



Ministry of Education and Research

Strategy

Competencies for tomorrow's kindergartens

Revised strategy for competence and recruitment 2018–2022



Preface

A good childhood is both intrinsically important and vital to our well-being later in life. All children should benefit from good kindergarten provision irrespective of where they live and which kindergarten they attend. The new Framework Plan for Kindergartens, which came into force in autumn 2017, continues to build on the Norwegian kindergarten tradition in which care, play, learning and formative development are seen in context. Play has and should continue to have a prominent place. However, the framework plan also acknowledges that early childhood education and care has changed. The new plan provides more clarity about the need to engage in systematic pedagogical processes. It highlights and explains the obligations of local authorities towards Sami children.

There is considerable disparity in the quality of kindergarten provision. The new framework plan is an important step towards good kindergarten provision for all children. In order to improve quality and fulfil the obligations set out in the framework plan, we need to work together to raise competence levels in the kindergarten sector.

Competencies for Tomorrow's Kindergartens was launched in 2013. The revised competence strategy is an extension and refined version of the original document. Between 2013 and 2017 the Norwegian government more than doubled its spending on quality measures from NOK 165 million to NOK 400 million. A raft of new competence initiatives has been launched, including tertiary education programmes for kindergarten staff and several continuing education programmes for kindergarten teachers. Kindergarten owners are now able to apply for government funding to help more employees boost their formal qualifications. The proportion of kindergarten staff holding teaching qualifications and trade certificates has increased in recent years. In 2016, 39% of core staff were qualified teachers, while 20% were qualified childcare and youth workers.

The implementation of the new framework plan primarily takes place in each individual kindergarten and is an ongoing process. Kindergarten-based competence initiatives allow employees to improve their competencies and pedagogical practices in line with the framework plan. In the long term the government is seeking to expand the kindergarten-based schemes.

Kindergarten teachers play a key role in fulfilling the obligations and ambitions described in the new framework plan. Working with the Christian Democratic and Liberal parties, the government oversaw a sharp increase in funding for kindergarten teacher recruitment in 2017 of no less than NOK 172 million. This will amount to NOK 400 million on an annual basis. The funding will be used to cut the teacher-to-child ratio in order to increase the proportion of qualified kindergarten teachers. It is the government's ambition to cut the ratio even further.

The competence strategy aims to boost recruitment and competence development. Kindergartens should allow staff to develop professionally, both individually and collectively. This requires competent and informed leadership. With the revised competence strategy, the government is seeking to define the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in relation to competence development. It also encourages co-operation in the sector in order to reach the strategy's goals.

We should like to thank you for all your valuable feedback during the process and wish you all the best in the important work you do!



Torbjørn Røe Isaksen

Minister of Education and Research



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PART 1



Goal: Kindergarten provision of a high quality for all children

The competence strategy is an important tool in supporting the implementation of the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens. The framework plan provides clearer guidance on what kindergarten owners, heads, teachers and other staff should do to ensure that all children benefit from kindergarten provision of a high quality.

Kindergartens should meet the children's need for care and play and promote learning and formative development as a basis for all-round development. To fulfil the social mandate conferred on them by the Kindergarten Act and the framework plan, kindergartens need competent staff at every level.

The kindergarten owner is responsible for ensuring that the kindergarten has the necessary and qualified personnel. Clearer instructions and definitions of kindergarten practices require improved leadership and competence.

For Sami children kindergarten plays an important role in strengthening and developing Sami language and culture. Sami kindergartens should promote learning and formative development rooted in Sami values and traditions. To be able to deliver the Sami content of the framework plan in both Sami kindergartens and other kindergartens attended by Sami children, the kindergartens need to possess the necessary knowledge of Sami language and culture.

The competence strategy runs from 2018 to 2022. Quality development in kindergartens involves ongoing professional development. The initiatives described in the strategy should help develop kindergartens as learning organisations and strengthen the professional learning community of teachers. The head teacher and the pedagogical leader have a particular responsibility for initiating and developing kindergarten practices in line with the latest research and knowledge in the field. More kindergarten teachers with master-level qualifications will help develop a knowledge-based practice that supports the intentions of the new framework plan.

Master-level qualifications are an important factor in developing equitable partnerships between kindergartens and educational institutions. By encouraging comprehensive competence development for all employees, the strategy aims to ensure high-quality kindergarten provision for all children. The strategy seeks to help recruit and retain qualified kindergarten staff.

