

**CORE CURRICULUM
FOR PRE-SCHOOL
EDUCATION IN FINLAND
2000**

**NATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION
2000**

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To providers of education, comprehensive schools and day-care centres

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CORE CURRICULUM FOR PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION 2000

The National Board of Education has confirmed the Core Curriculum for Pre-school Education 2000 to be observed as from 19th December 2000 until further notice. The Core Curriculum has been prepared in compliance with Section 14 of the Basic Education Act in co-operation with the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, Stakes.

The education provider shall prepare and approve a curriculum for education in compliance with the provisions of this Core Curriculum. The curriculum shall specify and complement the objectives and core contents set out in the Core Curriculum. Curricula conforming to this core curriculum may be adopted as from 1st August 2001 and shall be adopted no later than 1st August 2002.

The education provider may not fail to comply with the Core Curriculum and may not deviate from it.

Director General


Jukka Sarjala

Divisional Director,
General Education Division


Aslak Lindström

CC

National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, Stakes
Provincial State Offices

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Chapter 1 Roles and general objectives of pre-school education

Section 1 Roles

Pre-school education shall build on the basic values of society. These have been stipulated in national legislation and international declarations, recommendations or conventions, which endeavour to safeguard human rights and the viability of the globe. The role of pre-school education shall be to promote children's growth into humane individuals and ethically responsible membership of society by guiding them towards responsible action and compliance with generally accepted rules and towards appreciation for other people.

The core role of pre-school education shall be to promote children's favourable growth, development and learning opportunities. It shall support and monitor physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional development and prevent any difficulties that may arise. It is important to strengthen children's healthy sense of self-esteem with the aid of positive learning experiences and to provide opportunities for diverse interaction with other people. Children's world of experiences shall be enriched and they shall be assisted as they seek to find new areas of interest. Pre-school education shall also take the special needs of girls and boys into account. Pre-school education shall guarantee equal opportunities for children to learn and start school.

Early childhood education and care, pre-school education as part of it and basic education form an integrated whole progressing consistently in terms of children's development. Provision of pre-school education shall thus allow for the objectives and contents of other forms of early childhood education and care, on the one hand, and those of basic education, on the other. Irrespective of whether pre-school education is provided in a separate group or integrated with other age groups, its objectives and distinctive characteristics shall always be taken into account.

In order to achieve the objectives set, it is important that the teacher and parents or other guardians as well as staff participating in the implementation of pre-school education take joint responsibility for children's regular participation in pre-school education.

Section 2 General objectives of education and learning

The objectives of pre-school education shall be determined by each child's individual development opportunities and learning potential,

on the one hand, and by the needs of society, on the other. The objectives of pre-school education shall be as follows:

Children's positive self-concept will strengthen and their learning to learn skills will develop. They will adopt basic skills, knowledge and capabilities from different areas of learning in accordance with their age and abilities. Learning through play is essential. They will learn to understand the significance of a peer group in learning. They will retain the joy of and enthusiasm for learning and face new learning challenges with courage and creativity.

Children will learn how to reflect on what is right and wrong. Their actions as responsible members of a community will strengthen. They will practise the rules of co-existence and commitment to these rules. They will internalise the good practices of our society and understand their significance as part of everyday life. They will learn to control themselves better and learn how to cope with everyday situations. They will learn to understand equality and to accept the diversity of people. They will learn to understand how to maintain health and well-being in accordance with their age level.

Children's linguistic and cultural identity and their ability to express themselves diversely will strengthen and develop. They will familiarise themselves with different forms of art, local and national culture and also, as far as possible, with other cultures.

Children will become interested in nature and form an idea of their own dependence on and responsibility for both nature and the man-made environment. They will learn how to diversely observe and analyse their environment, enjoy the beauty and diversity of the environment and will become aware of the effects of their own actions.

Chapter 2 Implementation of pre-school education

Section 3 Conception of learning

Learning in pre-school education shall be an active and goal-oriented process, which is based on previous knowledge structures and will often involve solving problems. Knowledge cannot thus be directly transferred to children through teaching, but children themselves will generate new ideas on the basis of previously adopted ideas and new information. Learning is based on previous knowledge and learning experiences. Learning will occur through inter-

action between the learning material, previously formed knowledge structures and thinking. In interactive peer group situations, children will learn together with and from each other by giving impulses for the development of each other's thinking and imagination.

