

ETEIP: 2019-1-SE01-KA201-060552



State of Art

Educational System and Curriculum in Norway

Intellectual Output 1

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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Educational System

The Norwegian educational system can be divided into four parts. ECEC institutions are generally referred to as kindergartens instead of preschool. Kindergarten is voluntary, the child has a right to get a placement if they want it. Elementary school and Lower secondary are compulsory. Elementary and lower secondary school are mandatory for all children aged 6–16 since 1997, before mandatory school started at the age of 7. The educational system consists of a common knowledge base, tools, procedures on different levels, systematic process to enhance quality development both in national and local plans. The overarching goal is better well-being and learning outcome for children and students.

Table 1. Norwegian education system

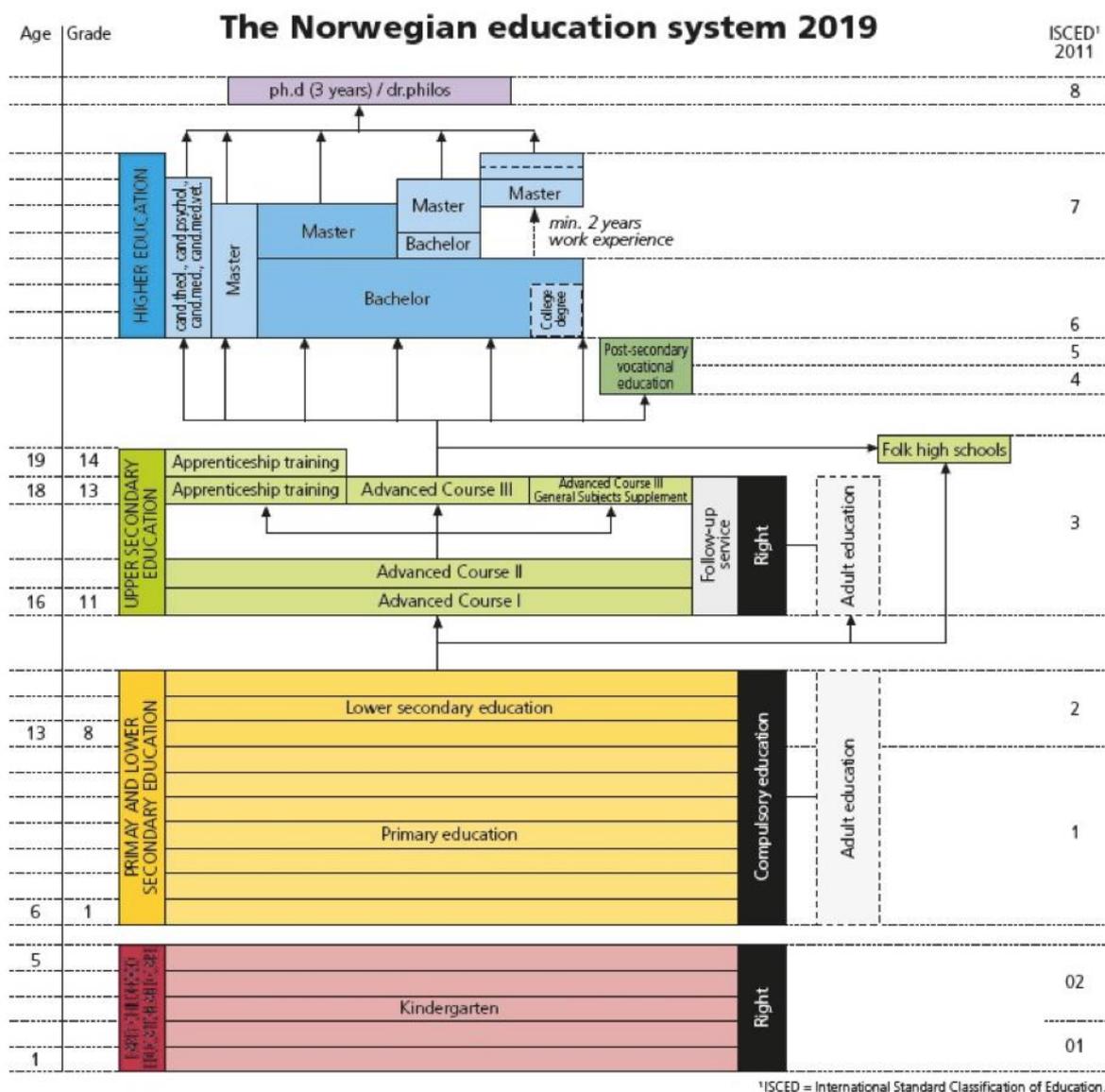


Table 2. Preschool, primary, lower and secondary education

Primary Education		
Schools		Age group
Foundation Stage	Kindergarten	1– 5 years
Elementary Education (primary school)		
Key Stage 1,	Year 1	6 – 7 years
	Year 2	7–8 years
	Year 3	8 – 9 years
	Year 4	9 – 10 years
Key Stage 2	Year 5	10 – 11 years
	Year 6	11 – 12 years
	Year 7	12 – 13 years
Lower secondary Education (Comprehensive school)		
Secondary Education (Comprehensive and High schools)		Age group
Key Stage 3	Year 8	13 – 14 years
	Year 9	14 – 15 years
	Year 10	15 – 16 years
Upper secondary Education (Gymnasium/High School)		
Key Stage 5	Grade 1	16 – 17 years
	Grade 2	17 – 18 years
	Grade 3	18 – 19 years
Compulsory education also includes <i>sameskolor</i> (Sami schools) for children of the indigenous Sami people.		

Higher Education

The higher education degrees (ISCED levels 6 to 8) are structured (in line within Bologna Process) in a three-year Bachelor, two-year Master, and three-year PhD as the main model. Norway has a few private university colleges, and all higher education institutions are publicly owned. Most higher education institutions are....

“By law, public universities and university colleges may not charge tuition fees for ordinary degree courses. Legislation is a key to ensuring that all citizens have the same right and opportunity to take part in higher education. To further support the principle of equal opportunities, all Norwegian students are entitled to financial support (grants and loans) to cover their living costs through the State Educational Loan Fund. Foreign citizens may also, upon certain conditions, receive support for education in Norway from the State Education Loan Fund”

<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/norway/norway>

