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Smooth Transition from kindergarten to primary school



Questions and Issues

- How does the Norwegian system help young children to transit to primary school?
- How does the system support those who do not attend preschool to be ready for school?
- How do primary school teachers and curriculum help children to be «on the same page»?
- Do preschool and primary teachers receive training together?
- Are preschool and primary curriculum developed in a coordinated manner?

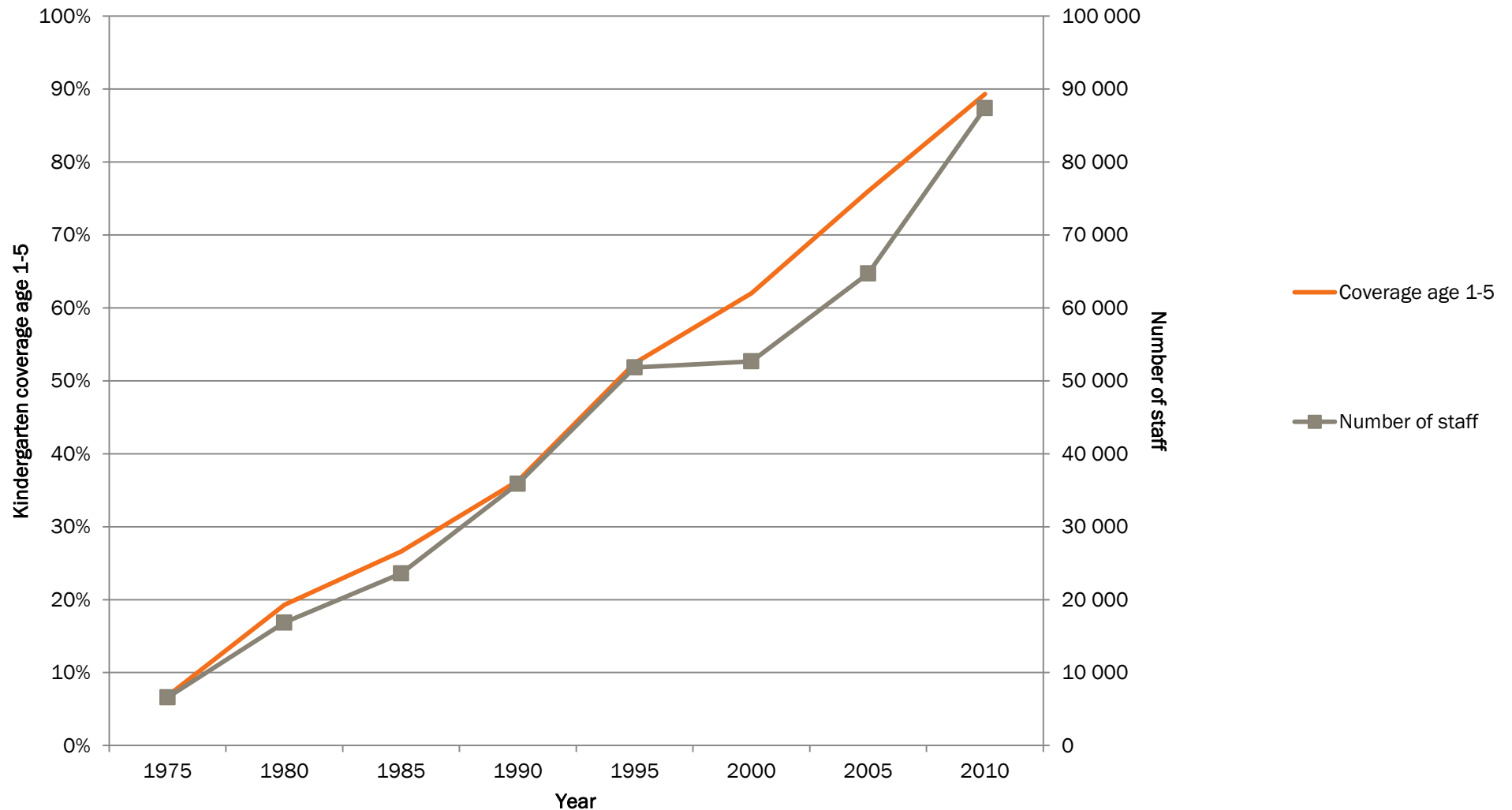
Facts about the Norwegian kindergarten