Section 4 Learning environment

The learning environment in pre-school education shall refer to the physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional environment in which the activities are carried out. The essential factors of a learning environment include interaction between the teacher and the child and that between the children, different operating methods and learning assignments. In pre-school education, the child-centred approach entails guiding education, where adults set limits, expectations and demands for children.

A good learning environment will guide children's curiosity, interest and learning motivation and promote their activity and self-direction. It will diversely support children's growth and learning and assessment of their own actions. It will provide children with opportunities for play, other activities and peace and quiet. It will also constitute a stimulating linguistic environment and enable the provision of activities to support children's linguistic development.

The prevailing atmosphere in the learning environment shall be joyful, open, encouraging and unhurried. Tools and working materials shall be readily available to children. Equipment in the learning environment shall also support children's development into members of the modern information society. A good learning environment shall be healthy and shall diversely support children's safety and security. The learning environment shall also be aesthetically pleasing.

Working in co-operation with staff participating in the implementation of pre-school education, parents or other guardians and children, the teacher shall plan, implement and evaluate activities, which will lead to the development of children's emotions, skills and knowledge and expand the interests of individual children and, as a result, those of the whole group.

Section 5 Working methods

The teacher shall support learning and guide children to become conscious of their own learning and to perceive that they can themselves influence their own success in learning. The teacher shall guide children in learning, concrete experimentation, exploration, active participation and other forms of information acquisition and problem solving in interaction with adults and other

children. The starting points of children's own investigations include phenomena and events closely connected with children's living environments and with experiences gained through these. Children will practise reflecting on causal relationships and drawing conclusions. From children's perspectives, the activities shall be purposeful and challenging.

Work in pre-school education shall be based on playful activities stemming from children's individual development level, which shall also promote children's linguistic development and their potential to learn new things. The activities shall take children's need to learn through play and imagination into account. Dramatic working methods shall combine different art subjects, children's experiences and knowledge, which shall be processed together on the basis of a current topic, a fairy tale or a story.

Chapter 3 Detailed objectives and contents of pre-school education

Section 6 Integration

Pre-school education shall be based on the integration of education. Integrative education shall be composed of themes related to children's sphere of life, on the one hand, and to contents expanding and analysing children's views of the world, on the other. The objectives of integrative education shall be negotiated jointly and they shall be acknowledged in the community, in which the children live.

The diversity of integration shall be seen in such a manner that different branches of knowledge are taken into account in planning and implementation and that they are examined as part of the theme chosen at each time. Selection of thematic modules shall aim to find issues significant to children by involving them in planning the themes.

The integrated themes and the learning process shall be more important than individual contents. Processing experiences and information in interaction with adults and children in many different ways shall form a central part of learning. The working methods shall be determined by the objectives and purposes of education. The diverse use of working methods will have the aim of gaining different experiences and skills from different branches of knowledge. Through the contents of the branches of knowledge in pre-school education, children will expand their views of the world and

learn about themselves as learners. The division of pre-school education into subject fields is intended to guide the teacher's work.

Section 7 Core subject fields

Language and interaction

Language is a medium of thought and expression. With the aid of the concepts they have learnt, children will analyse their environment and build their own views of the world. Pre-school education shall support the development of children's thinking, sociability, emotions and interaction skills and their learning processes with the aid of language in particular. Thus children's emotional life, cre-ativity and self-esteem will strengthen.

Children shall be encouraged and guided so as to enable them to gradually grow into active speakers and listeners in diverse interactive situations, both in everyday communication situations and in learning situations. Children will become accustomed to talking about and discussing their own feelings, hopes, opinions and thoughts and to expressing their observations and conclusions verbally. Children will become good listeners and narrators. As members of groups, they will become accustomed to listening to the speech of both children and adults, participating in conversations and waiting for their turn where necessary.

Children shall be read and told fairy tales, stories, narrative factual texts, poems, rhymes, etc. so as to provide a chance for them to enjoy what they hear. Children will live with what they hear, they will obtain material for their thinking and their ability to understand their own and other people's lives will strengthen. They will start to understand the significance of reading. They will become interested in asking questions, drawing conclusions and evaluating what they have heard.

