

The Danish Action Plan for implementation of the European Child Guarantee

30 April 2022



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1. Introduction

The Council Recommendation on the establishment of a European Child Guarantee ('the Child Guarantee'), adopted by the Council on 14 June 2021, aims to prevent and combat social exclusion and to ensure access to 'key services' for children in need.

Children in need are defined in the Council Recommendation as persons under the age of 18 years at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Key services denote services that are essential for the well-being and development of their social, cognitive and emotional skills.

Article 4 of the Child Guarantee

Member States are recommended to guarantee for children in need:

- a) *effective and free access to high quality early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare;*
- b) *effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing.*

The Council Recommendation calls on Member States, among other things, to ensure that children in need have effective access free of charge to: day-care; education and school-based activities and a healthy meal every school day; healthcare and effective access to it; healthy nutrition and adequate housing.

The Council Recommendation defines 'effective access' as a situation in which services are readily available, affordable, accessible, of good quality, provided in a timely manner and where the potential users are aware of their existence, as well as of entitlements to use them.

'Effective and free access' are defined as a situation in which services are readily available, accessible, of good quality, provided in a timely manner and where the potential users are aware of their existence, as well as of entitlements to use them, and provided free of charge, either by organising and providing such services or by adequate benefits to cover the costs or the charges of the services, or in such a way that financial circumstances will not pose an obstacle to equal access.

The Council Recommendation is based on Articles 151 and 153 TFEU, which respectively deal with the objectives of the EU and its Member States to promote improved living conditions and proper social protection and combat social exclusion, and to provide a legal basis for the EU to support and complement the activities of the Member States with a view to achieving these objectives. The Council Recommendation does not impose any legal obligations on Member States.

The Danish Government supports the Council Recommendation's ambition to combat the social exclusion of children and child poverty in general, and supports the general need to secure proper living conditions for children in Europe.

During negotiations on the Recommendation, importance was given to ensuring that the Recommendation was balanced and flexible and fully respected Member States' national competences and their varied national circumstances and approaches in areas such as day-care, education and school-based activities, and nutrition, healthcare and living conditions for vulnerable children.

In this Danish Action Plan, emphasis has therefore been placed on adapting the Child Guarantee to Danish circumstances. This applies both to the consultation process, monitoring and to the description of each key service.



Drawing up an Action Plan

The Danish Action Plan for the implementation of the Child Guarantee was drawn up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens [*Social- og Ældreministeriet*] in cooperation with the Ministry of Children and Education [*Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet*], the Ministry of Health [*Sundhedsministeriet*], the Ministry of Employment [*Beskæftigelsesministeriet*], the Ministry of the Interior and Housing [*Indenrigs- og Boligministeriet*], the Ministry of Immigration and Integration [*Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet*], the Ministry of Culture [*Kulturministeriet*], the Ministry of Taxation [*Skatteministeriet*] and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries [*Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri*].

A draft Action Plan has been consulted by a wide range of organisations dealing with children's perspectives, rights and conditions.

In adapting the Child Guarantee, emphasis has been placed on the fact that the consultation follows established fora and processes, including consultation lists from relevant national initiatives and the EU Special Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

In line with comparable national processes, this means that the interests of vulnerable children are addressed through organisations dealing with children's perspectives, rights and conditions.

The consultation list is set out in Annex 1.

We would point out that section 11 on the rights of Ukrainian children was added following the consultation phase.

Content of the Action Plan

In line with the Council Recommendation, section 2 of the Action Plan initially identifies relevant groups of vulnerable children, together with the existing knowledge of these groups.

In order to present a true and fair picture of the overall measures for children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, sections 3 and 4 give an account of both social benefits and measures targeting children, and relevant social security benefits. Both complement and support key services.

The subsequent sections 5-8 set out access to the four key services.

As a complement to the four key services, section 9 reviews culture and leisure, which in a Danish context represent an essential complement to the four key services.

Finally, section 10 sets out specific actions relating to COVID-19, while section 11 describes securing the rights of Ukrainian children.

The concluding section 12 provides an account of monitoring of the Child Guarantee target groups going forward.



2. Knowledge of target groups

It follows from the Child Guarantee that the national action plans should initially identify relevant groups of vulnerable children, together with existing knowledge on these groups.

Vulnerable children and pupils in ECEC and elementary school

In Denmark, the vast majority of vulnerable children and young people attend regular ECEC and elementary school. Thus, it is provided by the Danish Act on ECEC (*Dagtilbudsloven*), that ECEC should prevent negative social heritage and exclusion. Similarly, 10 years' school attendance is compulsory in Denmark, whereby all pupils have the right to be admitted to their local primary and lower secondary school [*grundskole*], which provides education free of charge. The basic principle of the Danish *folkeskole* legislation is that all pupils have the right to an education that meets their needs.

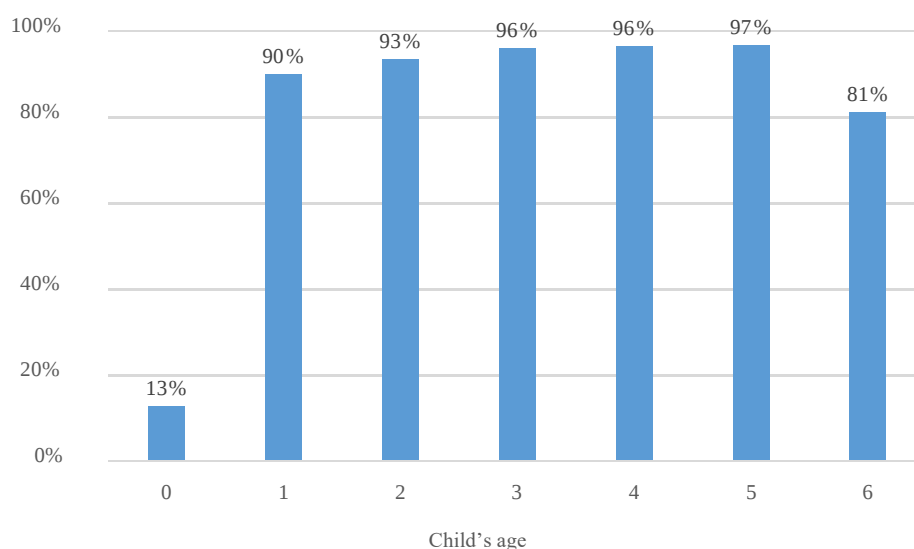
There is no unique definition of vulnerability among children and young people in Denmark. However, it is provided by the preliminary work to the Act on ECEC that vulnerable children means a complex group of children, e.g. children with low socioeconomic backgrounds, children with physical or mental disabilities, children at risk of being excluded from the community, etc.'. The Act of Public Compulsory Education [*Folkeskoleloven*] does not use apply the same definition for vulnerable children. Vulnerability is often used in practice to cover both pupils with special needs, children and young people to whom social measures apply and pupils from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The Expert Group on the Inclusion Survey of 2016 viewed the group of pupils with special needs as requiring special attention over shorter or longer periods in the context of the school's learning environment and communities, or greater efforts to be made in their professional and social development and well-being.

In Denmark, the belief is that ECECs and schools serve as a preventive measure in that it gives children and pupils a place within the children's communities and thus prevents the need for social interventions later in life. Data describing children and pupils in ECEC and schools is presented in the below.

ECEC

The vast majority of children in Denmark are enrolled in ECEC between the ages of 1 and 6 years. Figure 1 shows the coverage rate, i.e. the proportion of children enrolled in ECEC, broken down by age. The coverage rate is highest for 5-year-old children and generally increases towards school age. The coverage rate is lowest among children under 1 year of age, given that on average children are not enrolled in ECEC until the age of 10-11 months.

Figure 1. Coverage rate broken down by age, 2020

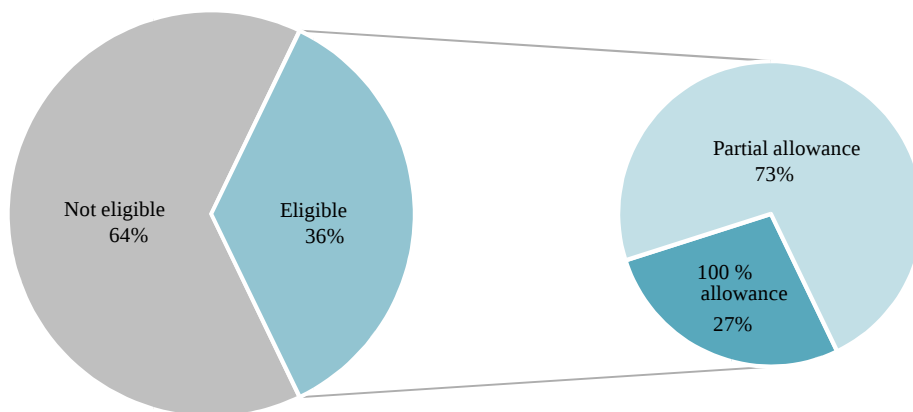




NB: The coverage rate is calculated as the number of children enrolled as a proportion of the total number of children of each age group. There is a drop in the figures at the end of September 2020. The number of 5 and 6-year-olds has been corrected for children attending school in 2020. The graph covers children who receive subsidies to attend municipal childcare, municipal and independent day-care institutions, private institutions, pooling schemes, private care services and parents who receive an allowance for caring for their own child. However, children in private care arrangements includes only children who receive an allowance for such care. The figures do not include children in private childcare, childcare under the Social Services Act [Serviceleven] or USFO, as the Ministry of Children and Education (BUVM) does not have sufficient data on this.

Source: The Ministry of Children and Education, based on register data from Statistics Denmark [Danmarks Statistik].

Figure 2. Proportion of children enrolled in childcare services eligible for an income-based free place allowance



NB: There is a drop in the figures at the end of September 2020. The chart covers children aged between 0 and 6 years in municipal day-care, municipal and independent day-care institutions, private institutions and pooling schemes. The figures do not include children in private childcare, childcare under the Social Services Act [Serviceleven] or USFO, as the Ministry of Children and Education (BUVM) does not have sufficient data on this. The free place allowance is calculated on the basis of the income of the household where the child has his or her registered address. For children in care, household income is set at 0, which means that these children are automatically eligible for a free place allowance.

Source: The Ministry of Children and Education, based on data from Statistics Denmark.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of children enrolled in ECEC in 2020 who were eligible for a free place allowance. This shows that 36% of children enrolled in ECEC in 2020 were eligible for a free place allowance. The chart also shows that 27% of these children were eligible for a 100% free space allowance, whereas the remaining 73% were eligible for a partial free space allowance.

Educational level of children's parents (ECEC)

Table 1 shows the coverage rate broken down by the educational level attained by the child's parents and the age of the child. It can be seen that the coverage rate is lowest among children whose parents' highest educational level attained is elementary school, whereas the coverage rate is more or less the same among children whose parents' highest educational level attained is either upper secondary school or higher education.

Table 1			
Coverage rate by parents' educational level and the child's age, 2020			
	Elementary school*	Upper secondary school	Higher education
0 years	12%	15%	12%
1 year	82%	90%	91%
2 years	89%	94%	94%
3 years	93%	96%	96%
4 years	93%	97%	97%
5 years	93%	97%	97%
6 years	76%	87%	80%



NB: The coverage rate is calculated as the number of children enrolled as a proportion of the total number of children for each educational level and each age group. There is a drop in the figures at the end of September 2020. The graph covers children who receive subsidies to attend municipal childcare and municipal and independent day-care institutions, private institutions, pooling schemes, private care arrangements and parents who receive an allowance for caring for their own child. Pooling schemes come under the category of 'private institutions'. Private care arrangements cover only children who receive an allowance for such care. The figures do not include children in private childcare, childcare under the Social Services Act [*Serviceoven*] or USFO, as the Ministry of Children and Education (BUVM) does not have sufficient data on this. The parents' educational level is based on the parent with the highest educational level attained. *Elementary school includes parents for whom the highest educational level attained is unknown.

Source: The Ministry of Children and Education, based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

Table 2 summarises the children enrolled in ECEC and childcare services broken down according to their parents' highest educational level attained. The table shows that children whose parents have elementary school as the highest educational level attained make up a large proportion of children in municipal day-care institutions. By contrast, children whose parents' highest educational level attained is upper secondary school make up a larger proportion of children in municipal childcare. Independent day-care institutions have the largest proportion of children whose parents have completed a longer period of higher education.

	Elementary school*	Upper secondary school	Higher education
Municipal day-care	7%	36%	56%
Municipal day-care institution	8%	27%	65%
Independent day-care institution	6%	20%	74%
Private institution	5%	27%	68%
Private childcare	3%	32%	65%
Caring for own child	5%	25%	70%
Total	7%	27%	65%

NB: There is a drop in the figures at the end of September 2020. The graph covers children who receive subsidies to attend municipal childcare and municipal and independent day-care institutions, private institutions, pooling schemes, private care services and parents who receive an allowance for caring for their own child. Pooling schemes come under the category of 'private institutions'. Private care arrangements cover only children who receive an allowance for such care. The figures do not include children in private childcare, childcare under the Social Services Act [*Serviceoven*] or USFO, as the Ministry of Children and Education (BUVM) does not have sufficient data on this.

The parents' educational level is based on the parent who has attained the highest educational level.

*Elementary school includes parents for whom the highest educational level attained is unknown.

Source: The Ministry of Children and Education, based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

Distribution of origin among children in ECEC

Table 3 shows the coverage rate broken down by the origin and age of the child. It can be seen from this that the overall coverage is lowest among immigrants, whereas it is highest among Danes. At the same time it is also apparent that the coverage rate is increasing with age regardless of the child's origin.



Table 3
Coverage rate broken down by the child's origin and age, 2020

	Danish	Descendants	Immigrants*
0 years	13%	9%	12%
1 year	92%	78%	49%
2 years	95%	88%	65%
3 years	97%	94%	81%
4 years	97%	95%	85%
5 years	97%	95%	86%
6 years	84%	87%	61%

NB: The coverage rate is calculated as the number of children enrolled as a proportion of the total number of children for each origin and each age group. There is a drop in the figures at the end of September 2020. The graph covers children who receive subsidies to attend municipal childcare and municipal and independent day-care institutions, private institutions, pooling schemes, private care services and parents who receive an allowance for caring for their own child. However, children in private care arrangements includes only children who receive an allowance for such care. Pooling schemes come under the category of 'private institutions'. The figures do not include children in private childcare, childcare under the Social Services Act [*Serviceleven*] or USFO, as the Ministry of Children and Education (BUVM) does not have sufficient data on this. *Immigrants include children whose origin is unknown in Statistics Denmark's population register.

