

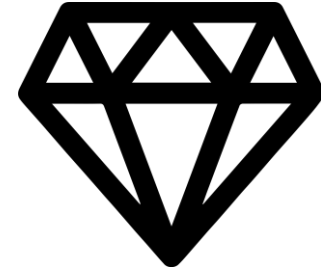
The Finnish Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system in a nutshell

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Department of Teacher Education

ABLE Workshop February 22th in Tokio

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> utu.fi



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of Turku is
among the top
1% in the world**

QS World University Rankings 2018

100

**YEARS IN
2020**

Founded in 1920 by
the initiative of the
Finnish people with
the support of 22,040
donors.

1st


**FINNISH-
LANGUAGE
UNIVERSITY**

“From a free people
to free science”



**ACADEMIC
HERITAGE IN
TURKU SINCE 1640**

The first university in
Finland, the Royal
Academy of Turku,
operated in the city
1640–1828.

An aerial photograph of a city in winter, with snow covering the ground and rooftops. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the city. The city is densely packed with buildings, and there are many trees without leaves. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Campuses in the cities of Turku, Rauma and Pori

The University has premises and research stations all over Finland – from the Finnish Archipelago Sea to Kevo at Utsjoki, Lapland.



1

**ORGANISATION
OF ECEC**

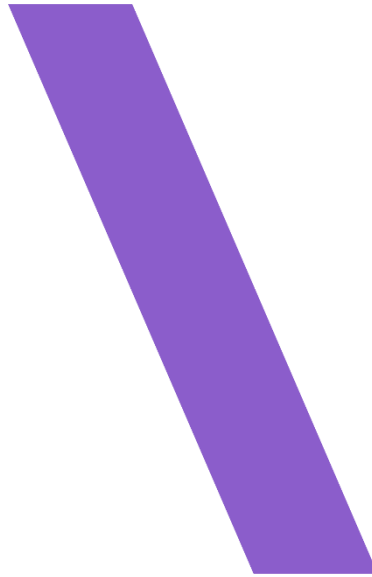
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**TEACHING AND
LEARNING IN ECEC**

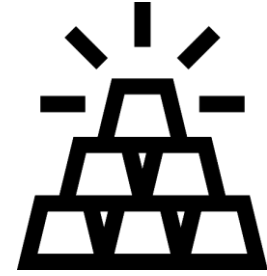
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**ASSESSMENT
IN ECEC**

