

About the curriculum for pre-school

This is the first curriculum for the pre-school, which means that the pre-school will now constitute the first step in the education system for children and young persons. Since January 1st 1998, the National Agency for Education has acted as the supervisory authority for the pre-school as well as for other pre-school activities and school child activity. The legislation was incorporated into the School Act on the same date.

The curriculum is based on a division of responsibility where the state determines the overall goals and guidelines for the pre-school and where the municipalities take responsibility for implementation. In its structure the curriculum of the pre-school is consistent with the other curricula for the school system. As a result of the introduction of a curriculum for the pre-school, the education system as a whole now comprises three curricula, one for the pre-school (Lpfö 98), a second for the compulsory school also covering the pre-school class and the after school centres (Lpo 94) as well as a curriculum for the upper secondary schools (Lpf 94). The aim is that the three curricula should link into each other and take a common view of knowledge, development and learning.

The curriculum applies to the pre-school

This curriculum applies to the pre-school, i.e. the pedagogical activities for children in the pre-schools for which the municipalities are responsible. The curriculum will also provide a foundation for assessing quality requirements when determining whether an individual pre-school fulfils the stipulated requirements. The curriculum will also be applicable to family day care units.

The curriculum for the pre-school replaces the pedagogical programme and the guidelines issued by the National Board of Health and Welfare, which were used earlier to steer these activities. The curriculum is an ordinance with binding provisions issued by the Government. The curriculum will steer the pre-school and contains the requirements the state imposes on the pre-school. It also expresses the requirements and expectations children and parents may make on the pre-school.

The curriculum sets out the foundation values for the pre-school, the tasks, goals and guidelines for pre-school activities. However, the curriculum does not lay down the means by which goals shall be attained. This is an issue primarily for the staff working in the pre-school. The principal organiser is responsible for ensuring that the pre-school is in a position to attain the goals of the curriculum. The development and learning of the individual child will be supported in close co-operation between pre-school and home.

The structure of the curriculum

The introductory section of the curriculum deals with the foundation values and tasks of the pre-school. The goals and guidelines that follow thereafter are to be understood against this background.

Goals and guidelines for the pre-school are given for the following areas:

- Norms and values
- Development and learning
- Influence of the child
- Pre-school and home
- Co-operation between the pre-school class, the school and the after school center

The goals set out directions for the work of the pre-school and contain targets for quality development in the pre-school. The goals in the pre-school curriculum are set up as goals to be aimed at. They stipulate what the pre-school should aim at in terms of the individual development and learning of the child. Continuity between the curricula will be easier to establish as a result of setting up common goals for both the pre-school and school.

In the pre-school the outcome of the individual child will not be formally assessed in terms of grades and evaluation. The pre-school provides pedagogical activity which children can begin and participate in at different ages over varying periods of time. The pre-school should be secure, developmental and rich in learning opportunities for all children participating on the basis of each child's individual conditions. The guidelines in the curriculum stipulate that the goal oriented work of the pre-school will apply to the work team itself and all those who work in the pre-school. The work team refers to the staff who have the pedagogical responsibility for a particular group of children.

Planning, implementation, assessment and development

The activities of the pre-school should be planned, implemented, assessed and developed in relation to the goals set up in the curriculum. It is important that the methods of assessment developed, are clearly related to the goals set up for the activities and that they contribute to the overall development of the pedagogical work. By documenting pedagogical activity, activities in the pre-school can be made more explicit and thus provide an important basis for discussion and assessment of the quality of activities and the need for development.

Attaining the goals of the curriculum requires well-educated staff, who are provided with the opportunity to enhance their competence and receive the support necessary for them to carry out their tasks in a professional manner. Fulfilling the tasks of the pre-school also imposes high demands on leadership. The municipalities in their capacity as principal organisers are responsible for this.

The Curriculum is based on the School Act

Chapter 2 a, paragraphs 1-12 in the School Act (1985:1100) contain the basic provisions on how pre-school activities are to be organised. The Act stipulates that the municipalities are obliged to provide pre-school activity of high quality without unreasonable delay. This obligation concerns all children whose parents are working or studying, or who need child care support as well as for all children in need of special support. The task of the pre-school is to organise and run pedagogical activities. There should be staff with the requisite education or experience capable of satisfying the child's need for care and good pedagogical activities. The size and composition of the child groups should be appropriate. The premises should be suitable for their purpose. Activities should be based on the individual needs of each child. Children who need special support for their development should receive care related to their needs.