On 1 January 2009, the government introduced the **legal right** guaranteeing each child a place in kindergarten. All children who turn 1 before August 31 the year the parents apply, have a right to a place.

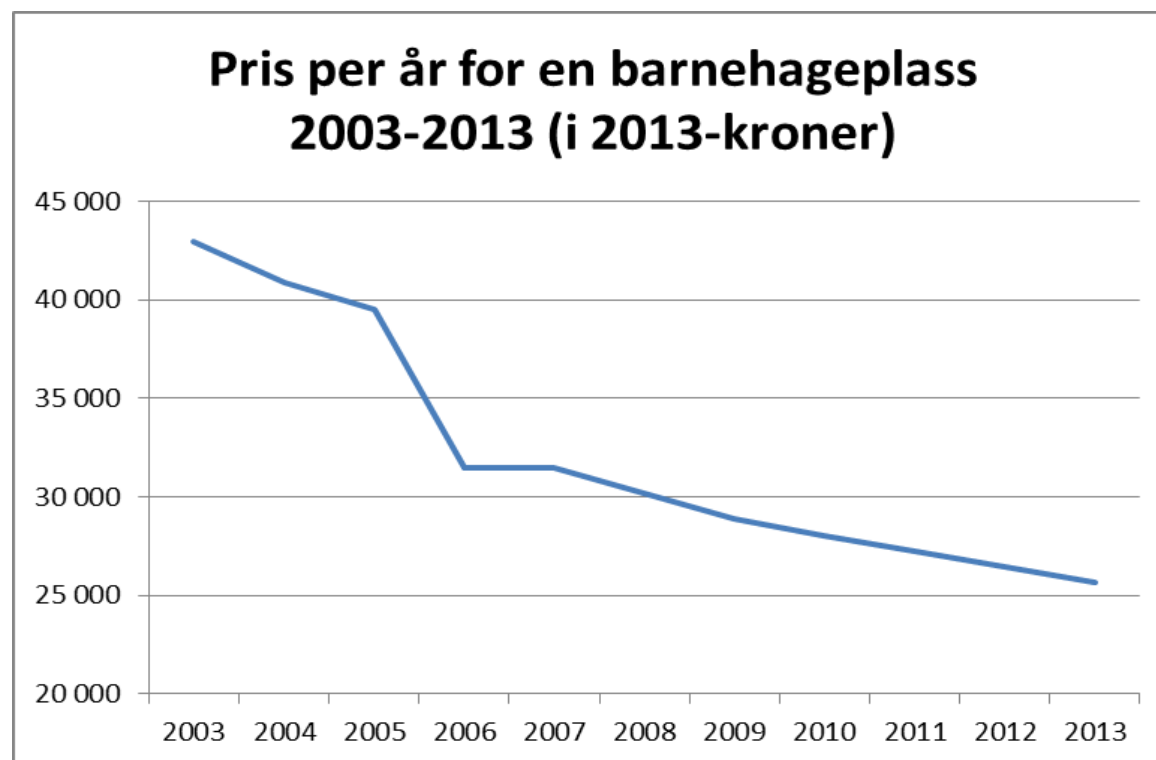
- Children in kindergarten: **283, 000**
- Coverage for children 1-5 year olds: **90 %**
- Coverage 3 - 5 year olds **96,6 %**
- Average attendance per week: **35 hours**
- Number of kindergartens: **6,469**
- Ownership: approx. **50 % private, 50 % public**
- Employed in kindergarten: **88,800 people**

Children start compulsory school the year they turn six.