Pre-school education shall create a foundation for learning to read and write. The basis for the beginnings of literacy is that children have heard and listened, they have been heard, they have spoken and been spoken to, people have discussed with them, and that they have asked questions and received answers. In such an environment, children will develop their vocabulary and literacy as if by accident. Children's earlier experiences and skills form the basis for the process of learning to read and write in pre-school education. These different skills and knowledge, including possible literacy already learnt before pre-school education, shall be taken into account by providing an open learning environment, which allows each child to grasp written language in accordance with his or her own abilities. The material shall consist of diverse texts, which pro-vide opportunities to read alone and together with other children or adults.

The objective shall be to inspire and increase children's interest in observing and exploring spoken and written language. Targets of exploration may include various texts, expressions, individual words, letters and sounds in a context that is meaningful to children. The development of linguistic awareness shall be supported through playing with language, talking nonsense and rhyming as well as through exploring the written forms of language diversely. Children will gain experiences of how to convert speech into written language and writing into spoken language both through examples set by adults and through their own attempts to read and write.

Mathematics

Pre-school education shall create and consolidate a foundation for learning mathematics. Children shall be guided to pay attention to mathematical phenomena that can be seen in natural everyday situations. Children shall have an active role in learning situations. Natural ways to expand children's understanding of mathematics include inducement mainly by means of play, stories, songs, physical exercise, small tasks, discussions and games and ample use of illustrative examples. Children's positive attitude towards mathematics shall be supported. They should perceive learning mathematics to be an interesting and challenging activity, which is significant and meaningful.

Learning mathematics requires understanding of concepts. Children shall be provided with diverse experiences of the different manifestations of a concept. Carefully considered and consistent teaching methods, aids and language play a central role in the concept formation process. With the aid of classification, comparison and sorting, children will explore and analyse objects, organisms, bodies, figures, materials and phenomena on the basis of shapes, quantities and other properties.

In pre-school education, it is important to develop children's concentration, listening, communication and thinking skills. In terms of the development of mathematical thinking, it is important that children will also learn to observe their own thinking. Children shall be encouraged to talk about what they are thinking or how they were thinking. The role of adults is to build a learning environment, which will support and promote the development of each child's individual mathematical thinking.

Ethics and philosophy

Freedom of religion and conscience is a right guaranteed by Section 11 of the Constitution, which is exercised by parents or other guardians on behalf of children of pre-school age. Pre-school education shall include general ethical education and education in cultural phil-

osophy. Within the framework of the provisions of Section 6 of the Constitution, pre-school education shall also include religious education and, as an alternative, education in secular ethics. Depending on the choice of the parents or other guardians, children shall thus participate in either religious education or secular ethical education, or in other instruction.

Due to a small number of children belonging to a certain denomination or being unaffiliated to any denomination, or for some other specific reason related to the organisation of education, a provider of pre-school education may decide not to provide religious education according to the beliefs of the denomination concerned or secular ethical education.

General ethical education in pre-school education shall be included in all activities and shall be common to the whole group. Ethical education shall start from the development of self-esteem and expand to embrace interpersonal social skills and further to the living environment. Ethical education shall be integrated into different situations in pre-school education and it shall be dealt with in discussions with children or by means of role-play, thus developing children's ethical thinking.

Education in cultural philosophy shall be provided for all children. The objective of education in cultural philosophy shall be the development of philosophical thinking. This shall involve children's opportunities to be heard on philosophical questions of life, to accumulate general philosophical learning through familiarisation with the conventions of one's own philosophy and with those of other cultures and convictions represented in the child group, as well as the opportunity to learn to know and appreciate the cultural and natural heritage of their own local area.

The objective of religious education in turn shall be to provide an opportunity to deal with issues related to religion and to learn about religious festivals and why and how they are celebrated. A further objective shall be to provide children with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the core contents of their own religion.

The objective of education in secular ethics shall be to develop abilities to deal with issues of conviction related to human relationships, cultural identity, relationships between people and nature and to the community. Instruction shall deal with tolerance and temperance, justice and fairness, courage and one's own identity, as well as benevolence and care.

Environmental and natural studies

Environmental and natural studies shall help children understand their environment, support the development of thinking and learning

to learn skills and consolidate the recreational, experiential and emotional relationship with nature and other environments. The starting points for learning are children's diversified living environments, knowledge of which will create a foundation for a broader understanding of the world around them.