ORGANISATION OF ECEC

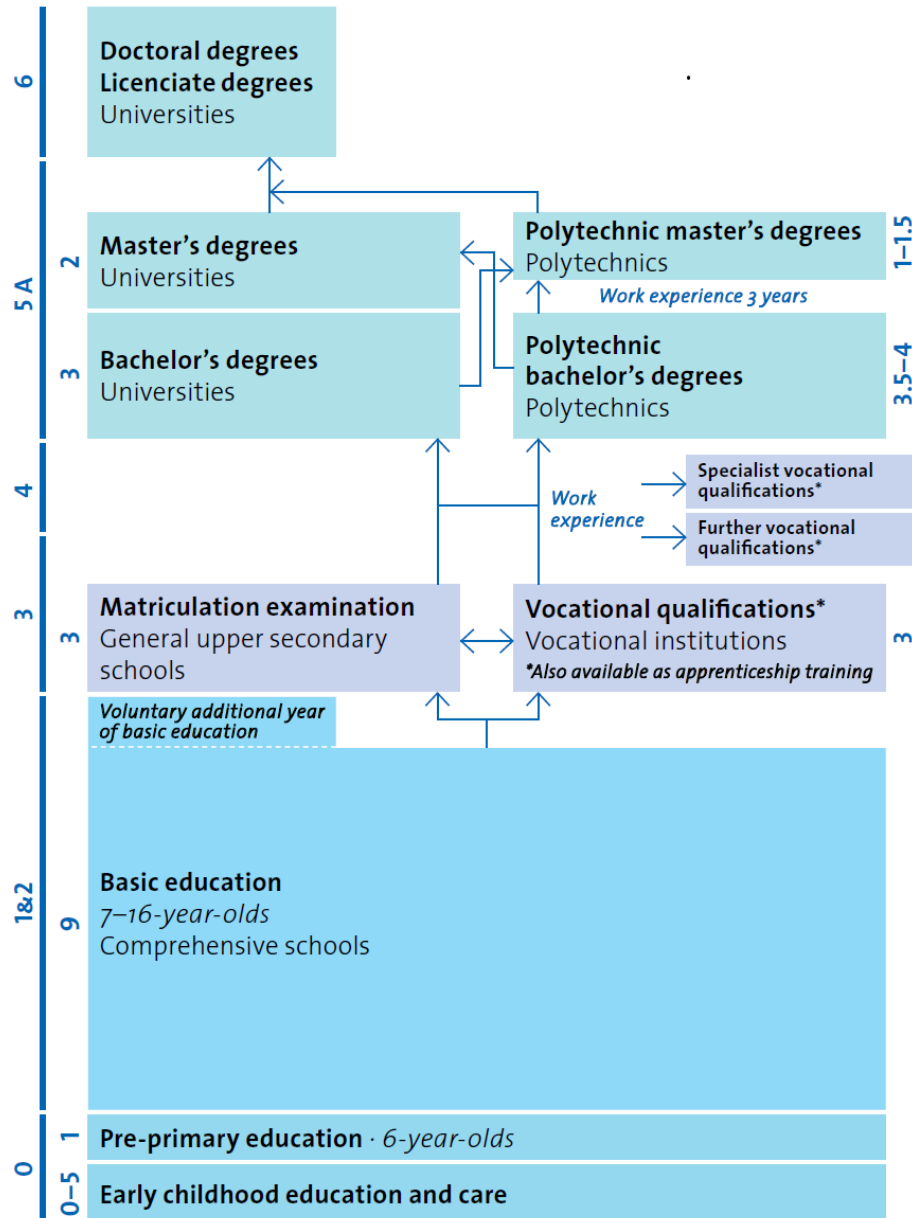


The education administration in Finland



- ECEC is under the mandate of the [Ministry of Education and Culture](#)
- A new legislation governing ECEC came into force September 1st 2018
- The national core curriculum for ECEC 2018 (and for pre-primary education 2014) informed by the ECEC Act (2018) and determined by the [Finnish National Agency for Education](#)
 - steers the provision, systematic evaluation, development, and implementation of high-quality and equal ECEC in the entire country.
 - provide a common basis and instructions for preparing and developing [the local curriculum for ECEC](#) and [the child's ECEC plan](#).
 - guides and obliges municipalities responsible for arranging ECEC services.

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND



- The ECEC system consists of municipal and private services provided in day-care centres and in family day-care and given in Finnish, Swedish or Sámi languages. Pre-primary education is only provided in day-care centres.
- Particularly private ones may follow different pedagogies (e.g. Montessori or Steiner), be carried out in a foreign language or have emphasis on e.g. physical education or nature.

6

UNDERLYING VALUES OF THE NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM FOR ECEC



- The intrinsic value of childhood
- Growth as a human being
- The rights of the child
- Equity, equality, and diversity
- Diversity of families
- Healthy and sustainable way of living



Equality

doesn't mean

Equity

Well-educated and competent staff equals high-quality ECEC*

- In day-care centres, multiprofessional teams are responsible for working with a group of children (12 or 21)
 - The ratio is 4:1 for children under three years and 7:1 for children aged three or more (a recent amendment in decree August 2020)
- The qualification of staff and leaders is regulated by the ECEC Act (2018)
 - Teacher (BA of education, university), overall responsibility of pedagogy
 - Socionom (BA of social science, university of applied sciences)
 - Childcarer (trade provided by vocational institutes)
- By year 2030, 2 out of 3 ECEC staff members must have a third-level qualification

* Vlasov et al. (2019). Guidelines and recommendations for evaluating the quality of early childhood education and care. Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, Publications 5.