A sector which has grown..



Parental Fees per year



The Kindergarten Act - § 1 Purpose

- The Kindergarten shall, in collaboration and close understanding with the **home**, safeguard the children's need for **care** and **play**, and promote **learning** and **formation** as a basis for an allround development.



The Kindergarten shall be based on fundamental values in the Christian and humanist heritage and tradition, such as respect for **human dignity** and **nature**, on **intellectual freedom**, **charity**, **forgiveness**, **equality** and **solidarity**, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in **human rights**.

The Kindergarten Act - § 1 Purpose

- The children shall be able to develop their creative zest, sense of wonder and need to investigate. They shall learn to take care of themselves, each other and nature. The children shall develop **basic knowledge and skills**. They shall have the right to **participate** in accordance with their age and abilities.
- The Kindergartens shall meet the children with trust and respect, and acknowledge the intrinsic value of childhood.
- They shall contribute to well-being and joy in play and learning, and shall be a challenging and safe place for community life and friendship.
- The Kindergarten shall promote **democracy and equality** and counteract all forms of discrimination.

The Education Act - § 1 Purpose

- Education and training in schools and training establishments shall, in collaboration and agreement with the **home**, open doors to the world and give the pupils and apprentices historical and cultural insight and anchorage.
- Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for **human dignity** and **nature**, on **intellectual freedom**, charity, forgiveness, **equality** and **solidarity**, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in **human rights**.
- Education and training shall help increase the knowledge and understanding of the national cultural heritage and our common international cultural traditions.

The Education Act - § 1 Purpose

- Education and training shall provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions. They are to promote **democracy**, equality and scientific thinking
- The pupils and apprentices shall develop **knowledge, skills and attitudes** so that they can master their lives and can take part in working life and society. They shall have the opportunity to be creative, committed and inquisitive.
- The pupils and apprentices shall learn to **think critically and act ethically** and with environmental awareness. They shall have joint responsibility and the right to **participate**.



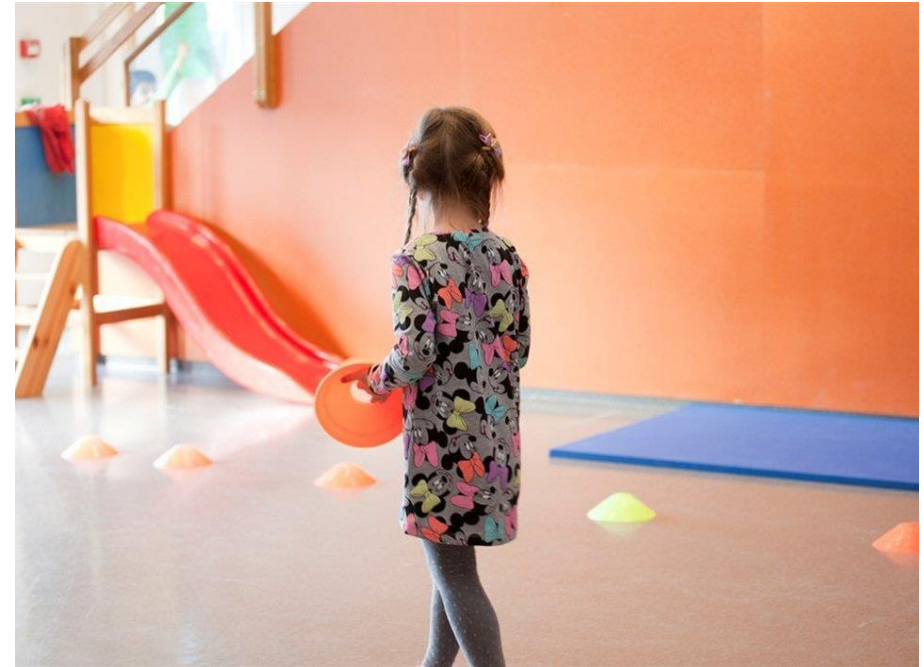
- Schools and training establishments shall meet the pupils and apprentices with trust, **respect** and demands, and give them challenges that promote formation and the desire to learn. All forms of discrimination shall be combated.