Subsidiary goals

The competence strategy aims to

- increase the proportion of qualified kindergarten teachers
- increase the proportion of qualified childcare and youth workers
- give all kindergarten employees the opportunity to pursue continuing education
- increase the number of kindergarten teachers with master-level qualifications
- enable all kindergartens to develop their pedagogical practices through kindergarten-based competence development

Target groups

The target group for the strategy is all stakeholders in the kindergarten sector, including the Sami parliament, the Directorate for Education and Training, county governors, universities and university colleges, the national centres for education, the National Parents' Committee for Kindergartens, kindergarten authorities, kindergarten owners, county councils, tertiary vocational colleges, the Union of Education Norway, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, PBL (the national association of private kindergartens), student unions, regional and local collaborative forums and kindergarten staff. The stakeholders should be familiar with the contents of the strategy and help ensure that its goals are reached. The target group for the initiatives presented in the strategy is every kindergarten employee working directly with the children: kindergarten heads, teachers and other educationalists, childcare and youth workers and other assistants.

Principles for content and organisation

The competence development initiatives should help fulfil the intentions and obligations set out in the framework plan

Significant changes in the kindergarten sector have created a skills gap. The framework plan is clear about the staff's obligations in respect of giving all children quality kindergarten provision, and it imposes stringent requirements as regards staff qualifications. Initiatives should be given priority in line with local needs. The strategy aims to support kindergartens in their competence development and encourages a joint effort to raise competence levels amongst all employees.

The kindergarten's owner and management should enable professional development for all employees

Quality development in kindergartens depends on employees' being able to boost their competences, both individually and as part of a professional learning community. To create a culture for shared learning and quality development in every kindergarten, the owner and management must initiate and lead collective development and change processes. The head teacher has day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that the kindergarten's pedagogical processes comply with the Kindergarten Act and the framework plan and that staff develop a common understanding of their social mandate. The pedagogical leader is responsible for initiating, leading and guiding colleagues in their work with the children. The head teacher and pedagogical leaders must work together to ensure that the kindergarten's core values and the framework plan's intentions are observed and fulfilled in practice. Working with their staff, the kindergarten management should systematically assess whether their practices and activities are working to that end.

Individual and collective competence initiatives must be seen in context

The strategy aims to encourage kindergarten-based competence development, to strengthen kindergartens as learning organisations and to reinforce their pedagogical practices. Individual competence development initiatives should support the collective development processes taking place in kindergartens. Professional development providers must allow mutual exchanges of theory and practice to take place by using the students' place of work as a learning arena. Kindergartens whose staff are enrolled in professional development courses must ensure that new knowledge is put to use and shared with the kindergarten's collective competence development process.

Stakeholders in the kindergarten sector must co-operate on competence development

Competence development requires co-operation between all relevant stakeholders nationally, regionally and locally. The strategy calls for a joint effort by all stakeholders in order to raise competence levels amongst all groups of employees. To reach the goals set out in the strategy, it is necessary for the stakeholders to work together to plan, develop and facilitate initiatives to strengthen the professional learning community of kindergarten teachers as well as the competence development processes taking place in every kindergarten. Regional collaborative forums will be important platforms for such co-operation.



Further development of regional schemes for competence development in kindergartens

The county governors currently administer the government funding earmarked for kindergarten-based competence development, competence development courses for assistants and basic ECEC training and trade certificates in the workplace. They have extensive experience of co-ordinating regional competence networks in which local authorities, in their role as the local kindergarten authority, along with municipal and private owners, kindergartens and relevant research communities are key participants.

In the coming strategy period the networks will be developed further into regional collaborative forums. The forums will be given responsibility for prioritising, organising and scaling the above-mentioned competence development initiatives in the region. This will help ensure that there is a shared direction, predictability for all stakeholders and quality assurance of the kindergarten-based initiatives and that the funding is being used as intended. The collaborative forums will be building on past experiences and competence networks for kindergartens and will include both municipal and private kindergarten owners. The following principles will apply:

- The kindergarten-based competence development initiatives should be rooted in the focus areas set out in the strategy.
- The Directorate for Education and Training will allocate funding to the competence development initiatives annually.
- The initiatives will eventually have to be part of the regional collaborative forum in order to receive funding.
- The county governor co-ordinates the regional collaborative forums and facilitates co-operation between the local authorities, municipal and private kindergarten owners, universities and university colleges and other relevant stakeholders.

- The funding should primarily be used for kindergarten-based competence development, but it can also be spent on basic ECEC training, professional development for skilled workers and assistants and trade certificates in the workplace.
- The collaborative forums must agree on which initiatives to prioritise and the exact allocation of funding.

