Early childhood education and care (ECEC) lays the foundation for the future learning of the child. Research shows that high-quality ECEC is an effective way of levelling out differences in learning that stem from a child’s family background. Between 2020 and 2022, Finland will spend EUR 125 million to improve the quality and equality of ECEC.

In 2020, the Finnish Government will launch a programme to improve the quality and equality of ECEC. The programme seeks effective measures to promote children’s learning and wellbeing and to reverse the rise of inequality. It aims to reduce and prevent learning differences arising from children’s socio-economic background, immigrant background or gender, to strengthen and develop learning support, and to improve literacy.

The programme will prepare legislation and promote effective practices and methods that strengthen equality. Calls for project proposals for ECEC providers and other organisations in the sector ensure that the projects are linked to long-term development goals for ECEC.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN EQUALITY TOGETHER

The National Forum for Comprehensive School Education and ECEC brings together experts and stakeholders in the promotion of educational equality.

Towards equality and wellbeing in Finland

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ARE THE BASIS FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

#RIGHTTOLEARN
www.minedu.fi/qualityprogramme

THE FORUM supports the implementation and communication of the programme and promotes the effectiveness of development actions. The Forum combines the expertise and research outcomes of ECEC and comprehensively to focus education.

RESEARCH: The development programme is strongly based on research data. The programme will contribute to producing research data to improve the equality and quality of early childhood education and care.

EFFECTIVE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE QUALITY AND EQUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

TOWARDS EQUALITY AND WELLBEING IN FINLAND

 THE NATIONAL FORUM
FOR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ECEC

THE RIGHT TO LEARN
AN EQUAL START ON THE LEARNING PATH

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

PROGRAMME FOR QUALITY AND EQUALITY 2020–2022
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Towards equality and wellbeing in Finland.
WE WILL PROMOTE LEARNING SUPPORT

The achievement of learning support is at its greatest in a child’s early years and is therefore important to invest in early learning support. We will develop a model of support for ECEC to harmonise the support for learning between pre-primary and compulsory education. In addition, we will identify best practices and development needs for learning support and inclusive ECEC. Inclusion and support for learning will be developed in joint working groups with pre-primary and compulsory education. We will endeavour to prevent bullying by means of an action programme and a development and research project.

WE WILL CREATE EQUAL CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING PATHS

High-quality ECEC provides a strong foundation for the future learning of the child. When the basics of ECEC are in place, the child will have a good start for their learning paths regardless of their social or ethnic background, residential area or gender.

In Finland, the ECEC participation rate is lagging behind the Nordic average. We will seek to raise the participation rate by increasing cooperation between administrative branches and by furthering service coordination in ECEC. One of the means by which we intend to achieve this is a multi-professional, evidence-based and multi-annual intervention project for maternity and child health clinics aimed at increasing the participation rates in ECEC.

WE WILL CREATE A MORE FLEXIBLE START FOR LEARNING

We will allocate the learning of basic skills during the early years by reconceptualising pre-primary education and the first two years of primary school into a more coherent system. We will also pilot two-year pre-primary education and expand the trial-lining of free ECEC for five-year-olds.

WE WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ECEC

We will reinforce the quality of ECEC by establishing dedicated quality criteria for ECEC with a digital quality assessment system. We will examine the current state of pedagogy for five-year-olds. A project will also be prepared to support the local management of ECEC plans, the monitoring of their implementation, and the evaluation and development of pedagogy.

WE WILL CREATE THE RIGHT CONDITIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE QUALITY AND EQUALITY OF ECEC

In order to develop and ensure the quality and equality of ECEC, we will establish dedicated quality criteria for ECEC with a digital quality assessment system. A professional development programme for management and its piloting will be implemented.

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WE WILL CREATE A MORE FLEXIBLE AND PERSONALISED PATH FROM PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION TO COMPULSORY EDUCATION

We will allocate the learning of basic skills during the early years by reconceptualising pre-primary education and the first two years of primary school into a more coherent system. We will also pilot two-year pre-primary education and expand the trial-lining of free ECEC for five-year-olds.

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WE WILL CREATE THE RIGHT CONDITIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE QUALITY AND EQUALITY OF ECEC

In order to develop and ensure the quality and equality of ECEC, we will establish dedicated quality criteria for ECEC with a digital quality assessment system. A professional development programme for management and its piloting will be implemented.
To strengthen the right of every child to learn, we will launch an equality fund that reduces socio-economic, gender and regional gaps in learning: the aim being to provide ECEC sufficiently close to the child’s home, to reduce group sizes, to improve children’s language development and to promote equal learning of digital skills.

In Finland, the ECEC participation rate is lagging behind the Nordic average. We will seek to raise the participation rate by increasing cooperation between administrative branches and by enhancing service coordination in ECEC. One of the means by which we intend to achieve this is a multi-professional, evidence-based and multi-annual intervention project for maternity and child health clinics aimed at increasing the participation rates in ECEC.

We will create the right conditions for developing the quality and equality of ECEC by conducting studies on the reasons leading to exclusion from ECEC. We will also carry out a study on how the right to ECEC is realised for undocumented children and children seeking asylum.

We will promote learning support.

The enhancement of learning support is at its greatest in a child’s early years and is therefore important to invest in early learning support. We will develop a model of support for ECEC to harmonise the support for learning between pre-primary and compulsory education. In addition, we will identify best practices and development needs for learning support and include ECEC. Inclusion and support for learning will be developed in a joint working group with pre-primary and compulsory education.

We will examine the current state of pedagogy for five-year-olds. A project will also be prepared to support the local management of ECEC plans, the monitoring of their implementation, and the evaluation and development of pedagogy. High-quality and equal ECEC requires skilled and committed leaders. We will study the current situation in the management of ECEC. In addition, a professional development programme for management and its piloting will be implemented.

We will create a more flexible start for learning.

We will allocate the learning of basic skills during the early years by reconfiguring pre-primary education and the first two years of primary school into a more coherent system. We will also pilot two-year pre-primary education and expand the trial-lining of free ECEC for five-year-olds.

We will promote learning support.

We will promote the prevention of bullying by means of an action programme and a development and research project.
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The Forum supports the implementation and communication of the programme and promotes the development of new measures. The Forum gathers experts and research outcomes of ECEC and comprehensive education.

Research: the development programme is strongly based on research data. The programme will contribute to producing research data to improve the equality and quality of early childhood education and care.

THE RIGHT TO LEARN
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Towards equality and wellbeing in Finland

Development programmes are the basis for long-term development

Inclusive ECEC that promotes learning and wellbeing

Improving quality

Developing evaluation

Equal conditions for learning paths

Developing pedagogy and leadership

Ministry of Education and Culture

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