

ETEIP: 2019-1-SE01-KA201-060552



State of Art

Educational System and Curriculum in Sweden

Intellectual Output 1





Educational System

In Sweden, preschool is the first step in the educational system, and children have opportunities to attend preschool when they are between 1 – 5 years old. From the year they turn six children begin preschool class as the first stage in compulsory school. Swedish compulsory school consist of four stages: preschool class, comprehensive school with lower stage (1-3rd grade), middle stage (4th – 6th grade) and upper stage (7th-9th grade).

Table 1. Preschool, primary and lower secondary education

Preschool Education		
Schools		Age group
Preschool Education	Preschool (Förskola)	1– 5 years
Primary and lower secondary education		
Preschool Class Education	Preschool Class (Förskoleklass)	6 – 7 years
Comprehensive school (Grundskola) Lower stage (Lågstadiet)	Year 1	7- 8 years
	Year 2	8 – 9 years
	Year 3	9 – 10 years
Comprehensive school (Grundskola) Middle stage (Mellanstadiet)	Year 4	10 – 11 years
	Year 5	11 – 12 years
	Year 6	12 – 13 years
Comprehensive school (Grundskola) Upper stage (Högstadiet)	Year 7	13 – 14 years
	Year 8	14 – 15 years
	Year 9	15 – 16 years
Upper secondary Education		
Gymnasium/High School (Gymnasieskola)	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.		



Tertiary Education

All higher education is pursued in courses and programmes. The courses can be taken separately or as part of a study programme to lead to degrees. The scale of a course or study programme is measured in 'credit points' in line with the ECTS. Full-time studies during one year equal 60 credit points. Higher education institutions (HEIs) decide about the organisation of their courses.

Table 2. Tertiary Education

Bachelor's level – Doctoral level education			
Educational level	Schools		Age group
Bachelor's level education	University college 2 – 3 years	1 st year	Ages vary
		2 nd year	
		3 rd year	
Master's level education	University college 1-2 years	1 st year	Ages vary
		2 nd year	
Postgraduate education Doctoral level	Research entitled university college 2 – 5 years	1 st year	Ages vary
		2 nd year	
		3 rd year	
		4 th year	

Adult Education

Sweden provide adult education by municipalities which consists of:

- Municipal adult education
- Special education for adults
- Swedish tuition for immigrants

To find out more go to: [Adult Education and Training](#).



Types of school

State:

- Municipality Schools including:
 - schools for pupils with impaired hearing,
 - schools for pupils with learning disabilities,
 - sami-schools
- Faith Schools
- Free Schools/Independent schools

To find out more go to:

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/organisation-education-system-and-its-structure-80_en

Independent School

In Sweden, the independent schools must be approved by the [Schools Inspectorate](#) and follow the national curricula and syllabuses, just like regular municipal schools. During the academic year 2021/22, there were 828 independent school units in compulsory school and 460 independent school units in upper secondary school.

Grant-aided independent schools and preschools can be organised in different forms. The municipalities distribute grants to grant-aided independent preschools and they are also responsible for ensuring that the operations meet the requirements of quality and safety. The same laws and frameworks apply to grant-aided independent preschools and municipal preschools. For more information on grant-aided independent education providers, see chapter [2.4 Organisation of Private Education](#).

To find out more go to: <https://sweden.se/life/society/the-swedish-school-system>

Early Years Types of Provision

Schools: Municipality Schools, Faith Schools, Free Schools/ Independent schools

- Preschool

Even if the municipality preschools are most common in Sweden there are a number of different types of early years providers. In Sweden the [alternative structures in early childhood education and care](#) within the formal system primarily encompasses four types of care and activities for children up to the age of 12. These activities go under the name "Other pedagogical activities".

- Pedagogical care/Childminders,
- Open preschools,
- Leisure-time centres,



- Care at uncomfortable times. According to the Education Act the municipality should offer care for children during the times that preschool or leisure-time centres are not offered and it should be offered to the extent that is needed based on the parents work and the family situation in general.

To find out more go to: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/early-childhood-education-and-care-80_en

Inspection Framework for Sweden

The National Agency for Education is the central administrative authority for the public school system, publicly organised preschooling, school-age childcare and for adult education.

The Swedish National Agency for Education is tasked with ensuring that all children and students have access to the same high-quality standard of education and activities in secure environments.

The mission is to create the best conditions for the children's development and learning and to help improve the students' learning outcomes.