«The Image of the Child»; to *be* and to *become*

- The kindergarten tradition in Norway is founded on a **holistic** approach to care, upbringing, play and learning and respect for the value of childhood in itself.
- 2005: Responsibility for ECEC was moved from the Ministry of Family Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Research
- The **awareness of ECEC in a life-long learning perspective** has led to emphasizing a pedagogical approach to everyday activities in the lives of children.
- Studies, published in the OECD report Starting Strong II from 2006, show that the best learning results are achieved when **cognitive and emotional learning processes run in parallel**. This goes well with the Nordic kindergarten tradition that emphasizes play, social skills and a comprehensive understanding of learning.

Smooth transition

- transitions can support or undermine a child's development, self-esteem and life skills
- the context of the child's environment, family, the peers, kindergartens and teachers in school.



- children need to be secure and to experience close and warm relationships with adults to be able to take on new challenges

«School ready» vs «Life ready»

The AcE Programme (Pascal and Bertram 2009) sets out what a child needs early for lifelong learning and will make him 'life ready' rather than 'school ready'.

1. Language development and communication skills
2. Attitudes and dispositions
3. Social competence and self esteem
4. Emotional well being



- *Language in Kindergarten*
- *Children's wellbeing*

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Legislation

- ❑ The **national government** is in charge of legislation and funding; it establishes the *framework*, and has also established a system of supervision.
- ❑ The **municipality** is the local authority for kindergartens. The municipality shall provide guidance and ensure that kindergartens are operated in accordance with current rules
- ❑ The **owner** (private and public) of a kindergarten shall run the undertaking in accordance with current statutes and rules

Legislation

- **Kindergartens shall, in collaboration with schools, facilitate the transition of children from a kindergarten to year one and to any after-school groups. This shall be done in close collaboration with the children's homes. Plans for the children's transition from kindergarten to school must be specified in the kindergarten's annual plan.**
- **If the kindergarten is to provide the school with information about an individual child, parents must consent. Parents must be given access to, and be able to influence, the exchange of information**
- **The municipality may decide that there shall be joint coordinating committees for municipal kindergartens and primary schools.**

Annual plans Example A

Parents and kindergarten in collaboration fill in a form and deliver it to the school before school starts. This is to ensure that schools get the information they need to be well prepared to meet the child. *Filling in the form is voluntary.*

In spring the kindergarten visit the local schools.



A parent meeting for parents of “school starters”.

Representatives from schools inform about the school and the expectations they have for parents and children. They answer questions parents have about starting school

Example B

Pre-school club

- On Mondays the oldest children have Pre-school club with Hilde-Emilie.
- Until July they will be playing with letters and numbers. We will also focus on raising hands, concentration, games and working in groups without too much adult- intervention.
- We read books with chapters and talk about difficult words and phrases.



- After Christmas, the children learn traffic rules. With the help of the hand-doll *Tarkus* they learn how to walk in traffic.
- We will also visit other preschool groups to socialize by meeting new adults and children.

Example C

- **The last year in kindergarten, the oldest children join the *Maxi-club*.**
- **Here they have different projects, themes and activities tailored to the oldest.**
- **We want children to feel proud of being the oldest, and we want to help ensure that children are prepared for school**
- **We go to ski school and school camps with the Maxi -Club**
- **There is a meeting for «Maxi-Club parents» in January.**
- **We emphasise independence training the last year in kindergarten.**

Recommendations Kindergarten - school coordination

- Visit days where five to six year olds in kindergarten visit 1st grade pupils to get familiar with the school
- Joint activities
- Coherence and progression in learning content in kindergartens and schools
- Teachers in kindergartens and schools have common meeting places for information exchange, anticipation clarifications, skills development and joint planning



The first day of school is a milestone and should be experienced like this. To know the thrill and excitement around the school, is important

Recommendations

Parents' involvement

Parents need to be informed about the school's expectations of participation and cooperation, and the school must listen to parents' expectations.