Source: The Ministry of Children and Education, based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

Table 4 summarises the children enrolled in ECEC services broken down according to their origin. The table shows that there is a relatively higher incidence of descendants and immigrants in municipal and independent day-care institutions.

Table 4
Distribution of origin among children in day-care, 2020

	Danish	Descendants	Immigrants*
Municipal day-care	92%	8%	0.3%
Municipal day-care institution	84%	14%	2%
Independent day-care institution	86%	12%	2%
Private institution	92%	7%	2%
Private childcare	96%	3%	1%
Caring for own child	93%	6%	1%
Total	86%	12%	2%

NB: There is a drop in the figures at the end of September 2020. The graph covers children who receive subsidies to attend municipal childcare and municipal and independent day-care institutions, private institutions, pooling schemes, private care services and parents who receive an allowance for caring for their own child. However, children in private care arrangements includes only children who receive an allowance for such care. Pooling schemes come under the category of 'private institutions'. The figures do not include children in private childcare, childcare under the Social Services Act [*Serviceleven*] or USFO, as the Ministry of Children and Education (BUVM) does not have sufficient data on this. Immigrants include children whose origin is unknown in Statistics Denmark's population register.

Source: The Ministry of Children and Education, based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

Elementary school

In the school year 2020/2021, 95.5% of pupils at Danish elementary schools attend standard classes and 4.5% attend special classes.



Educational level of children's parents (elementary school)

8% of pupils in classes 0 to 9 have parents with elementary school as their highest educational level attained, whereas 31 and 61% have parents with upper secondary education or higher education respectively, as the highest educational level attained. In the case of the special classes in primary and special schools, day treatment and nursing homes, and at municipal upper secondary schools and boarding schools, more than half of the pupils have parents whose highest educational level attained is either elementary or upper secondary. By contrast, at independent [*friskole*] and private elementary schools it appears that the proportion of pupils with parents for whom the highest educational level attained is higher education is 72%.

Table 5

Parents' highest educational level attained among elementary school pupils in classes 0 to 9, 2020/2021

	Elementary school*	Upper secondary school	Higher education
Primary and lower secondary school [folkeskole]	9%	33%	58%
<i>Standard classes</i>	8%	32%	59%
<i>Special classes</i>	20%	44%	36%
Special children's schools	17%	40%	43%
Day treatment and nursing homes	26%	42%	32%
Municipal upper secondary schools and boarding schools	25%	48%	27%
Independent and private elementary schools	5%	24%	72%
Total	8%	31%	61%

NB: *Elementary school includes parents for whom the highest educational level attained is unknown. A total of 7 596 pupils have a parent whose highest educational level attained is unknown.

The table covers a total of 641 143 pupils, of whom 508 264 attend primary and lower secondary school, 9 704 special children's schools, 2 733 day treatment and nursing homes, 1 113 municipal upper secondary schools and boarding schools, and 119 329 independent and private elementary schools.

Source: Ministry of Children and Education

Origin among elementary school pupils

87% of pupils in classes 0 to 9 at elementary school are of Danish origin, whereas 8 and 5% are descendants and immigrants respectively, see Table 6. There is a relatively higher prevalence of descendants and immigrants in special classes, as well as in municipal upper secondary schools and boarding schools.

Table 6

Distribution of origin among elementary school pupils in classes 0 to 9, 2020/2021

	Danish	Descendants	Immigrants*
Primary and lower secondary school [folkeskole]	86%	8%	6%
<i>Standard classes</i>	86%	8%	5%
<i>Special classes</i>	86%	10%	4%
Special children's schools	85%	11%	5%
Day treatment and nursing homes	88%	8%	4%
Municipal upper secondary schools and boarding schools	82%	7%	11%
Independent and private elementary schools	90%	7%	4%



Total	87%	8%	5%
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NB: *Immigrants include pupils whose origin is unknown in Statistics Denmark's population register. A total of 614 pupils have an unknown origin.

The table covers a total of 641 143 pupils, of whom 508 264 attend primary and lower secondary school, 9 704 special children's schools, 2 733 day treatment and nursing homes, 1 113 municipal upper secondary schools and boarding schools, and 119 329 independent and private elementary schools.

Source: Ministry of Children and Education

Homeless children

There are no precise estimates of the number of homeless children in Denmark.

VIVE's [the Danish Centre for Social Science Research] national homelessness census of 2019¹ states that 159 of the homeless were living with one or more children, and it is estimated that a total of between 126 and 227 children were living in homelessness with a parent.² The census was completed in February and includes only those found to be homeless in week 6 of 2019.

Children and young people with mental and physical disabilities receiving measures under the Social Services Act.

Children and young people with mental and physical disabilities are reviewed together. There is no clear definition of who disabled children and young people in Denmark are, nor is there a central register of disabled persons.

In the 2019 Social Policy Statement [*Socialpolitisk Redegørelse*], a specific analysis was carried out on the target group of children and young people receiving support under the Social Services Act on the grounds of disability. It was estimated that in 2016 there were 30-35 000 children and young people receiving assistance under the above Act due to a disability. This group does not constitute all disabled children in Denmark, but only those receiving assistance in line with selected sections of the Social Services Act.

The main single benefit for children and young people receiving assistance under this Act on account of their disability was the 'additional cost benefit'. This benefit is intended to cover the necessary additional expenses associated with caring at home for a child under the age of 18 with significant and permanently impaired physical or mental capacity or a severe chronic or long-term illness. In the order of 20 000 children and young people were registered as recipients of additional cost benefit in 2016, see Figure 3.

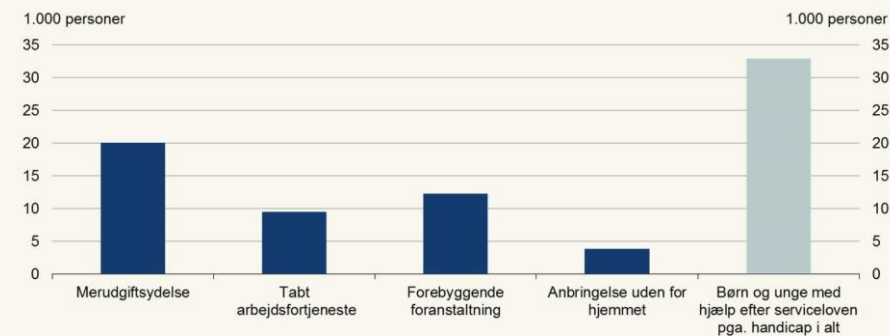
¹ The national homeless censuses are carried out every two years. Owing to COVID-19, the 2021 census was postponed to 2022. The figures for 2022 have not yet been published, hence the figures for 2019 have been used.

² (VIVE, 2019: 39). Link: <https://www.vive.dk/media/pure/14218/3352843>



Figure 3.

Estimate of children and young people with disabilities receiving assistance under the Social Services Act, 2016



Key to Figure 3:

personer

people

Merudgiftsydelse

Additional cost benefit

Tabt arbejdsfortjeneste

Loss of earnings

Forebyggende foranstaltning

Preventive measure

Anbringelse uden for hjemmet

Placement in care

Børn og unge med hjælp efter serviceloven pga. handicap i alt

Total number of children and young people assisted under the Social Services Act due to disability

NB: Each child and family may receive one or more of the following four allowances: additional cost benefit, loss of earnings, preventive measures and placement. The total number of children and young people assisted by the Social Services Act due to disability includes the total number of children and young people receiving these benefits. The additional cost benefit and lost earnings covered 0-18 year-olds at the end of 2016. Preventive measures and placement covered 0-23 year-olds at the end of 2016. We would refer you to Chapter 7 of the 2019 Social Policy Statement for further details on methodology and reservations. Source: our own calculations based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

Overall, on the basis of the available data, it is estimated that around 25 in 1 000 children and young people aged between 0 and 18 receive assistance under the Social Services Act on the grounds of disability. This is an under-estimate, as there is no data on recipients of all benefits. Among other things, children and young people who receive only medical devices or special day and club services under the Social Services Act are not included. It should also be noted that it cannot be said with absolute certainty that the child or young person is receiving the preventive measure or the placement on grounds of disability. The estimate is therefore subject to some uncertainty.

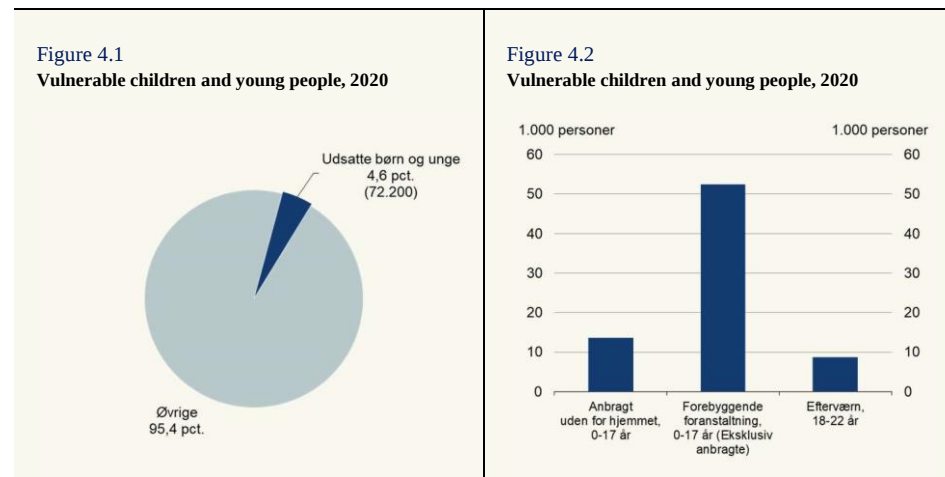
Vulnerable children and young people receiving measures under the Social Services Act

If a child or a young person under the age of 18 needs special support, the municipality must investigate their circumstances and undertake one or more relevant measures. This can take the form of either an early preventive action, measure or a placement outside the home.

The early preventive actions cover a variety of forms of assistance and support for the child and their parents. These include, for example, the provision of networking and groupings, counselling and family planning, and financial support for leisure activities. Examples of preventive measures are family treatment, relief stay at a placement and a permanent contact person for the child or family. The aim of preventive actions and measures is to ensure that children and young people with special support needs receive the help they require and that emerging problems are addressed before they loom large. For example, children and young people with signs of mental health issues, which become evident through high levels of absenteeism or worrying behaviour.



In 2020, around 72 200 children and young people aged 0-22 years received help and support in the form of a social service or measure under the Social Services Act. This corresponds to 4.6% of all 0-22 year-old children and young people in Denmark.



Key to Figure 4.1:

Udsatte børn og unge 4,6 pct.

Vulnerable children and young people, 4.6%

Øvrige, 95,4 pct.

Others 95.4 %

Personer

people

Anbragt uden for hjemmet, 0-17 år

Placed in care outside the home, 0-17 years

Forebyggende foranstaltning, 0-17 år (Eksklusiv anbragte)

Preventive measure, 0-17 years (excluding those placed in care)

Efterværn

rehabilitation

NB: Vulnerable children and young people include all those aged 0-22 years who were placed away from home or received a preventive measure or action at some point during the course of 2020.

Source: our own calculations based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

Vulnerable young people aged 18-22 years in receipt of a social measure include persons in 'rehabilitation'. Support is offered for young people aged between 18 and 22 years who have either had a permanent contact person or were placed in care outside the home immediately before they reached the age of 18. In this context, the main focus of social action is to ensure a successful transition to an autonomous adult life, with a focus, among other things, on supporting young people's education and employment. As part of their rehabilitation, young people are offered advice and help from a permanent support or contact person on how to find their own accommodation, for example. In 2020 around 9 000 young people received rehabilitation support, see figure 4.2.

We would point out there is no comprehensive register on all preventive measures that the municipalities may set in motion prior to a placement. This is particularly true of preventive actions outside the provisions of the Social Services Act such as PPR (pedagogical and psychological counselling), healthcare or SSP (school, social administration and police). Although these actions are therefore not included in the chapter, it is important to bear in mind that in most cases a combination of all measures are implemented for families as part of the general service offered. In 2020 around 52 500 children and young people were the recipients of preventive action, see Figure 4.2.

The figures also exclude children and young people who only receive disability compensation under the provisions of Chapter 710 of the Social Services Act as a result of a disability, such as special early day-care, help with covering both lost earnings or necessary additional expenses. However, children and young people with physical or mental impairments who are receiving preventive measures or who are placed outside the home are included in the figures, as they can receive help and support under the same legal provisions of the Social Services Act as vulnerable children and young people.

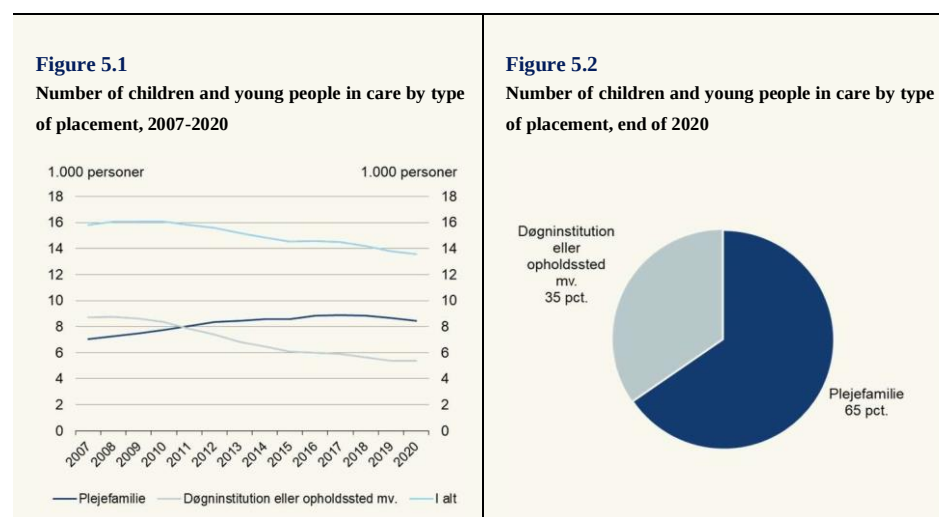


Children and young people in care

If the municipalities become aware of circumstances which are a cause for concern in a child or young person and a preventive action is not deemed to be sufficient, it may be necessary for them to be placed in care. This can, for example, be due to more serious problems such as domestic violence and abuse. In such cases municipalities are initially obliged to prepare a specialised assessment of the child to identify a number of issues associated with the child and their family, including health, well-being, school, etc. This specialised child assessment must provide evidence that the specific actions are best for the child's well-being and development, including the fact that the placement is most likely to help meet the child's particular need for support and assistance.

The municipalities are also obliged to draw up a plan that must contain specific objectives for the child's well-being and development plus state when follow-up and progress reports will be produced to determine whether the placement has had the desired effect.