Ordinance on the curriculum for the pre-school

1998-06-11

The Government decrees the following:

The curriculum as set out in the appendix to this ordinance shall apply to the pre-school.

This ordinance shall be announced in the code of statutes (SKOLFS) of The National Agency for Education.

This ordinance enters into force on 1st August 1998.

For and on behalf of the Government,

YLVA JOHANSSON

Barbara Martin Korpi
(The Ministry of Education and Science)

1998 Curriculum for the pre-school (Lpfö 98)

1. Fundamental values and tasks of the pre-school

Fundamental values

Democracy forms the foundation of the pre-school. For this reason all pre-school activity should be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values. Each and everyone working in the pre-school should promote respect for the intrinsic value of each person as well as respect for our shared environment.

An important task of the pre-school is to establish and help children acquire the values on which our society is based. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between the genders as well as solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the school shall actively promote in its work with children.

The foundation on which these values rests expresses the ethical attitude which shall characterise all pre-school activity. Care and consideration towards other persons, as well as justice and equality, in addition to the rights of each individual shall be emphasised and made explicit in all pre-school activity. Children assimilate ethical values and norms primarily through their concrete experiences. The attitudes of adults influence the child's understanding and respect for the rights and obligations that apply in a democratic society. For this reason adults serve an important role as models.

Upholding these fundamental values requires that the attitudes from which they are derived are clearly apparent in daily activity. The activities of the pre-school should be carried out democratically and thus provide the foundation for a growing responsibility and interest on the part of children to actively participate in society.

Understanding and compassion for others

The pre-school should take into account and develop children's ability to take responsibility and manage their social life in society so that solidarity and tolerance are established at an early stage.

The pre-school should encourage and strengthen the child's compassion and empathy for others. All activities should be characterised by care for the individual and aim at developing a sense of empathy and consideration for others, as well as openness and

respect for the differences in the way people think and live. Support should also be given to the child's need to be able to reflect over and share their thoughts on the issues life poses.

Increasing mobility across national borders creates cultural diversity in the pre-school, which provides children with the opportunity to build up respect and consideration for each individual irrespective of background.

Objectivity and comprehensiveness

The pre-school should be open to different ideas and encourage their expression. Children should have the opportunity of forming their own opinion and making choices in the light of their personal circumstances. Full participation and belief in their own ability will thus be established and grow. All parents should be able to send their children to the pre-school, fully confident that their children will not be prejudiced in favour of any particular view.

All who work in the pre-school should uphold the fundamental values that are set out in this curriculum and should very clearly dissociate themselves from anything that conflicts with these values.

The ways in which adults respond to boys and girls, as well as the demands and requirements imposed on children contribute to their appreciation of gender differences. The pre-school should work to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles. Girls and boys in the pre-school should have the same opportunities to develop and explore their abilities and interest without having limitations imposed by stereotyped gender roles.

The pre-school should, irrespective of where it is located, work in order to attain the goals of the pedagogical activity. Concern for the individual child's well-being, security, development and learning should characterise the work of the pre-school. Account should be taken of the varying conditions and needs of children. This means that the pre-school cannot be organised in the same way everywhere, and that the resources of the pre-school need not be distributed equally.

The tasks of the pre-school

The pre-school should lay the foundations for lifelong learning. The pre-school should be enjoyable, secure, and rich in learning for all children. The pre-school should provide children with good pedagogical activities, where care, nurturing and learning together form a coherent whole. Children's development into responsible persons and members of society should be promoted in partnership with the home.

The pre-school should help families by supporting them in their role of bringing up and helping their children to grow and develop. The task of the pre-school means working in co-operation with parents so that each child receives the opportunity of developing in accordance with their potential.

Pedagogical activities should be related to the needs of all children in the pre-school. Children who occasionally or on a more permanent basis need more support than others should receive this in relation to their needs and circumstances. The skill of the staff in understanding and interacting with the child, as well as gaining the confidence of parents is important, if the period in the pre-school is to provide support for children facing difficulties. All children should be able to experience the satisfaction that comes from making progress, overcoming difficulties and experiencing themselves as a valued member of the group.