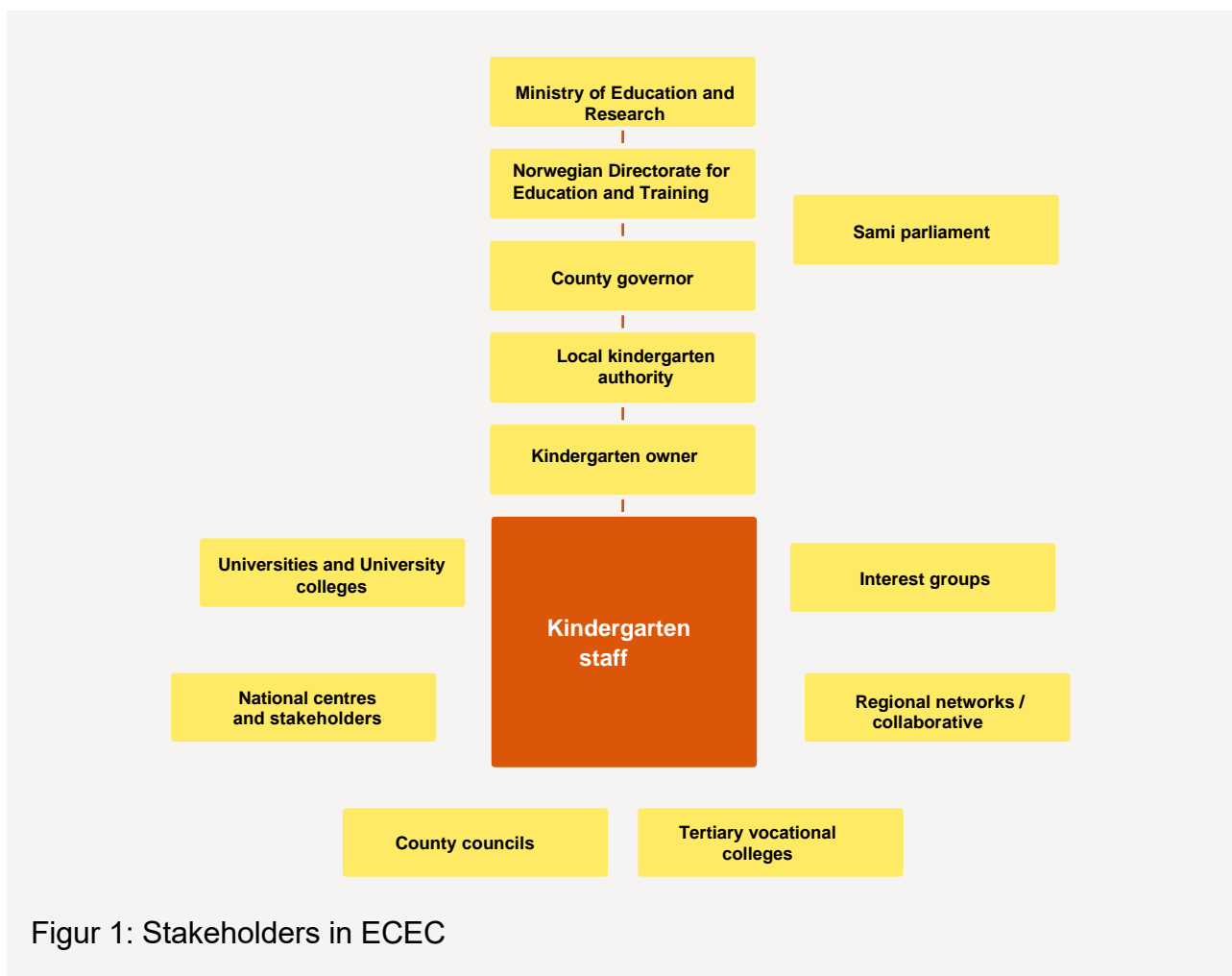
An evaluation of whether to introduce funding criteria for kindergarten owners will be carried out during the strategy period. One possible criterion could be that they need to put up their own funding to a value of 30% of the government grant – equivalent to the decentralised funding scheme for competence development in schools. The structure and further development of the collaborative forums will be agreed in dialogue with the stakeholders.



Roles and responsibilities

Targeted recruitment and competence development in the kindergarten sector are important in order to give all children equitable kindergarten provision of a high quality. Clear lines of responsibility between parties and stakeholders in the sector are essential in order to ensure co-operation on competence development nationally, regionally and locally.

Kindergarten staff should participate in competence development and research on a regular basis in order to boost their competencies and increase their understanding of the contents and tasks of kindergartens.



Figur 1: Stakeholders in ECEC

Kindergarten management

- The head teacher leads and oversees the kindergarten's change and development processes for competence development. The head teacher motivates, inspires and facilitates competence development among their staff.
- Kindergarten teachers are especially trained to carry out the tasks assigned to kindergartens, and their expertise means they are well placed to offer guidance.
- The pedagogical leader oversees reflective and development processes in kindergarten together with the head teacher.