In 2020 there were around 13 700 children and young people aged from 0 to 17 years in placements away from home. There has been a decrease in the number of placements over a considerable number of years, and since 2007 the total number of children and adolescents in care has fallen by around 2 000. This trend conceals an increase in the number of those in foster care families from around 7 000 children and young people in 2007 to around 8 500 in 2020, while the number of children and young people in residential care and residential care facilities etc. decreased from around 8 700 in 2007 to around 5 400 in 2020. At the end of 2020, 65% of all children and young people aged 0-17 years in care lived in a foster family, see Figures 5.1 and 5.2.



Key to Figure 5.1:

<i>personer</i>	people
<i>Plejefamilie</i>	Foster care family
<i>Døgninstitution eller opholdssted mv.</i>	Residential institution/residential care facilities
<i>I alt</i>	Total

NB: Figure 5.1 includes children and young people aged 0-17 years who have been placed in care outside the home during the course of a given year. Some children and young people have been placed both in a foster family and in a residential institution/residential care facilities within the space of a year and may thus be included twice in the figures. Figure 5.2 was produced on 31 December 2020.

Source: our own calculations based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

Children with a minority background

The majority of children and young people with an immigrant background thrive and perform well within the Danish education system.

However, there are groups of children and young people who are in a particularly vulnerable position because they grow up in families that have little contact to the social setting around them or generally face challenges integrating into society.



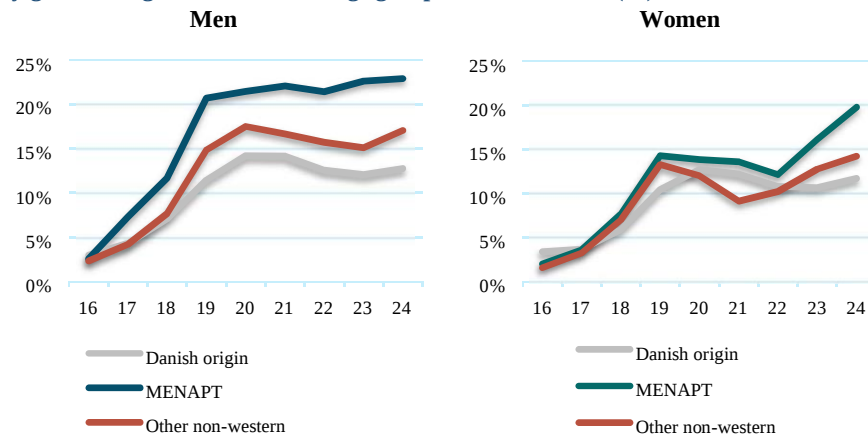
60% of school children (aged 6-15 years) with a migrant mother³ originating in the MENAP countries and Türkiye⁴ (labelled MENAPT) thus have a mother who is not in employment. The same applies to 31% of school children with an immigrant mother originating in another non-western country. The corresponding figures are 14% of school children with a mother of Danish origin.⁵

In specific terms, the challenges of integrating into society translate into higher crime rates for young men and an over-representation of children and young people from different ethnic backgrounds among young people not in employment, education or training.

There is a relatively high proportion of men from the age of 18 years originating in MENAPT who are neither in employment nor in education or training compared to men of Danish origin (see Figure 6).

The proportion of women from MENAPT who are neither in employment nor in education or training is roughly the same as women of Danish origin until they reach the age of 22 years. The difference only becomes markedly apparent from the age of around 23 years.

Figure 6: Proportion of 16-24 year-olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) by gender, origin and individual age group, November 2019 (%)



NB: NEET stands for 'not in employment, education or training'. The register-based NEET indicator thus indicates the proportion of young people aged 16-24 years who are neither in employment nor education and training based on labour market accounting [Arbejdsmarkedsregnskabet](AMR) register data. The figures were produced in the last week of November 2019 and a person is categorised as not active (NEET) if, during the reference week, they are not in employment, education or training and have not been in education or training during the three preceding weeks.
Source: our own calculations based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

According to VIVE's 'SPOR – Children's development and well-being throughout life' (2021), children of immigrant families are more exposed to violence during their upbringing. The proportion of children who have experienced at least one form of rough handling/violence (slapped, shaken, smacked or beaten) in the preceding two months increases with the age of the child, and is higher if both parents of the child are unemployed, and is markedly higher if both parents of the child are immigrants or descendants (36%).

There are also significant differences both in the level of notifications and social measures under the Social Services Act when dividing children and young people by origin.⁶ In 2019, notifications for children and young people originating in MENAPT

³ Immigrant mother means a mother who is herself an immigrant.

⁴ MENAP is a regional grouping used internationally. They include middle-eastern countries and North Africa (Syria, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi-Arabia, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, Qatar, Sudan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Jordan, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Iran, Yemen, Mauritania and Oman) plus Afghanistan and Pakistan. Türkiye is also included in the figures as it plays an important role in Denmark's immigration history.

⁵ Our own calculations based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

⁶ Ministry of Social Affairs, Housing and Senior Citizens (2021): 'Welfare policy analysis: Notifications and social measures by origin'



increased proportionately, with 11% of all 0-5 year-olds originating in MENAPT and 4% of 0-5 year-olds of Danish origin being the subject of notifications.

There is a higher proportion of children originating in MENAPT receiving a preventive measure compared with children of Danish origin. Whereas 6% of all 0-5 year-old children originating in MENAPT were subject to a preventive measure in the course of 2019, the figure was 2% among children of Danish origin.

However, the picture is rather different when looking at placements outside the home. Among 0-5 year-old children of Danish origin, 0.5% were placed away from home at some point in 2019, whereas the figure was 0.3% for children originating in MENAPT.

If we consider the relationship between notifications and placements, there are therefore significant differences depending on the origin of the children. For 0-5 year-olds of Danish origin, there were approx. eight times as many children subject to notifications than were placed outside the home in 2019. For 0-5 year-olds originating in MENAPT, there were approx. 34 times as many children subject to notifications than were placed outside the home in 2019. A similar trend is seen in 0-5 year-olds originating in other non-Western countries, where there were approx. 21 times as many children subject to notifications than were placed outside the home in 2019.

A notification is not necessarily synonymous with the child or young person needing help and support. In that sense, it is not possible to conclude from the number of notifications how many people should receive social measures, including placements outside the home, under the Social Services Act. However, when significantly more children and young people of non-Western origin are subject to notifications, whereas at the same time only a smaller proportion are placed in care, a possible explanation may be that notifications are followed up on differently for children of Danish origin and non-Western origin respectively.

Children covered by the Danish Immigration Service's [Udlændingestyrelsen] care

The Danish Immigration Service is obliged to support foreign minors who are present in Denmark as asylum seekers or who do not have the right to stay in the country if this is necessary for the maintenance of the person concerned.

This group is different from other children with a minority background, in that the persons concerned do not have a formal right of residence in Denmark and are in principle accommodated in an asylum centre where they have access to day-care, education, cash benefits and possible support in the form of social measures, etc. The special conditions for children under the Immigration Service's care, insofar as this is considered relevant, are described under each section of the Action Plan.

Children with Roma background

The Child Guarantee highlights children with Roma background as part of this group of young people with a minority background. Denmark does not record the ethnicity of its citizens, and for this reason, among others, Denmark has neither data nor policies and activities specifically targeting Roma or other ethnic groups.

We consider that to the extent children with Roma background are regarded as vulnerable, they will be included as an integral part of the other groups described. Thus, Roma in Denmark and children with Roma background are guaranteed access to education, health and social services, and employment etc. through the Danish welfare system's basic principle of universal, taxpayer-funded services and the general focus on complying with overall principles of equal treatment, which also ensure equal recognition of the political, civil, social and other rights of Roma.

For further information we would refer you to the Danish Roma Action Plan: [Roma inclusion in Denmark | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)



3. Social benefits and interventions for vulnerable children

The role of municipalities and the appeals system

The social sector in Denmark is characterised by local self-government in which responsibility for carrying out tasks is rooted in the 98 municipalities. It is therefore the municipality's responsibility to provide citizens with the right social measures and services that meet the needs of the individual.

The Social Appeals Board [*Ankestyrelsen*] acts as an independent supervisory authority under the Ministry of Social Affairs, Housing and Senior Citizens to supervise the compliance of municipalities and regions with legislation specifically applicable to public authorities, including in the social sector.

Actions for children and young people with disabilities

Children and young people with disabilities can be part of the target group for a number of actions mentioned in the section below on 'Specific support for vulnerable children and young people'.

The Social Services Act also creates a framework for a number of social actions specifically targeting children and young people with disabilities and their families. The Act thus contains a number of specific provisions on support measures for municipalities to offer the target group. The aim of these measures is to compensate, as far as possible, for the specific challenges posed by the child's or young person's disability, so that the child or young person can, as far as possible, live and thrive like everyone else, and to support the child and the family in their everyday lives despite these challenges.

For example, the Social Services Act may cover, among other things, the necessary additional costs incurred by parents of children or young people at home as a result of their child's significant and permanent physical or mental impairment or severe chronic or long-term illness. Compensation for loss of earnings may also be granted to them for dependent children or young people under the age of 18 at home with as a result of a significant and permanent physical or mental impairment or severe chronic or long-term illness, for the loss in income they experience in training or caring for the child or young person.

In addition, under the Social Services Act, a place in a special day-care centre may be offered to children with a significant and permanent physical or mental impairment, whose needs for support and treatment are so extensive and complex that they cannot be accommodated in general day-care, even if support is given to the individual child. The municipalities are required to supplement general day-care with special services that meet the needs of these children. These special needs day-care services must, among other things, offer pedagogical support for children's development and ensure that the child receives the necessary support and treatment. Municipalities grant a 100% allowance for stays in special needs day-care if a child is taken alone or essentially for therapeutic reasons, i.e. in such cases the parents are not required to pay.

In addition, the principle of responsibility applicable to the disabilities sector requires that the public authority providing a service or product is also responsible for the accessibility of that service to persons with disabilities.

Special support for vulnerable children and young people

If a child or a young person needs special support, for instance due to social problems at home or a physical or mental impairment, the municipality concerned must examine the situation carefully and implement one or more relevant measures.

This may include, for example, a family-oriented counselling session, practical and pedagogical support at home or a permanent contact person for the child, and for some children a short placement outside the home, for example in a foster family, will be necessary.



In 2020 just over 72 000 children and young people received help and support under the Social Services Act. This corresponds to 4.6% of all 0-22 year-old children and young people in Denmark.

The municipalities are responsible for providing support to children and young people and their families should they require special support. The support is intended to ensure that children and young people have the same opportunities as their peers for personal development, health and an independent adult life.

The support must be provided at an early stage and be holistic in nature, so that as far as possible problems can be prevented and remedied at home or in the close environment. Such support must be organised on a case-by-case basis following a specific assessment of the circumstances of each child or young person and their family.

It must build on the child's or young person's and their family's own resources, and always take appropriate account of the views of the child or young person in line with their age and maturity. The child's or young person's difficulties must as far as possible be resolved in cooperation with the family and with their involvement.

The municipality must be aware of whether there is a specific child or young person in the municipality who may need support. If a child or young person is considered to be in need of support, the municipality has a duty to ensure that a specialised assessment of the child's or young person's circumstances is carried out. The purpose of the assessment is to identify the child's and the family's strengths as well as their difficulties. The assessment should result in an informed decision on whether to take measures to support the child.

The municipality must always choose a measure that can be expected to address the problems and needs of the child, young person or family that are the subject of the specialised assessment of the child's circumstances.

Support measures may include support at home, family consultation or treatment for the child or young person's problems, residential care for the child or young person and their parents and placement of the child or young person outside the home.

Placement outside the home

In the case of placements, a distinction is usually made between placements with and without the consent of the holder of parental responsibility and a young person who has reached the age of 15 years.

A placement with consent may be undertaken where it is considered essential for the child or young person's specific needs for support, and where the holder of custody rights and the young person being over the age of 15 give their consent. The decision is taken by the municipal council.

A placement without consent may be undertaken where there is a manifest risk of serious harm to the health or development of the child due to, for example, insufficient care, and where there are reasonable grounds for believing that the problems cannot be resolved while the child or young person stays at home. The decision is taken by the municipality's children and young persons' committee which consists of a judge, two pedagogical psychologists and two members of the municipal council.

Once it has been decided to place a child or a young person outside the home, the municipality must decide on the choice of a specific location for the placement. The municipality must choose a location on the basis of a specific assessment of its suitability for meeting the child or young person's needs for special support. It must assess the capacity of the placement's location for offering close and stable care relationships and assess whether a placement in a foster family would be the most appropriate choice.



Notification requirements

There is a general notification obligation for all persons resident in Denmark. Under the general notification obligation, anyone who becomes aware that a child or young person under the age of 18 years is being subjected to neglect or degrading treatment by their parents or guardians or lives in conditions that endanger their health or development is obliged to report this to the municipality.

In addition, civil servants or persons holding public office have an increased obligation to inform the municipality if, in the course of their duties they become aware or have reason to believe that a child or a young person under the age of 18 years may need special support. The notification obligation for professionals is not conditional on, for example, neglect, physical or psychological harm or similar situations. It is sufficient that the child or young person is facing difficulties which the professional in question is unable to remedy alone.

Special provisions for children under the Danish Immigration Service's care

The asylum centre system generally focuses on the well-being of all children accommodated, and pays attention to the physical and mental health of the children. The operator is under a more stringent obligation to notify in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Social Services Act. The operator must ensure that the identification of children at particular risk of neglect is carried out with a view to taking the necessary measures in cooperation with the local municipality and the Immigration Service. The operator shall also provide outreach to parents with children of play group age, as well as pregnant women.

The municipality in which the accommodation is located – known as the host municipality – has a duty to supervise all minors present in the municipality. This obligation applies regardless of whether or not minors have a residence permit or are legally resident.

The implementation of social measures for asylum seekers who are minors, etc., is covered by the Danish Immigration Service's maintenance obligation.

Residents with special needs are identified in their residences and a holistic, multidisciplinary and coordinated psychosocial response is ensured for these residents, including cooperation with support workers, external institutions (e.g. psychiatric treatment institutions and harm reduction centres), therapists, health visitors, etc. Operators working in the residences are not able to implement approved social support measures for residents with particular problems, such as where the latter are temporarily unable to take care of themselves or their own children.

If the need for special support cannot be met under the normal accommodation system, social measures may be implemented with the prior approval of the Immigration Service.



4. Relevant social security benefits

The Danish welfare system covers a wide range of measures, allowances and benefits that contribute to upholding the general objective of the Child Guarantee and its recommendation that all children at risk of poverty or social exclusion have access to the most basic rights such as healthcare, education, nutrition and housing.

