



Meld. St. 24
(2012–2013)
Melding til Stortinget

Framtidens barnehage



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The Future Kindergarten

A good childhood lasts a lifetime. Helping to ensure that all children get a good start is the most important thing we can do as a society. Children who know how to make friends and keep friends have confidence and social skills for the rest of their life. A good quality kindergarten can give all children equal opportunities and help to reduce social inequality.

Kindergarten is the first voluntary step in lifelong education and provides children with a good start, regardless of background and needs. An adaptation of kindergarten for each child's needs and early intervention when necessary, is a key part of the kindergarten's mission.

With the introduction of the right to attend kindergarten from age 1, kindergartens have become a universal good that everyone can take part in. The Kindergarten reform is the largest and most important welfare reform made by the Norwegian society in recent decades. Both Norwegian and international research shows that a high quality kindergarten has a positive effect on child development, and that the positive effects last a lifetime.

The government's goal for the future kindergarten is to ensure equally high quality kindergartens for all, to enhance kindergarten as a learning arena and to ensure that all children can actively participate in an inclusive community. The price shall be so low that everyone will be able to afford to send their children to kindergarten.

Through this white paper, the government is establishing a clear direction for future kindergarten policy, both in terms of quality and content, as well as staff competence and sector management.





Kindergarten accessible for all

The Government wants to ensure that all children are given opportunities to participate and develop in society regardless of their parents' economic and social situation. To ensure accessibility for all, the government has opted for maximum parental fees, the expansion of the availability of kindergartens and introduction of the individual right to attend kindergarten.

The Government will among other things:

- introduce two kindergarten admissions per year in order to ensure better access for children 1 year of age.
- remove exemptions in regulations for family kindergartens in order to ensure better quality family day care

Staffing and staff skills

The Government aims to ensure children a good childhood and contribute to social equality through quality kindergartens. The skills of the staff are the single most important factor for children to thrive and develop in kindergarten. The Government has therefore multiplied the resource allocation for recruitment and training measures for kindergartens since 2005. A new and comprehensive competence strategy for all staff in kindergartens shall be submitted in the autumn.

The staff: child ratios and staff skills are the most important structural factors for quality in kindergartens. Legal requirements for general basic staffing will help to ensure the quality of kindergartens and to safeguard each child.

The Government will, among other things:

- introduce a requirement for basic staffing of the kindergarten of one adult per three small children (1:3) and one adult per six older children (1:6) by 2020.
- consider introducing a provision in the Kindergarten Act that children have the right to belong to a group of children and that the number of children in the group shall be appropriate.
- continue efforts to meet the regulated number of kindergarten teachers and increase the proportion of employees with relevant education. The question of increasing the proportion of teaching staff will be considered in the longer term.
- establish a system for competence development in the kindergarten sector.
- extend the campaign for recruitment for the kindergarten teacher training, including recruitment of persons with a Sami language background.
- cooperate with the Sami Parliament on skills and recruitment initiatives aimed at the Sami kindergarten sector.



Governance of the kindergarten sector

The kindergarten sector has in a short time undergone extensive changes in structure, scale and work distribution. There is therefore a need to develop a national framework that will facilitate the proper management of the kindergarten sector.

The Government will among other things:

- initiate a comprehensive review of the Kindergarten Act and regulations
- consider introducing a provision in the Kindergarten Act that the child's best interests are to be a primary consideration.
- aim to transfer the responsibility for supervising individual kindergartens pursuant to the Kindergarten Act from the municipality to the County so as to ensure better legitimacy of the inspecting body.
- aim to legislate requirements for authorities and owners to have a satisfactory system for compliance with the Kindergarten Act and regulations.
- monitor developments relating to equal treatment between municipal and non-municipal kindergartens and consider the need for changes in regulations.

Kindergarten content

Simultaneously with the historic expansion of kindergarten availability, the government has focused on quality improvement in the kindergarten sector.

Today's curriculum is well received in the sector, and surveys show that the curriculum is well implemented in kindergartens. Kindergartens will continue to be based on a holistic pedagogical philosophy where care, play, learning and formation are at the core of the activities and lay the foundation for children's well-rounded development.

The kindergarten's purpose and content regulations were reviewed and amended in 2010 and we currently have a unifying purpose for the whole course of education. Several committees, including the Brenna Committee (NOU 2010:8 With the urge to research and the wish to play), have made important contributions to the debate about kindergarten quality and content. To ensure that the purpose is reflected in the content and that the curriculum is better adapted to all children in kindergarten and more consistent with the needs of the sector, it is now necessary to revise regulations on the curriculum for the content and tasks of kindergartens.

Early childhood is the fundamental period for the development of language. The national curriculum states that children with late language development, or other language problems, shall get early and quality help. The kindergarten's work with language is a high priority of the government.

The Government will:

- establish a framework group that will submit proposals for a revised curriculum for the kindergarten's content and tasks.
- propose a provision in the Kindergarten Act to clarify the content and framework for the kindergarten's work with documentation and evaluation.
- introduce a requirement for kindergartens to offer language assessment and mapping for children considered to have special needs for language intervention.



Kindergarten's cooperation with parents

The kindergarten's purpose is based on basic respect for living in a multicultural and diverse society, and on having some common values that everyone can adhere to, regardless of religion and cultural background. It is important to have a good start for children when they start kindergarten. Parents are an important partner in developing the kindergarten's quality and content.

The Government will:

- consider whether and in what manner kindergarten can be supported to facilitate good introduction practices for children and parents.

The individual child in the community – cooperation for the child's best

Kindergarten is an important arena to establish proactive measures to promote good health, social inclusion and lifelong learning. In a good kindergarten environment, all children participate on their own terms and are treated with respect and appreciation, regardless of functional and social background. The physical and psychosocial environment is a key factor in the kindergarten and for children's well-being.

The Government will:

- consider the regulation of the physical and psychosocial environment in the kindergarten.
- transfer the provision of the right to special educational assistance in the Education Act § 5–7 to the Kindergarten Act without the child's right being weakened.
- help to secure, develop and strengthen the best possible collaboration with services that are of importance for the kindergarten.
- gather systematized knowledge about proactive efforts to detect and assist vulnerable children aged 0–6 years with an emphasis on strengthening the relationships and interactions between children and parents.

Prepared by:

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