If the kindergarten will provide information about individual children, parents must consent to this.

A municipality website showing how parents can seek advice and guidance.

Mentoring

During the first school year many schools use different schemes for “mentoring”. The 1st grade child gets support from someone who knows the school already, often a pupil from grade 6 or 7 who can help the child get familiar with school routines and establish and develop new friendships.

Coherence and collaboration in curricula

The Framework Plan

Kindergartens - Learning Areas:

1. Communication, language and text
2. Body, movement and health
3. Art, culture and creativity
4. Nature, environment and technology
5. Ethics, religion and philosophy
6. Local community and society
7. Numbers, spaces and shapes

Curricula Primary School

Subjects:

1. Norwegian/Mother tongue teaching
2. Physical education
3. Arts and crafts/Music
4. Natural science
5. Religion, philosophies and ethics
6. Social studies
7. Mathematics

How do primary school teachers and curriculum help children to be «on the same page»?

In school there is the principle of “adapted education”; education shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil. In school curricula there is set out goals for each student's competence, but the school and the teacher has the freedom to make the necessary didactic choices. Some reach the goal at 6, some at 7 (or later)

Example: **Competence aims after Year 2**

”The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- count to 100, divide and compose amounts up to 10, put together and divide groups of ten
- double and halve”

In Kindergarten there is not set out aims for the individual child. All children shall be seen with their resources and get support adapted to their needs. Kindergarten's content shall be adapted to the individual child's age, abilities and development. Children's experiences and interests and their motivation to learn is an important starting point for practice.

Immigrant children

- Particular support and guidance might be necessary, especially if it is the first time parents have children in school.
- Some minority children will need special arrangements in terms of language.
- Arrangements and guidelines around religious and cultural distinctiveness must also be included in the expectation clarifications.



Using **interpreters** may be necessary in the communication between the child, parents and staff to insure common understanding and good cooperation

Children with special needs

Education Act § 5-7

Special educational assistance for children under compulsory school age

Children under compulsory school age with a specific need for special educational assistance, have the right to such assistance. The assistance shall include an offer of the provision of advice for parents.

The assistance may be attached to kindergartens, schools, social and medical institutions, etc., or be organised as separate measures.

The assistance may also be provided by the educational and psychological counselling service or by another expert body.

Children that do not attend Kindergarten

Open kindergartens. Parents who stay home with their child, can take their child to the open kindergarten.

- ✓ The child can play with other children
- ✓ Parents can socialise and build networks within the community
- ✓ Parents can seek advice with other parents and staff.
- ✓ These kindergartens can serve as a recruiting venue for ordinary kindergartens
- ✓ They can have an impact when it comes to early intervention with children with special needs
- ✓ Migrant children can take part in a good and stimulating linguistic environment.

Children that do not attend Kindergarten

Municipal **Health Services** is the only service that meets all preschool children whether they attend kindergarten or not. The health services

- ✓ are responsible for informing parents about the importance of going to kindergarten
- ✓ encourage and motivate to apply for kindergarten.
- ✓ must have contact with each child several times before the child starts school
- ✓ have a unique opportunity to gain an overview of all the children's language skills, as well as trends over time
- ✓ it is therefore recommended that the services systematically observe the child's communication, comprehension and spoken language

Teacher Education



- Kindergarten Teacher and Primary Teacher education have very different structures.
- The requirement for differentiation in primary teacher education is strong, and common teaching of these two groups of students is probably difficult to arrange in a meaningful way.
- Kindergarten teacher training is organized around interdisciplinary knowledge areas, primary teacher education is unionized and has a completely different device.



Utdanningsdirektoratet