The Danish benefits system

People who are unemployed are provided with a temporary means of subsistence and those who, for example, have a proven permanently reduced working capacity are provided with a durable means of subsistence. In addition, there are a number of possibilities for assistance, such as support for housing costs, which can be provided both to people in receipt of a public maintenance allowance and to those who are self-sufficient but are on a low income.

All payments of aid require that the persons concerned fulfil the relevant conditions. Cash benefits are available for people aged 30 or over and those under the age of 30 who have a vocational qualification. In order to receive cash benefits, you must meet a residence requirement and an employment requirement. The residence requirement means that you must have resided legally in Denmark (Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland) for a total of nine years within the last 10 years, while the employment requirement means that you must have been in regular employment in the Kingdom of Denmark for a period which corresponds to a total of two years and six months of full-time employment within the last ten years. Education assistance is available for young people under the age of 30 without vocational training who meet the residence and employment requirements. The self-supporting/repatriation/travel/transition allowance [*selvforsørgelses- og hjemrejse-ydelse eller overgangsydelse (SHO-ydelse)*] is for people who do not meet the residence and employment requirements but otherwise meet the conditions for receiving aid under the cash assistance system.

The cash assistance system is the lowest financial safety net and targeted at citizens who are unable to provide for themselves or their family by any other means. It creates economic security and thereby constitutes one of the pillars of the Danish welfare model. Under the cash assistance system, there are special dependency rates to ensure that the children of benefit recipients do not suffer significant deprivation in relation to their peers.

Child allowances

It is also possible to receive an allowance for your child's maintenance under the Child Benefit and Advance Payment of Child Support Act [*Lov om børnetilskud og forskudsvis udbetaling af børnebidrag*]. This allowance, granted to different target groups, including the children of single parents and children who do not have two dependent parents, is subject to the fulfilment of a number of conditions, including, for example, nationality, place of residence and the right to reside in Denmark. Single parents may also have the maintenance allowance paid in advance by the State if the parent liable to pay maintenance fails to pay. This may, however, be waived under international conventions. The scheme also covers, for instance, children under the guardianship and children of old-age pensioners whose pension is not paid on the grounds of Section 46 of the Social Pension Act [*Lov om social pension*]. Under the same law, a prescribed child benefit may be paid to the person entitled to claim maintenance if it is not paid by the maintenance debtor on the due date. Contributions are paid out on application.

Support for housing and assistance for unforeseeable costs

In addition, it is possible to receive special support under Section 34 of the Active Social Policy Act [*Lov om aktiv socialpolitik*] in connection with high housing costs or high dependency costs, if the conditions for this are met.

It is also possible for tenants with children in their household to receive housing assistance. Housing benefit can be granted to all tenants on low incomes, provided that they otherwise meet the relevant conditions and preferential treatment is given to households with children. Housing benefit is calculated as the difference between the



proportion of housing costs and the proportion of household income that exceeds an income threshold. Children's income is not included in the calculation of housing benefit.

Ultimately, the municipality may provide assistance with reasonably justified individual costs to people who have undergone a change in their circumstances whereby their own payment of the costs would significantly impede their ability and that of their family to support themselves in the future, see Section 81 of the Active Social Policy Act. Assistance may normally be granted only if the relevant costs have been incurred as a result of unforeseeable needs. However, subject to a specific assessment, the municipality may exceptionally provide assistance to cover expenditure which could have been foreseeable where it is essential for the daily subsistence of the person or family concerned. Similarly, the municipality may provide assistance for reasonably justified temporary rent costs for people threatened with eviction on account of rent arrears, where this is likely to prevent the person from being evicted from their dwelling, see Section 81a of the Active Social Policy Act. In particular, the municipality must provide assistance to families with children. The municipality may make such assistance conditional on the person entering into an administrative agreement, helping them to establish a plan for moving to a more suitable dwelling or participating, for example, in debt management counselling.

All in all, the Danish benefit system maintains a strong focus on children's well-being, upbringing and equal opportunities. This applies to vulnerable children as well as to children in general.

Commission for Social Benefits [Ydelseskommissionen] with a focus on children

It is important to note in this connection that in December 2019 the Danish Government set up a Commission for Social Benefits, whose task it is to look at the Danish cash benefits system, with a particular focus on the conditions for the children of cash benefit recipients. In May 2021, the Commission for Social Benefits issued recommendations for a new cash benefit system, which the Danish Government is following up on with the parliamentary parties at the time of writing. It is an important benchmark for the Government to ensure that all children in Denmark, regardless of their background and their parents' situation, grow up in reasonable conditions and are given the possibility of being an active part of the community.

Child and young persons benefit

In addition to the above measures and benefits, the Danish State also provides financial support to parents and guardians through child and young persons benefit. This tax-free allowance, which is paid for children under 18 years of age, also helps parents and guardians to access, among other things, healthy and nutritious meals and leisure activities such as sport and music education.

Since 1987 tax-free child benefit has been paid out for all children and young people under 18 years of age who are resident in Denmark. For children under the age of 15 years child benefit is paid on a quarterly basis, and for children between the ages of 15 and 17 years it is paid on a monthly basis. In principle child and young persons benefit is paid to both holders of parental responsibility at the rate of half each. The child and young persons benefit rates for 2022 are shown in Table 7 below. An accrual principle applies whereby full entitlement to child and young persons benefit is gradually accrued over a period of six years by residence or employment in Denmark, Greenland or the Faroe Islands. Persons from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland who reside or work in Denmark and who are covered by the European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems may take into account periods spent in other Member States (aggregation principle). The accrual period applies to the last 10 years.

**Table 7 Rates of child and young persons benefit (2022)**

Age	Annual benefit	Paid
	DKK	
0-2 year-olds	18 612	quarterly
3-6 year-olds	14 724	quarterly
7-14 year-olds	11 592	quarterly
15-17 year-olds	11 592	monthly

5. ECEC, education and school-based activities

ECEC

Prevention of negative social heritage

The Act on ECEC states that the purpose of the Act on ECEC among other is to prevent negative social heritage and social exclusion by making ECEC both an integral part of the municipality's overall general provision for children, as well as the municipality's preventive and support measures for children in need of special measures.

The Act on ECEC also lays down a series of specific objectives on the provision of ECEC. These include promoting children's well-being, learning, development and formation through secure and pedagogical learning environments, where play is fundamental and the approach taken is based on a child's perspective. In cooperation with parents, ECEC must provide care for children and support the well-being, learning, development and formation of each child, and contribute to the sound and secure childhood. The Act on ECEC also states that children in ECEC must be provided with a physical, mental and aesthetic child-friendly environment that promotes their well-being, health, development and learning. Children must also be given the opportunity to participate in decisions, share responsibility and understand and experience democracy. As part of this, ECECs must contribute to developing children's independence, their ability to take part in binding communities and integrate into and be part of Danish society, as well as supporting successful children-positive, cohesive transitions.

Guaranteed ECEC

The Act on ECEC provides a guarantee for equal access to an ECEC facility for all children below the school age. Guaranteed ECEC availability means that the local council must offer places in an age-appropriate ECEC facility to all children older than 26 weeks and until they reach school age.

Costs

It is provided in the Act on ECEC that the municipality, as a starting point, gives subsidies for a place in ECEC for a minimum of 75 pct. of the budgeted gross operating expenditure, while parents pay a maximum of 25 pct. of services for children. Families receive a sibling discount. Additionally, the parents may apply for a financially aided place subsidy, which is calculated on the basis of the parents' financial situation. This place subsidy is increased for single-parent families.

The aim of the rules is to ensure that all children, regardless of socio-economic background, have equal access to ECEC.

Support for children in ECEC

Municipal councils must ensure that children – who need support in ECEC in order to thrive and develop – receive such support. If the municipality considers that a child who, due to significant and permanently impaired physical or mental capacity, needs assistance or special support that cannot be covered by ECEC, it must offer a place for the child in accordance with the provisions of the Social Services Act.



A reinforced pedagogical curriculum

Since 2004, all Danish ECEC facilities are obliged to focus on children's well-being and learning on the basis of a pedagogical curriculum. As part of efforts to strengthen ECEC quality, the rules were changed in 2018.

A central element in the new rules is the common pedagogical foundation which consists of a number of key elements (e.g. play, communities of children and a broad concept of learning) constituting the understanding and approach to work on children's wellbeing, learning, development and formation in ECEC in Denmark. One element of the pedagogical curriculum is the view of children. The view of children in Danish ECEC is the belief that a child is valuable in itself. Children should not only be prepared for adult life, they should also be supported and appreciated in the first years of their lives. Another element is children's communities. The view is that all play, formation and learning should take place in communities of children for which the ECEC staff set the framework. Relationships and friendships are crucial, and all children should experience being part of the community and respected and heard. Everyday ECEC activities should have space for the individual child to show initiative and be an active participant, while at the same time the community should create space for everyone, new relationships and to try different roles, etc. The ECEC staff and the management should be responsible for creating a balance between the individual and the community at the ECEC.

Another crucial element in the pedagogical foundation is the support of the learning for children in vulnerable positions. Establishing a pedagogical learning environment for vulnerable children is not about taking out a single child from the general community of children for specially planned activity with the child. It is about challenging vulnerable children so they experience mastery in connection with child-initiated and adult-initiated play and activities, for example. All children in ECEC are entitled to be stimulated and be met with positive expectations. In line with expectations of the other children in the ECEC setting, it is essential that the ECEC staff have positive expectations of a vulnerable child. Vulnerable children should be an important part of the community of children, and their parents are equally important in the community of parents.

Other elements of the pedagogical basis are the child's perspective, play, the broad concept of learning, the pedagogical learning environment and parental cooperation.

As part of the pedagogical curriculum, ECECs must focus on children's learning within and across six curriculum themes, which are *Comprehensive Personal Development, Social Development, Communication and Language, Body, Senses and Motion, Nature, Outdoor Life and Natural Phenomena, and Culture, Aesthetics and Community*.

The requirement is that the pedagogical learning environment in ECEC should take into account children in vulnerable positions with a view to promoting their well-being, learning, development and education.

Language development and assessment

The work of ECEC centres with children's communicative and linguistic development is generally rooted in the pedagogical curriculum, one of the themes of which is communication and language. The curriculum envisages development as a starting point for pedagogical practice throughout the day.

According to the Danish ECEC Act, local authorities are obliged to perform a language assessment and offer language stimulation to children at the age of three (or age of two if the local authorities have decided this) who attend ECEC, and where there is a presumption that the children require language stimulation.

The local authorities are obliged to perform a language assessment of all children at the age of three (or age of two if the local authorities have decided this), who do not attend ECEC. Monolingual children in need of language stimulation must be offered language stimulation based on the children's needs. Bilingual children who need language stimulation must be offered language stimulation in an ECEC facility 30 hours a week.



‘Bilingual children’ is to be understood as children who have a mother tongue other than Danish and who only learn Danish through contact with the surrounding society.

All parents are obliged to let their children participate in the language assessment and the language stimulation performed by local authorities. Local authorities are obliged to sanction parents financially if they do not let their children participate..

Healthy lunches in ECEC centres

It follows from the Act that every child in municipal, independent and outsourced ECECs and private ECECs must be given a healthy lunch meal. The aim is to contribute to the healthy eating habits of children and to their overall well-being and development. The local council may decide to include a healthy lunch as part of the ECEC service overall costs in local-authority, independent and outsourced ECECs.

The local council must further decide to provide a subsidy in order to lower parent’s payment of the healthy lunch scheme.

Subject to an application from a child’s parents, the local council shall decide whether a child may be exempted from a healthy lunch if the child has allergies or other disorders diagnosed by a doctor which require a special diet, and the local authority is not in a proper manner able to give the child a healthy lunch in the ECEC.

More recent policy initiatives

Various policy initiatives have been introduced in Denmark over the last decade with the overall aim of ensuring children’s well-being, development, learning and formation in ECEC. A number of the most recent ones are presented below:

Minimum staff/child ratios

In December 2021, the Danish Parliament passed a new legislation stating that that by January 1st 2024 there shall be a minimum of 1 adult pr. 3 children for the 0-2 year olds and a minimum of 1 adult pr. 6 children for the 3-5 year olds as an average pr. year among all ECEC (excluding childminders) facilities in the municipality. In the years 2020-2023 the municipalities receive funds to implement the minimum ratio. The political agreement also included a distribution fund for education of uneducated pedagogical staff in ECEC (excluding childminders) as well as a strengthened model of municipal inspections of ECEC.

To further support staff retention in ECEC, the Danish government decided in 2022 together with KL – Local Government Denmark to follow the national development in staff ratio and the percentage of educated staff in ECEC.

The Danish government decided with the Finance Act for 2020 to make permanent the distribution funds for the employment of more staff in areas with vulnerable children. The funds amount to 327.5 mio DKK yearly permanent and will be distributed to ECECs based on national data regarding the socioeconomic background of children..

Delayed school start

The Finance Act 2022 allocated funds to provide more children the opportunity to postpone their enrolment in school if they are in such need. The purpose is to ensure the child’s well-being, learning and their readiness to begin school. Following the agreement, the ECEC leader shall assess the individual child’s needs in dialogue with the pedagogical educators, the parents and the school leader at the child’s future school.

1 000 days programme – a better start to life

In 2018, an agreement was reached to strengthen efforts for children in exposed and vulnerable families during their first 1,000 days of life, with more pedagogical staff in ECEC, as well as training of ECEC staff working with children in vulnerable positions. In addition, funds were allocated for enhanced home guidance and more healthcare visits by health nurses to vulnerable families.

Strong ECEC settings – everyone must form part of the community (2017)



In 2017, the agreement on ‘Strong ECEC – everyone must form part of the community’ [*Stærke dagtilbud – alle børn skal være med i fællesskabet*] addressed three main focus areas, all aimed at raising the quality of ECEC services:

- increased flexibility, transparency and free choices for families with children;
- the introduction of a strengthened pedagogical curriculum, interventions aimed at children in vulnerable positions and better transitions throughout children’s lives;
- High quality ECEC through professionalism and clear management, a lift of competencies of leaders, childminders and pedagogical staff.

Preventing segregation of children in ECEC (2019)

Since 2019, it has been a legal requirement that each ECEC must hold a maximum of 30% of children from vulnerable housing areas. The purpose is to prevent and deconstruct parallel societies by ensuring that a larger share of children from vulnerable housing areas are admitted to institutions where they meet other children and role models than the ones they socialize with on a daily basis from their family and the vulnerable housing area. The purpose is furthermore to ensure that children from vulnerable housing areas to a greater extent develop their language, readiness to learn, and get acquainted with Danish traditions, norms and values.

