



FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

Education in Finland

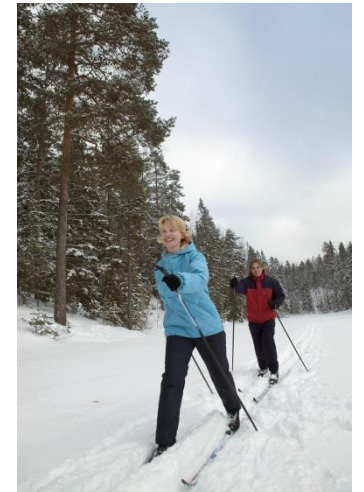
Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022



Finland in brief

- population 5.5 million (18 inhabitants / sq. km)
- two official languages: Finnish and Swedish
- persons with foreign background:
7.5 % of the population
- education level of the working age population:

- 9 % basic education
- 44 % upper secondary education
- 45 % tertiary education



Underlying educational understanding is based on equity

Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge. The public authorities shall guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship.

(Constitution of Finland)



Education developed in partnership

National
authorities

Local authorities

Teachers' union

Social partners

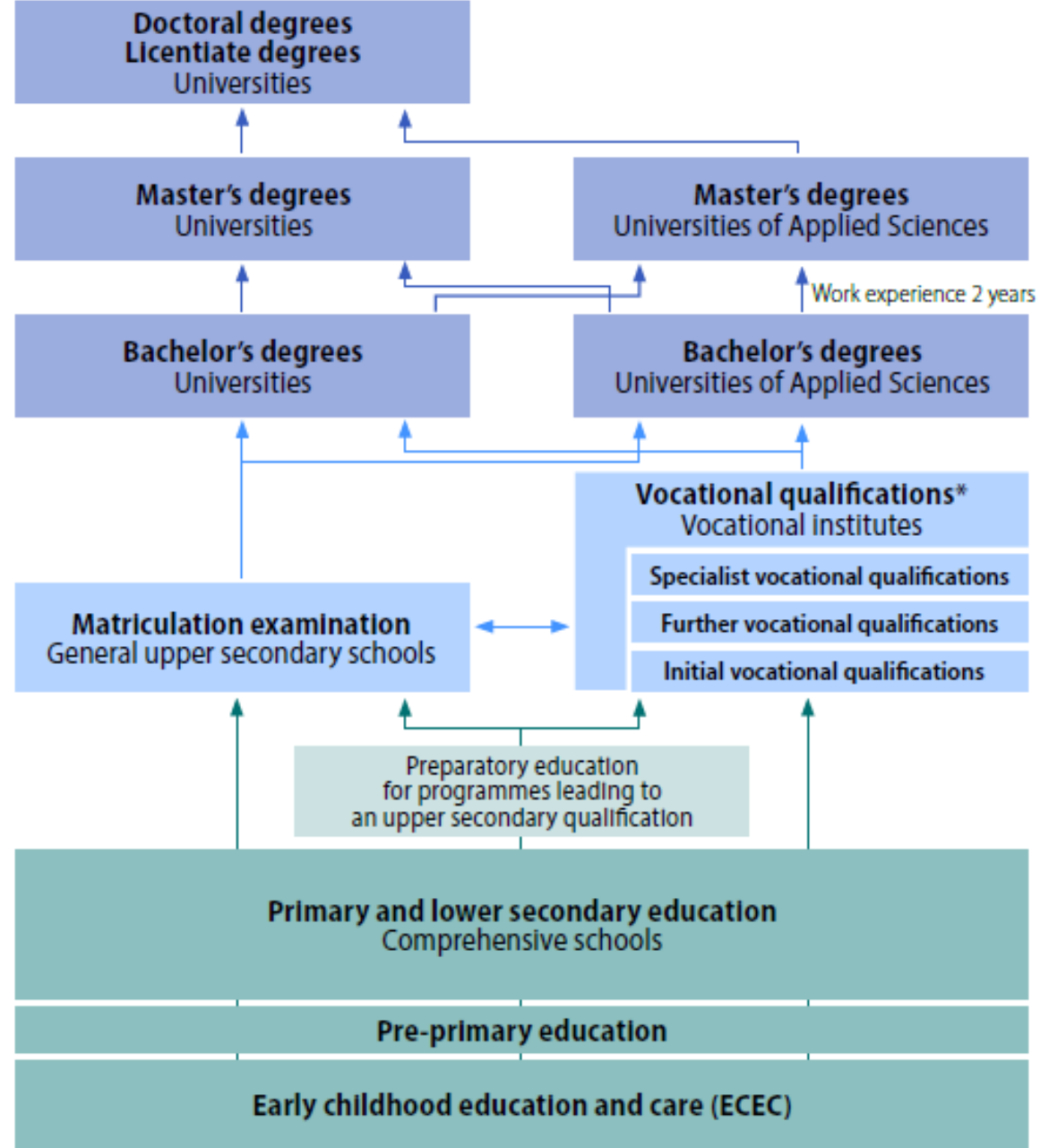
Parents

Pupils and students

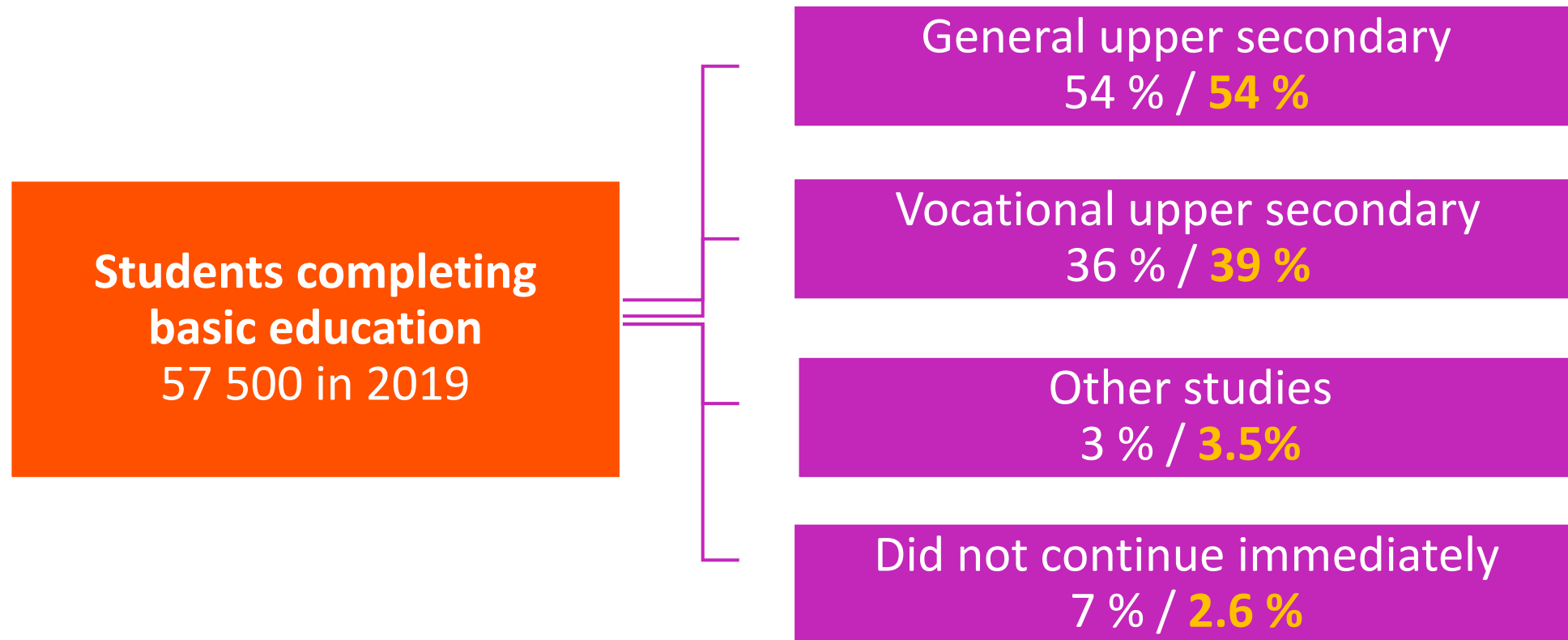
Research