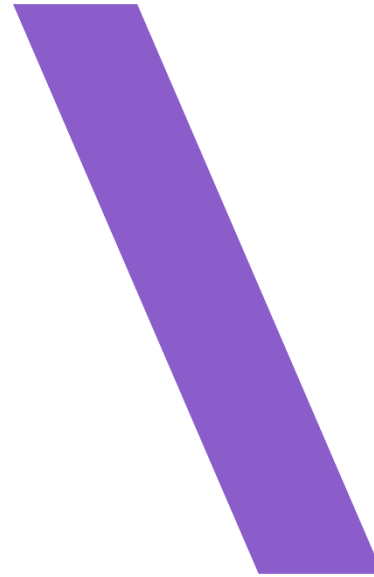
The quality of adult-child interactions equals high-quality ECEC*

- High process quality is described by balanced and sensitive interaction that takes children's initiatives and interests into account on three dimensions
 - high-standard emotional support
 - organisation of the group's activities and regulation of behavior, and
 - high-standard instructional support for a child's development and learning
- Activities and groups are usually organised by children's age (under 3 years, 3 to 6 years, and preprimary education)
- Other grouping criteria: sibling groups, children with special needs integrated

* Vlasov et al. (2019). Guidelines and recommendations for evaluating the quality of early childhood education and care. Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, Publications 5.

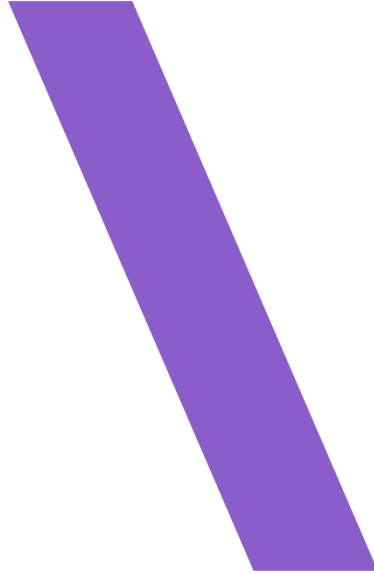
Pedagogical emphasis

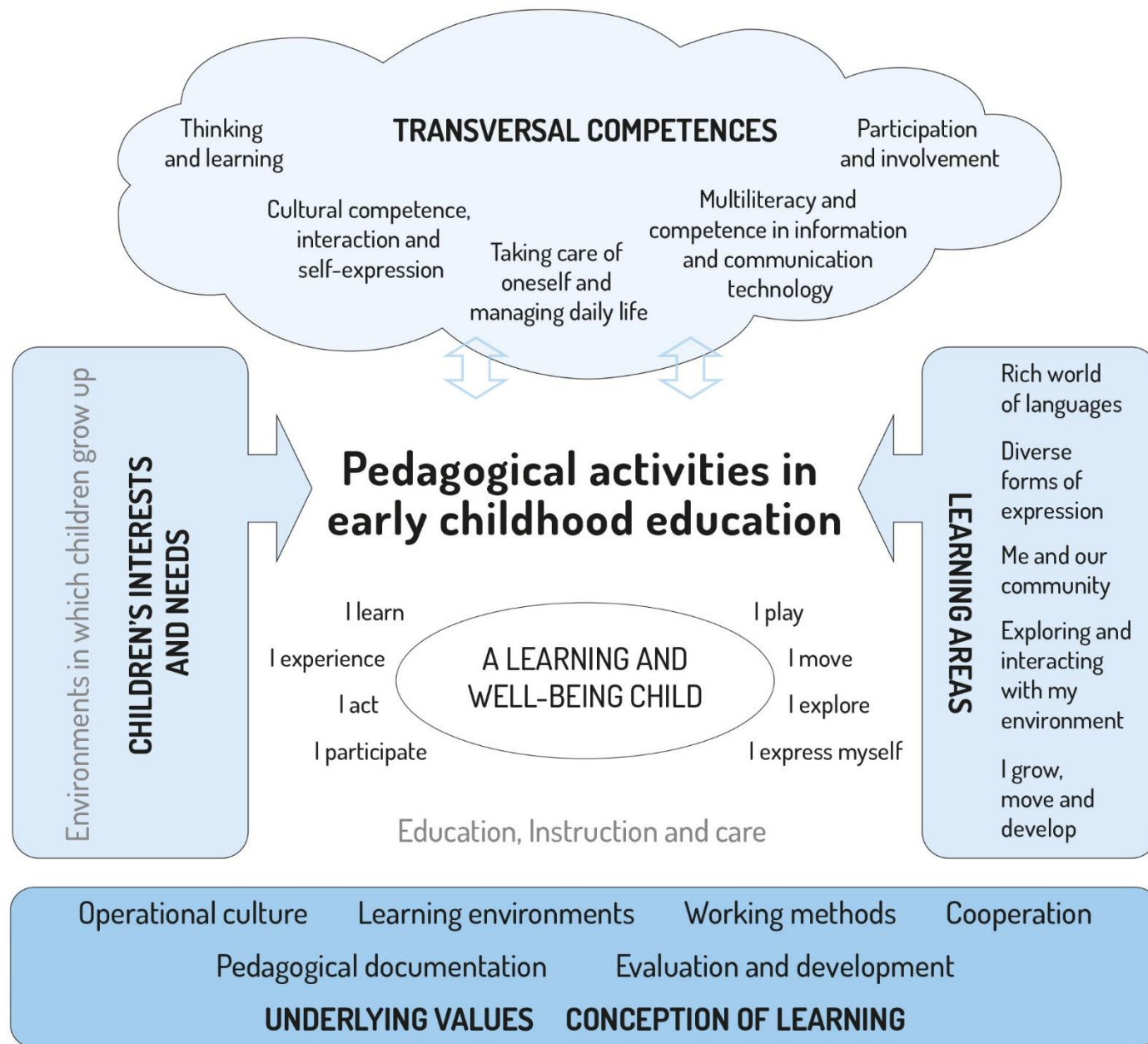
The pedagogy of the National core curriculum for ECEC is based on the underlying values and the conception of child, childhood, and learning.