Special provisions for children under the Danish Immigration Service’s care

Accommodation operators must offer care to all children from the age of three years to the time of starting school in playgroups, which provide children with a structured daily life with qualified educational services and activities. The activities also cover the organisation of excursions, parental interviews/meetings, participation in the multidisciplinary teams at the centres, to name but a few. Care in playgroups may take place under the aegis of municipal institutions or bodies approved by the municipality or at the operator’s own premises.

The general focus is on:

- providing children and parents with Danish day-care and knowledge of and familiarity with the Danish language
- a stable, secure and recognisable environment for children
- daily attendance at the day-care centre with its clear range of activities;
- building relationships and developing social skills;
- health and diet;
- motor development.

Daily opening hours are coordinated with parental training and the holidays are scheduled at the same time as those of the local primary and lower secondary schools.

There is also a crèche for children aged between one and two years at the Avnstrup repatriation centre [*Udrejsecenter Avnstrup*] (accommodation for families without legal residence in Denmark). As regards the other accommodation establishments, the operator must – if necessary – provide a crèche for particularly vulnerable children from the age of 0 to three years after prior approval by the Immigration Service.

Primary and lower secondary school [*grundskole*]

In Denmark, there are 10 years of compulsory education. All pupils have the right to be admitted to their local primary and lower secondary school. Tuition is free of charge. Primary and lower secondary schools are run by municipalities.



They are founded on democratic principles to prepare pupils to become part of a free and democratic society. That objective is stated in the text setting out its formal aims, particularly in the wording: ‘The *folkeskole* has to prepare the students to be able to participate, demonstrate mutual responsibility and understand their rights and duties in a free and democratic society.’ Primary and lower secondary schools prepare pupils to become active citizens in a democratic society.

Well-being and educational environment

In line with the Consolidation Act on the educational environment of students [*Bekendtgørelse af lov om elevers og studerendes undervisningsmiljø*], pupils have the right to a positive teaching environment. This means that education is provided securely in terms of health and safety, and that action must be taken to remedy mental health issues within the educational environment – such as by establishing an anti-bullying strategy.

The Danish centre for the educational environment [*Dansk Center for Undervisningsmiljø*], a State institution, was set up with the aim of helping to secure and develop a positive educational environment in Denmark.

This is achieved, among other things, by providing guidance and advice on educational environmental issues to pupils, educational establishments and authorities.

An assessment of the well-being of pupils in nursery schools up to and including year 9 is carried out annually at all primary and lower secondary schools, including special schools.

Access to leisure and club activities

Municipal councils must provide the necessary number of places in leisure and club activities and ensure that children and young people under the age of 18 years in need of support in leisure or club activities receive this help for their well-being and development.

As regards access to leisure facilities, municipalities must provide places free of charge to families in financial or social need, covering the entire or part of the cost of the place at the establishment. Such access is granted to households with an annual income of less than DKK 576.800 (2021). This income limit is increased in the case of single parents or where there are several children under the age of 18 years living at home. In addition, free of charge allowances are also granted to children needing treatment for significant and permanent physical and mental impairments and/or social-pedagogical free place allowances.

Outdoor expeditions and extra-curricular activities

Apart from catering fees, parents are not obliged to contribute financially to their children’s participation in camps or on excursions that are part of the curriculum. Parents may thus be charged for meals, but not for other costs. However, this does not mean that parents cannot contribute to the municipality’s budget to cover the costs of excursions/camps if they so wish. However, those pupils whose parents are unable to pay this additional amount, if any, still have the right to participate.

Pupils with special needs

The basic principle of the Danish *folkeskole* legislation is that all pupils have the right to an education that meets their needs. To support pupils’ development and learning, municipalities and schools can provide support to pupils and organise teaching in ways that support the teaching of pupils with special needs in the mainstream classroom. This can include the creation of groups [*holddannelse*], differentiated teaching and supplementary teaching. It can also include the use of dual teacher arrangements and teaching assistants to help both the individual pupil and the class as a whole. Finally, advice from PPR (pedagogical counselling) and VISO (national special advisory organisation) can be provided to pupils, teachers, school heads and parents. For pupils needing more than nine hours of support per week, special education may be provided either in the form of support in mainstream classes, in special classes, in special schools or in internal schools.



Linguistic support

Pupils have the right to receive the language support they need to acquire the necessary Danish language skills to participate in education.

Instruction in Danish as a second language is offered to pupils who, on the basis of an individual assessment, are deemed to need it. Danish as a second language can be offered both as basic instruction to those pupils who, at the time of admission to the school, do not have the necessary language skills in Danish to be able to participate in instruction with an adequate learning outcome, and as supplementary instruction to those pupils whose language skills enable them to participate in instruction. Pupils from EU/EEA countries can also be offered mother-tongue education [*modersmålsundervisning*] to develop not only the skills they need to communicate in their mother tongue, but also their linguistic awareness, based on the fact that they use two languages in everyday life.

In 2016 a review of reduced inclusion was published, showing the state of play regarding schools' progress on increased inclusion. In addition, the review made a number of recommendations on how to focus on strengthening inclusive learning environments in schools. In the wake of the review, the target figure set for the inclusion of 96% of pupils in the general area was simultaneously dropped.

As a follow-up to the 2020 financial agreement between Local Government Denmark (KL) and the Government, it was decided that the Danish Centre for Social Science Research (VIVE) would carry out a major evaluation of inclusion and special education. The aim of the evaluation is, among other things, to reveal the state of play regarding schools and municipalities' efforts to strengthen inclusive learning environments in schools, including the recommendations made by the 2016 inclusion review. The evaluation is due to be published at the end of March.

Following publication of the inclusion evaluation, the Government and Local Government Denmark agreed to discuss ways to improve solutions to 'support the future work of municipalities in finding positive solutions to provide students with special needs with training aligned as closely as possible with mainstream education, for example, in the form of intermediate forms'⁷.

School meals

In Denmark, there are no nationwide measures to ensure that each child receives a healthy meal every day at school. One of the reasons for the Danish adoption of the Child Guarantee was that it provides sufficient flexibility in relation to existing national schemes and traditions.

Voluntary food schemes, including after-school meal schemes, are organised by municipal councils. There are therefore likely to be local differences as to whether and, if so, what kind of food is offered in schools and during the afternoon day-care.

Various municipalities offer parents the opportunity to order school meals for their child. This is usually linked to a price per meal, although many municipalities offer reduced or free meals. In addition, the draft law amending the Act of Public Compulsory Education (future evaluation and assessment system in primary and lower secondary schools, etc.) includes a proposal to introduce a legal basis for municipalities to opt to grant a differentiated allowance for meal schemes based on household income. This is particularly pertinent to children from disadvantaged homes.

As set out above, parents and guardians receive various financial allowances and subsidies for their children up to the age of 18 years, enabling them to ensure that their children have a healthy and nutritious diet. The Danish State thus indirectly ensures that all children have access to at least one healthy and nutritious meal each school day.

Recent policy initiatives

⁷See the agreement on the finances of municipalities for 2022



Dyslexia packages I, II and III

The Danish Government has a clear ambition to improve conditions for people with dyslexia – children, adolescents and adults alike. In the last two years, three agreements have been reached to strengthen the response for dyslexic people, children, adolescents and adults. In the field of primary and lower secondary education, among other things, a new year 2 detection tool will be developed and a national forum for reading counsellors and teachers of dyslexic students will be set up. In addition, DKK 6 million has been set aside to train more reading counsellors and teachers of dyslexic students.

New evaluation and assessment approaches

In October 2021, the primary and lower secondary school conciliation group [Folkeskoleforligskredsen] concluded an agreement to develop a stronger evaluation and follow-up culture in primary and lower secondary schools (the future school evaluation and assessment system), which includes a number of tools to further improve the detection of pupils with language and reading difficulties. For example, the agreement requires the risk test for dyslexia to be sat at the latest in year 1 for students displaying signs of reading difficulties, and initiates the development of a screening test for reading difficulties.

Children First [Børnene Først]

In March 2022 the Government concluded an agreement on strengthening the schooling of vulnerable children and children in care as part of a major governmental initiative in the social sphere entitled ‘Children First’ for vulnerable children and children in care. The agreement aims to ensure that children in day-care centres and care institutions receive the education to which they are entitled. Among other things, the purpose of the agreement is to strengthen municipal authorities’ responsibility for day-care centres and special education services within care institutions. The quality agreement sets out requirements for cooperation with the local school system. The intention is to accompany it with reinforced supervision and better coordination across supervisory authorities. The agreement also strengthens the supervision of independent and private schools with boarding facilities, independent residential schools [efterskoler] and independent vocational schools which take in children and young people in care.

Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education [gymnasiale uddannelser]

Applicants to upper secondary education (3-year certificates of upper secondary education (stx), upper business education (hbx) and upper technical education (htx), as well as the 2-year upper preparatory certificate (hf) are in principle entitled to enrol in upper secondary education if they have been assessed as ‘ready to learn’, meet a number of requirements for teaching and examinations in year 10 of elementary school and meet certain qualification requirements. Candidates who do not have a legal right to be admitted may, under certain conditions, be admitted on the basis of a case-by-case assessment in the form of a compulsory admission test and interview or standardised assessment.

The Act on upper secondary education and the Order on enrolment in upper secondary education and on capacity fixing in general upper secondary educational establishments do not cover formal conditions such as residence permits, residency, citizenship, etc. as a precondition for admission to upper secondary education.

In order to be admitted, the applicant must have sufficient knowledge of the Danish language to follow the course and intend to follow the entire course to its conclusion.

Admission to vocational education and training for young people under the age of 18

All pupils who have complied with the educational requirements under the Act of Public Compulsory Education or who have completed year 10 may apply for admission to a vocational school. Pupils have the right to be enrolled if they have fulfilled the admission requirements or have a training agreement with an enterprise. They will have satisfied the admission requirement if they have passed the primary and lower secondary school finishing exam and have obtained an average mark of at least 2.0 in Danish and



mathematics in this or the year 10 tests. In addition, pupils must be assessed as ‘ready to learn’ and have submitted their choice of subjects portfolio.

Extended upper secondary and vocational education and training

It is currently possible for upper secondary educational establishments to organise extended courses in exceptional cases (two-year training may be extended to three years (hf) and three years’ duration is extended to four years) for students who are prevented from attending the course in the usual manner due to a disability or equivalent learning difficulties. The institution may set up separate classes for these students with extended schooling.

The agreement of 16 March 2022 on strengthening the teaching of children and young people at risk decided that trials may be launched with the option of establishing extended courses for young people in care in secondary education (upper secondary and vocational training). The trial is expected, if possible, to begin in the 2022/23 school year.

As of 1 January 2022, vocational training providers have been given the option, as part of a trial, of running part 2 of the basic cycle (GF2) under special conditions for students and apprentices with disabilities or similar severe difficulties. The duration of GF2 could thus be extended by up to 50%.

At the same time, the establishments concerned will be able to put together separate teams of students and apprentices and run GF2 under specific conditions. Participation in this trial will be voluntary for both establishments, students and apprentices.

ASD classes

ASD classes are special upper secondary classes for students with autism spectrum disorders. In order to set up special support functions for students, these are small classes of up to 12 pupils.

Specially organised upper secondary education (STU)

Young people under 25 who are unable to complete a course of upper secondary education have a legal right to be offered upper secondary schooling for young people with special needs (STU).

This course does not provide a qualification for further training or occupations. It aims to provide young people with intellectual disabilities and other young people with special needs with personal, social and professional skills to enable them to become as independent and take as active a role in their adult lives as possible and, where appropriate, in further training and employment.

Other training and measures targeting young people

Preparatory Basic Education (FGU)

Preparatory Basic Education is designed for young people under the age of 25 who have not completed or are currently in upper secondary education and are also not in employment. FGU makes room for the various individual skills of young people and aims to provide students with the knowledge, know-how, skills, clarification and motivation to complete upper secondary education or, alternatively, to find unskilled employment.

FGU is the main pathway for young people under the age of 25 who need comprehensive training after elementary school in order to move on in life. The common thread for students is that they need another means of getting into training or onto the job market. Some have had to improve their qualifications to meet the eligibility requirements for upper secondary education. Others need to develop personal or social skills. FGU is a full-time course of study with a minimum of 26 hours of classes per week on average.

Special pedagogical support (SPS)

Pupils/students enrolled at independent elementary schools, independent boarding schools, on courses of vocational education and training, and in upper secondary and higher education can apply for special pedagogical support.



In order to obtain SPS, the student must have a physical or mental impairment or similar severe difficulties to the extent that they require support in order to be able to complete their course of study on an equal footing to other students.

SPS is allocated further to a professional assessment of the individual's needs and depends on the degree of impairment and training involved. The assistance granted may take the form of:

- assistive tools, including IT aids and instructions on their use;
- extra study support lessons;
- specially designed study materials;
- sign language interpreting and speech-to-text reporting;
- personal and secretarial assistance.

Municipal youth action

Every municipality now has to have a local youth service (KUI) to coordinate the overall progression of young people through educational, employment and social initiatives. It is often in the transition between elementary and upper secondary education that the professional, personal and social challenges of young people become apparent. For this reason it is clearly the responsibility of the authorities vis-à-vis young people to ensure that they do not have different plans in each different system. Changes of course and inactive periods have a major impact on the progression of young people in upper secondary education or employment, and it is therefore considered important that supporting different goals among local authorities does not lead to a loss of valuable knowledge among young people.

Municipal youth action gives municipalities full responsibility for preparing all young people under the age of 25 for completing upper secondary education or entering employment. Municipalities are responsible for the young person's educational plan as part of their focus on cohesive municipal youth action. The plan is used as the tool to coordinate and ensure an overview of the different measures in play. The aim of the educational plan is to support young people in organising a realistic pathway that provides an anchor to education and employment.

Municipal youth action must designate a regular contact person for young people if it is felt that the young person needs support from several entities within the municipality for personal or social reasons. The role of the contact person is to follow-up on and support the young person towards remaining in upper secondary education or employment. A contact person can be assigned to young people from year 8 of elementary school onwards. The contact person scheme aims to provide support to young people in realising their educational plan thereby furthering their progress in education and employment.

Special provisions for children under the Danish Immigration Service's care

Accommodation operators are required to provide an education system of all children of mandatory school age.

The aim of this education is to:

- promote the acquisition by children of knowledge and skills that contribute to the multifaceted development of each child;
- familiarise children with Danish culture and contribute to their understanding of other cultures and human interaction with nature;
- provide children with an understanding of participation, co-responsibility, rights and duties in a free and democratic society, with an education system characterised by spiritual freedom, equity and democracy, and
- equip children for their future lives, whether they are granted a residence permit in Denmark or have to return to their country of origin.