The objective of pre-school education in environmental and natural studies shall be for children to learn to understand and appreciate natural and man-made environments, different people and cultures and to recognise the effects of their own actions on their immediate environment. Children will learn to take biodiversity and the pleasantness and beauty of the environment into account in their actions and to act so as to preserve and care for the environment. A prerequisite for developing a positive relationship with the environment is that children will also perceive their living environment to be a safe and interesting place for exploration and play.

Children's environmental studies will be based on a problem-oriented exploratory approach, which stems from issues, phenomena and events related to the environment. Although study will take place in social interaction with others, each child actively participates in the acquisition of information and will build his or her own understanding through many different means. Children shall be encouraged to form questions and seek answers to them. Through observations and the use of all of their senses, they receive information about the surrounding world and, as a result, they shall also be guided in making observations using different aids, such as measurements. Children will learn to describe, compare, classify and sort information and results obtained through observations and measurements and to present arguments for these measures. On the basis of these, they will likewise learn to form concepts, draw conclusions and find causal explanations. They will practise writing down their observations and research results and presenting them by drawing, telling or acting, for example. They will learn to adopt a critical approach towards information obtained through experiments, vision or hearing.

Themes shall be chosen from the following subject fields of natural sciences, for example: people and their relationship with the environment, organisms and their habitats, the Earth and space, substances and materials in the environment and topics related to energy. Exploiting the concepts of natural sciences, instruction may be planned in the form of integrated themes, which are related to children's sphere of life. Nevertheless, the themes shall be planned so as to provide children with the opportunity to build their own views of the world and to obtain skills, knowledge and capabilities to promote understanding of everyday life.

Health

Pre-school education shall promote the physical, psychological and social health, growth and development of children. Children shall be helped to become conscious of themselves in relation to other people and the environment by providing them with positive experiences and opportunities to participate. Children's capabilities to understand and take responsibility for their own health and safety shall be promoted in natural everyday situations. Children shall be guided to move safely in and around their immediate environment.

Children shall be guided to take care of their health and daily personal hygiene. Children's healthy eating habits shall be supported and they shall be guided in good table manners. Through activities and teaching of manners, children shall be guided towards good personal relationships and emotional health and to avoid the use of violence. Children's growth and development shall be supported by ensuring the correct balance between work, rest and recreation.

Physical and motor development

Diverse daily physical exercise is essential for the balanced growth, development and health of children. Children's physical and motor condition, movement control and basic motor skills shall be trained through exercise and play. Children's fine motor functions, manual skills and hand-eye co-ordination will develop in everyday activities. In addition to guided exercise, children shall be provided with opportunities for self-motivated physical activities and play. Children shall be supported in acting independently, proactively and co-operatively in a group and in being brave in all physical exercise situations. Children shall be guided to understand the significance of physical exercise to human health and well-being.

Art and culture

In pre-school education, musical and other artistic experiences shall form a significant part of children's emotional, practical and cognitive development. Children's creativity, imagination and self-expression will be developed through making pictures, music and objects by hand, drama rehearsals, dance and movement. Children shall be provided with opportunities for artistic experiences and enjoyment and to discuss them. With the aid of play and exploratory and experimental artistic activities, children will search for information about themselves and the phenomena of the surrounding world. Children shall be guided in persistent artistic work and to appreciate their own work and that of other people. The development of children's sensitivity, perception and spatial orientation shall be supported. Thus, children's learning processes

will become deeper and they will learn life skills as well as thinking and problem-solving skills.

Children shall be offered an opportunity to familiarise themselves with communications media and to practise their use. Teachers shall examine pictures and discuss their semantic content and visual expression with children. Children shall be guided to explore the world of sounds and the effects of music in communication. Children shall be encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings through words and by dramatic means, through stresses and tones of voice, expressions, gestures and motions.

The strengthening of children's cultural identities shall be supported, together with their understanding of their own cultural heritage and cultural diversity. Children shall be guided to appreciate and treasure the aesthetic and cultural values of natural and man-made environments and the material environment.

Children shall be encouraged in diversity of expression in connection with different thematic modules.