The pre-school should take account of the fact that children have different living environments and that they try to create context and meaning out of their own experiences. Adults should give children support in developing trust and self-confidence. The child's curiosity, ambitions and interest should be encouraged and their will and desire to learn be stimulated. The task of the pre-school involves not only developing the child's ability and cultural creativity, but also passing on a cultural heritage – its values, traditions and history, language and knowledge – from one generation to the next.

The internationalisation of Swedish society imposes high demands on the ability of people to live with and understand values in cultural diversity. The pre-school is a social and cultural meeting place, which can reinforce this and prepare children for life in an increasingly internationalised community. Awareness of their own cultural heritage and participating in the culture of others, should contribute to children's ability to understand and empathise with the circumstances and values of others. The pre-school can help to ensure that children from national minorities, and children with a foreign background receive support in developing dual cultural affiliation.

The pre-school should provide children with a secure environment at the same time as it challenges and encourages play and activity. It should inspire children to explore the surrounding world. Children in the pre-school should meet adults who see the potential in each child and who involve themselves interactively with both the individual child and the group of children as a whole.

The ability to communicate, to learn and be able to co-operate are necessary in a society characterised by a huge flow of information and rapid speed of change. The pre-school should provide a foundation so that children in the future can acquire the knowledge and skills which make up the common framework that all in society need.

Children should have the opportunity of developing their ability to observe and reflect. The pre-school should be a living social and cultural environment that stimulates children into taking initiatives and developing their social and communicative competence. Children should also have the opportunity to explore on their own an issue in greater detail and to look for their own answers and solutions.

Play is important for the child's development and learning. Conscious use of play to promote the development and learning of each individual child should be an omnipresent activity in the pre-school. Play and enjoyment in learning in all its various forms stimulates the imagination, insight, communication and the ability to think symbolically as well as the ability to co-operate and solve problems. Through creative and imaginary games, the child will get opportunities to express and work through their experiences and feelings.

The pre-school should promote learning, which presupposes active discussion in the work team on the contents of what constitutes learning and knowledge.

Knowledge is a complex concept, which can be expressed in a variety of forms - as facts, understanding, skills, familiarity and experience - all of which presuppose and interact with each other. The starting point for the pre-school is the experience children have already gained, their interests, motivation and compulsion to acquire knowledge.

Children search for knowledge and develop it through play, social interaction, exploration and creativity, as well as through observation, discussion and reflection. A theme-oriented approach to work can broaden and enrich the child's learning.

Learning should be based, not only on the interaction between adults and children, but also on what children learn from each other. The group of children should be regarded as an important and active part in development and learning. The pre-school should give children support to develop a positive picture of themselves as learning and creative individuals. They should be supported in developing confidence in their own ability to think for themselves, to act, to move and to learn i.e. to develop from different perspectives such as the intellectual, linguistic, ethical, practical, sensory and aesthetic.

Children should get stimulation and guidance from adults in order to increase their competence and acquire new knowledge and insights through their own activity. This approach presupposes that both different forms of language and knowledge as well as different ways of learning are brought into balance and form a whole.

Language and learning are inseparably linked together, as is language and the development of a personal identity. The pre-school should put great emphasis on stimulating each child's language development and encourage and take advantage of the child's curiosity and interest in the written language. The pre-school should help to ensure that

children with a mother tongue other than Swedish, receive the opportunity to develop both their Swedish language and their mother tongue.

Creating and communicating by means of different forms of expression, such as pictures, song and music, drama, rhythm, dance and movement, as well as spoken and written language make up both the contents and method to be used by the pre-school in promoting the development and learning of the child. This also involves building, designing, and using various material and technologies. Multimedia and information technology can be used in the pre-school both in the development and application of creative processes.

The pre-school should put great emphasis on issues concerning the environment and nature conservation. An ecological approach and a positive belief in the future should typify the pre-school's activities. The pre-school should contribute to ensuring children acquire a caring attitude to nature and the environment, and understand that they are a part of nature's recycling process. The pre-school should help children understand that daily reality and work can be organised so that they contribute to a better environment, both now and in the future.