Bachelor's programmes are a three-year course of study (180 ECTS credits). After completing its possible to continue to a master's degree and a doctorate (accordance to certain rules). Programmes can have fixed structures; others allow chooses of different courses (after completing part one).

University college graduate programmes are two-year bachelor-level programmes at university colleges that confer the title university college graduate. There are a variety of one-year, supplementary, and short programmes. These can form; part of bachelor's degrees, basis for professional programmes, subject studies like in psychology. University colleges offer four-year teacher training programmes. They could award the student to a bachelor's degree (after three years) if the programme got the requirements for a bachelor's degree. Teaching qualifications can be achieved (reach after four years) for primary and lower secondary school.

Master's degree programmes are usually two-year course of studies (120 ECTS credits) this programme builds on academic specialisation (for building the degree including independent work).

For academic specialisation in the bachelor's degree (experience-based programmes) can be either two years (120 ECTS credits) or one and a half years (90 ECTS credits). Master's degree?

Doctoral degree (PhD) is based on a master's degree or equivalent qualification (highest academic degree). Programme is based on independent research in cooperation with academic supervisors and other researchers.

Programmes of professional study characterised by fixed course plans over several years in subject areas, three-year programmes lead to a bachelor's degree. Five-year programmes (integrated master's degrees) are common at universities (example of subject areas: informatics, law, teacher training and economics). There are Six-year programmes of professional study these lead to a special degree (areas like for example, medicine, veterinary medicine, psychology, and theology).

Learn more: <https://www.nokut.no/en/norwegian-education/general-information-about-education-in-norway/>

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Teaching Profession

The titles of educators in Norwegian schools vary with the degrees they have. Preschool teacher can work in kindergarten and in after school day care. Pre-school teacher in Norway requires a bachelor's degree.

Adjunct teacher can work between the 5th and 10th grades of lower secondary school, or at high schools, usually in minor subjects. Adjunct requires a bachelor's degree in a particular subject. If subject knowledge from different courses, a one-year course in pedagogy is required.

Lecturer can work in upper secondary school and high schools, from 8th grade up to the third year of high school. Lecturers need a master's degree, along with a pedagogy course. In 2017 the 5 year integrated master's degree programmes for teaching in primary and secondary school were implemented. Now teaching in primary and secondary school requires a master's degree.