Tuition must take place in State or independent schools (external schools) or in the operator's own schools. Tuition at the operator's own schools must be equivalent to that offered to bilingual pupils at Danish primary and lower secondary schools.



Nursery schools, leisure clubs and schools in asylum centres are supervised by municipalities.



6. Healthcare

Universal access to free and high-quality healthcare

In Denmark, residents are entitled to benefits under the Section 7 of the Health Act [Sundhedsloven]. This access to healthcare applies regardless of age and means that children in Denmark have access to high-quality healthcare free of charge, which, as we know, is one of the key services of the Child Guarantee. This also applies to the treatment and investigation of mental illnesses. Having a place of residence means signing up to the CPR. Treatment includes examination, diagnosis, treatment of illness, birth assistance, rehabilitation, professional healthcare and prevention and health promotion in relation to individual patients, see Section 5 of the Health Act.

Safeguarding the health of children and young people

As described in the section on the structure of the Danish system, municipalities are responsible for managing a number of different areas. Municipalities also take responsibility for promoting the health of children and young people. Since 1 January 2007, municipalities have taken charge of creating a framework for a healthy lifestyle for all its citizens. This is set out in Section 119 of the Health Act. Sections 120 to 126 of the Act set out the provisions relating to preventive healthcare for children and young people. Among other things, they state that the municipalities are responsible for ensuring the healthy upbringing of children and young people and creating positive conditions for a healthy adult life, and that there is a need for both general preventive action and individual-oriented action and special measures targeting children with special needs.

Municipal health services consist of doctors, healthcare providers, nurses and other staff employed in the municipality who perform tasks under the Health Act.

Sections 121-122 of the Health Act state that municipalities are to offer all children and young people health guidance, assistance and examinations given free of charge by healthcare providers until the end of their education. Greater efforts are required for children and young people with special needs, including counselling as well as further preventive testing carried out by the healthcare provider or doctor. Children in the asylum centre system also have access to the same health treatment as Danish children.

Social services are also set out in the guide to the Social Services Act: 'The child or young person must also be provided with necessary care in the form of a positive and stable adult contact. In addition, access to necessary practical assistance, such as food, clothing, housing, pocket money, transport, healthcare and access to other services offered by the community, must be ensured. Continuous systematic assessment of the individual development of the child or young person must be carried out in order to identify where the child or young person has difficulties in achieving the same level of personal fulfilment, development and health as their peers.'⁸ It thus clearly states that children and young people who are dependent on social services must be guaranteed access, among other things, to healthcare. In addition, as mentioned, children's development and health is assessed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they meet the same levels as their peers. Under the section covering the Danish system, municipalities are responsible for assisting children and young people and their families should they require special support. The support is intended to ensure that children and young people have the same opportunities as their peers for personal development, health and an independent adult life.

Healthcare

Healthcare providers offer, among other things, guidance and individual support to parents of infants and young children, as well as to pregnant women with special needs. They also focus on providing support, diagnoses and follow-up in relation to care and interventions for children and young people with health issues, including

⁸ Guidance on actions and special support for children and young people and their families (retsinformation.dk): [Vejledning om indsatser og særlig støtte til børn og unge og deres familier \(retsinformation.dk\)](#)



interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral cooperation with general practice, municipal doctors, social administration, pedagogical psychological counselling and other services. All families in Denmark are offered home visits from the health provider during the child's first year of life. In principle, a minimum of five visits are offered during this period, as well as an early visit to ensure the child's well-being in the event of an early discharge from hospital. In addition, extra services may be offered to families with special needs. The focus during the visits is the child's development and well-being, as well as breastfeeding and family planning.

Home visits for the child may be offered from the age of one to five years. Families with special needs are offered additional services, including home visits depending on a specific professional assessment, needs and issues.

The healthcare visitor also has regular contact with children and young people of school age, including health education activities in groups or for school year levels. In addition, the healthcare visitor carries out the compulsory medical examinations on starting and leaving school (although these may also be carried out by a doctor).

All children – in parallel with the provision of healthcare – are offered ongoing medical examinations by the doctor. Vaccinations which are part of the Danish childhood vaccination programme are also offered to all children and are usually carried out by their own doctor. Vaccination against COVID-19 is also offered by general practitioners, or by vaccination centres, pharmacies, etc.

Information on children's health obtained through professional health tests is reported to the children's database [*Børnedatabasen*] at the Danish Health Authority [*Sundhedsstyrelsen*].

Municipalities provide all children and young people under the age of 18 years with preventive and therapeutic dental care free of charge in accordance with Section 127 of the Health Act.

Special provisions for children under the Danish Immigration Service's care

Children who are dependent on the Immigration Service's care are entitled to the same health treatment as all other children in Denmark.



7. Healthy nutrition

Denmark is committed to guaranteeing access to healthy nutrition for vulnerable children, cf. Child Guarantee Recommendation No 9. As described in the section on cross-cutting and horizontal benefits, the Danish State supports parents and guardians financially through various services, with the aim, among other things, of enabling parents and guardians to ensure that their children receive healthy and nutritious food. These financial benefits are thus in line with Child Guarantee Recommendation 9(a) on support for access to healthy and nutritious meals – also outside of school days.

The focus is on creating healthy eating habits in children from an early age. As described earlier in the Action Plan, Denmark ensures that all children in day-care centres are given a healthy lunch. This helps to create healthy eating habits in children and contributes to their overall well-being and positive development.

Official dietary advice

In order to promote the provision and availability of healthy and climate-friendly food in day-care centres and schools, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) [Fødevarestyrelsen] publishes official dietary guidelines [Kostråd til Måltider] targeting meals in schools and day-care institutions. This advice is based on official dietary guidelines and is adapted to the needs of children day-care or at school in terms of food and beverages. The aim is to make it easier to prepare and serve healthy and climate-friendly food at school.

More specifically, the dietary guidelines for meals provide recommendations on the nutritional content of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, pulses, fish and meat, as well as plant oils and dairy products. There are also recommendations for beverages and advice on restricting consumption of sweet, salty and fatty foods, such as sweets, cakes and juices, etc. In addition to dietary recommendations, the DVFA also advises on how to create a framework for a positive eating environment and enjoyable meals.

In order to inform children and parents about healthy and climate-friendly food, the DVFA disseminates the official dietary guidelines to the fit and healthy members of the population aged from 2 to 65 years, for example, through awareness-raising campaigns, on social media and on the website altomkost.dk. The DVFA's recommendations for a framework on meals focus on the involvement of both children and parents, for example, in dialogue and dietary-related activities.

Other initiatives

In cooperation with the DVFA, the Danish Health Authority produces the publication 'Meals for the very young – from milk to family food' [*Mad til små – fra mælk til familiens mad*]. This describes children's food, from the time infants are weaned off milk until they begin on the food that the rest of the family eats.

Denmark also participates in the EU school scheme. The aim of the school scheme is to promote healthy eating habits among children and young people and to widen their access to healthy products. This objective is met by granting subsidies for the distribution of skimmed milk products to school pupils and children in day-care centres, as well as subsidies for the distribution of fruit and vegetables in schools.

In primary and lower secondary schools, 'Meals and Health' also features on the school curriculum under the compulsory subject of home economics. The objective is for students to learn the skill of making the right dietary choices in relation to health. Home economics is taught as a compulsory subject from years 4 to 7. During these classes, children are informed about what constitutes a healthy and nutritious diet, which is in line with Child Guarantee Recommendation 9(d) on the provision of information on healthy and nutritious food for children.

As described in the section on healthcare, the guide to the Social Services Act states that children and young people who are dependent on social services must be given access to the necessary practical help, including nutrition. For municipal institutions and social



services, the Danish Health Authority has issued recommendations to municipalities to draw up local action plans to ensure residents' access to healthy and nutritious diets that follow the nutrition recommendations ⁹.

In the event that a child comes to school or day-care without a packed lunch (or otherwise shows signs of neglect) to the extent that concerns are raised among staff, the professional staff have an increased obligation to inform the municipality. See section 3 above on notification requirements.

Special provisions for children under the Danish Immigration Service's care

In the residence centres where asylum seekers and others stay while their cases are pending, residents receive cash benefits every 14 days, and it is then up to the parents to purchase food and prepare meals, including packed lunches. At the Avnstrup repatriation centre, where families without legal residence in Denmark are accommodated, there is an arrangement whereby each family has the possibility to order food supplies from a selection of products and prepare the family's own meals. The children receiving educational services receive meals at the institutions concerned.

⁹ <https://www.sst.dk/~media/D87928FB0F1D4AE5A48DF8A547A62869.ashx>



8. Adequate housing

As set out in the Child Guarantee, it is the task of Member States to ensure access to adequate housing for vulnerable children. In Denmark, adequate housing conditions for children are ensured through the social housing sector, which is regulated by the Social Housing Act [*Lov om almene boliger mv.*]. The main target group of social housing is housing seekers on relatively low incomes, including families with children in socially vulnerable situations. In order to safeguard low rents, municipalities and the Danish State provide financial support for the establishment of social housing.

Social housing is rented out by non-profit social housing organisations, the purpose of which is to provide adequate housing for all those in need of housing at reasonable rents. The objective is to benefit groups that experience difficulties in obtaining adequate housing under normal market conditions.

Equal access to social housing is ensured by the obligation for housing organisations to rent out housing in line with a waiting list and, as a general rule, to prioritise housing seekers with the longest seniority.

In order to ensure that socially vulnerable families with urgent needs can also obtain housing, municipal councils have access to up to one out of every four available social family housing units for the purposes of housing under municipal instructions. This enables municipal councils to help socially vulnerable families obtain permanent housing. The instruction is triggered based on a specific assessment as to which housing applicants are in the most urgent need of housing.

It covers all people legally resident in Denmark, regardless of their income, social, religious, ethnic or national background, who may sign up to the housing organisations' waiting list or, if they have an urgent need for social housing, apply directly to the municipal council.

Measures relating to the general housing sector

In Denmark, there are about 627 000 social housing units, representing about 20% of the total housing stock. Of these, around 500 000 are family homes and the rest are youth homes and homes for the elderly and disabled.

Apart from the fact that the general sector is regulated and supported in such a way that rents are generally kept at a relatively low level, housing seekers with particularly low incomes have the option of receiving individual housing assistance. At the beginning of 2021, 59% of households in the social housing sector received housing benefit in the form of either housing allowance (old-age pensioners and early-retirement pensioners under the previous system) or housing benefit (others, including just over 54 000 households with children). For recipients of housing benefit, this is estimated to cover on average between 40 and 60% of the rent, depending on the composition of the household.

Denmark continues to work hard to ensure adequate housing conditions for vulnerable children and their families. Indeed, the Government has just entered into a political agreement to set aside DKK 10 billion in the 2022-2035 period for the Mixed Cities Fund in order to ensure that affordable social family housing remains available to the target group. The Fund will contribute to the creation of new social housing.

Among other things, the Fund will help to make around 4 000 social housing particularly affordable in order to prevent homelessness.

Given the objective and target group of the social housing sector, there is a risk that certain residential districts could fall into decline and that the mix of residents could become unbalanced since the proportion of socially and economically vulnerable residents is high compared to other residential districts. In order to prevent social housing from developing into disadvantaged residential areas with reduced life chances for children and adults, Denmark has introduced annual monitoring of the mix of residents



in social housing districts with more than 1 000 inhabitants. Once a year, the proportion of residents in those areas who are out of work, convicted of crime, lack an education, have a low income and are of non-Western background is published. In neighbourhoods where the proportion exceeds the set thresholds, measures are taken to transform them into well-functioning neighbourhoods and to raise living standards for residents both socially and financially.

These measures include mandatory rental rules, which, among other things, give priority to housing seekers in education and employment in vulnerable residential districts. This means that these groups are at the forefront of the queue for a vacant dwelling in residential districts where there are many unemployed people, and many uneducated people on low incomes and with criminal convictions.

In addition, the legislation provides that municipal councils may not assign housing to applicants who: have just been released following imprisonment; have had their housing lease terminated for serious violations of good order; are nationals of a country outside the EU, the EEA or Switzerland (excluding students) or have received a number of social transfers to dwellings within a district categorised as a vulnerable or preventive area.

This ensures that newcomers contribute to a balanced population mix, with more neighbours in employment and education thus providing children and young people with positive role models. In addition, this breaks with the historical practice of assigning the socially disadvantaged to the same residential areas.

In total, approximately 12% of all social housing is covered by the abovementioned rental rules. This means that there are still more than 420 000 family social housing units that housing seekers can move into even if they are not in employment or education and where there are no restrictions on municipal social housing provision.

The most socially and economically vulnerable residential areas need to be transformed, i.e. the share of social family housing needs to be reduced from 100% to 40% by 2030. The aim is to ensure a balanced mix of residents and to create a normal urban neighbourhood where all residents living on estates to be sold or demolished are rehoused without exception in another suitable dwelling in the municipality.

Denmark thus features a large social housing sector that allows housing seekers, including families with children, in a socially or economically vulnerable position or with special needs, to find a place to live, as well as access to financial assistance to pay the rent. In addition, efforts have been made to combat the segregation of residential areas and thereby ensure that children in Denmark have equal opportunities for a positive schooling, education and employment experience wherever they grow up.

Special measures for securing stable housing conditions for families with children in particular

In order to prevent families with children from losing their homes because they cannot pay the rent, successive governments have taken a series of measures over the past ten years to prevent evictions of tenants who have defaulted on their rent. Efforts are made to ensure that the municipality is contacted rapidly in the event of non-payment of rent so that an assessment of whether the family needs help can be made in good time.

Approximately two thirds of evictions of tenants are from social housing. The social housing sector has made considerable efforts to prevent and deter evictions by recruiting staff to seek out and advise tenants at risk of eviction on the matter of budgeting, debts and opportunities to apply for social benefits, including housing benefit. These efforts have had a positive impact on the number of evictions, which have decreased significantly since 2009.

Finally, Danish legislation includes a homelessness provision in Section 80 of the Social Services Act. Under Section 80 of the Social Services Act, the municipality is obliged to provide families or single persons who have lost their home with temporary shelter against payment, and must take a decision on an application for temporary shelter as soon



as possible. The assistance is provided only if the applicant is unable to resolve their housing problem temporarily or permanently on their own. The provision of the assistance may also depend on the homeless person in the emergency situation playing an active role in solving the housing problem. Article 80 does not offer a more permanent solution to housing problems.