The kindergarten owner

- is responsible for ensuring that staff have the correct and necessary competences
- identifies competence needs and has a long-term plan for recruitment and competence development
- initiates and facilitates necessary training and professional development for staff
- ensures that all employees are familiar with the social mandate, responsibilities and content of kindergartens
- provides funding for competence initiatives
- safeguards the equality principle when recruiting new staff
- safeguards the rights of Sami children

The local authority (in its role as the local kindergarten authority)

- should ensure that the children are given pedagogical and appropriate kindergarten provision in line with the Kindergarten Act and the framework plan
- develops competence plans for all groups of staff in both municipal and private kindergartens that comply with national guidelines and local needs as a prerequisite for receiving government funding
- prioritises and allocates funding to meet competence needs in municipal and private kindergartens
- participates in regional competence networks on the development and implementation of competence development initiatives
- facilitates Sami language kindergarten provision

The county governor

- initiates and oversees governmental competence development initiatives and ensures that development processes and initiatives are implemented in close consultation with the local authority, universities / university colleges and other relevant research communities
- ensures that local authorities meet the competence needs of municipal and private kindergartens by distributing government funding
- leads and co-ordinates regional competence networks

with participants from kindergartens, kindergarten owners, local authorities, the county council, universities and university colleges and organisations, all working together to define competence needs locally and then produce competence development initiatives

The Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate for Education and Training

- allocate government funding for competence development and ensure that the strategy is made known to all stakeholders
- develop detailed guidelines on the content and structure of the training provision in partnership with training providers and local stakeholders in the sector
- evaluate the initiatives and make adjustments as needed
- set criteria for funding
- contribute to local co-operation and knowledge-sharing
- enable further development of kindergartens as learning organisations
- support the professional learning community of kindergarten teachers by offering continuing education and kindergarten-based competence initiatives
- encourage kindergartens and their owners to recruit more men to work in kindergartens

The Sami parliament

- is an elected body of representatives for Sami people in Norway and sets the agenda for Sami kindergarten provision together with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Directorate for Education and Training and the county governor
- assumes joint responsibility for competence development aimed at South Sami, Lule Sami and North Sami kindergarten provision
- works with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Directorate for Education and Training and the county governor to recruit and train Sami-speaking kindergarten staff

Universities and university colleges

- provide kindergarten teacher training of a high quality and help ensure good recruitment to the training programmes
- work with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Sami Parliament, the county governor, local authorities and kindergarten owners to offer high-quality continuing education and in-service training to all kindergarten staff in line with national guidelines and local needs
- develop new initiatives in partnership with regional stakeholders and meet kindergartens' needs for competence development in priority areas through research and development
- develop master programmes in kindergarten teaching

which build on the existing kindergarten teacher training programmes

- organise continuing education programmes so that they can be incorporated into different master's degrees
- help implement national education policy through resources from the national centres for education that support competence development and the implementation of the new framework plan in kindergartens

Tertiary vocational colleges

- work with relevant stakeholders to offer training programmes in which professional practice is emphasised over more theoretical approaches
- develop training programmes based on kindergartens' competence needs and the guidelines provided by the competence strategy

The county council

- ensures that providers offer approved tertiary training programmes that meet needs locally, regionally and nationally in priority areas
- develops suitable programmes for assistants who wish to obtain trade certificates through the practice candidate scheme. The programmes are developed in partnership with the county governor and the vocational training boards when necessary

The interest groups

- make the strategy known to their members and enable kindergarten staff to participate in competence development

ABSOLUTT – new development programme for local and county authorities

Aimed at elected representatives and administrative leaders, the ABSOLUTT programme seeks to raise awareness in the local government sector of kindergartens, schools and childhood. The programme provides an insight into factors that impact children and young people's learning, development, well-being and sense of belonging. Being elected to serve on the local or county council comes with a local responsibility for ensuring that services aimed at children and young people are of a sufficient scope and a high quality. This requires dialogue and co-operation between politicians, administrators and various actors in the local community. Local and county councils should identify areas for improvement, recognise correlations and find local solutions. Good co-operation and a shared understanding of the needs of children and young people are important in order to ensure seamless transitions between the different stages of their education as well as co-ordination between education and other services aimed at children and young people. This applies within a municipality, between municipalities and counties and across sectors.

NOU 2016:18 Language of the heart. Proposed legislation, initiatives and schemes for Sami languages

The panel has reviewed legislation, initiatives and schemes for the South, Lule and North Sami languages in Norway. The panel has been mindful that the Sami languages are under threat. The report shows that children's language learning is key to the vitalisation of Sami languages. Vitalisation and development of the Sami languages require domains in which speakers can use the languages together with others. Language development is a key issue in kindergartens, and strengthening and encouraging increased use of Sami languages in kindergartens and schools is important.

The panel believes that Sami language kindergartens are the single most important tool for preserving and vitalising Sami languages. A kindergarten's most important language resource is its staff. The report shows that kindergartens need more staff with Sami language skills. The panel proposes that the language resource centres assist local authorities in offering Sami language kindergarten provision.

Recruiting men to work in kindergartens

Equality and equity should form the basis for all activity and pedagogy in kindergarten. As well as enabling necessary competence development with a view to promoting equality, the stakeholders should also strive for kindergarten staff to reflect diversity in society in respect of gender and ethnicity. In 2016 around half of all kindergartens had male employees. In total, 9% of core staff and 8% of head teachers are men. 14% of those graduating from the kindergarten teacher training programmes in 2016 were men.