institutions

Relevant
stakeholders

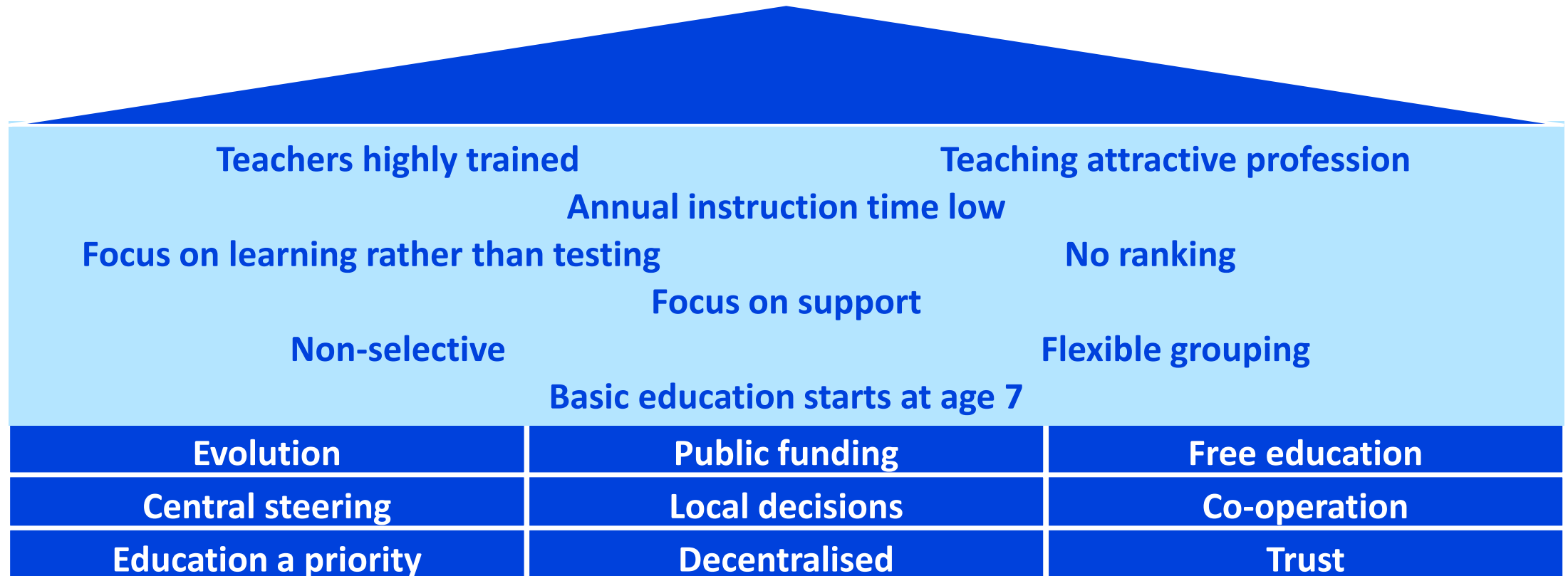
Education system in Finland



What happens immediately after compulsory education? 2001 / 2020



Specificities of the Finnish education system



Two-tier national administration

Ministry of Education and Culture

- **Education policy**
- **Preparation of legislation**
- **State funding**

Finnish National Agency for Education

- **National development agency**
- **National core curricula & qualification requirements**
- **Support for evidence-based policy-making**
- **Support for reform and development**
- **Services for learners**
- **Supporting internationalisation**

Central steering



Central

- Educational priorities
- Minimum time allocation
- National core curricula
- Size of state subsidies

Local decisions



Local

- Educational priorities
- Local curricula
- Allocation of subsidies
- Class size
- Recruitment
- Teacher "evaluation"
- Quality assurance