Safeguarding adequate housing conditions for children with disabilities

Under the Social Services Act, municipalities are required to provide assistance with furnishing of accommodation for persons – including children and young people – with permanently impaired physical or mental capacity, where necessary to make the dwelling more suited to accommodating the person concerned. This provision enables the families of children and young people with disabilities to be supported and able to organise their homes to make them suited to accommodating the child or young person despite their disability. Assistance with housing may, for example, take the form of fitting access ramps, installing bed lifts or removing door steps from the dwelling.

In addition, the Social Services Act contains a wide range of other social measures which are initially provided to foster opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to continue living with their biological family on an equal footing with other children and young people of the same age who have no impairments. However, the Social Services Act also contains provisions on accommodation outside the home, which provides, among other things, a framework for finding placements for children and young people who, due to significant and permanently reduced functional capacity, require a level of support that is higher than can be met in the family's own home. By law, it is the municipality's responsibility to ensure that there is a suitable placement available to match the support needs of each child or young person. The municipality is also responsible for supporting continued contact between the child and its biological parents during the placement.

Special provisions for children under the Danish Immigration Service's care

The Immigration Service is responsible for providing and maintaining accommodation facilities for asylum seekers, among others. In practice, a number of operators run these accommodation sites on behalf of the Service.

The tasks involved are set out in a contract concluded between the Immigration Service and the operators, detailing the services relating to maintaining the accommodation. The contract establishes the framework for a holistic approach that provides asylum seekers and others with a safe, dignified and meaningful period of residence during the Immigration Service's examination of their asylum case and until the decision on a residence permit or departure is taken.

The Immigration Service monitors the conditions at the centres and performs continuous checks on how the operators carry out their tasks. The purpose of these checks is to monitor and ensure that operators continue to provide services that meet the content and scope of the operator contract and the applicable guidelines and regulatory requirements, and that they continue to fulfil the overall purpose of maintaining the accommodation system.

Unaccompanied minors

Unaccompanied minors face a particularly vulnerable situation. The focus is therefore on accommodating this group in order to ensure a safe environment and opportunities for a meaningful and structured daily life with age-appropriate services, so that the resources of minors are maintained and developed. At the children's centres, there are a number of extended requirements for staff, staff ratios and watchkeeping.

The rules applicable in centres for unaccompanied minors include:

- minors accommodated at a new centre must be offered a counsellor on arrival;
- assistance must be offered to minors in applying for private accommodation;
- minors are assigned a primary and secondary contact person.



- The operator must draw up development plans for all minors. Development plans must include agreements on schooling, leisure activities, training in everyday skills and contact with any relatives.
- The operator must prepare social reports containing information on the child's background, development, schooling, leisure interests and future aspirations. The social report is sent, among other things, to the integration municipality in connection with a possible transition to integration.

Finally, it must be ensured that the transition to integration in municipalities provides the child or young person with the best possible basis for further integration.



9. Associational life and culture

Municipalities are responsible for setting the framework for the participation of children and young people in associational life and any special actions in this area for specific target groups, such as vulnerable children.

The Adult Education Act [*Folkeoplysningsloven*] stipulates that municipalities must secure a framework for children and young people to establish and participate in the free education of the general public, and that, in this context, municipalities are to provide subsidies for activities for children and young people under the age of 25 and provide premises for voluntary, civic education associations, i.e. sports and associational activities for children and young people.

Although the State does not provide direct grants to local associations, it does provide operational funds to the Danish Sports Confederation, the DGI and the Danish Youth Council, which support local associational life, including for children and young people, and undertake specific initiatives in this area.

Children's libraries

The Libraries Act [*Biblioteksloven*] states that municipalities in the country must run public libraries with separate children's departments. Municipalities are obliged (as far as possible) to provide library services for children, who are excluded from entering the library themselves.

In addition, municipal public libraries have to cooperate with municipal school libraries. The same cataloguing systems, etc. are used within public and school libraries.

Each year, the State distributes the state fund known as the 'Development pool for public libraries and pedagogical learning centres'. The purpose of this pool is to support the role of libraries in promoting information, education and cultural activities. The pool, implemented by the Agency for Culture and Palaces [*Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen*], supports both projects that help to develop the libraries' physical and digital services.

Culture for children and young people

Every year, the State supports a wide range of cultural projects and initiatives targeting activities for children and young people. These activities are financed, respectively, by resources under the Finance Act and by funds allocated for cultural purposes.

For example, the State grants music schools a partial refund of up to 25% of the music schools' expenditure on teachers' salaries, etc.

In addition, by law municipalities are obliged to run a music school to provide musical education for children and young people up to the age of 25. Municipalities can provide children and young people with music school classes free of charge or at reduced rates. The aim of the music schools is to develop and promote pupils' musical skills and knowledge through its educational activities and also to promote the local musical environment.

In addition to the tasks assigned to music schools, municipalities themselves support different types of cultural activities for children and young people.

Voluntary initiatives and associations

In addition to municipal and State initiatives, there are a number of voluntary initiatives and associations that provide cultural services to children and young people. One example of this is the Music and Youth association [*Musik & Ungdom*], which works to promote musical and cultural communities with young people as co-creators.

This type of initiative is often supported by the Ministry of Culture, through the Adult Education Act, through state pools and project grants, and through the Danish Youth Council, which is an umbrella and interest organisation for nationwide children's and youth organisations, or through municipal grants.



Supporting children and young people's encounters with art and culture

As described above, there are a wide range of initiatives to support children and young people's encounters with art and culture, as well as to create accessible cultural opportunities for all children throughout the country. A number of areas and initiatives are described below. It should be noted that the list is not exhaustive.

All municipalities run music schools with the option of obtaining State subsidies. In addition, around half of the country's music schools are organised along the lines of cultural schools and therefore also provide training in other cultural disciplines such as the performing arts, visual arts, or animation, among others. As a result, there is a wide range of cultural activities on offer throughout the country, although the responsibility for these lies with each municipality, and there will therefore be local differences between the respective municipalities in the current cultural activities available to children and young people.

Culture for children and young people under the 2021 Finance Act

The 2021 Finance Act allocates DKK 235 million for the period 2021-2024 to enable more children and young people to encounter culture in everyday life. These include the following initiatives:

- DKK 20 million per year in 2021 and 2022 for music and cultural schools. The initiative aims to support more children and young people in their access to and desire for artistic participation.
- DKK 20 million per year from 2021 to 2024 for more youth and children's theatres. This will ensure that more children and young people encounter the performing arts.
- DKK 25 million in 2021 for children and young people's encounters with literature in the country's day-care institutions and leisure facilities.
- DKK 10 million per year from 2021 to 2024 for 'living music' at school and the national orchestras, which aim to reach more children and cooperate across institutions.
- DKK 10 million per year from 2021 to 2024 for approximately doubling the decorative artists scheme, which enables schools and institutions to link up with professional artists so that children and young people can encounter art early in life.
- DKK 5 million per year in 2021-2022 to strengthen the 'house of song' so that it can continue its work and extend the network of 'song craft' centres to a larger proportion of the country, so that singing activities for children and young people in particular are spread further.

Decorative artists scheme

Grants for art fees for children and young people's encounters with professional artists in schools and day-care centres. Under the decorative artists scheme, grants are also made available to municipalities to have an artist/artistic group in-house for a longer period of time, with the overall aim of promoting children and young people's encounters with art.

Performing arts for children, young people and adults

Grants for professional performing arts projects, including grants for the multiannual running costs and individual and international activities of the theatre. These grants are intended to encourage the development of new performing arts and other experimental activities in the field of performing arts aimed at children and young people. It means that more children and young people have the opportunity to experience professional, international performing arts projects.



Reimbursement of the costs of children's and youth performances

Producers of professional performing arts may apply to the State to have a ready-made performance approved for inclusion in the reimbursement scheme. This covers expenditure incurred by municipalities and non-municipal institutions for the purchase of performances.

Subsidies for the reduction of fares

The State grants subsidies to reduce fares for resident theatres and other producing theatres, as well as performing arts companies without a fixed venue. The reduced ticket price allows more children and young people to experience professional theatrical performances regardless of their socio-economic background.

Children and young people in vulnerable residential areas

The Ministry of Culture has a number of initiatives aimed at enabling children and young people in disadvantaged housing areas to meet and engage actively in arts and culture.

The 'Cultural bridge for children and young people' pool [*Kulturbroen til børn og unge*] has focused on developing methods to create bridges between parties from disadvantaged residential areas and local cultural institutions and actors, allowing more children and young people from such areas to encounter and engage in arts and culture. The initiative consists of a pool of DKK 3.7 million, a project maturity camp ahead of the application round and a knowledge-sharing network set up across the projects supported by the pool. The pool supports projects that engage children and young people actively in artistic and cultural activities for a three-year period from 1 April 2019 to 1 April 2022.

The 'Culture in vulnerable housing areas' pool is based on artistic and cultural participation and is designed to promote the social participation, engagement and integration of residents in vulnerable housing areas. The pool targets everyone living in such areas, including children and young people. It supports projects based on democracy, active citizenship, freedom of expression and dialogue which use artistic and cultural tools to shape positive communities. A total of DKK 20 million was allocated to the pool of DKK 5 million per year from 2019 to 2022.

Grib Engagement ['Get involved']

The 'Get involved' model is designed to support the access and desire of more children and young people to become engaged in artistic activities such as music, theatre, the visual arts, etc.

Follow-up

The existing measures are regularly monitored in cooperation with the Agency for Culture and Palaces, which administers most of the aid schemes.

Action: leisure passes for vulnerable children and young people

Vulnerable children and young people are less involved in organised leisure activities than other children and young people. As a result, they miss out on the opportunity to connect and build social skills that can eventually help them out of their vulnerable position.

In order to increase the participation of vulnerable children and young people in leisure activities, many Danish municipalities offer leisure pass schemes. Leisure passes are offered to children and young people under the age of 18 years who live in social, economic and/or cultural conditions that have the effect of excluding them from leisure activities as part of organised recreation. A leisure pass may take many forms, but basically consists of a scheme whereby municipalities provide financial support to enable vulnerable children and young people to participate in leisure activities. It may also be supplemented by various forms of guidance, etc.

With the agreement on the reserve for social, health and labour market measures 2020-2023, a pool was created for further deployment of the leisure allowance scheme.



Special provisions for children under the Danish Immigration Service's care

There are social clubs available for children and young people from 6 to 17 years of age under the Immigration Service's care. Instructors in social clubs ensure that there is a positive combination of individual activities and group games.

Staff at asylum centres also help children to join clubs, for example, to play football or music in local associations and clubs.

10. Safeguarding the rights of children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic

Day-care and education

The well-being, development and learning of children and young people was a top priority throughout the pandemic. Day-care facilities remained open throughout the pandemic, with the exception of a short lockdown in spring 2020 for a total of 19 days. During this lockdown, emergency care was available for children with special needs or children with parents in socially critical occupations.

In some cases, it was possible to scale down the remit of day-care services, i.e. to derogate from the care guarantee under the Day-care Act in very exceptional cases where not all children are able to attend day-care etc. in general as a result of the introduction of new or reintroduced measures to combat COVID-19.

In other areas of education and training, lockdowns took place on several occasions, both in spring 2020, from December 2020 to May 2021, and most recently over Christmas and New Year 2021/22. During the first two lockdowns in primary, secondary and adult education, the re-opening took place in stages, bringing the youngest pupils back to actual presence in classes significantly earlier than others. Students received distance learning classes during all lockdowns. In the case of the temporary closures of primary schools etc., provision was made for emergency classes for children with special needs or students enrolled in years 0-4, whose parents were in employment or self-employment and either not repatriated or taking up employment or working from home.

In secondary education, pupils, trainees and participants with specific social, pedagogical and therapeutic needs had the opportunity to attend the educational establishment in person. Upper secondary education for young people with special needs and TAMU (Labour market classes at the training school) were completely exempted from closure.

Access to school-based activities etc. in the light of COVID-19

In June 2020, the Government and a broad majority of the Danish Parliament agreed to allocate DKK 200 million to a partnership with Local Government Denmark, which will provide a wide range of summer activities for children and young people aged between 6 and 17 years. Many children and young people find themselves left with problems that can affect their schooling. For example, they may have fallen behind academically after a long period of emergency education or be left out of their community when friends from school take summer holidays with their family. The agreement also allocates money to increase the capacity of organisations that organise summer camps and activities such as football schools, holiday camps, swimming camps, etc. for children, young people and families. Funding is also allocated to outreach actions extended to isolated families, who can, among other things, obtain assistance to enable their children to take part in leisure activities during the summer break.

The social field

Throughout the pandemic, the social sector has been categorised as a critical function and has therefore been exempted from lockdowns, etc. Throughout the lockdown, municipalities have still been obliged to take the necessary measures, assess notifications, and so on. In doing so, municipalities' support and assistance to vulnerable children and young people has been secured throughout the pandemic, as usual.



In addition, the Government has taken a number of initiatives and actions to counter the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, targeting vulnerable children and young people. An overview of these is given below.

Overview of Government support packages and initiatives targeting vulnerable children and young people, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- April 2020: Children's package of DKK 13.5 million for increased counselling and practical help provided by a number of organisations to vulnerable children and their families.
- April 2020: Agreement on a series of initiatives at a cost of DKK 215 million to ensure that socially vulnerable children and adults and people with disabilities get through the COVID-19 pandemic as well as they possibly can.
- June 2020: Summer activities for children and young people: DKK 220 million for municipalities and organisations organising summer activities for young people, as well as outreach to get isolated young people involved.
- November 2020: Additional funds to combat loneliness: The 'loneliness pool' of DKK 50 million, for new communities, among others, of which DKK 20 million targeted actions for vulnerable children.
- November 2020: Extra Christmas assistance for vulnerable families: exceptional grant of DKK 2.5 million to organisations providing Christmas assistance to vulnerable families.
- February 2021: DKK 11 million support package for vulnerable children, adults and people with disabilities under prolonged restrictions.
- October 2021: The State contributed DKK 27 million to a post-COVID-19 initiative on school children's learning and well-being, in partnership with private foundations.



11. Safeguarding the rights of Ukrainian children

Last updated: end of April 2022

The Danish Government is keeping a close eye on developments in Ukraine and the influx of displaced Ukrainians into Denmark. It is still unclear how many displaced persons from Ukraine Denmark will receive in the forthcoming months. However, it is expected that these displaced persons will include children and young people under the age of 18 years.

The Act on the temporary residence of persons displaced from Ukraine was adopted by the *Folketinget* on 16 March 2022. The law provides for the temporary right of residence for persons displaced from Ukraine. While an application for a residence permit under the Act is being examined, the person has procedural residence in Denmark and will have access to accommodation and maintenance under the Immigration Service's care.

The most pertinent aspects of the Danish efforts for children from Ukraine are briefly highlighted below. It is noted that changes and adjustments may occur as the situation evolves.