- Pedagogy refers to systematic and goal-oriented activities based on multidisciplinary knowledge that are professionally managed and implemented by professional staff aiming to support children's well-being and learning.
- ECEC is realised in interaction and cooperation between the staff, children and the environment, in which education, instruction and care form a coherent entity (EduCare).

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN ECEC





The framework for pedagogical activities in ECEC



Finnish National Agency for Education (2018). National core curriculum for early childhood education and care 2018. English translation 2019.

A central goal of ECEC: Transversal competences (TC)

- to strengthen the development of children's TCs
- five interconnected TC areas:
 1. Thinking and learning
 2. Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression
 3. Taking care of oneself and managing daily life
 4. Multiliteracy and competence in ICT
 5. Participation and involvement
- A TC consists of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will.



Pedagogical activities in ECEC

- Five learning areas define the key objectives and contents of pedagogical activities:
 1. Rich world of languages
 2. Diverse forms of expression
 3. Me and our community
 4. Exploring and interacting with my environment
 5. I grow, move and develop
- combined and applied according to the children's interest and competence.



What is a typical day like in a day-care centre?

6.30 Day-care centre opens

8.00 Breakfast

8.30 Pedagogical Session (PS): language, mathematical, social, motor skills by means of play, story telling, music, drama, crafts etc.

10.00 Outdoor: PS and/or play

11.30 Lunch

12.30 Listening to story & nap

14.00 Snack

14.30 PS and/or play

15.30 Outdoor: play

17.00 Day-care centre closes



Teaching methods and learning materials 1/2

- The goals set for the ECEC and the age, needs, prerequisites and interests of children guide the selection of versatile and functional *working methods* that promote the creativity, interaction and participation of children in groups of different sizes and independently.
- The staff is free to choose *working methods* as long as they are in line with the principles defined in the national core curriculum.



Teaching methods and learning materials 2/2

- Play as source of development, learning and well-being is a key *working method*. The ECEC must provide children with opportunities for different kinds of play and games, both supervised and free.
- Children are encouraged to express themselves, ask questions, solve problems together and explore the world with all their senses and their entire bodies.

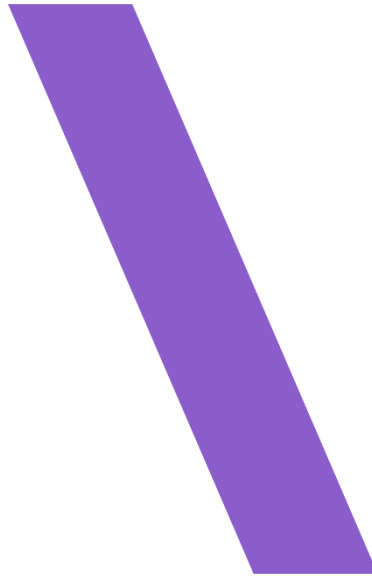




Examples of pedagogical sessions

- Video 1 What is Teddy Bear feeling? (Adult singing and signing)
 - Learning outcomes: identifying and naming emotions, accurate self- and other perception
- Video 2 Toddlers playing a board game (Adult-child ratio 1:4)
 - Learning outcomes: vocabulary and cooperation, self-control and relationship skills
- Video 3 Preschool-aged (3-5 year-olds) children and body percussions to play own name (Adult-child ratio 2:11)
 - Learning outcomes: names of peers and body parts and syllable awareness and cooperation, self-control and relationship skills