Chapter 4 General support for pre-school education

Section 8 Co-operation with parents or other guardians

Parents or other guardians shall have the primary educational responsibility for their children. In terms of children's satisfaction, growth and learning, it is important to create a trusting relationship between pre-school staff and parents or guardians.

Section 9 Child's pre-school education plan

In the initial phase of pre-school education, the teacher may draw up the child's pre-school education plan in co-operation with parents or other guardians and possibly also with the child, which aims to guarantee the child the best opportunities to grow and learn. The child's pre-school education plan may be drawn up separately for each child and/or jointly for the group. The plan shall focus on factors essential to individual development, such as the objectives to be set for the child's growth and development and the assessment of the child's strengths and weaknesses.

Section 10 Assessment

Assessment in pre-school education shall be based on the achievement of the general objectives of pre-school education and of the individual child's objectives set in the child's possible pre-school education plan or in some other form. Assessment shall be carried out on a continuous basis in interaction between the teacher and the child in the course of schoolwork and the learning process. Feedback shall be provided in regular discussions between the teacher and the parents or other guardians and possibly also with the children. The teacher shall, in co-operation with other staff, promote children's capabilities for self-assessment, which will particularly support the development of the children's self-concept and analysis of their own work. Assessment shall place greater emphasis on the progress of the child's growth and learning process, rather than on the mere achievement of objectives.

A certificate of attendance may be awarded at the end of pre-school education. Such a certificate may be supplemented with a description of the pre-school education provided.

Section 11 Support services

The achievement of the objectives of pre-school education requires care for children's health and their physical, psychological and social well-being. The curriculum shall determine how support services promoting health and well-being are to be organised.

Chapter 5 Pre-school education for children in need of special support

Section 12 Special support

Special support in pre-school education is needed by children, whose conditions for development, growth and learning have been affected by illness, disability or reduced functional ability. In addition, children in need of psychological or social support for their growth shall receive special support. Children whose development, according to experts in education and pupil welfare services and parents or other guardians, involves risk factors related to learning potential, shall also be entitled to special support. In addition, special support in pre-school education shall be provided for children, who are within extended compulsory education or whose basic education

has been deferred until one year later, and for children admitted or transferred to special education during pre-school education.

Special support shall include the necessary measures related to early detection, prevention and rehabilitation of learning difficulties.

Section 13 Individualisation of pre-school education for children in need of special support

The physical and social learning environment and the necessary support services in children's pre-school education shall primarily be organised so as to enable children to participate in group activities as fully as possible.

The basis for schoolwork shall comprise personal objectives agreed together with children's homes, which sustain basic security and support children's physical, cognitive and socio-emotional growth. The main considerations shall be to support the development of children's positive self-concept and healthy self-esteem and to ensure equal membership of the group. Schoolwork shall be play-ful and shall involve active group and individual guidance stemming from children's development level. It shall promote children's linguistic development and their ability to learn new things and prevent learning difficulties.

A child's pre-school education plan shall be drawn up for each child in need of special support together with parents or other guardians and the relevant experts. The plan shall include the objectives set for the child's growth and development and an assessment of the child's strengths and risk factors and difficulties related to learning. The plan shall indicate any change needs related to the child's learning environment and the support and pupil welfare services required for participation in instruction, the bodies responsible for these and the monitoring and assessment of progress. The plans for those children admitted or transferred to special education shall be prepared in the form of personal plans covering the organisation of education (HOJKS).

Special education during pre-school education shall be primarily organised in connection with other instruction in the form of team teaching, in small groups or as individual study. Children in need of special support may also be gathered in a separate group.

In the provision of education, it shall be ensured that the transfer of a child in need of special support to basic education is carried out in co-operation between staff responsible for basic and pre-school education and parents or guardians.

Chapter 6 Pre-school education for different language and cultural groups or based on a specific pedagogic system or principle

Section 14 Sami-speaking children

Pre-school education may be provided in one of the three Sami (Lappish) languages spoken in Finland: Inari Sami, Skolt Sami and North Sami.

The linguistic objectives of pre-school education provided in a Sami language shall be as for other pre-school education. In addition, the objective of Sami-language pre-school education shall be to consolidate knowledge of the Sami language and, in particular, to encourage its use. Instruction shall support the preservation and consolidation of oral traditions. A further objective shall be to increase children's capabilities to function in a Sami-speaking environment and to learn the Sami language and to learn in the language.