General arrangements for schools, day-care, upper secondary education and preparatory basic education

Displaced children and young people from Ukraine have access to day-care and primary education in Denmark. This puts a lot of pressure on municipalities and the influx from Ukraine is expected to be such that new opportunities for action in the field of day-care and primary education need to be handed over to municipalities.

For this reason, the Government and the Liberal Party, the Socialist People's Party, the Radical Liberal Party, the Unity List, the Conservative People's Party, the Danish People's Party, the New Citizens' Party, the Liberal Alliance, the Alternative and the Christian Democrats have reached an agreement on increased flexibility in the matter of the reception of displaced children and young people from Ukraine. The agreement will secure the necessary capacity in day-care and primary education, while at the same time supporting the best possible environment for children and young people from Ukraine to become part of Danish society during the time they are here, without renouncing their attachment to Ukrainian language, culture and identity.

The agreement allows municipalities to set up special day-care and primary education services for children and young people from Ukraine with a residence permit under the Special Act. Among other things, municipalities will have the opportunity to set up classes across various school years and to teach in English and Ukrainian. The arrangements will be exempt from a number of rules laid down in the Day-care Act and Act of Public Compulsory Education, including requirements for Danish as the main language in day-care and as the language of instruction, as well as requirements for the number of hours in primary schools.

At the same time, under the Special Act municipalities will be allowed to derogate from a number of requirements under the applicable rules in respect of children and young people from Ukraine with a residence permit. As part of the agreement, it will be possible for Ukrainian parents to receive allowances to look after their own children by waiving the requirement of Danish language skills and prior residence in Denmark for seven out of the last eight years. At the same time, municipalities will be able to waive the requirement that bilingual children in need of language stimulation must be included in a language stimulation programme for 30 hours a week.

In primary education, the possibility of using Ukrainian and English as a language of instruction and distance learning is provided as part of the reception arrangements. For example, it will be possible to use material from the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, provided that the course remains commensurate with that of primary and lower secondary education. Municipalities are also given greater flexibility in the organisation of reception classes. For example, it is possible to establish reception classes across municipalities. At the same time, the requirement for language tests for displaced



children and young people from Ukraine living in vulnerable residential areas is waived.

The agreement also allows youth and adult education institutions to offer pupils, trainees and participants with a residence permit under the Special Act classes in English or Ukrainian as well as entirely or partially as distance learning classes. In addition, it provides for the possibility of using available capacity on FGU and upper secondary education courses, at vocational schools and adult education centres for teaching young people from Ukraine.

It will be up to each municipality to assess which measures will need to be applied. The bill will be submitted for urgent consideration in May 2022 with a view to its entry into force as soon as possible.

Arrangements specific to upper secondary and preparatory basic education (FGU)

Preparatory basic training: Young people with a residence permit under the Special Act may be admitted to FGU courses under the FGU rules. This requires that the young target group be assessed for FGU by the municipal youth action team. The rules for assessing the target group have not been amended under the Special Act. As a general rule, the young person must thus be under the age of 25 years and not yet have completed upper secondary education or be in permanent employment. There are no language requirements for FGU courses, but FGU classes are in practice given in Danish.

Vocational education and training: Persons with a residence permit under the Special Act shall have access to vocational training if they meet the general admission requirements laid down in the Act on vocational training [*Lov om erhvervsuddannelser*]. The applicant meets the eligibility requirements if the school considers that the candidate has, in Ukraine or in another country:

1. passed an examination of a level at least equivalent to that of lower secondary education;
2. obtained an average mark in Danish and mathematics at a level equivalent to 2.0 at lower secondary school or the year 10 tests, and
3. the assessed proficiency or assessed ability to complete the training. Applicants are also admitted if they have a training agreement with a company.

Upper secondary education: As regards upper secondary education, persons residing in Denmark under the Special Act are admitted in accordance with the general rules, under which the right of residence is not a factor. In practice, it is for the management of each institution to decide whether the claimant can be admitted on the basis of the applicant's school background. The assessment must take into account whether the applicant's level of school education can be equated with a completed year 9 or 10 in lower secondary education and whether the applicant has the appropriate linguistic prerequisites.

Social benefits and supervision

Persons from Ukraine who are legally resident in Denmark, including, for example, procedural residence, are covered by the Social Services Act and are entitled to benefits under this Act.

The Danish municipalities have a general supervision obligation covering the conditions in which children and young people under the age of 18 years and prospective parents live. The supervision must be carried out in such a way that the municipality can know as early on as possible whether special support or action is likely to be required.

The municipal authority's duty of supervision applies to all children and young people under the age of 18 years, irrespective of their place of residence and whether or not the child or young person is legally resident. The municipal authority's duty of supervision also applies when the child or young person is staying at an asylum centre.

Special rules were adopted on 28 April 2022 to extend the circle of persons eligible as a network family as specifically suitable for a particular child or young person who has been granted a residence permit under the Temporary Residence Act [*Lov om midlertidig*



opholdstilladelse] to persons displaced from Ukraine. The municipal council of the municipality which decides on the place of placement of a child or a young person who is to be housed or on a relief stay from home may therefore approve a network foster family if this family shares a cultural and linguistic community with the child or young person.

The special rules state that children and adolescents who have been granted a residence permit under the Temporary Residence Act for persons displaced from Ukraine and where a relief stay or placement has been ordered, can receive proper assistance and care and are provided with supportive conditions in which to maintain their culture, language and linguistic development.



12. Conclusion

The European Child Guarantee was adopted by the Council on 14 June 2021 with the aim of preventing and combating social exclusion and ensuring children's access to 'key services'.

The Danish Government supports the ambition to combat the social exclusion of children and child poverty in general, and supports the need to secure proper living conditions for children in Europe.

During negotiations on the Child Guarantee, importance was given to ensuring that the Recommendation was balanced and flexible and fully respected Member States' national competences. This Danish Action Plan for the Child Guarantee is therefore also adapted to Danish circumstances in respect of the consultation process, monitoring and description of the individual key services.

In line with the Council Recommendation, the Action Plan initially identifies relevant groups of vulnerable children, together with the existing knowledge of these groups.

In order to present a true and fair picture of the overall measures for children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, the Action Plan provides an account of both social benefits and measures targeting children, and relevant social security benefits. Both complement and support key services.

The section below sets out access to the four key services and Danish access to areas such as day-care, education and school-based activities, nutrition, healthcare and housing conditions for vulnerable children.

As a complement to this, we include a review of culture and leisure, which in a Danish context represent an essential complement to the four key services.

Lastly, an account is given of special measures relating to COVID-19. In addition, the Plan sets out the actions undertaken to safeguard the rights of Ukrainian children.

Overall, the Action Plan's review of the four key services and the other areas and services highlighted demonstrate that Denmark meets the objectives and recommendations of the Council Recommendation.

In the future, the recommendations and themes of the Child Guarantee will feed into the ongoing Danish policy work on the social inclusion of vulnerable children.

Monitoring

The Child Guarantee requires that Member States report back to the Commission every two years on progress on implementing the Recommendation. In this context, Member States must put forward a national framework for monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Child Guarantee.



Article 11 of the Child Guarantee

11. *With a view to sound governance, monitoring and reporting and taking due account of existing national structures and mechanisms, Member States are recommended to:*

(c) submit to the Commission, within nine months from the adoption of this Recommendation, an Action Plan, covering the period until 2030, to implement this Recommendation, taking into account national, regional and local circumstances as well as existing policy actions and measures to support children in need. The Action Plan should include, in particular:

(v) a national framework for data collection, monitoring and evaluation of this Recommendation, also with a view to establishing a common monitoring framework, as referred to in paragraph 12, point (d);

(f) report every two years to the Commission on the progress in implementing this Recommendation, in line with the national Action Plan referred to in point (c).

The plan is to base this forward-looking monitoring of the target groups and themes covered by the Child Guarantee on the Social Policy Statement.

In accordance with the Finance Act, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens prepares an annual social policy report which follows up, among other things, on measures for vulnerable children and young people. With a systematic mapping of expenditure, target groups and actions in the specialised social field and a number of thematic chapters, the Social Policy Statement sets out an annual account of the latest knowledge on social policy actions in Denmark. The thematic chapters follow up on specific themes and trends, such as the academic performance of vulnerable children and young people at school, how many are admitted to and complete upper secondary education, how many have mental health issues, commit crime, become homeless, and so on.

The Statement, which has been produced since 2016, is a key instrument in reorienting social efforts, with a view to increasing the use of tools and actions that make a real difference.

It is estimated that building on an already well-established and robust analytically based tool will provide a better starting point for monitoring the development of relevant risk groups in the future than the creation of a parallel monitoring system.

The biennial Danish report under the Child Guarantee will therefore be based on the Social Policy Statement, with the involvement of relevant ministries in the search for additional relevant evidence.

Finally, the use of the Social Policy Statement as a framework for the forward-looking monitoring of implementation of the Child Guarantee is highly compatible with the European Semester. The Social Policy Statement is published at the end of the year. An extract on topics relevant to the Child Guarantee could thus be made available (every two years) at the start of each year, just as the analytical work intensifies under the European Semester.



Annex 1: Consultation list

ADHD-foreningen
Adoption og Samfund
Advokatsamfundet
Akademikernes Centralorganisation
Ankestyrelsen
AOF Danmark
Arbejdstilsynet
ATP
Baglandet København
Baglandet Vejle
Baglandet Aalborg
Baglandet Aarhus
Bedsteforeningen
BL, Danmarks Almene Boliger
Børne- og Kulturchefforeningen (BKF)
Børne- og Ungdomspædagogernes Landsforbund (BUPL)
Børnenes Bureau
Børnerådet
Børnesagens Fællesråd
Børns Vilkår
Daginstitutionernes Lands-Organisation (DLO)
Danmarks Lærerforening
Danmarks Statistik
Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening (DA)
Dansk Blindesamfund
Dansk Center for Undervisningsmiljø
Dansk Erhverv
Dansk Flygtningehjælp
Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd
Dansk Friskoleforening
Dansk Handicapforbund
Dansk Industri
Dansk Magisterforening
Dansk Psykologforening
Dansk Skoleidræt
Dansk Socialrådgiverforening
Dansk Sygeplejeråd
Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd
Danske Advokater
Danske Døves Landsforbund
Danske Erhvervsskoler- og Gymnasier - Lederne
Danske Familieadvokater
Danske Gymnasieelevers Sammenslutning
Danske Gymnasier
Danske Gymnastik- og Idrætsforeninger
Danske Handicaporganisationer
Danske HF og VUC – Lederne
Danske Lærerorganisationer International (DLI)
Danske Professionshøjskoler
Danske Regioner
Danske Skoleelever
Danske SOSU-skoler
Danske Studerendes Fællesråd
Danske Undervisningsorganisationers Samråd
Danske Universiteter
Datatilsynet
De Anbragtes Vilkår (DAV)
Den Danske Dommerforening
Den Uvildige Konsulentordning på Handicapområdet (DUKH)



Det Centrale Handicapråd
Deutscher Schul- und Sprachverein für Nordschleswig (DSSV)
Dommerfuldmægtigforeningen
Domstolsstyrelsen
Efterskoleforeningen
Erhvervsskolelederne
Erhvervsskolernes ElevOrganisation
Erhvervsstyrelsen
Fabu – Socialfagligt konsulenthus
Fagbevægelsens Hovedorganisation (FH)
Familiernetshuset
Finanssektorens Arbejdsgiverforening
FOA – Fag og Arbejde
Folkehøjskolernes Forening i Danmark
Foreningen af Danske Døgninstitutioner (FADD)
Foreningen af Frie Fagskoler
Foreningen af Kommunale Social-, Sundheds- og Arbejdsmarkedschefer i DK
(FSD) (Socialchefforeningen)
Foreningen af Kristne Friskoler
Foreningen Børn og Unge Trivsel
Foreningen for Forældre til Elever i Fri- og Privatskoler
Foreningen til gavn for børn og unge (fobu)
Forhandlingsfællesskabet
ForældreLANDSforeningen (fbu)
Forældrenes Landsorganisation (FOLA)
Frederiksberg Kommune (Socialtilsyn Hovedstaden)
Frie Skolers Lærerforening
Friskolerne
Faaborg-Midtfyn Kommune (Socialtilsyn Syd)
Gymnasieskolernes Lærerforening
Handelsskolernes Lærerforening
Hjørring Kommune (Socialtilsyn Nord)
HK/kommunal
Holbæk Kommune (Socialtilsyn Øst)
HvorErDerEnVoksen
Institut for Menneskerettigheder
ITD (International Transport Danmark)
KFUM's Sociale Arbejde
Klagenævnet for Specialundervisning
Kommunernes Landsforening (KL)
KRAKA
Landforeningen Autisme
Landsforeningen af 10. klasseskoler i Danmark
Landsforeningen af Ungdomsskoleledere (LU)
Landsforeningen for Børn og Forældre
Landsorganisationen Danske Daginstitutioner
Landsorganisationen for sociale tilbud (LOS)
Landssammenslutningen af Foreninger for Selvstændige Børnepassere
Landssammenslutningen af Handelsskoleelever
Landssamråd for PPR-chefer
Lederne
Ledernes Hovedorganisation
Lev uden Vold
Livsværk
LOKK – Landsorganisationen af Kvindekrisecentre
Lægeforeningen
Lær for Livet
Medarbejder- og Kompetencestyrelsen
Mødrehjælpen
OpenDenmark
Plejefamiliernes Landsforening (PLF)



Private Gymnasier og Studenterkurser
Red Barnet
Red Barnet Ungdom
Rigsadvokaten
Rigspolitiet
Rigsrevisionen
Røde Kors
Rådet for Børns Læring
Rådet for de Grundlæggende Erhvervsrettede Uddannelser
Rådet for Etniske Minoriteter
Rådet for Socialt Udsatte
Rådet for Voksen og Efteruddannelse (VEU-Rådet)
Selveje Danmark
Selvejende og private institutioners forening (Spifo)
Silkeborg Kommune (Socialtilsyn Midt)
Sjældne Diagnoser
Skole og Forældre
Skolelederforeningen
Socialpædagogernes Landsforbund (SL)
Socialstyrelsen
Styrelsen for Arbejdsmarked og Rekruttering
Styrelsen for Undervisning og Kvalitet
Søfartsstyrelsen
TABUKA – Landsforeningen for nuværende og tidligere anbragte
Team Danmark
Udbetaling Danmark
Uddannelsesforbundet
Uddannelseslederne
Ungdommens Røde Kors
Ungdomsringen
Ungdomsskoleforeningen
UNICEF Danmark
VUC Bestyrelsesforeningen