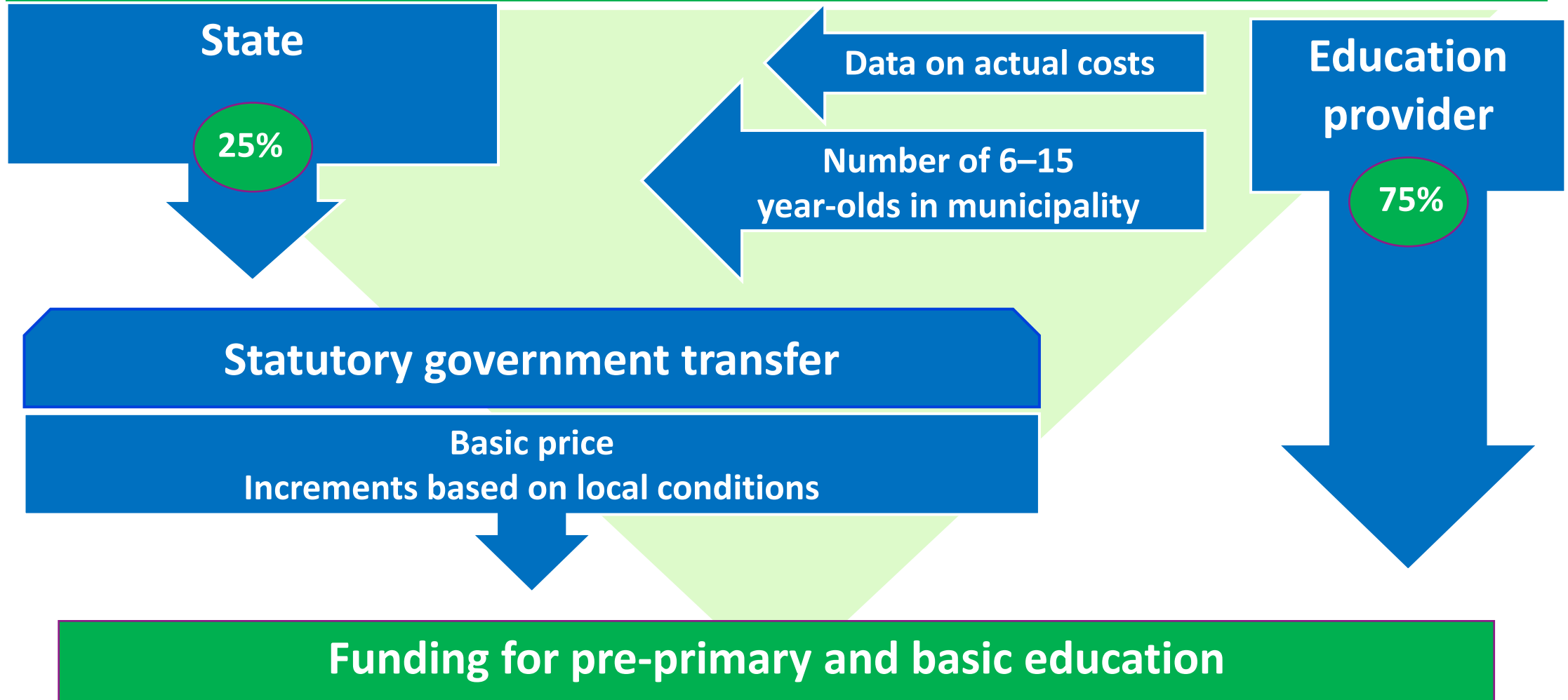
Current issues

- differences between girls and boys in learning outcomes
- learners with migrant background
- admission to higher education
- ICT in focus, learning environments
- extending compulsory education
- Preparatory education for programmes leading to an upper secondary qualification