Play Resources is an example of a recruitment programme designed to attract more males to the profession in the long term.

The project has spread to the whole country and aims to give boys of lower secondary school age a positive experience of working in a kindergarten. The boys who are offered work in a kindergarten are asked to take an active part in playing with the children on the children's own terms. As play resources, the boys are assigned a male mentor. The county governor of Oppland, Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education, the Centre for Equality and the Eastern Norway Research Institute have launched a research and innovation project to investigate what it takes to recruit men to work in kindergartens.





Focus areas

The competence strategy contains four focus areas that provide general guidance for competence development in the kindergarten sector. The focus areas are based on the objectives of the Kindergarten Act and should support the implementation of the framework plan. The Norwegian kindergarten tradition is built on an holistic pedagogical approach and on respect for the intrinsic value of childhood.

The focus areas should be seen in the context of ongoing nationwide initiatives. The national campaigns for STEM subjects, languages and anti-bullying aim to strengthen kindergarten practices in key areas during the strategy period. Once the national campaigns have been concluded, they can be continued as part of the focus areas of the strategy.

Leadership is key to all four focus areas. Leadership and leadership skills are vital if kindergartens are to develop as organisations and develop their staff's competencies. The head teacher and pedagogical leader should oversee the competence development process within the four focus areas and in the day-to-day work with the children. The focus areas should provide guidance for kindergarten-based competence development, but there is also room for local needs and adaptation. The focus areas also set the direction for further training for assistants and skilled workers, tertiary training programmes in childhood and youth development, continuing education for kindergarten teachers, new master programmes and leadership training for head teachers.

The focus areas are:

- Kindergartens as pedagogical undertakings
- An inclusive environment for care, play, learning and formative development
- Language and communication
- Core values

Focus areas should be chosen on the basis of each kindergarten's individual needs. Below follows a brief description of each focus area with suggested topics to help exemplify each area. The list of topics is not exhaustive. The topics should be seen in context and may be applicable to more than one focus area.

Kindergartens as pedagogical undertakings

This focus area aims to support the framework plan's stipulation that kindergartens should be pedagogical undertakings that need to be planned and evaluated. Initiatives within this focus area should address the kindergarten's pedagogical practices and how development and change processes are managed. Kindergartens should systematically assess whether their practices are conducive to promoting the core values of kindergartens and whether the intentions of the framework plan are being fulfilled in practice.

Potential topics could be:

- Development and change processes in the kindergarten
- Mentoring
- Observation, planning, evaluation and documentation
- Child participation
- How inclusive and equitable provision is enabled
- Early intervention and cross-disciplinary co-operation
- Work on the learning areas
- Digital practices in the kindergarten

Communication and language

Language stimulation is a key task in any kindergarten. The children should encounter and be part of a rich and varied language environment that involves physical, aesthetic and verbal forms of expression. Language and communication skills are vital to being able to communicate with others and to participate in play. The new framework plan provides clearer instructions on how kindergartens should work with communication and language. Supporting the children's language acquisition is a central part of life in kindergarten. Staff can observe, document and evaluate the language environment and the language of individual children in order to create a good language environment and provide adapted language stimulation for all children.

Potential topics could be:

- The language environment in the kindergarten
- The design of the physical environment and its impact on language activity
- How the youngest children express themselves
- Non-verbal forms of communication
- The impact of language on relationships, friendships, play and learning
- Language development in minority language children
- Language development in Sami children
- Linguistic diversity as an enrichment for the entire group of children
- Language development and problems

An inclusive environment for care, play, learning and formative development

This focus area aims to help staff create a good environment for caring, play, learning and formative development in line with the provisions of the framework plan. Kindergartens should make allowances for the children's differing abilities, perspectives and experiences and help to ensure that the children, together with others, develop a positive relationship with themselves and confidence in their own abilities. Kindergartens should contribute to the children's well-being, happiness, attainment and feeling of self-worth. Kindergartens should help ensure smooth transitions between home and kindergarten, transitions in kindergarten, and transitions from kindergarten to school. Initiatives in this focus area should boost staff's ability to prevent, identify, stop and act on discrimination, exclusion, bullying, harassment and inappropriate patterns of interaction, and they should promote a good and safe kindergarten environment.

Potential topics could be:

- Sense of security, belonging and well-being
- Friendships and social competence
- Inclusivity
- Transitions
- Facilitating play
- The physical environment
- Facilitating varied and explorative learning processes
- Progression
- Understanding identity in a Sami perspective
- Adapting provision for children in need of additional support
- Preventing, identifying, stopping and acting on bullying and exclusion

Core values

The framework plan contains exhaustive provisions on the contents and tasks of kindergartens. The core values of kindergartens should be promulgated, practised and manifest in every aspect of a kindergarten's pedagogical practices. This should take place through engagement and interaction with each child and the group of children. All kindergartens must base their activities on the core values set out in the Kindergarten Act and international conventions that Norway has signed up to. Kindergartens should promote democracy, diversity and mutual respect, equality, sustainable development, life skills and good health. This focus area aims to help create a shared understanding of how these values can be converted into everyday pedagogical practice and ensure that all children are able to participate in and be part of the kindergarten community.