Preschool staff:

- Pedagogical leader = the kindergarten teacher who is the team leader for a group (class)
- Assistants, some with specific vocational training upper secondary school, but many have no higher education or formal ECEC-training

Preschool (Kindergarten) teacher education (three – years bachelor degree)

Year of study		Practice
Years 1 and 2	Areas of knowledge: Children's development, play and learning (30 ECTS)	100 days integrated in all areas of knowledge. 75 days in the first two years and 25 days in the last year of study.
	Society, religion, beliefs and ethics (20 ECTS)	
	Language, text and mathematics (20 ECTS)	
	Art, culture and creativity (30 ECTS)	
	Nature, health and movement. (20 ECTS)	
Year 3	Leadership, co-operation and development (15 ECTS)	
	Bachelor thesis (15 ECTS)	
	Specialisation course (30 ECTS)	

A new approach has been developed lately; The modular education main approach in adult education in Norway with the main aim to get more young people and adults to acquire a study certificate or professional competence. The education approach is to tailor education better to the needs of adults (three coherent pilots) started in 2017 and will end in 2023:

- **preparatory** adult education – newly developed module-structured curricula (learning subjects and languages), level below upper secondary education (EQF 4), with adult adapted curricula
- **modular** vocational education and training – a pilot with module-structured curricula in selected subjects of the third year of upper secondary education (EQF 4, flexible path) For adults aged 25 and above who have completed primary education (training in companies)
- **the combination** pilot - merges approaches above with prior learning assessment, combine training in missing subjects from primary education level (vocational training in companies).

Read more:

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/norway-modular-education-adults>

<https://www.kompetansenorge.no/Norsk-og-samfunnskunnskap/modulforsoket/>

<https://www.kompetansenorge.no/Norsk-og-samfunnskunnskap/modulforsoket/modulstrukturert-fag--og-yrkesopplaring-mfy/>

Inclusive education system

Primary and lower secondary school are mandatory for all children aged 6–16, where upper secondary school is a statutory right. The curriculum for primary and secondary education is common, within the framework the implementation of education and training can be influenced (municipal, county authorities, schools, and teachers). The principal of a unified school is to provide equal and adapted education for all in both primary and secondary schools.

Sami community are part of the common Norwegian and Nordic culture which the national and the Sami curricula require that all pupils are acquainted with. Sami defined areas as Sami districts, the Sami curriculum is used in teaching to ensure that Sami pupils receive high quality teaching based on their own cultural background and Sami language.

There are very few special schools for children with special needs, and grade repetition is not practised.

- shorter school day for the younger children
- municipalities are obliged to offer day-care facilities for children in grades 1– 4
- children with special needs in primary and secondary education
- all municipalities are required to have a Culture school. These schools offer courses and training for children and youth in music, dance, theatre, and resembling arts. Often cooperate with day-care facilities for school children
- Parents must pay a fee set by the municipality for after school day-care and in culture school activities

Cost for preschool covered by the municipality by 82% both for private and public preschools. National regulations concerning parents' fees apply a maximum price/month. Free 20 hours/week for children (age 2-5) from low income families. Reduced fees if they attend fulltime ECEC.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that a child's education should help develop the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. That everyone is entitled to an education without discrimination based on equal opportunity. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reviewed Norway's initial report in Geneva (25 - 26 March 2019) reported both on positive aspects and areas of concern. Norway will report (mid - 23) on what has been done to follow up on the committee's report. Concerns that a large proportion of the special needs provision is delivered by staff without the appropriate training and to ensure inclusion of a high quality.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/meld.-st.-6-20192020/id2677025/>

Curriculum for primary and secondary education 6-16

Core values of the education and training:

- Human dignity
- Identity and cultural diversity
- Critical thinking and ethical awareness
- The joy of creating, engagement, and the urge to explore
- Respect for nature and environmental awareness
- Democracy, and participation

All people are equal and have a right to belong to the society, they must be accepted as individuals, human dignity is recognised as a fundamental value regardless of who you are, where you come. Christian and humanist heritage traditions are an important part of Norway's cultural heritage. Sami cultural heritage is part of Norway's cultural heritage common developed throughout history present to future generations. The schools shall give room for diversity and give an insight into how we live together with different perspectives, attitude, and views of life. School shall promote democratic values and attitudes to prejudice discrimination. Pupils shall learn to respect the fact that people are different and learn to solve conflicts peacefully. A democratic society based on that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to participate. Protect minority is an important principle in a democratic state governed by law and in a democratic society. The teaching and training shall promote belief in democratic values and in democracy as a form of government and give the pupils an understanding of the basic rules of democracy and the importance of protecting them.