Basic education is free for
pupils and families

Funding of pre-primary and basic education in a nutshell



Expenditure on education 2020

- **Operative costs per pupil/student**

- pre-primary education

6 341 €

- basic education

9 597 €

- general upper secondary

7 961 €

- vocational upper secondary

10 393 €



well-being promotes learning

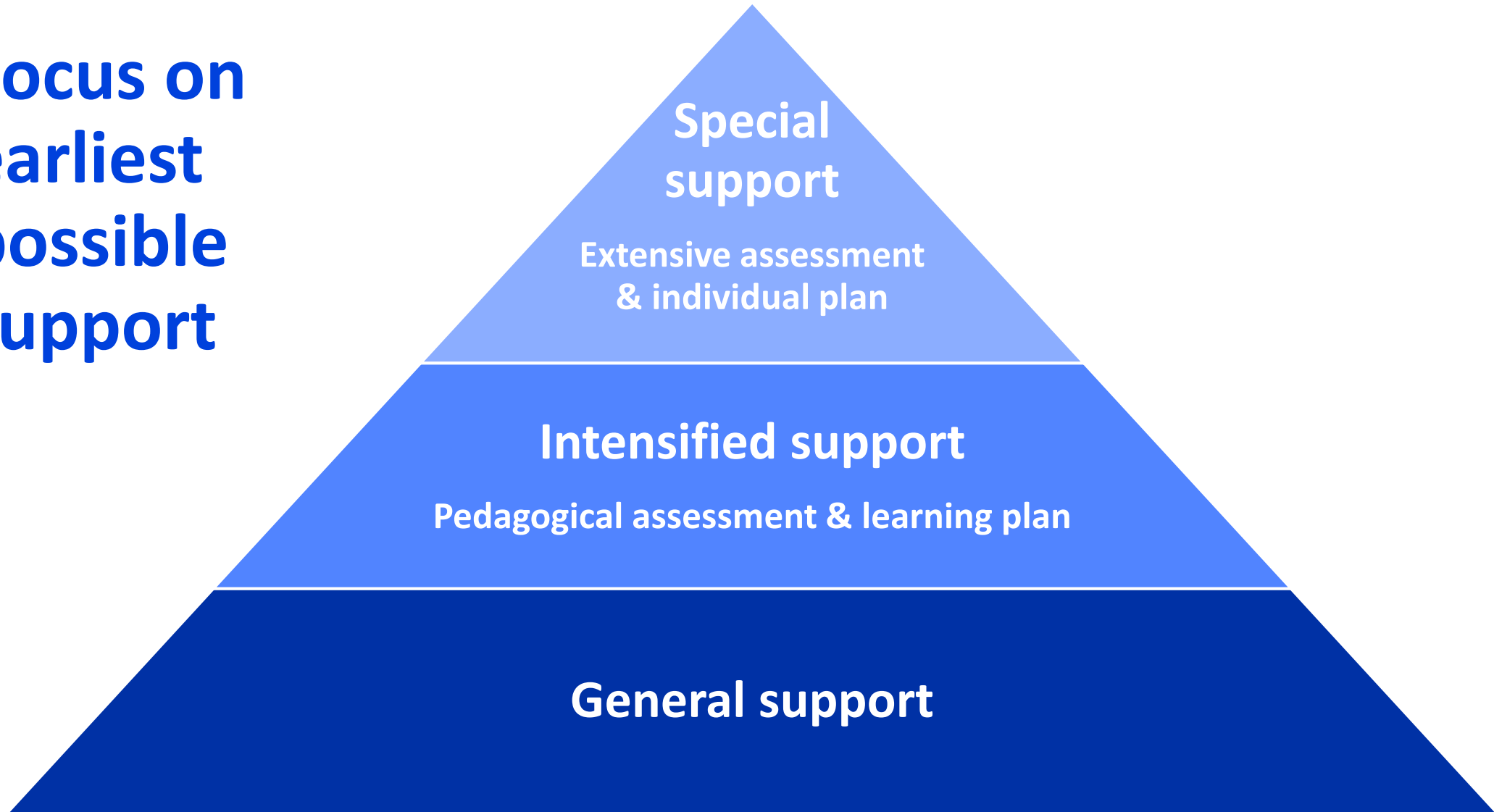
Support to well-being & learning

Maternity &
child health
clinics

Early childhood
education
and care

School

**Focus on
earliest
possible
support**



Pupil and student welfare

**Collective and
individual
approach**

Health care

School meals

Safety

School meals

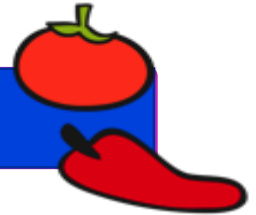
School meals generally consist of typical Finnish foods.
A good school meal consists of:



warm main course



vegetables



bread and table spread



drink

water



Guidance and counselling

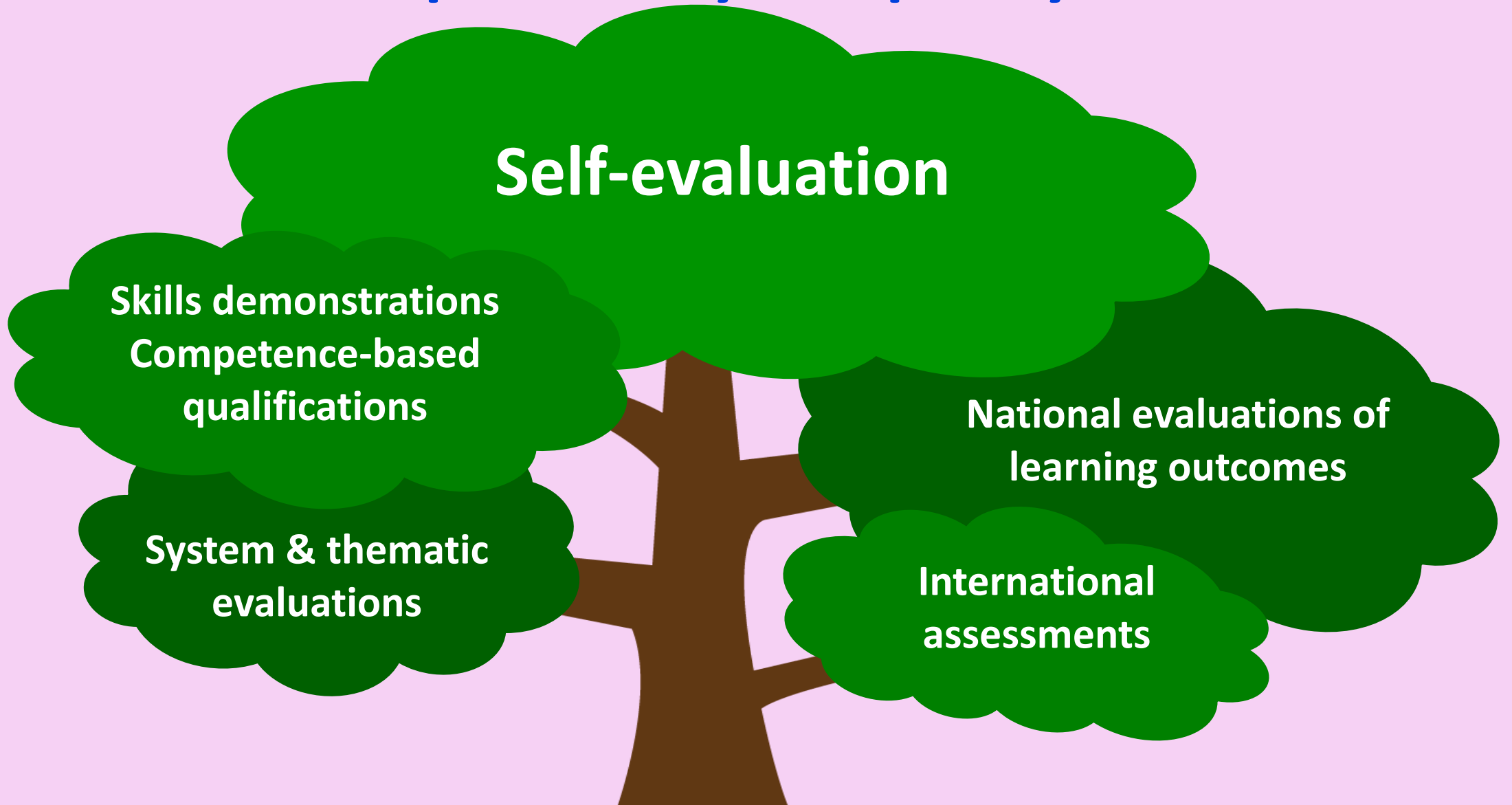


- Subjective right
- Part of the curriculum
- Collective and individual approach
- Develops learning skills
- Supports self-confidence, participation and personal growth
- Focus on transition points