ASSESSMENT IN ECEC



Pedagogical documentation in ECEC

- The staff is expected to systematically and consciously observe and document children's development and learning and use their observations in planning the activities and developing the learning environments for the child group.
- There are no performance requirements for the child but the focus is on the overall wellbeing of the child.



Individual ECEC plans for each child

- are part of the continuous pedagogical documentation process.
- are prepared in collaboration with parents and the child's views must be heard and taken into account.
- The plan is founded on the child's knowledge and skills, interests and strengths, as well as needs for support and guidance.
- The objectives defined in the plan are targeted for the pedagogical activities and support measures.
- The implementation of the plan must be assessed and the plan must be revised regularly.

Example of a 3-year-old bilingual child's ECEC plan

Developmental domain	Strengths and difficulties	Learning goals	Educational activities	Collaboration with parents	Follow-up and assessment
Language	Speaks mainly Finnish, Swedish vocabulary small	Improve Swedish vocabulary related to daily activities	Basic vocabulary (nouns and verbs) of dressing and eating situations	Parents support at home	After six months
Communication	Is interested in adults and peers, good eye contact, trouble with joint play	Managing stress, controlling too rough activities	Adults actively support during play, make clear that hugging is better than hurting etc.	Has been discussed with parents who support at home	On a monthly basis

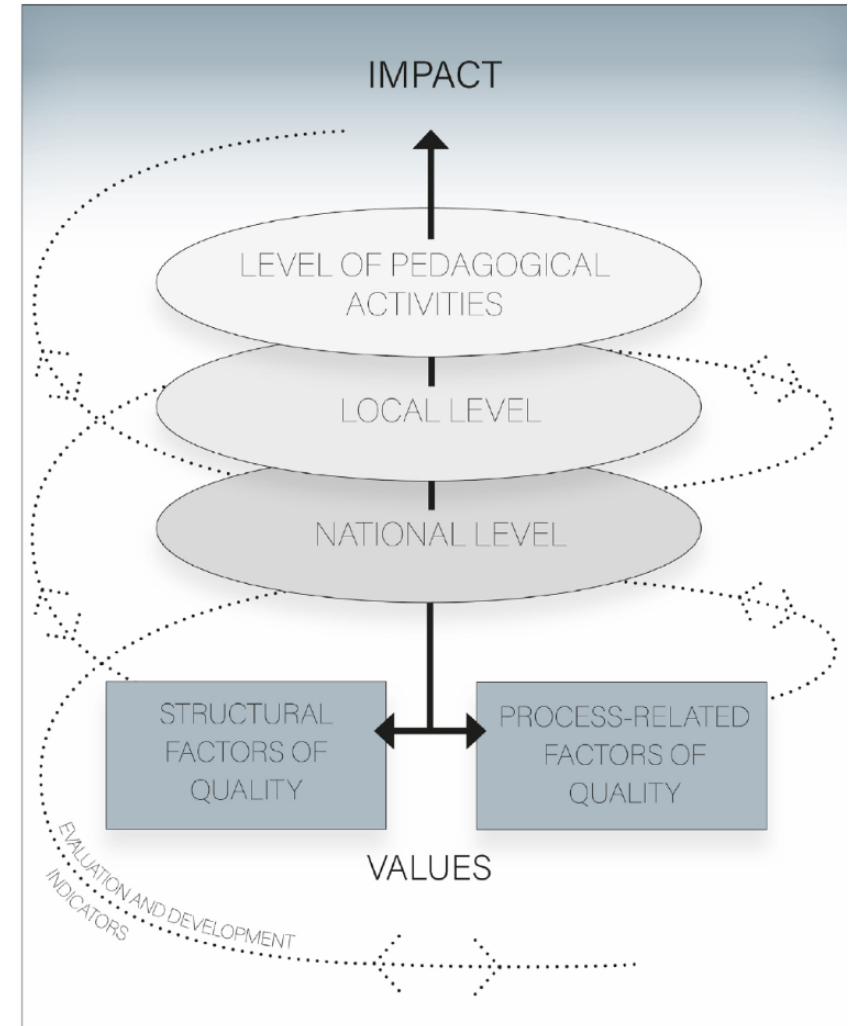
Other developmental domains: Gross and fine motor skills, social and emotional competence etc.

EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM



Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC)

- FINEEC's task is to develop systematic and enhancement-led evaluation of quality in the Finnish ECEC context at national and local levels and at the level of pedagogical activities.
- *Structural quality* is related to the provision of ECEC. They are defined and governed by acts, decrees and other national documents (relatively permanent).
- *Process quality* means the core functions of early childhood pedagogy and the pedagogical operating culture of ECEC centres.



- # ECEC is experienced as safe, and the atmosphere in the groups is positive
- # good pedagogical leadership
- # local ECEC curriculum was formulated in sufficiently concrete terms
- # correctly targeted continuing education for the staff



Strengths of ECEC curriculum implementation

**Survey findings for
ECEC providers to
improve quality**

Shortcomings

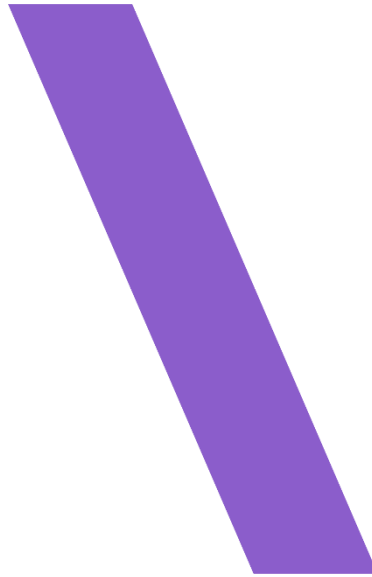
- # in pedagogy focusing on children aged under three
- # in the contents of art education, expression, music, physical activity, literacy skills
- # in leadership practices, the staff's pedagogical competence as well as staff shortages



Shortcomings of ECEC curriculum implementation

**Survey findings for
ECEC providers to
improve quality**

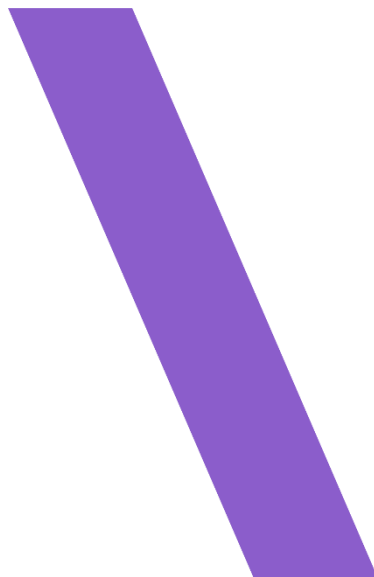
RECENT REFORMS OF FINNISH ECEC



Participation in ECEC

Accessibility: All children under school age have a right to publicly subsidized ECEC. Municipalities have a statutory duty to provide ECEC.

However, Finnish children attend ECEC clearly less than children in other EU member states and the Nordic countries.