Principles for education and all-round development:

- Social learning and development
- Competence in the subjects
- The basic skills
- Learning to learn
- Interdisciplinary topics:
 - Health and life skills
 - Democracy and citizenship
 - Sustainable development

Education and all-round development (Bildung) of all pupils are interlinked and mutually dependent, and their underlying principles should help schools accomplish this dual mission. The lifelong process has the individual's all-round development such as intellectual freedom, independence, responsibility, and compassion for others as its goal. The teaching and training shall give the pupils a good foundation for understanding themselves, others, and the world, making good choices in life, for participation in all areas of education, work, and societal life. The school must recognise the intrinsic value of childhood and the adolescent years. The teaching shall develop each pupil and give them an opportunity to learn and develop their skills, abilities, insight into nature, environment, language, history, society, working life, art, culture, religion, and worldviews. School shall facilitate and support pupils' development in five basic skills: reading, writing, numeracy, oral skills, and digital skills. Skills part of the competence in the subjects, tools for learning and understanding. To develop identity, social relations, ability to participate in education and society.

Principles for the school's practice:

- An inclusive learning environment
- Teaching and differentiated instruction
- Cooperation between home and school
- On-the-job training in a training establishment and working life
- Professional environment and school development

“The school shall treat pupils with trust and respect and also place demands on them and give them challenges that will promote their all-round development and desire to learn. To do this successfully, the school must create a good learning environment and differentiate the teaching and training in collaboration with the pupil and the home. This requires professionals who are involved in the development of school”

<https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/?lang=eng>

Legislation

Early Childhood and Care (ECEC) is for children under school age. Municipalities are responsible for the development and supervision of both private and municipal institutions and for ensuring that institutions are run according to the Framework Plan and the Kindergarten act.

The preschools are regulated from the Kindergarten Act (Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to kindergartens) entered into force January 2006. This is a response to changing policy needs that the Kindergarten Act has had several amendments, e.g. aligning the purpose clause to the Education Act.

The Kindergarten Act states that Municipalities are the local authorities for kindergartens and must provide guidance, ensure that they are operated in accordance with current rules and regulations. They are obliged to offer a place in kindergarten, children have a statutory right to get a placement from the age of one year. Decisions made from applications for approval after assessing the suitability in terms of purpose and content and they may set operating conditions regarding the number of children, their age, and the opening hours.

Municipalities are obliged to treat all kindergarten equally with municipal or private (around 50 per cent are private) owners' kindergarten as regards to public funding. Children in kindergarten shall benefit from the public grants and parent's fees.

To know more:

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/families-and-children/kindergarten/early-childhood-education-and-care-polic/id491283/>

Early years national Curriculum – 1 – 6 years

Norwegian kindergartens' framework plan outlines several core values, staff shall take a holistic approach to the children's development, care, play and learning. Childhood itself has a value and preschools shall work with families as partners to promote learning and development. The curriculum follows the UN Convention of 20 November 1989 on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO Convention 169). Children should for example learn to respect human dignity, freedom of thought, forgiveness, equality, and solidarity. The child shall be able to enjoy a good childhood with friends, play and well-being.

The preschools shall adopt the core values that is:

- Meeting every child's need for care, security, and belongingness
- Respect and enabling the children to participate and contribute
- Promote democracy, diversity and mutual respect, equality, sustainable development, life skills and good health
- Prepare children for active participation in society

Core values are about children and childhood, democracy, diversity and mutual respect, equity and equality, sustainable development and life skills and health. In line with this all kindergartens shall promote respect for human dignity and nature, and operate in accordance with freedom of thought, compassion, forgiveness, equality, and solidarity (Framework plan 2017)

Norway's regulation for Sami children:

“Norway has a particular responsibility for safeguarding the interests of Sami children and their parents, cf. Article 108 of the Norwegian Constitution, Article 30 of the UNCRC and the ILO Convention. Sami kindergarten children shall be FRAMEWORK PLAN FOR KINDERGARTENS | 01.08.2017 8 supported in preserving and developing their language, their knowledge, and their culture irrespective of where in Norway they live.