Potential topics could be:

- Children and childhood
- Democracy
- Diversity and mutual respect
- Equity and equality
- Sustainable development
- Life skills and health

National initiatives

The maths, sciences and technology strategy. National strategy for maths, sciences and technology in kindergarten, primary and secondary education (2015–2019): The strategy aims to increase interest, motivation and competence in STEM subjects in kindergartens and schools. So-called *science municipalities* are a key aspect of the strategy. Science municipalities receive academic and financial support for network-building for kindergarten and school teachers. The networks are designed to boost competences and improve the work and co-operation taking place around STEM subjects in kindergartens and schools. Annual action plans describe and demonstrate correlations between new and existing national initiatives, and they propose local initiatives in kindergartens and schools. The action plans also provide an overview of available tools and resources. <https://www.udir.no/kvalitet-og-kompetanse/nasjonale-satsinger/realfagsstrategien/>

Inclusivity in kindergartens and schools: The government's campaign against bullying emphasises what kindergartens and schools can do to create good and inclusive communities for children and young people. For example, a competence package has been developed to better enable staff to prevent, identify and act on bullying in kindergartens, schools and the wider community.

The learning environment project offers direct support and guidance from external advisors to those in need of particular support. Conferences are also being held for those wanting some extra help. The scheme involves joint conferences, development in the workplace, learning networks and support from local resource persons. An online course for all employees has been developed for kindergartens and schools looking to obtain additional competences. Read more about the competence initiative here:

<https://www.udir.no/kvalitet-og-kompetanse/nasjonale-satsinger/tilbud-om-kompetanseutvikling-miljo-og-mobbing/>

Language Trails – national strategy for language, reading and writing (2016–2019). The *Language and Reading Activities*

competence development programme: The national Language Trails strategy involves a number of competence development packages. The packages aim to increase awareness amongst kindergarten staff of children's language development and learning and give them the competences they need to aid the children's language learning through reading activities. <http://sprakloyper.uis.no/>

Understanding neglect, violence and sexual abuse against children

Kindergartens should be a safe space for play, personal expression and learning. The government wants to raise awareness amongst kindergarten staff of violence and abuse, cf. the *national plan to combat physical and sexual abuse* (2017–2021), and ensure that children are given age-appropriate information about their bodies, identity and feelings. Kindergartens must be conscious of the fact that some children may be victims of neglect, violence and sexual abuse, and they must know how to prevent/detect it. The new framework plan makes it clear that kindergarten staff should observe and evaluate the children's care situation

and personal circumstances and take action where necessary. All kindergarten employees have a duty of disclosure to child protection services (cf. Section 22 of the Kindergarten Act), and they need to be aware of this duty. The duty to avert a criminal offence also applies to all citizens generally (cf. Section 196 of the Penal Code). The new framework plan emphasises that kindergartens should help the children become comfortable with their bodies, gain a positive view of themselves, get to know their feelings, become conscious of their right to decide over their own bodies and develop respect for the boundaries of others.