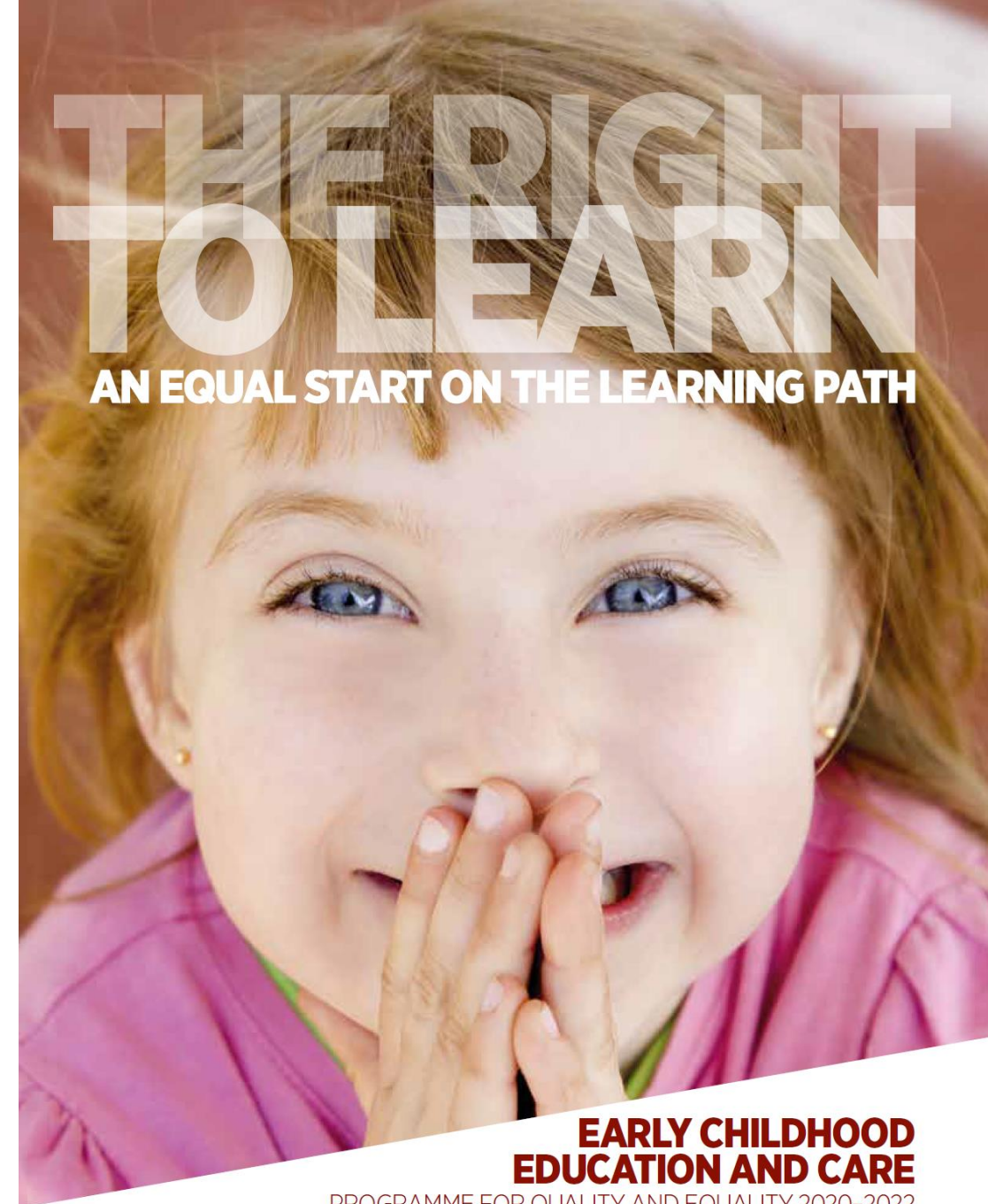


Age cohort	% in 2014
< 1 year	<1%*
1	29%
2	53%
3	68%
4	75%
5	78%
6 years	>99%
* parental leave period	

Statistics of the National
Institute for Health and Welfare

Government launches the Right to learn programme 2020-22

- Aims to reduce differences in learning outcomes connected to childrens' socio-economic background, gender or immigrant background.
- The objective of the programme is to find ways for more children to participate in ECEC.



**EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION AND CARE**

PROGRAMME FOR QUALITY AND EQUALITY 2020-2022

Government launches the Right to learn programme 2020-22

- spans from ECEC to basic education.
- By enhancing pre-primary and early primary education, it will improve the early learning of basic skills and provide better support for such learning.
- comprises projects improving quality and equality.



**COMPREHENSIVE
SCHOOL EDUCATION**
PROGRAMME FOR QUALITY AND EQUALITY 2020-2022

- # a reduction in monthly customer fees (0-290 euros) especially for low-income families
- # access to free of charge pre-primary education for two years instead of one year (voluntary for 5-year-olds, compulsory for all 6-year olds since 2015)
- # a reduction in home care allowance from three to two years



**How to increase
participation
rate in ECEC?**

**A proposal for a
roadmap until 2030**

- # universities have gradually increased the number of BA's degrees
- # a long-term objective: only MA's degrees would qualify for teaching in ECEC
- # a permanent continuing education system would be created for ECEC



How to improve the quality of ECEC?