The pre-school should provide children with a well-balanced daily rhythm and environment related to their age and time spent in the pre-school. A balance should be attained between care and rest, as well as other activities.

Children should be able to switch activities during the course of the day. Their activities should provide scope for the child's own plans, imagination and creativity in play, and learning both indoors and outdoors. Time spent outdoors should provide opportunities for play and other activities, both in a planned and natural environment.

2. Goals and guidelines

The goals specify the orientation of the work of the pre-school and thus the desired quality targets in the pre-school.

Guidelines for the staff in the pre-school not only state the responsibility of all who work in the pre-school, but also the responsibility the work team has in ensuring that work is directed towards the goals of the curriculum.

2.1 Norms and values

The pre-school should actively and consciously influence and stimulate children into developing their understanding and acceptance of our society's shared democratic values.

Goals

The pre-school should strive to ensure that each child develops

- openness, respect, solidarity and responsibility,
- the ability to take account of and empathise with the situation of others as well as a willingness to help others,
- their ability to discover, reflect on and work out their position on different ethical dilemmas and fundamental questions of life in daily reality,
- an understanding that all persons have equal value independent of gender, social or ethnic background and
- respect for all forms of life as well as care for the surrounding environment.

Guidelines

All who work in the pre-school should

- show respect for the individual and help in creating a democratic climate in the pre-school, where a feeling of belonging and responsibility can develop and where children have the opportunity of showing solidarity and
- stimulate interaction between children and help them to resolve conflicts as well as work out misunderstandings, compromise and respect each other.

The work team

- is responsible for ensuring that each child's needs are respected and satisfied and that they are able to experience their own unique value,
- is responsible for ensuring that the pre-school applies democratic working methods in which the children actively participate,
- should emphasise and approach the problems involved in ethical dilemmas and questions of life,
- should make children aware that people may have different attitudes and values that determine their views and actions,
- should be responsible for developing norms for the work and their participation in activities for the group of children and
- should co-operate with the home concerning the child's upbringing and discuss with parents the rules and attitudes of the pre-school.

2.2 Development and learning

The pre-school should be characterised by a pedagogical approach, where care, nurturing and learning together form a coherent whole. Pedagogical activities should be carried out so that they stimulate and challenge the child's learning and development. The learning environment should be open, enriched by content and attractive. Activities should promote play, creativity and enjoyment of learning as well as focus on and strengthen the child's interest in learning and mastering new experiences, knowledge and skills.

Activities should contribute to children developing an understanding of themselves and their surrounding world. A sense of exploration, curiosity and desire to learn should form the foundations for pedagogical activities. These should be based on the child's experiences, interests, needs and views. The flow of the child's thoughts and ideas should be used to create variety in learning.

Goals

The pre-school should try to ensure that children

- develop their identity and feel secure in themselves,
- develop their curiosity and enjoyment at the same time as the ability to play and learn,
- develop self-autonomy and confidence in their own ability,
- feel a sense of participation in their own culture and develop a feeling and respect for other cultures,
- develop their ability to listen, narrate, reflect and express their own views,
- develop their ability to function individually and in a group, to handle conflicts and understand rights and obligations as well as take responsibility for common rules,
- develop their motor skills, ability to co-ordinate, awareness of their own body, as well as an understanding of the importance of maintaining their own health and well-being,
- acquire and be able to differentiate shades of meaning in concepts, see inter-connections and discover new ways of understanding the surrounding world,
- develop a rich and varied spoken language and the ability to communicate with others and to express their thoughts,
- develop their vocabulary and concepts, the ability to play with words, an interest in the written language and an understanding of symbols as well as their communicative functions,
- develop creative abilities and the ability to convey thoughts and experiences in many different forms of expression, such as play, pictures, song and music, dance and drama,
- develop their ability to build, create and design using different materials and techniques,

- develop the ability to discover and use mathematics in meaningful contexts and situations,
- develop their appreciation of the basic characteristics of the concept of number, measurement and form, as well as the ability to orient themselves in time and space and
- develop an understanding of their own involvement in the processes of nature and in simple scientific phenomena, such as knowledge of plants and animals.