The agency prepares knowledge requirements, regulations, general recommendations and national tests. They are also responsible for official statistics in the area of education and conduct national follow-ups and evaluations. The National Agency for education also oversee Sweden's participation in international education surveys.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate investigates the municipalities' routines regarding the right to education and the compulsory attendance at school

[The Swedish National Agency for Education](#)

[The Swedish Council for Higher Education](#)

[The Swedish Higher Education Authority](#)

[The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education](#)

[The Swedish National Council of Adult Education](#)

Early years national Curriculum – 1 – 5 years

The national preschool curriculum (National Agency 2019) is a mandatory framework for early childhood education and care in Sweden. Municipalities are required by the Education Act ([Skollagen SFS 2010:800](#)) to provide publicly subsidised preschool activities and childcare to all children aged 1-5 years. All children are entitled to free preschool for at least 525 hours per year (approximately 15 hours per week) from the autumn term when they turn three years old.

In 2019, 85.4 percent of children aged 1–5 years attended preschool. The proportion of enrolled children has increased to some extent in all age groups. 50.5 percent of one-year-olds attended

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preschool, 90.6 and 94.0 percent respectively of two- and three-year-olds and 95.3 percent of all four- and five-year-olds according to the [statistics database of the Swedish National Agency for Education](#).

The Education Act (2010:800) stipulates that the purpose of education in the preschool is to ensure that children acquire and develop knowledge and values. It should promote all children's development and learning, and a life-long desire to learn. Education should also convey and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based.

Overarching Principles

Fundamental values

The goals specify the orientation of the education in the preschool and thus the quality development expected of the education and how it contributes to each child's development and learning. The guidelines specify the responsibility of preschool teachers for ensuring that teaching takes place in accordance with the goals set out in the curriculum. The guidelines also specify the task of everyone in the work team, which can include preschool teachers, child minders and other staff, to provide each child with secure care and to promote development and learning in all children. Everyone who works in the preschool should follow the norms and values set out in the preschool curriculum and contribute to the preschool's implementation of its task.

Care, development and learning

Play is the foundation of development, learning and well-being.

The preschool should provide each child with the conditions to develop

- their identity and feel security in it, and awareness of the right to their physical and personal integrity,
- independence and trust in their own ability,
- curiosity, creativity and a desire to play and learn,
- an ability to function individually and in a group, cooperate, manage conflicts and understand rights and obligations, and to assume responsibility for common rules,
- an ability to listen and reflect on other people's perceptions and to reflect and express their own beliefs,
- fantasy and imagination

Key Features for the workteam in Preschool

1. Create a democratic climate with respect for every child
2. Prevent discrimination and abusive treatment,
3. Work consciously and actively on gender equality,
4. Stimulate interaction between children and offer them help and support to resolve conflicts, work out misunderstandings, compromise and respect each other
5. Emphasise and approach the problems involved in ethical dilemmas and questions of life in everyday situations



6. Make children aware that people may have different values that determine their views and actions while at the same time reinforcing the fundamental values
7. Collaborate with guardians

Areas of Learning

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Natural Science and Technology

To find out more go to:

[Curriculum for the Preschool \(Lpfö 18\)](#)

Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare – 6 – 16 years

Fundamental values

The national school system is based on democratic foundations. The Education Act (2010:800) stipulates that education in the school system aims at pupils acquiring and developing knowledge and values. It should promote the development and learning of all pupils, and a lifelong desire to learn. Education should impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based. Each and everyone working in the school should also encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person and the environment we all share. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity between people are the values that the school should represent and impart. In accordance with the ethics borne by a Christian tradition and Western humanism, this is achieved by fostering in the individual a sense of justice, generosity, tolerance and responsibility. Teaching in school must be non-denominational. The task of the school is to encourage all pupils to discover their own uniqueness as individuals and thereby be able to participate in the life of society by giving of their best in responsible freedom.

Preschool Class

Preschool teachers can work in Preschool Class. Through the educational programme for the preschool class, pupils should summarily be given conditions to develop their abilities to

- experiment with and develop ideas, solve problems and put their ideas into action,
- create and maintain good relationships, as well as learn to co-operate using a democratic and empathetic approach,
- communicate, verbally and in writing, in different situations and for different purposes,
- create and express themselves through different aesthetic forms of expression,
- use mathematical concepts and reasoning to communicate and solve problems,



- explore and describe phenomena and relationships in nature, technology and society, and
- versatily move in different environments as well as understand what can affect health and well-being.

Core Content

The educational programme should cover the following core content.

- Language and communication
- Creative and aesthetic forms of expression
- Mathematics reasoning
- Nature, technology
- Norms and rules associated with pupils' everyday lives, for example for playing and games, and why rules are necessary
- Democratic values and principles
- Children's rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Natural Science and Technology
- Physical indoor and outdoor activities during different seasons and in different types of weather.