Learn more:

<https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/barnehage/rammeplan/framework-plan-for-kindergartens2-2017.pdf>

Key feature for the work team in preschool

The Framework Plan states:

- content shall be comprehensive
- varied and adapted to each individual child/group of children
- children shall be able to play
- explore creativity
- sense of wonder and inquisitiveness

Kindergarten's teachers must work goal-oriented with children's development and learning, and stimulate children's communicative, linguistic, social competence and must be inclusive fellowships with space for each child. Instead of defined learning outcomes, descriptions of experiences to provide for children the framework makes explicit demands to staff.

Areas of learning

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of the fundamental principles, goals, contents and activities for all preschools (public and private). The preschools Framework Plan describes 7 learning areas as care, play, formative development, learning, communication, language competence, friendship, and communities.

Children should be acquainted in the kindergarten to several aspects like communication, language, text, body and movement, food, health, art, culture, creativity, nature and environment, technology, quantities, spaces and shapes, ethics, religion and philosophy, local community, and the society. Knowledge and skills shall be developed in all learning areas through exploration and creative activity. The learning areas must be seen as meaningful, and fun built on children's enthusiasm and contributions. The staff must plan, assess and develop the pedagogical work, they need to keep records as a tool of reflection and ethical consideration, all subject areas must be included.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/families-and-children/kindergarden/early-childhood-education-and-care-polic/id491283/>

Subject areas

- Communication, language and text
- Body, movement and health
- Art, culture and creativity
- Nature, environment and technology

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- Numbers, space and shapes
- Ethics, religion and philosophy
- Local community and society

All learning areas should be in a context and recurring themes in the preschools content. The preschools core values and objectives should influence all learning areas. Play is an important part in the learning areas and children´s enthusiasm and contribution in the learning areas be seen as meaningful.

<https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/barnehage/rammeplan/framework-plan-for-kindergartens2-2017.pdf>

The Characteristics of the Kindergarten Tradition is to remind you that the childhood can never be replaced, and a child is a member of the community:

- Equality with social egalitarianism as a goal
- Universalism understood as meaning that all children should be integrated within the same institutional framework
- Independence from the school sector, with focus on play, not on teaching
- The home as a model

(Korsvold, T. (2005). *For alle barn*. Oslo: Abstrakt forlag AS.)

In the preschools there are 43 % of kindergarten teachers (180 ECTS, Bachelor degree). One of four of the staff has relevant continuous education (additional courses). There are 22 % of the staff with ECEC training (secondary school level). More than 30% of the preschools do not full fill the new requirements for kindergarten teachers.

Types of preschools

- Kindergarten, for children from 1 -5 years have municipality or private owners
- Family day care, Family daycare are in private homes, mentored by a kindergarten teacher. Mainly for children under 3.
- Open kindergarten, part-time drop-in center led by a kindergarten teacher. Parents/caregivers attend together with the child.

Size of Kindergarten

- on average about 50 children, 3 - 4 groups in one building
- larger institutions in towns, 15% of children attend a barnehave with more than 100 children
- Small institutions (1 or 2 groups) in rural areas

Group size on average (no regulations of maximum group size)

- 12 children age 1-2
- 19 children age 3-5
- 17 children age 1-5 (age mix)

National regulations (from 2019):

- 1 staff per 3 children under 3
- 1 staff per 6 children 3-5
- 1 kindergarten teacher/14 children (3-5)
- 1 kindergarten teacher/7 children under 3

Read more: The Norwegian Education Mirror 2021, <https://www.udir.no/in-english/education-mirror-2019/about-the-education-mirror/>

Quality

The system for quality in the ECEC shall give all Kindergarten stakeholders a foundation to evaluate and develop the quality within their responsibilities. The system provides settings with tools to evaluate and reflect upon their pedagogical practices.

According to the Framework Plan, Kindergartens are to carry out internal quality assessments. The well-being and development of groups of children and individual children have to be observed and assessed on an ongoing basis.

The quality system for ECEC consists of different optional quality development tools and resources such as research and statistics that the different stakeholders are free to use.

These are available to kindergartens, owners, local and national authorities. The system provides information about kindergartens available to parents and other interested stakeholders and can contribute to dialogue and quality development.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/families-and-children/kindergarten/early-childhood-education-and-care-polic/id491283/>