Schools and day-care centres in the Sami area are part of a multicultural society. The objective of pre-school education shall be to educate children into multilingualism and multiculturalism and to teach them to respect the languages and cultures of their area. It is important to emphasise the affinity of Sami-speaking people as the indigenous people of the area across national borders.

Pre-school education shall consolidate and promote children's Sami identity and cultural awareness. Children shall be given an opportunity to embrace the Sami cultural heritage through education and instruction. The priorities of instruction shall include Sami culture, in particular Lappish joik chants and handicraft, livelihoods, way of living and local nature. The continuance of linguistic and cultural traditions shall be promoted in co-operation with the local community.

Section 15 Romany-speaking children

Pre-school education for Romany children shall take into account the special needs arising from the Romany culture and provide instruction in the Romany language, as far as possible.

The purpose of instruction in the Romany language is to consolidate the identity and cultural awareness of Romany children and to provide them with the opportunity for a functional bilingual cultural identity.

The objectives of Romany instruction shall be to familiarise children with the Romany language through play and rhymes, to enlarge their vocabulary, promote the sense of sentence structure and to encourage them to use their own language in interaction with each other. Instruction shall promote the preservation and consolidation of oral traditions and describe Romany culture, way of life, occupations and history.

Romany children shall, in particular, receive instruction in the Finnish/Swedish language and manual skills in pre-school education.

Section 16 Sign language children

The linguistic background of children in sign language education may be one of the following: sign language as the mother tongue, the first language or a second language. Sign language pre-school education shall primarily be carried out in a sign language group or in a mixed group composed of children using sign language and spoken language. The linguistic objectives and pedagogic solutions of instruction shall be closely linked to children's linguistic backgrounds, which shall be given special attention in the preparation of the child's pre-school education plan or personal plan covering the organisation of education. Children shall be provided with the opportunity to embrace the sign language cultural heritage through education and instruction.

The linguistic objectives of sign language pre-school education shall be as for other pre-school education. The objective of pre-school education shall be to consolidate sign language expression, sense of sentence structure and sign vocabulary and to encourage children to use the language, thus increasing their capabilities to function in a sign language environment. A further objective shall be to familiarise children with differences between the dominant culture and sign language culture, such as phenomena of the world of sounds and spoken language as well as the use of interpreting services.

The objectives of pre-school education shall be achieved in sign language interaction between adults and children. This shall take into account the fact that communication with the child will primarily involve the visual medium. Pre-school education in a mixed group shall be implemented so as to enable sign language children to participate as fully as possible. Interpretation may be used in order to guarantee sign language instruction and education.

Section 17 Immigrant children

It is possible to organise education for immigrant children of pre-school age in conjunction with other pre-school education, in the form of preparatory instruction for basic education or as a combination of these. Immigrant children participating in pre-school education are distinguished from each other by language and culture, the reason for immigration and the duration of residence. Children's backgrounds shall be taken into account, although instruction shall follow the general educational and learning objectives of pre-school education. In addition, there shall be specific objectives for immigrant education, which shall be pursued within the limits of local resources and different approaches. Instruction shall support the development of the Finnish/Swedish language and, where possible, also that of children's own native language and the opportunity to grow into two cultures. In terms of the formation of children's identities, it is significant that matters of their own culture are also appreciated and that these are visible in everyday activities in pre-school education.

The objective of instruction of Finnish/Swedish as a second language shall be for children to achieve functional skills in the Finnish/Swedish language as far as possible in all sectors of the language during basic education. The key prerequisites for a good command of the Finnish/Swedish language include command of the native language and focused learning. In pre-school education, children shall have the opportunity to study Finnish/Swedish both under guidance and in natural communication situations with Finnish/Swedish-speaking adults and children. The core subject fields of pre-school education shall provide practice in the different functions of language use, integrate children into Finnish culture and compare Finnish culture with other cultures. This instruction and the learning processes of children's native language shall be interwoven with all sectors of pre-school education.

The objectives of children's native language shall in turn include the development of thinking, the sound growth of self-esteem and personality and the consolidation of language use skills. Children's increasing wealth and courage of linguistic expression and the expression of their own views and opinions shall have a prominent role. Central material shall include either narrated or written fairy tale and story traditions, depending on the cultural group concerned.