To find out more go to:

<https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.31c292d516e7445866a218f/1576654682907/pdf3984.pdf>

Teaching Profession

The current teacher education programmes in Sweden include four different professional degrees:

- a degree in preschool education
- a degree in primary school education
- a degree in subject education
- a degree in vocational education

The teaching profession has for many years struggled with declining status. The government has during the last years initiated several reforms to improve the status of the teaching profession and to increase the number of applicants to the teacher education programmes.

Roles within Preschool

The Swedish national curriculum för preschool 2018 express:

Preschool teachers are responsible for

- each child's development and learning being continuously and systematically followed, documented, and analysed so that it is possible to evaluate how the preschool provides

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- opportunities for children to develop and learn in accordance with the goals of the curriculum, • documentation, follow-up, evaluation, and analysis covering how the goals of the curriculum are integrated with each other and form a whole in the education,
- carrying out a critical examination to ensure that the evaluation methods used are based on the fundamental values and intentions as set out in the curriculum,
- results from follow-ups and evaluations systematically and continuously being analysed in order to develop the quality of the preschool and thus the opportunities of children for care, as well as conditions for development and learning, and
- using the analysis to take action to improve education.

The work team (Child minder and other staff) should

- continuously and systematically follow, document, and analyse each child’s development and learning in order to make it possible to follow changes in children’s knowledge and to evaluate how the preschool is providing children with opportunities to develop and learn in accordance with the goals of the curriculum,
- follow up and evaluate how children have the opportunity to exert an influence over the education and how the education takes into account the needs, interests, perceptions and opinions of children,
- follow up and evaluate the opportunities for guardians to exert an influence, and
- analyse the results of follow-ups and evaluations in order to develop the quality of the preschool and thus children’s opportunities for care, as well as conditions for development and learning.

The Head

As the pedagogical leader and head of the preschool teachers, child minders and other staff in the preschool, the head has overall responsibility for ensuring that the education as a whole is targeted towards the national goals. The head is responsible for the quality of the preschool.

To find out more go to:

[Curriculum for the Preschool \(Lpfö 18\)](#)

Table 3. Qualifications and Routes to work in the Early Year Sector

Level	School and University Awards	Role in Early Years
Child minder (Barnskötare)	Upper secondary 3 years in the programme, Child and Recreation programme	Member of the workteam



Preschool teacher	Bachelor degree, 3,5 years in the Preschool Teacher programme, university level	Responsible for the educational content of teaching and for targeted work to promote development and learning in children. Preschool teachers have a special responsibility in the education provided jointly by the work team. Preschool teachers can work in Preschool and Preschool Class.
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Legitimation

Requirements for obtaining legitimation:

The Education Act (2010: 800) contains the basic rules of legitimation for teachers and preschool teachers. The rules describe what is required to be allowed to teach in preschool and preschool class. To obtain a legitimation, you must have a preschool teacher's degree. The content in the degree governs what qualifications will be in the legitimation.

The National Agency for Education has produced several regulations that supplement the rules in the Education Act. The regulations deal with, among other things, the requirements for obtaining legitimation. The Swedish National Agency for Education's regulations are collected in the National Agency for Education's collection of statutes, SKOLFS.

General base in the National Preschool Curriculum

According to the Swedish National Preschool Curriculum the preschool should reflect the values and rights expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Education should therefore be based on what is deemed to be the child's best interests, that children have the right to participation and influence, and that children should be made aware of their rights. Swedish preschool education should be based on a holistic approach to children and the needs of children, in which care, development and learning form a whole. In cooperation with the home, the preschool should promote the development of children to become active, creative, competent, and responsible people and members of society.

The Swedish national curriculum does not describe how the education should be done, that is up to each preschool to decide but education in the preschool should be developed to correspond with the national goals. The school authority has a responsibility for ensuring that this happens. The head's leadership, the responsibility of preschool teachers for teaching in accordance with the goals set out in the curriculum and the work team's mission to promote children's development and learning are all prerequisites for the development and quality of the education. Such development requires that the head and all members of the work team systematically and continuously document, monitor, evaluate and analyse the results of the education.



There are no stated theories explicit described in the curriculum, but one interpretation is that the sociocultural perspective is the main approach in the preschool curriculum. With inspiration from Vygotsky the view on learning in preschool has its basis in interacting with other people (peers and adults).

To find out more go to:

[Curriculum for the Preschool \(Lpfö 18\)](#)