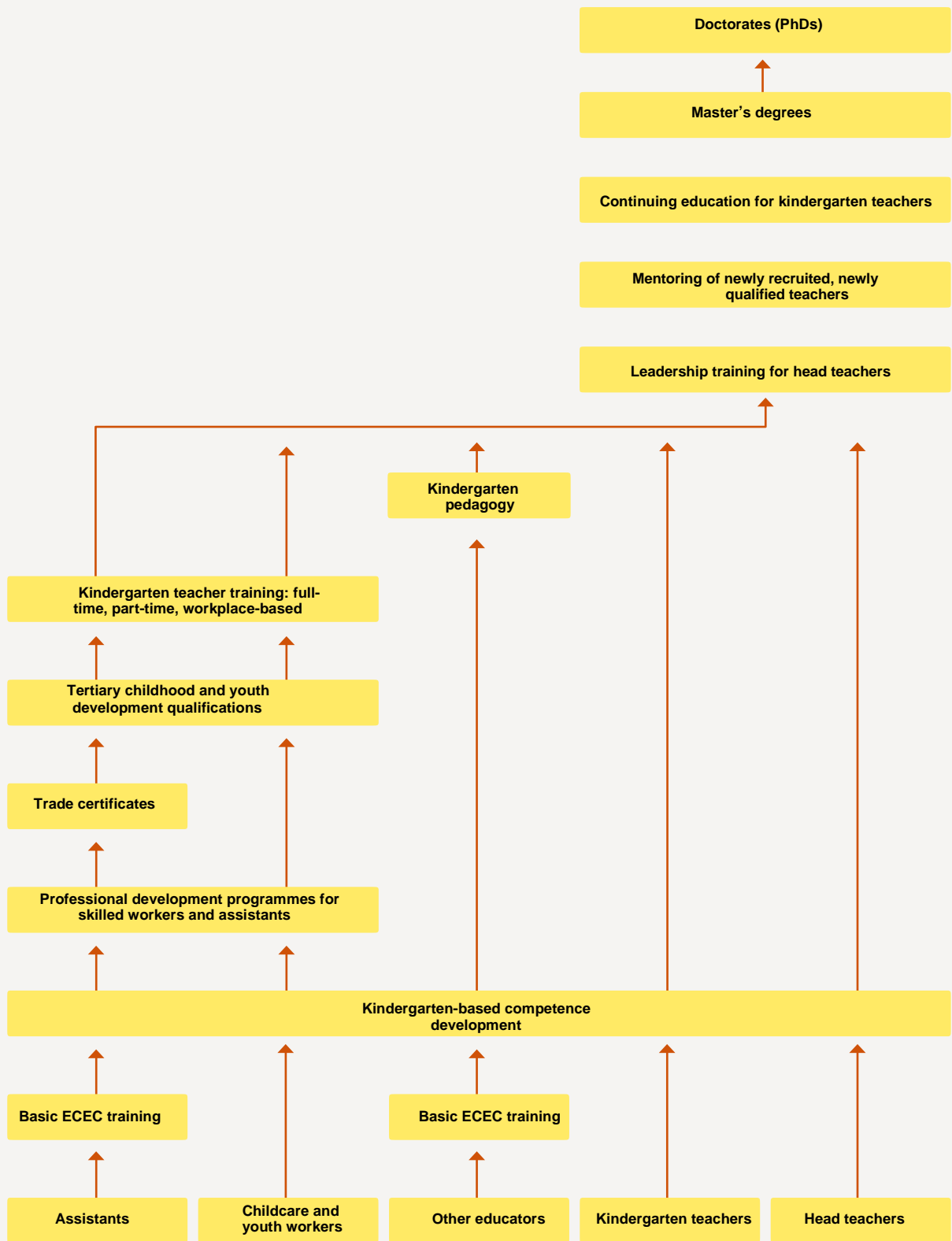
PART 2 Career paths

The government provides funding for competence development initiatives for kindergarten staff. These initiatives should help reach the goals set out in the strategy and include both individual and collective competence development for all categories of employees. Evaluations show that the initiatives contained in the strategy have worked well, and all of them will be continued in the next strategy period. The particular competence needs of Sami kindergartens must be met when developing the initiatives further. Predictability is necessary to allow stakeholders to draw up a long-term plan for which competence development initiatives to implement. The principles of the strategy must be observed

when launching the initiatives. The initiatives are described below and are included in the summary of career paths and development opportunities for all staff.

The funding given to kindergarten owners whose employees are involved in competence development programmes should be used to support their participation and enable the employees to complete their studies. The government's annual budget processes may impact the further development and funding of competence development measures.





Figur 2: Karriereveier



Summary of competence development initiatives

Competence development initiatives for all staff

Kindergarten-based competence development

Kindergarten-based competence development involves all staff and takes place in each individual kindergarten. The kindergarten owner is responsible for initiatives developed locally in partnership with relevant research communities, the kindergarten authority and even other

kindergartens and across municipalities. The initiatives should be institutionalised with the pedagogical leader, head teacher and owner, and they should help instigate a development process involving all staff in the kindergarten irrespective of their qualifications. This initiative is key to the further development of regional competence development schemes.

Competence development for kindergarten teachers, other educators and head teachers

Continuing education for kindergarten teachers

Continuing education programmes for kindergarten teachers have been designed to help increase the proportion of kindergarten teachers with master's degrees in line with the priorities of the framework plan. The programme aims to enable kindergarten teachers to better plan and carry out research and development. The Directorate for Education and Training has been working with universities and university colleges to create continuing education programmes for kindergarten teachers within four different specialisations: learning environment and pedagogical leadership; science and mathematics; language development and learning; and student teacher mentoring. The programme generates 30 credits and is offered part-time. Additional disciplines may be added to the programme. New continuing education programmes should be organised as modules that could form part of a master's degree.

Leadership training for head teachers

Leadership training for head teachers is a continuing education programme for kindergarten heads and assistant heads. The programme aims to raise quality standards in kindergartens by boosting pedagogical and administrative leadership skills. The programme generates 30 credits and is offered part-time over three semesters. The programme may form part of a master's degree in leadership. A module-based continuing education programme for leaders who have completed their head teacher training will be considered during the strategy period.