Guidelines

All who work in the pre-school should

- co-operate to provide a good environment for development, play and learning, and pay particular attention to and help those children who for different reasons need support in their development.

The work team should

- be responsible for ensuring that work in the group of children is carried out so that the children
 - develop in accordance with their own capacity and at the same time are stimulated into using and developing the whole range of their abilities,
 - experience a sense of enjoyment and meaningfulness in learning what is new,
 - receive new challenges that stimulate enjoyment in learning new skills, experiences and knowledge,
 - receive support and stimulation in their social development,
 - be given the necessary means to build up relationships and feel a sense of security in the group,
 - receive support and stimulation in their language and communicative development,
 - receive support and stimulation in the development of their motor skills and
 - be provided with good care and a well-balanced daily rhythm.
- take account of children's eagerness, desire and enjoyment in learning, as well as strengthen confidence in their own ability,
- provide stimulation and special support to those children who experience difficulties of various kinds,
- stimulate the curiosity of children and their initial understanding of the written language and mathematics,
- give children the opportunity of understanding how their own actions can have an effect on the environment and
- give children the opportunity to become familiar with their own immediate environment and those functions which are important for daily life, as well as become familiar with local cultural life.

2.3 Influence of the child

The pre-school provides the foundations for children to understand what democracy is. The social development of the child presupposes that in relation to their capacity, they are able to take responsibility for their own actions and for the environment in the pre-school. The needs and interests which children themselves express in different ways should provide the foundation for shaping the environment and planning pedagogical activities.

Goals

The pre-school should try to ensure that children

- develop the ability to express their thoughts and views and thus have the opportunity of influencing their own situation,
- develop their ability to accept responsibility for their own actions and for the environment of the pre-school and,
- develop the ability to understand and act in accordance with democratic principles by participating in different kinds of co-operation and decisionmaking.

Guidelines

All who work in the pre-school should

- work towards ensuring that the individual child develops the ability and willingness to take responsibility to exercise influence in the pre-school and,
- work towards ensuring that the opinions and views of each child are respected.

The work team should

- take advantage of children's ability and desire to take greater responsibility for themselves and their participation in the group of children,
- make sure that all children have the opportunity on the basis of their growing ability to influence the contents of activities, methods of working, and participate in assessing activities,
- work towards ensuring that both girls and boys have an equal measure of influence over and scope for participating in activities and
- prepare the children for participating in and sharing the responsibilities, rights and obligations that apply in a democratic society.

2.4 Pre-school and home

The parents or guardian are responsible for their child's upbringing and development. The pre-school should supplement the home by creating the best possible preconditions for ensuring that each child's development is rich and varied. The pre-school's work with children should thus take place in close and confidential co-operation with the home. Parents should have the opportunity within the framework of the national goals to be involved and influence activities in the pre-school. A prerequisite for children and parents to have the opportunity of exercising influence is that the pre-school is clear about its goals and the contents of its work.

Guidelines

All who work in the pre-school should

- show respect for parents and feel responsible for developing good relationships between the staff of the pre-school and children's families.

The work team should

- together with the parents be responsible for ensuring children receive a good introduction to the pre-school,
- maintain on an on-going basis a dialogue with parents on the child's well-being, development and learning, both in and outside the pre-school, in addition to holding the personal development dialogue,
- provide parents with opportunities to exercise influence over how the goals can be made concrete in planning pedagogical activities,
- take due account of parents' viewpoints when planning and carrying out activities and
- make sure that parents are involved in assessing the activities.

2.5 Co-operation between the pre-school class, the school and the after school centre

In order to support the all-round development of children, the school should try to establish good working co-operation with both the pre-school and after school centres in order to support the child's all-round development and learning for the future. Co-operation should be based on the national and local goals, and the guidelines applicable to the different activities.

When the time approaches for the child to transfer to new activities, the pre-school has the special task of finding models for completing the pre-school period. In the transition to new activities, special attention should be given to those children needing special support.

Guidelines

The work team should

- exchange knowledge and experiences with the staff of the pre-school class, the school and after school centre and co-operate with them, as well as
- together with the staff in the pre-school class, the school and after school centre, pay due attention to each child's need for stimulation and support.