



Instructions for the child's individual early childhood education and care plan

The basis for the child's individual early childhood education and care (ECEC) plan shall be the best interest¹ and needs of the child. In the child's individual plan, the ways to promote each child's individual development, learning and wellbeing in a systematic and goal-oriented manner in ECEC are agreed on. Where relevant, the child's individual plan must also include information about any support in development and learning needed by the child and its implementation. The child's individual plan is a pedagogical plan and it is part of the pedagogical documentation process in ECEC.

The child's individual plan is drawn up for every child at ECEC centres and family daycare (Act on early childhood education and care 540/2018, section 23) together with the child and the child's guardians. When preparing an individual plan for a child, it is important to be aware of the child's knowledge and skills, strengths, interests and personal needs. The child's individual plan combines the child's, the guardian's and the personnel's observations and views. The objectives recorded in the child's individual plan describe how pedagogical activities are used to support the child's development, learning, wellbeing and participation in the group.

The goals arising from the children's individual plans are taken into account in the planning and implementation of activities for the group of children as well as in the development of learning environments and an operating culture.

If the child receives part-time ECEC in addition to pre-primary education, the goals of ECEC and other related matters to consider can be recorded in the learning plan for pre-primary education. If no individual learning plan for pre-primary education is drawn up for the child, the goals and needs of pre-primary education can be taken into account in the child's individual ECEC plan. The learning plan of a child receiving intensified support and the educational plan (IEP) of a child receiving special support take ECEC given in addition to pre-primary education into account according to the guidelines in the National core curriculum for pre-primary education.

Different stages are included in the process involved in the child's individual plan (see Figure The continuum of the child's individual plan):

- **Preparations are made** by taking into consideration the personnel's observations and the child's and the guardian's perspectives, and the timetable and the responsibilities for the process of the child's individual plan are agreed.
- The plan is **drawn up**:
 - a discussion on the child's individual plan is conducted with the guardian
 - the realisation of the child's previous individual plan is evaluated and plans are made for the future

¹ Section 4 of the Act on early childhood education and care and HE 40/2018 vp: Chapter 2 of the Government proposal to Parliament for an Act on early childhood education and care and certain associated acts



- attention is paid to multidisciplinary cooperation
- the objectives for the activities and the measures for implementing the objectives are recorded.
- The team **discusses and agrees** on how the objectives recorded in the child's individual plan are paid attention to in the planning and implementation of the group's activities.
- The objectives are **evaluated** and specified as part of the continuous development of activities.

Persons in charge of the child's instruction, education and care participate in the process together with the child and his or her guardian. If necessary, experts or other relevant actors supporting the child's development and learning also participate in preparing the individual plan for the child.² To form the most diverse picture possible, the personnel discuss their own observations about the child before the child's individual plan is drawn up.

In ECEC centres, it is the ECEC teacher who is responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the process involved in the child's individual plan in cooperation with the other personnel and the child's guardians. The responsibilities and the multidisciplinary cooperation related to drawing up, monitoring and evaluating the child's individual plan are agreed locally on the basis of the Act on early childhood education and care and the National core curriculum for early childhood education and care (2018). It is the responsibility of the ECEC teacher to plan and organise the drawing up of the individual plans specific to a group of children, conduct the discussions with the parents and plan the group's activities on the basis of the children's individual plans. The ECEC teacher is responsible for planning the multidisciplinary work and organising the related tasks together with the personnel responsible for the other education of the group of children. It is extremely important that the observations, views and knowledge of the multiprofessional team are paid attention to in the process involved in the child's individual plan. A special ECEC teacher participates in evaluating the child's support needs, support measures or their implementation as necessary.

The guidance given for the process plays an important role in family daycare. Depending on what has been decided locally, a family daycare instructor, the head of an ECEC centre, an ECEC teacher or some other actor may be responsible for the guidance. The family childcarer pays attention to the objectives recorded in the child's individual plan when planning the activities.

Discussions with the guardians are part of the process of drawing up the child's individual plan. It is recommended that the guardian be given the possibility to prepare for the discussion in advance. The child's opinion and wishes must be heard and taken into account in the plan. The objective is that the child participates and is heard in all stages of drawing up the individual plan and in its assessment. The Act on ECEC emphasises the participation of children. It is therefore important to develop ways that enable children to have a say in what the content of their own individual plans is.