Additional qualifications in kindergarten pedagogy

Additional qualifications in kindergarten pedagogy are primarily aimed at those with other teaching qualifications who wish to retrain as pedagogical leaders in kindergartens. The programme generates 60 credits, 30 of which in kindergarten pedagogy and 30 in early years pedagogy. The additional qualifications can also be obtained by existing kindergarten teachers as a part-time continuing education programme.

Mentoring of newly recruited, newly qualified teachers

The mentoring scheme is intended to ensure a better transition between training and profession in that newly qualified teachers gain increased confidence in and awareness of their own abilities and feel more comfortable in the role. Newly qualified teachers also bring knowledge to the table that can encourage innovation in the professional learning community. The mentoring of newly qualified teachers contributes to competence development amongst kindergarten staff.

It is the kindergarten owner's responsibility to provide mentoring for newly qualified teachers. Working with the stakeholders, the government will be preparing a national framework for a mentoring scheme for newly qualified teachers in kindergartens and schools. The national framework will ensure that all newly qualified teachers can benefit from the scheme, that there is room for local adaptation, and that it is better co-ordinated with other forms of professional development in kindergartens and schools.

Master's degrees

The kindergarten teacher training programmes and other pedagogical qualifications at bachelor level qualify the candidates for various master programmes offering a broader insight into kindergarten pedagogy and specialisation in particular areas. Universities and university colleges offer both masters in kindergarten pedagogy particularly aimed at early years and more subject-specific masters aimed at multiple professions. The master programmes generate 120 credits and are offered as both full-time and part-time courses. Universities and university colleges should design their master programmes as modules in order to accommodate continuing education courses for kindergarten teachers.

Doctorates (PhDs)

A master's degree qualifies the candidate to pursue a PhD. A variety of PhD programmes in early childhood education and care are offered by both Norwegian and foreign universities and university colleges. The schemes for public sector PhDs and industrial PhDs help improve co-operation between kindergartens and research institutions, and they produce researchers with knowledge that is relevant to the sector.

Competence development for childcare and youth workers and assistants

Workplace-based kindergarten teacher training

Workplace-based kindergarten teacher training (ABLU) is a programme for assistants and childcare and youth workers who wish to qualify as kindergarten teachers. The ABLU programme is a part-time course running over four years and generating 180 credits. The students are required to work in a kindergarten during their studies. The kindergarten serves as a learning arena, and there is close co-operation between the educational institution and field of practice. The option of combining work and study helps recruit students who do not wish to study full time. Funding for kindergarten owners is available to ensure that the students complete the training programme.

Trade certificates for childcare and youth workers and practice candidates

Trade certificates obtained through the practice candidate scheme are aimed at assistants with long-standing experience of working in kindergartens. The scheme enables assistants to sit the apprenticeship exam in order to formalise their competencies. The practice candidate scheme allows candidates to obtain a trade certificate while still working, the practice element being made up of their own workplace practice. Staff with trade certificates in childcare and youth work possess valuable skills for working in a kindergarten. More childcare and youth workers are therefore encouraged to seek work in kindergartens, and assistants who lack formal qualifications are urged to obtain a trade certificate.

Tertiary training programmes in childhood and youth development for kindergarten staff

Tertiary training programmes in childhood and youth development offer additional qualifications for skilled workers and assistants with at least five years' experience of working with children. These vocational programmes build on the students' upper secondary education or training or similar practical experience. The programmes allow candidates to pursue one of three specialisms: children with special needs; language, multilingualism and multicultural competence; and early years education (ages 0–3). The national committee for tertiary vocational education in the healthcare, childhood and youth development sectors (NFFHO) has drawn up nationwide plans for all three specialisms. The tertiary education programme runs part-time over two years and generates 60 vocational credits.

Professional development for skilled workers and assistants

The professional development programme for skilled workers and assistants generates 15 credits and is run by the university sector. The aim is to give skilled workers and assistants an insight into the kindergarten tradition and professional ethics and to gain experience of pedagogical reflection. The county governor and regional network / collaborative forum will consider whether there is a need locally for this initiative.

Basic ECEC training

This initiative is aimed at assistants who lack skills in kindergarten pedagogy. The kindergarten owner is responsible for ensuring that all staff without skills and kindergarten experience are introduced to the social mandate, responsibilities and content of kindergartens. This competence initiative will be run locally as a partnership between relevant training providers and should be followed up on by the kindergarten retrospectively. A national framework for the initiative will be drawn up during the strategy period in consultation with the relevant parties.



Published by:

Ministry of Education and Research

This publication is available at www.regjeringen.no.

Publication code: F-4438

Front page photo and photos on pages 4, 15, 16, 20 and 22: Sveinung Uddu Ystad

Other photos: Bård Gundersen (pp. 6 and 11) Tine Poppe (p. 9) and Erika Larsen Herding (p. 26) Design and editing: kord.no

Printed by: Norwegian Government Security and Service
Organisation 09/2017 – copies 200