaches and activities chosen and the children’s environment (children in ECE facilities must have a physical, mental and aesthetic environment that promotes their welfare, health, development and learning) lead to the achievement of the outlined objectives. The manager specifies how the ECE facility intends to follow-up on the results.</p> <p>National guidelines for municipalities and ECE facilities on how to work with quality information exist, but each municipality decides both the content and organisation of the work with quality information and standards. The local council supervises the activities of the ECE facilities and the manner in which tasks are performed, including ensuring that the established objectives and framework are observed. The local council publishes the supervision framework.</p> <p>In Denmark, there is central evaluation and an advisory function for ECE facilities under the Danish Evaluation Institute (<i>Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut</i>). The institute is in charge of systematic collection, analysis and communication of knowledge and evaluation of the ECE facility area. ECE facilities and local authorities may seek</p> |



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| | <p>inspiration and guidance on evaluation and quality development from the institute.</p> <p>As a part of promoting common objectives in ECE, the Ministry launched a dynamic knowledge portal on EMU (the Danish learning portal). On EMU, teachers can find inspiration for examples and materials to work with learning goals across all subjects in school. The knowledge portal also contains guiding curriculum plans and teaching guides for all subjects and topics as well as transversal topics.</p> <p>ECE facilities may seek advice regarding the child environment from the Danish Centre of Educational Environment (<i>Dansk Center for Undervisningsmiljø</i>).</p> |
| <p><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p>1. How do staff monitor and evaluate the participation and learning of all children?</p> <p>2. How are parents involved in this process?</p> <p>3. How are children themselves involved in this process?</p> | <p>See previous answers</p> |



5. GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Key principles

5.1. Stakeholders in the ECE system have a clear and shared understanding of their role and responsibilities, and know that they are expected to collaborate with partner organisations.

5.2. Legislation, regulation and/or funding supports progress towards a universal legal entitlement to publicly subsidised or funded ECE, and progress is regularly reported to all stakeholders.

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| <p><i>Legislation and policy</i></p> <p>1. Under which ministry(ies) / department(s) are ECE provisions regulated and funded?</p> <p>2. How is intersectorial (health, social and education) collaboration promoted among all stakeholders in ECE?</p> <p>3. How is free or affordable provision guaranteed to all children age 3 years and over?</p> <p>4. What additional economic measures are available for children with additional needs and their families to access mainstream ECE?</p> <p>5. How is additional funding allocated?</p> | <p>ECE provisions are regulated under the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality.</p> <p>The local council offers parents guaranteed day-care availability in ECE facilities. Guaranteed day-care availability implies that the local council will offer places in an age-appropriate ECE facility to all children older than 26 weeks until they reach school age.</p> <p>The council of the local municipality grants parents with legal residency in Denmark a subsidy per child in an ECE facility. Subsidies and own payments are determined on the basis of the budgets for the ECE facilities. Subsidies to parents with children in public, independent, private and outsourced ECE centres constitute at least 75%, and the parents' own payment cannot exceed 25% of the budgeted gross operating costs.</p> <p>As stated above: To ensure all children access to an ECE facility, parents with an income below a certain limit may, in addition to the general subsidy for a place in a ECE facility, receive an extra subsidy from the local authority to reduce their own payment. Parents can be granted a subsidy of up to 100% of their payment.</p> |



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| <p data-bbox="150 320 464 398"><i>Practice at national level</i></p> <p data-bbox="150 427 491 600">1. How far does the standard of ECE provision vary across regions and localities?</p> <p data-bbox="150 629 499 887">2. How effective is collaboration between the ECE and health, social and other relevant agencies for children and families?</p> <p data-bbox="150 916 499 1128">3. What proportion of children (3 years to primary education) make use of additional funding?</p> <p data-bbox="150 1158 432 1330">4. How well does additional funding support inclusive education?</p> | – |