



# THE RIGHT TO LEARN

**AN EQUAL START ON THE LEARNING PATH**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION AND CARE**

PROGRAMME FOR QUALITY AND EQUALITY 2020-2022

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

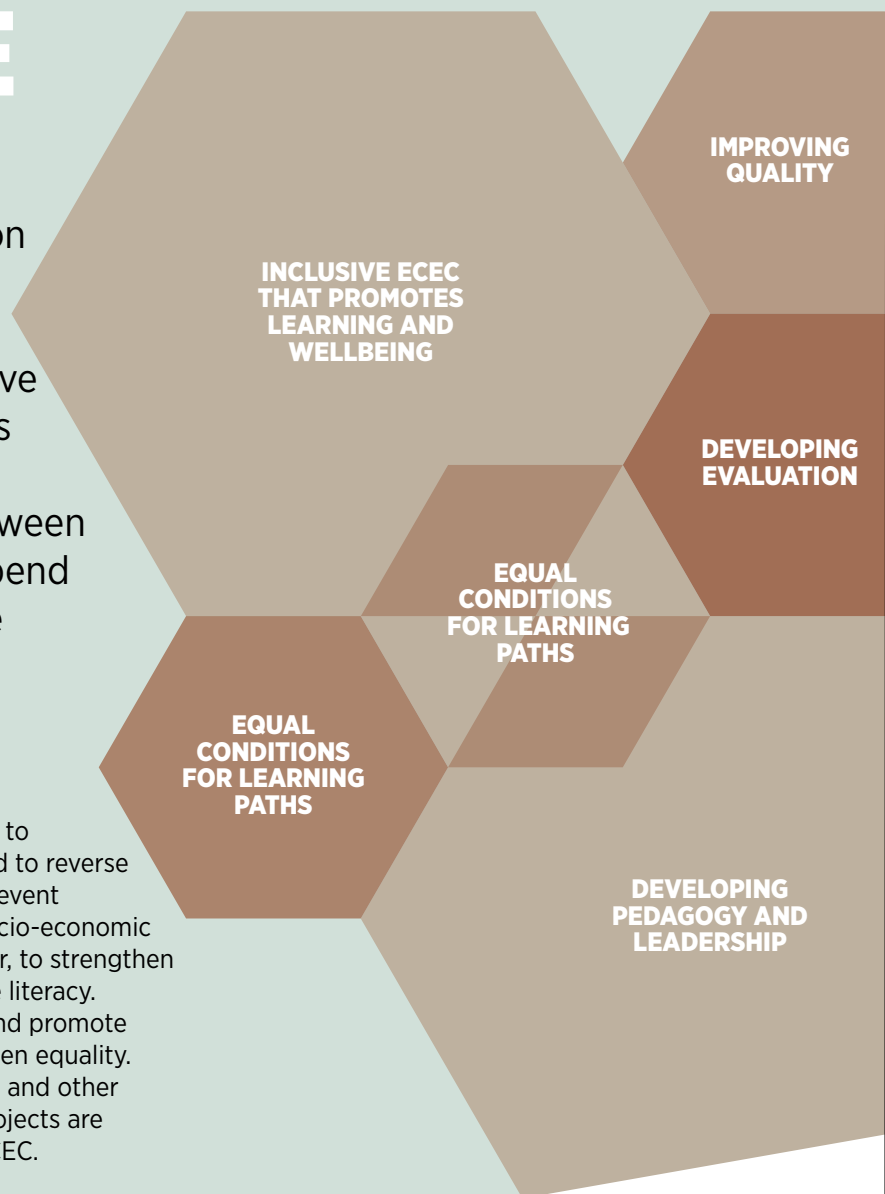
Early childhood education and care (ECEC) lays the foundation for the future learning of the child. Research shows that high-quality ECEC is an effective way of levelling out differences in learning that stem from a child's family background. Between 2020 and 2022, Finland will spend EUR 125 million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

Towards equality and wellbeing in Finland



**DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ARE THE BASIS FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT**

## GOAL 1

INCREASE  
ECEC  
PARTICIPATION  
RATE

EUR  
**70**  
MILLION  
FUNDING FOR  
2020-2022

CLOSEST  
CHILD CARE  
PROVIDER

SUPPORTING  
LANGUAGE  
LEARNING

SMALLER  
GROUP  
SIZES

EQUALITY  
IN DIGITAL  
SKILLS

EQUALITY  
AND NON-  
DISCRIMINATION

# 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 path regardless of their social or ethnic background, residential area or gender.

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 intend to strengthen children's literacy skills, support the culture of reading in ECEC and ensure that every child gets the support they need to learn to read.

## GOAL 2

EFFECTIVE  
INCLUSION

EUR  
**15**  
MILLION  
FUNDING FOR  
2020-2022

# WE WILL PROMOTE LEARNING SUPPORT

The effectiveness of learning support is at its greatest in a child's early years and it 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 a joint working group with pre-primary and compulsory education.

We will endeavour to prevent bullying by means of an action programme and a development and research project.

REINFORCING  
CONTINUITY  
BETWEEN  
PRE-PRIMARY  
AND PRIMARY  
EDUCATION

IMPROVING  
THE  
PREVENTION  
OF BULLYING

DEVELOPING  
A MODEL FOR  
LEARNING  
SUPPORT

## GOAL 3

EXPANDING  
THE FREE  
ECEC TRIAL

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

EUR  
**30**  
MILLION  
FUNDING FOR  
2020-2022

A STUDY  
INTO TWO-YEAR  
PRE-PRIMARY  
EDUCATION

# WE WILL CREATE A MORE FLEXIBLE START FOR LEARNING

We will advocate 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 trialling of free ECEC for five-year-olds.



## GOAL 4

REVIEW  
OF CURRENT  
PEDAGOGY FOR  
5-YEAR-OLDS

STRENGTHENING  
MANAGEMENT  
SUPPORT AND  
NETWORKING

EUR  
**10**  
MILLION  
FUNDING FOR  
2020-2022

STUDY INTO  
THE PRESENT  
STATE OF  
LEADERSHIP

PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME FOR  
MANAGEMENT

SUPPORTING  
THE MANAGEMENT  
OF ECEC PLANS

QUALITY  
CRITERIA AND  
A DIGITAL QUALITY  
ASSESSMENT  
SYSTEM

# 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.

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 STRENGTHEN EQUALITY TOGETHER

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

**THE FORUM** supports the implementation and communication of the programme and improves the effectiveness of development actions. The Forum combines the expertise and research outcomes of ECEC and comprehensive school 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.

**#RIGHTTOLEARN**

[www.minedu.fi/qualityprogramme](http://www.minedu.fi/qualityprogramme)



Ministry of  
Education  
and Culture