

A photograph of four young children sitting on a sandy, rocky ground. They are all wearing winter clothing, including jackets and hats. A dead fish is lying on the ground in front of them. The children are looking at the fish with interest. The background shows some sparse vegetation and rocks.

ECEC in Denmark

The Danish quality framework



High quality ECEC makes a difference

- Develops children socially, emotionally and cognitively – a development that lasts a lifetime
- ‘Vaccinates’ against low quality schools
- High quality ECEC has a long term effect on children’s educational results, labor market participation, income and family life
- Especially vulnerable children are benefitted from high quality ECEC



A Strong Tradition

- The first real kindergarten was established in Copenhagen in 1871 (Frøbel) with pedagogical methods that focused on how to stimulate the child's development.
- The universal system we have in Denmark today can be traced back to the **1960'es** caused by a growing need in the labor market for more employees.
- Parents are entitled to one year of parental leave.

89,6 per cent of children between 1 and 2 years are in day-care

98,0 per cent of children between 3 and 5 years are in day-care Almost all children are in full-time day-care



Key objectives in the Act on Day-Care

- Promote children's well-being, development and learning.
- Provide families with flexibility and options.
- Prevent the vicious circle of deprivation.
- Create coherence and continuity between facilities.
- The state has the overall responsibility and each local authority has the responsibility of the structure and organization of the day-care facilities in each municipality.



Types of Day-Care Facilities

- Nurseries for children between 26 weeks and 3 years.
- Family day-care for children between 26 weeks and 6 years.
- Kindergarten for children between 3 and 6 years.
- Age-integrated facilities for children between 26 weeks and 6 years.

Operators:

- Public day-care facilities run by the local authorities.
- Independent day-care facilities run by independent organisations.
- Private day-care facilities run by private businesses.



Responsibility of the Local Authority

- All children have equal access to day-care facilities and all children are guaranteed a day-care place from the age of 26 weeks. The municipalities are punished economically if they do not provide the guaranteed day-care.
- The local authority is responsible for the overall organisation of day-care in the municipality.
- The local authority shall establish and publish overall local authority objectives and framework for day-care in the local authority.
- The local authority shall supervise the activities of the facilities under the Act on Day-Care etc. and the manner in which task are performed.



Flexibility and Options

- Access to request a specific day-care.
- Free choice of either public or private day-care – the subsidies follow the child.
- Access to choose a day-care center placed in another municipality.
- Financial subsidy for minding own children or for arranging a private childminder - as an alternative to a place in a day-care facility.



Opening hours (1)

1. The purpose of the Act on Day Care is (among other things) to
 - (ii) provide families with flexibility and options as regards various types of facilities and subsidies so that, to the extent possible, families can plan family and working life according to their needs and wishes
 - No specific, legislative demands to the local organization of ECEC, including opening hours in ECEC.
 - Opening hours must take the purpose of ECEC into consideration and the opening hours must cover local needs for flexible childcare.
 - *Combination services:*
 - The local council may decide to grant subsidies for private day care to parents in combination with the child having a place in a day-care facility. The aim is to ensure flexibility for parents with odd working hours and continuity for the children.
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Opening hours (2)

- In 2014 the average opening hours were
 - 51 hours and 15 minutes in ECEC centers
 - 48 hours in home based ECEC
- Opening hours are typically from 6.30-17.00 on week days.
- The local council is obligated to offer child care on all week days. If an ECEC center is chooses to close on a week day they must offer alternative child care



Funding and Parents' Payment

- The municipalities spend around 25 billion DKK yearly on ECEC (2015)
- Municipal funding: minimum 75 pct. of the operating costs. Subsidies are given to the specific day-care-facility.
- Operating costs can vary from one municipality to the other depending on the level of service.
- Parents pay a maximum of 25 % of the budgeted gross operating expenditure for day-care services for children from 26 weeks to age six.
- Parents can receive a discount in payment in a number of ways. For instance, families can receive a sibling discount and low-income families can get an aided place subsidy to reduce the parent's payment (between 0-25 % of the operating costs)



Pedagogical Curriculum

- Since 2004, all day-care facilities have been obligated to prepare a written pedagogical curriculum for the group of children aged 0-2 years and group of children aged 3- school-age. This was done in order to support the learning and well-being of all children in day-care facilities and thereby to prepare all children for school start.
- The curriculum shall describe children's learning within 6 themes:
- 1. personal development, 2. social competences, 3. language development, 4. body and motion, 5. knowledge of nature and natural phenomena, 6. cultural expressions and values.
- The manager of the day-care facility is responsible for preparing and publishing the pedagogical curriculum as well as an annually evaluation.
- Evaluations shows an overall positive impact on the pedagogical practice.



Language assessment and language stimulation

- All children aged three in day-care must receive a language assessment, if there are indications that the child may need language stimulation.
- All children aged three who are not attending day-care must receive a language assessment test.
- Parents are obligated to let their children receive language assessment.
- The local council is responsible for ensuring that language stimulation is provided for children who, on the basis of the language assessment, is in need of language supporting activities.
- For children who are not attending day-care language stimulation can be; 1) arranged as needed, 2) 15 hours a week, 3) compulsory 30 hour day-care a week



Thank you for your time