The objective of support for children's own culture shall be that children become aware of the cultural heritage of their own ethnic group and learn to appreciate it. The goal of culturally supportive pre-school education shall be self-respecting, bilingual and bicultural.

tural adults, who are proud of their culture, background and language, integrated into society and able to pass down their own cultural heritage to their children.

Section 18 Pre-school education based on a specific pedagogic system or principle

It is possible to base provision of pre-school education on different pedagogic solutions, which emphasise language or human development through art and practical activity. These include foreign-language education and language immersion as well as Steiner or Montessori pedagogy, for example. When these solutions are applied, it is of particular importance that children's parents or other guardians are provided with sufficient information on the operational philosophy applied and the specific objectives of education.

Provisions on the language of instruction in pre-school education have been laid down in the Basic Education Act. Pre-school education provided in the language of instruction of pre-school education and in some other language shall form an integrated whole. In addition to the general objectives, such pre-school education shall pursue specific objectives. In the narrowest terms, the objective shall be to inspire children's interest in the language. In the broadest terms, the aim shall be to create capabilities for children to function in a bilingual environment and to learn in some other language, in addition to the language of instruction. The long-term objective in such cases may be that once they transfer to basic education, children will be able to study both in the language of instruction of pre-school education and in the other language concerned. Where a group includes children with different linguistic backgrounds, their linguistic objectives are also different. Their achievement shall be supported, where necessary, by differentiating instruction. The broader the use of the other language in pre-school instruction, the higher the demands it sets for the learning environment.

Chapter 7 Elaboration of the curriculum for pre-school education

Section 19 Arrangements for the elaboration of the curriculum

The Core Curriculum shall be a legal norm, which shall function as the national framework for the elaboration of the curriculum. The local curricula shall specify the objectives and contents determined in the Core Curriculum, which shall form a basis for the creation of functional modules.

Accordingly, a curriculum shall be drawn up on the basis of the Core Curriculum and, in addition, it shall take account of the distinctive characteristics of the municipality and other municipal decisions concerning children and education.

A curriculum for pre-school education shall also indicate the operating environment of the day-care centre or school and the opportunities it provides and shall also describe the implementation of instruction. The curriculum shall guide the planning work of teachers and function as their tool.

A curriculum may be drawn up for each municipality, its area, day-care centre or school, as decided by the education provider. Where there are private providers of pre-school education operating in the municipality, from which the local authority purchases pre-school services, it shall also decide on the elaboration and approval of their curricula.

The aim shall be to involve as many people implementing education as possible in the elaboration of the curriculum, in order to ensure commitment to compliance with it. The parents or guardians of children shall also be able to influence the work, in terms of the planning of the educational objectives of the curriculum in particular.

Practical arrangements shall be laid down in the plan referred to in Section 9 of the Basic Education Decree, which shall be drawn up annually.

Section 20 Issues included on the curriculum

The following issues shall be indicated on the pre-school curriculum as required by the provision of education:

- 1) the mission of pre-school education;
- 2) a description of the learning environment in pre-school education;

- 3) any possible focus in pre-school education;
- 4) the specified educational and learning objectives to be observed in pre-school education;
- 5) the pedagogic implementation of pre-school education;
- 6) provision of pre-school education for children in need of special support;
- 7) provision of pre-school education for children from different language and cultural groups;
- 8) co-operation with other forms of early childhood education and care and with basic education;
- 9) co-operation with homes;
- 10) co-operation among staff participating in the implementation of pre-school education;
- 11) support services for education and co-operation with other experts;
- 12) co-operation with other parties;
- 13) provision of pre-school education in combined groups, such as 3–6-year-olds in day care or pre-school education in combined classes with basic education;
- 14) the principles of the elaboration of a child's pre-school education plan;
- 15) monitoring and assessment of a child's development and learning;
- 16) the certificate awarded for participation in pre-school education;
- 17) continuous evaluation of the realisation of the activities.

Chapter 8 Enforcement

Section 21 Enforcement

This Core Curriculum shall enter into force on 19th December 2000 and shall repeal the Core Curriculum for Pre-school Education issued on 16th February 1996. Curricula conforming to this Core Curriculum may be adopted as from 1st August 2001 and shall be adopted no later than 1st August 2002.