Quality assurance is

a tool for development

Education providers have main responsibility for quality



Evaluation of learning outcomes function as traffic lights

National evaluation plan

Sample-based

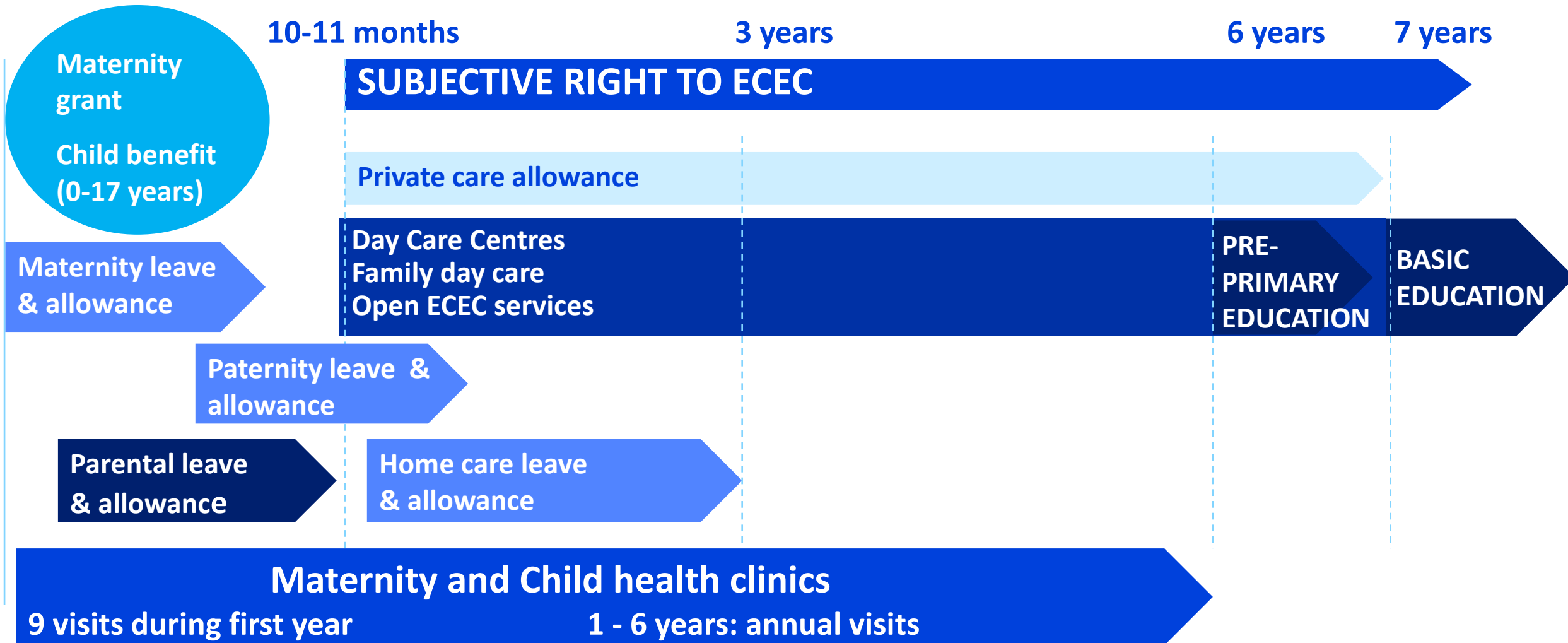
Stratified

Mother tongue and
mathematics every other
year

Other subjects according
to policy priorities

Child's overall development
and joy of learning
emphasised in Early Childhood
Education and Care

Early childhood education and care (ECEC)



Early childhood education and care (ECEC)



Photo: Liikuntapäiväkoti

- **Universal entitlement (0-6 years)**
- **Main forms:**
 - ECEC centres**
 - family day care**
- **Integrated approach to education, care & teaching => EduCare model**
- **Moderate fees**

ECEC plans and curriculum

**National core
curriculum for
ECEC**

**National core
curriculum for
pre-primary
education**

**Local curricula
& plans**

Child's overall well-being in focus

Integrative education

Individual ECEC plan, no learning standards

Learning through play essential

Language, physical activity, exploration, artistic experiences and self-expression

ECEC partnership

Pre-primary education at the age of six

- free and compulsory
- provided in ECEC centres or schools
- minimum 700 hours per year
- promoting child's prerequisites for growth, development and learning
- a continuous learning path from ECEC to school
- integrative education
- learning through play, joy of learning



Basic education:

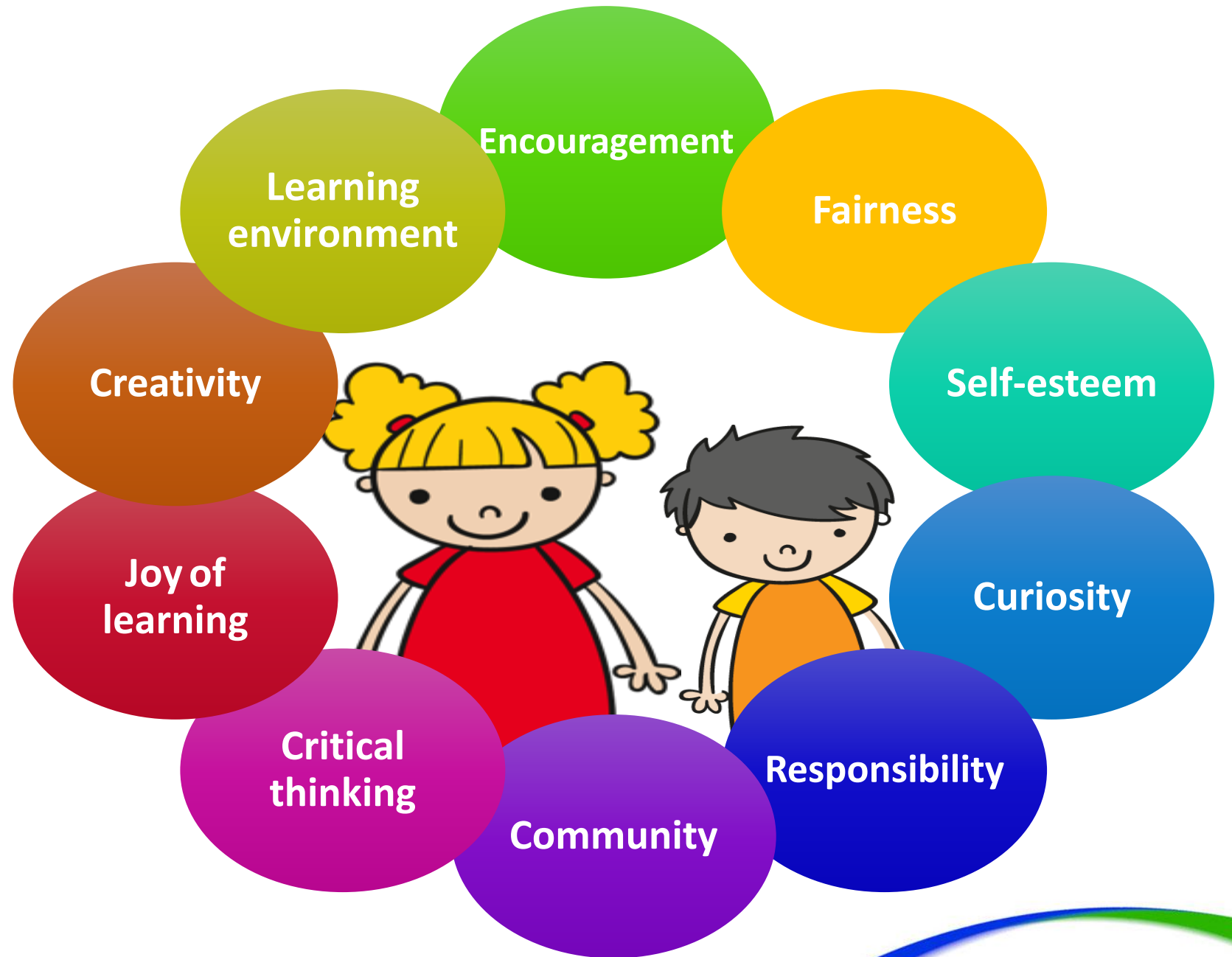
Every pupil is unique and

has the right to

high-quality education

**Maximising
potential:**

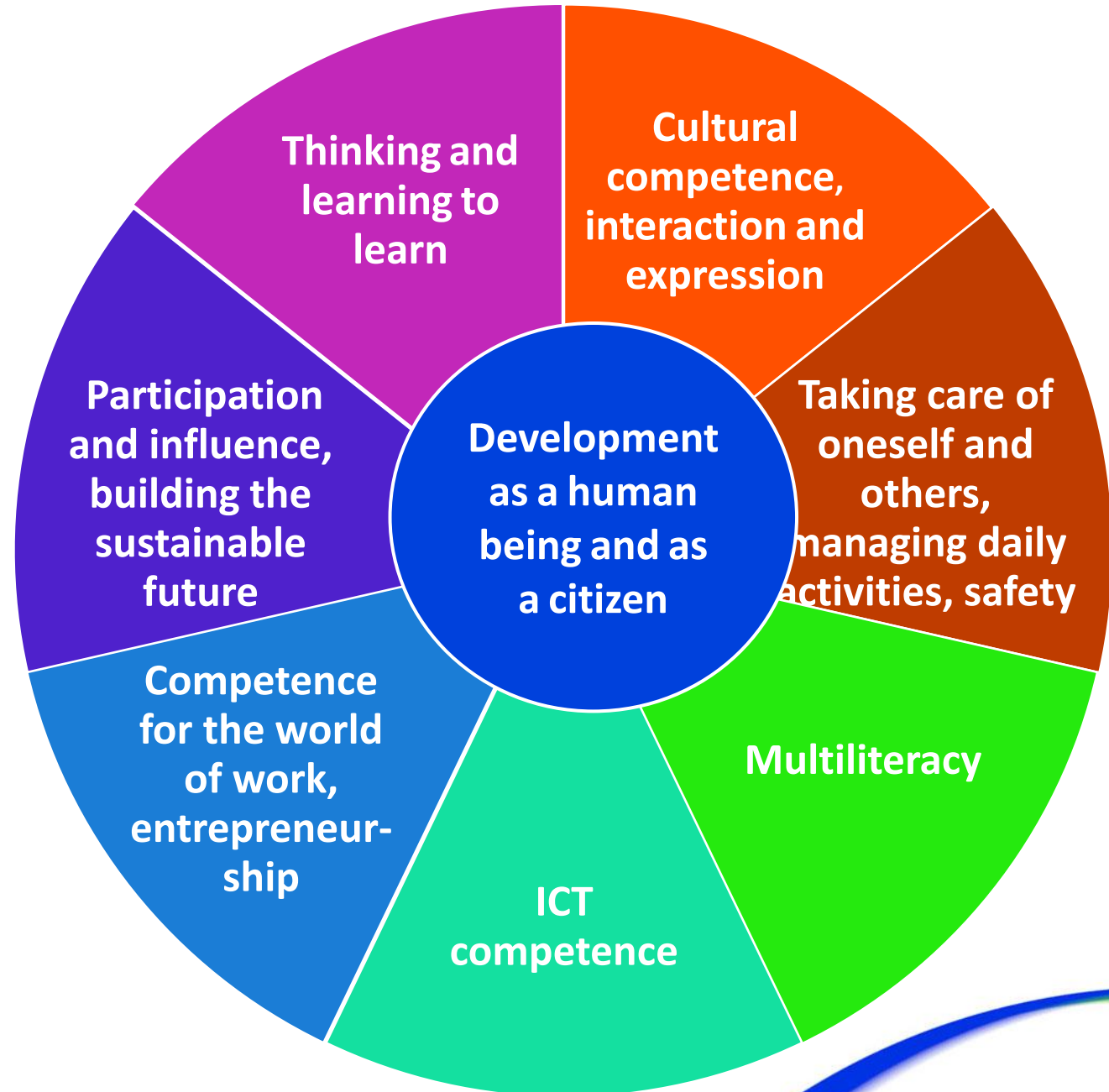
**every
child is
unique**



Rethinking competences

National Goals for Basic Education and Transversal Competences

- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will



National minimum time allocation sample of subjects (annual weekly lessons¹)

Forms	1–2	3–6	7–9	Total
Mother tongue & literature	14	18	10	42
Mathematics	6	15	11	32
A language (1st foreign language)	2	9	7	18
B language (2nd national language)	–	2	4	6

Forms	1–6	7–9	Total
Environment and science	14	17	31
History & civics	5	7	12
Arts, crafts & sports			62
¹ Total annual no of lessons x 38		Total min	224

Basic education curriculum

Core ideas

Active learner

Sustainable way
of living

Integrative
teaching

School as a
learning
community

Comprehensive
education

Conception of learning

Learner's active role

- Sets targets
- Reflects & analyses
- Solves problems

Interaction

- Learns with others and in different environments
- Understands consequences

Learning to learn

- Recognises own way of learning
- Applies this to promote learning

Self-conception and confidence

- Helps setting targets
- Receives feedback

General upper secondary education

aims at

broad-based knowledge

Upper secondary education

Flexible

Personalised

Individualisation

Modular/course structure

Combining general & vocational studies

Eligibility for higher education



Distribution of lesson hours in general upper secondary education

Compulsory courses	47–51
Minimum total of specialisation courses	10
Minimum total number of courses	75