A proposal for a roadmap until 2030

7

UNIVERSITIES HAVE A
BA'S DEGREE
PROGRAMME IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD TEACHER
EDUCATION



University of Eastern Finland
University of Helsinki
University of Jyväskylä
University of Oulu
University of Tampere
University of Turku
University of Åbo Akademi

RAUMA CAMPUS

The Rauma Campus is home for the Department of Teacher Education and the Training Day-Care Centre which are located on the same court.

Degree Programmes in Early Childhood Teacher Education (BA's and MA's)

> <https://www.utu.fi/en/university/rauma-campus>



**Teacher
seminar
established
1896**



**Multidisciplinary.
International.
Research university.**

Training day-care centre.



1101

STUDENT TEACHERS

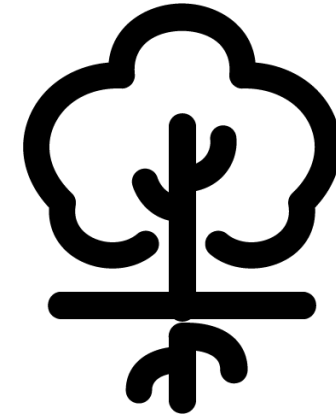
Class teachers **433**

Early childhood
education teachers **346**

Subject teachers for
craft, technology and
design **252**

95

STAFF



**EDUCATIONAL
GARDEN FOR STAFF,
STUDENT TEACHERS
AND CHILDEN**

BA's Degree Programme in Early Childhood Teacher Education: Structure and Content of Curriculum



UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

STRUCTURE OF STUDIES (180 ECTS* CREDITS)

* European Credit Transfer
System
1 ECTS credit ~ 27 hours of
student work



General Studies 12 ECTS

Language Studies 14 ECTS

Basic Studies in Education 25 ECTS

**Intermediate Studies in Education 35
ECTS**

**Professional Studies in Early
Childhood and Pre-Primary Education
60 ECTS**

**Minor Studies and/or Elective Studies
34 ECTS**

**BASIC STUDIES IN
EDUCATION (25
ECTS)**



**Introduction to Educational Science, 4
ECTS**

Sociology of Education, 4 ECTS

**Developmental and Educational
Psychology, 6 ECTS**

Basics in Didactics, 5 ECTS

**Flourishing and Healthy Learning
Communities, 6 ECTS**

**INTERMEDIATE
STUDIES IN
EDUCATION (35
ECTS)**



Practical Training in Early Childhood Education I, 7 ECTS

Practical Training in Early Childhood Education II, 5 ECTS

Learning and Pedagogical Support, 5 ECTS

Research Workshop I, 5 ECTS

Research Workshop II, 5 ECTS

Bachelor's Thesis, 8 ECTS

**PROFESSIONAL
STUDIES (60 ECTS
= one year full-time
studying 1600
hours)**



**Basics of Early Childhood Education
Early Childhood Special Education
Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education
Pedagogy in Pre-primary Education
Thoughts, Emotions and Behaviors:
Development and Pedagogical Support
Language Development, Pedagogical
Interaction and Stories
Environmental Education
Mathematics Education
Co-Operation in Early Childhood Education
Music Education
Physical and Health Education
Visual Arts Education
Craft Education**

Language development, pedagogical interaction and stories: Learning outcomes

- The student
- is aware that the key aim of early childhood (special) education, preprimary and early primary education is to support children's language learning and social interaction skills as a part of transversal competence and development of diverse linguistic and cultural identities (assessment and interaction competence).
- can use observation to assess and identify the typical variations in mono- and multilingual development compared to deviating developmental paths.
- knows basic culture- and language-sensitive pedagogical methods, and knows how to use verbal and non-verbal communication to prevent problems and improve language learning and identity development of children with varying needs for support and varying cultural and language backgrounds.
- understands how development of speech comprehension and production is related to learning to read and write and comprehension of written language.
- is familiar with pedagogical methods for supporting emergent reading and literacy by the means of creative processes, and with children's literature and understands its pedagogical significance.



**JUMP ALONG INTERVENTION
STUDY** aims at renewing preservice
and in-service teacher education in
collaboration across four universities.

Explores new evidence-based ways of
assessing and supporting teachers'
professional development during
various phases of their career in the
context of ECEC.



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 www.osaamisenyhteisloikka.fi



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OF TURKU**

Thank you ! Kiitos!