Distribution of courses sample of subjects

Subject	Compulsory courses	Specialisation courses
Mother tongue & literature	6	3
A-language	6	2
B-language	5	2
Other languages		8+8
Mathematics	6-10	2-3
Environment & science	5	16
Humanities & social sciences	11	14
Arts, crafts & sports	4-6	7

Matriculation examination

- Minimum 5 tests
- Mother tongue + 4 of the following:
 - 2nd national language
 - foreign language
 - mathematics
 - general studies(one subject in sciences and humanities)
- One or more optional tests possible
- Biannual

vocational education
and training:

focus on competences and
individual learner

Funding of vocational education and training (2022)

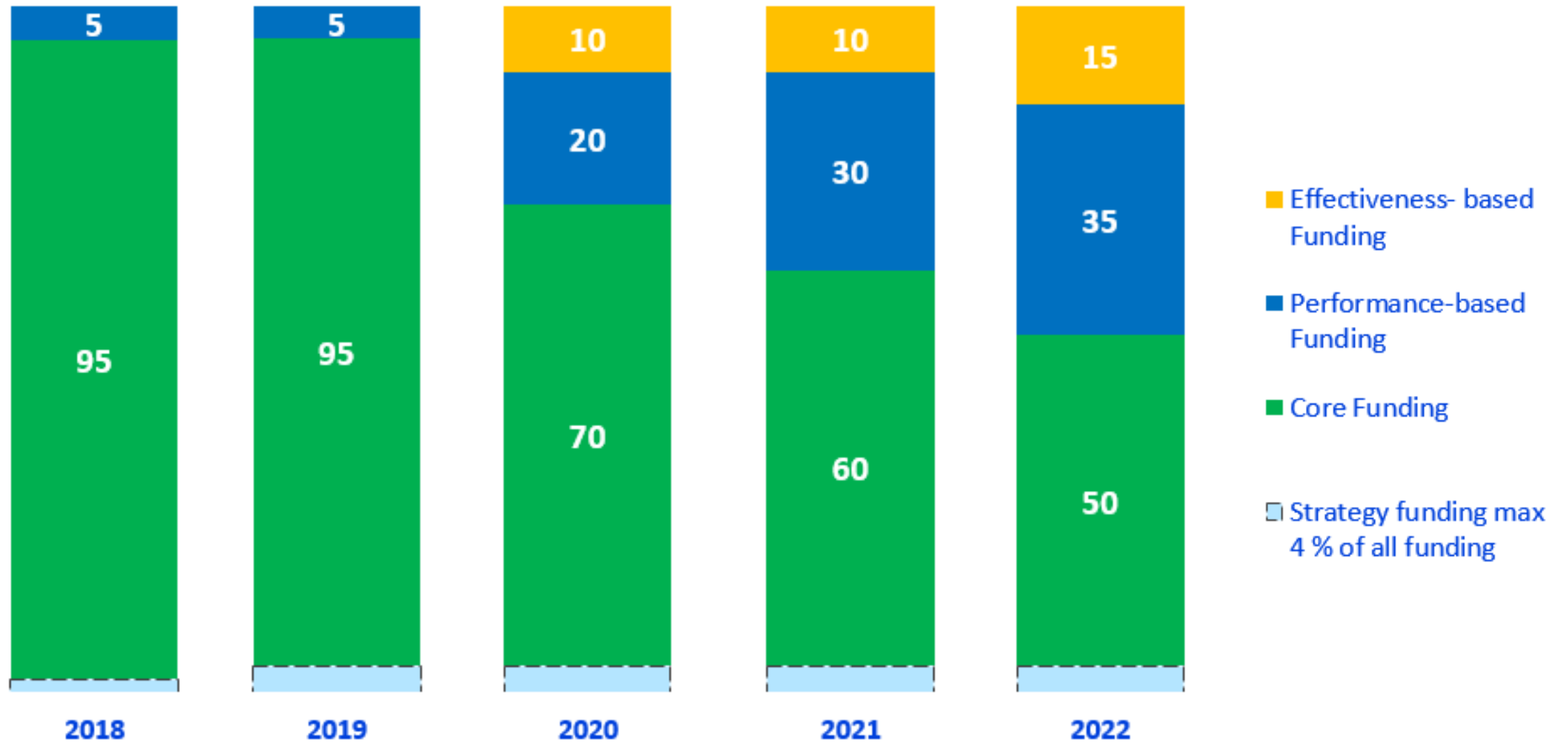
Strategy funding Maximum 4 % of total funding

50%
Core funding
Student years

35%
Performance-based funding
Qualifications and qualification units

15 %
Effectiveness-based funding
Employment and further studies

Distribution of total funding VET (%)



An illustration of two hands holding a tablet. The hands are rendered in a simple, stylized manner with a light skin tone and white cuffs. The tablet is black with a dark grey screen area. The text on the screen is in a light blue, sans-serif font. The background is a solid light orange color.

Vocational education and training (VET)

Close cooperation with the labour market

Work-based learning

Flexible learning pathways

Open pathways from VET
to higher and further education

Developing VET

Improving effectiveness

Drop-out & exclusion

Quality improvement

Flexibility & individualisation,
Recognition of prior learning,

Learning environments
Youth guarantee, funding reform, work-based learning

Local development plans,
quality strategies,
competence-based

Key competences for lifelong learning

Entrepreneurial competence

Digital competence

Societal competence and citizenship

Competence of sustainable development

Cultural competence

Mathematical, natural scientific and technical
competence

Development of competences

Communication and interaction competence

Adult education is popular

Adult Education and Training

- General upper secondary education for adults
- Vocational adult education and training
- Adult education in higher education institutions
- Liberal adult education
- Labour market training



2.2 million participants in adult education not leading to a qualification

**29 % of the population aged 25 to 64
participating in non-formal adult education in 2019**

	Total	Male	Female
Finland	29	24.8	33.3
EU-28	10.8	9.8	11.9

Dual model in higher education

Higher education

14 universities

- Conduct research and provide education based on research
- Universities interact with society and promote the effectiveness of research results


25 universities of applied sciences

- Education is based on labour market needs
- R&D of UAS aims at supporting instruction and promoting regional development

Steering in higher education

- 4-year agreements between HE institution and Ministry of Education and Culture target results, monitoring and resources
- Government funding ca 64% of university budgets

HE institutions decide on

- Administration
 - Admission
 - Content of study programmes
 - State funding
- 

Finnish teachers are
trusted professionals

Finnish teachers are supportive

Finnish teachers believe in:

- equity and encouragement
- individual support
- strengthening the pupils' thinking skills
- developing the pupils' self-confidence and tolerance



Source: From goals to interaction.
Evaluation of pedagogy in Finnish basic education 2008
(National Council for Evaluation in Education in Finland)

Most teachers are required a master's degree

Kindergarten teachers
180 ECTS (3 years)

Class teachers
300 ECTS (5 years)

Subject teachers
300 ECTS (5–6 years)

**Teachers
of vocational
studies:**

**Master's , Bachelor's
+ work experience+
pedagogical studies
of 60 ECTS
(1 year)**

Principals:
teacher education
+ e.g. certificate
in educational
administration

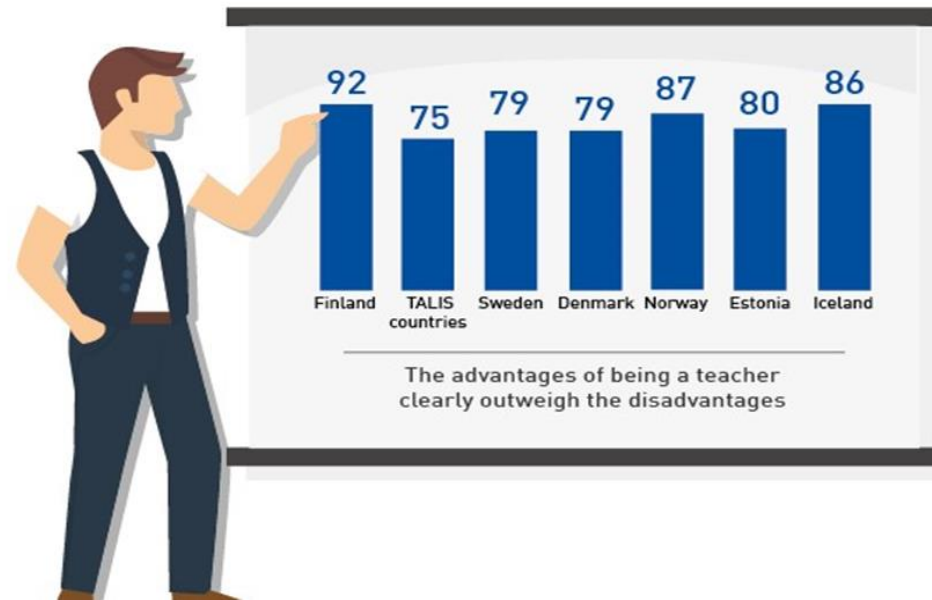
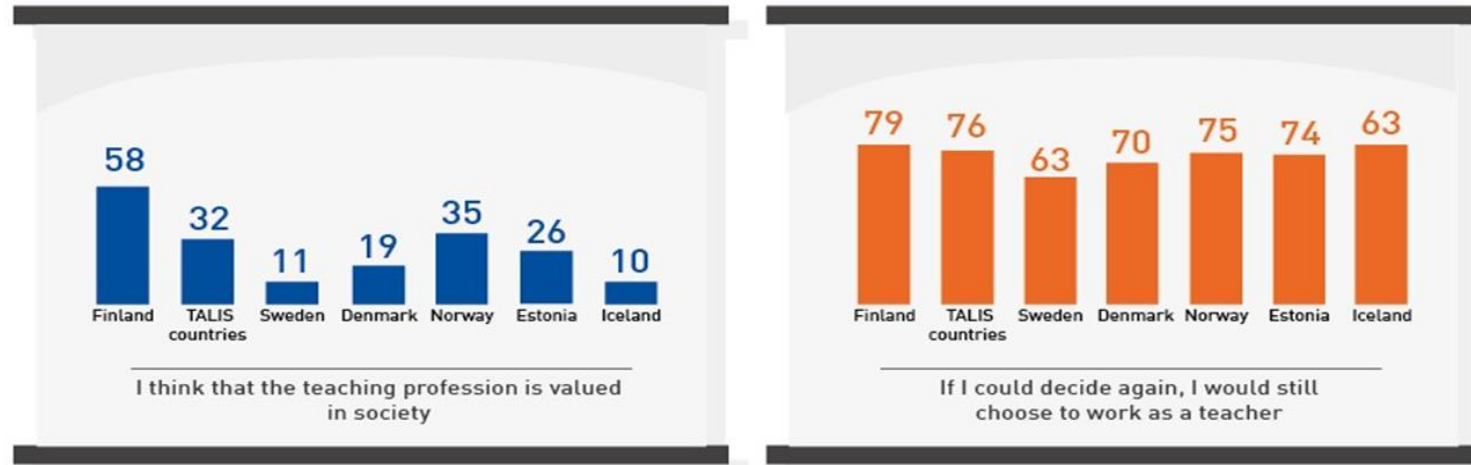
Teacher training institutions can select heavily

Intake into teacher education 2020 (% of those who applied)

Class teacher education	16 %
Subject teacher education	10 % – 53 %
Vocational teacher education	38 %

Finnish lower secondary (ISCED2) teachers are satisfied with their career choice

Percentage of teachers (%) who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statements



Teacher and principal salaries in Finland

(permanent contract, average actual gross salaries per month 2018)

- kindergarten teacher 2 700 €
- class teacher, primary education 3 700 €
- subject teacher, lower secondary 4 100 €
- subject teacher, general upper secondary 4 600 €
- vocational studies teacher (VET) 4 300 €
- principal, basic education 5 800 €
- principal, general upper secondary 6 000 €

Average salary in the municipal sector in Finland 2018: 3 200 €

Salary is not the reason to become a teacher

Average actual monthly salary in the municipal sector 3 200 €

* lower secondary subject teacher
Source: Statistics Finland

3 900 €
Teacher*



6 200 €
Doctor (health career)



4 500 €
Lawyer



3 600 €
Constable



Comparing Finnish education

Finnish education in international comparison

**Instruction
time low**

**Differences
between schools
small**

**Girls outperform
boys**

**Moderate
costs**

**Socio-economic
effect moderate**

**Teachers feel highly
valued**

PISA 2018: differences between schools smallest



- OECD average 29 %
- Finland 7 %

Variance of performance between schools as a proportion of total performance across OECD countries

What do the high-performing school systems have in common?

- 1 They get the right people to become teachers.
- 2 They develop these people into effective instructors.
- 3 They put in place systems and targeted support to ensure that every child is able to benefit from excellent instruction.