The child's individual ECEC plan is a confidential document³. As a rule, when information from the plan is disclosed, permission for the disclosure is requested from the child's guardian. The Act on ECEC makes it possible to disclose the information that is necessary for the provision of ECEC without the confidentiality obligation

² Section 23 of the Act on early childhood education and care and p. 99 of Government proposal HE 40/2018 vp

³ Section 40 of the Act on early childhood education and care



preventing it. Information that is necessary for the provision may be related to the support measures provided to the child or the provision of safe ECEC. The ECEC provider has the right to receive such necessary information from the other providers of ECEC services or, for example, from a social welfare and healthcare authority or professional. If the child moves to ECEC provided by another ECEC provider, information necessary for the provision may be disclosed between the old and the new provider. The disclosure of information aims at safeguarding the implementation of ECEC in accordance with the child's best interest.

To the extent that the information included in the medical care plan is necessary for the provision of the child's ECEC, these are recorded in the child's individual plan.

Instructions for completing the model form for the child's individual plan in ECEC

1. Basic information

The name/names, contact details and telephone numbers of the child and the child's guardian or other legal representative taking part in the discussion are recorded in the basic information. The additional information on communication between the personnel and the guardians includes matters such as shared custody or prohibition to disclose contact details to other than authorities.

2. Drawing up the child's individual ECEC plan

Here the objective is to ensure that the child and the guardian have the opportunity to participate in drawing up and assessing the plan (Act on ECEC 580/2015, sections 7a and 7b)

2.1 Name and contact details of the person responsible for drawing up the plan

2.2 Other personnel and/or experts that have participated in drawing up the plan

2.3 How have the child's point of view and opinions been taken into consideration?

2.4 How are the guardian's views taken into consideration and how has cooperation been arranged?

For example, the wishes and matters agreed on together with the family regarding the family's linguistic or cultural background or worldview can be recorded here.

3. Assessment of how the objectives and measures in the child's possible earlier individual plan have been realised

The child's individual plan is checked every year and it is based on the assessment of the previous plan together with the child and the child's guardian. The objective is to ensure that the child's individual plans form a continuum. This part focuses on the child's previous plan and assesses how it has been realised. If the child's individual plan is being drawn up for the first time, this assessment will naturally not be carried out. The objectives of the plan and their realisation are monitored and assessed on a regular basis. Between the drawing



up of the different plans, assessment is carried out in ECEC as well as together with the child's guardian, and the objectives are specified when the child's needs change.

3.1. Realisation of objectives

Which objectives set for the activities have been realised? How well have they been realised? What has enhanced their realisation/prevented them from being realised?

Assessment is focused on the activities, arrangements, learning environments and the pedagogy, not on the child. When assessing the plan, the guardian, the child and the personnel all discuss how well the measures for promoting the child's wellbeing and learning recorded in the plan have been realised and whether they have been appropriate. How have the possible agreed pedagogical and structural solutions been arranged and what has been their impact? How have the agreed cooperation practices been realised? Has the possible support given to the child been functional and sufficient?

Example: We have been practising getting dressed with Anni by using visual aids to guide the situation and by encouraging her. When we do this, getting dressed goes very well, so we will continue to use the visual aids.

Example: The support measures described in the previous entry have mainly been effective and functional, so it is worthwhile to continue using them. Assessment of how the support has been realised: The facilities have been provided with visual aids, there are pictures for the activities, but it is not always possible to use them and this immediately affects Anni's activities. We will put even more emphasis on using visual aids in future!

3.2. Other observations about the child's previous individual plan

Example: Appointments with the occupational therapist have been cancelled and the child has not participated in the planned rehabilitation for a long time.

4. Objectives for pedagogical activities and measures for achieving the objectives

The objectives and measures apply to education, instruction and care as a whole.

The child-specific objectives of pedagogical activities and the measures for achieving these objectives are described here.

4.1. The child's strengths, interests and needs and how they are taken into consideration

The child's key strengths and interests are described in the individual plan as the basis for setting and planning the objectives and needs.

Example: Samu is very interested in building things. Samu's father tells us that Samu is very clever at building with Legos at home. Samu is slow at understanding the concept of numbers. We will start to use building as a way to support learning, for example, when we practice numbers and naming colours. The personnel will name the colours of the building blocks and say how many layers there are.



Example: Elli is very active physically. Physical activity is indeed her strength and she goes to a circus school with her mother. Elli wants to move a lot also during the day at the ECEC centre. We take physical activity into account when we plan activities for the group. We will also take physical activity into consideration in transition situations: for example, children can move between the places by jumping like frogs.

Example: I talked with Sara and her mother and they told me that Sara is keen on building with Duplos and likes to say what colour they are. We will plan things to build also at the ECEC centre and will go through colours and some wider vocabulary (big, behind, in front of) at the same time.

4.2 Objectives for pedagogical activities

A few central objectives for the child's ECEC are recorded here. The child's strengths, interests and needs should be used in the goal setting. The child's emerging skills and how they can be advanced with pedagogical activities are taken into consideration here. It is essential to record the objectives that are significant in terms of the child's wellbeing and learning. For example, the factors that support linguistic development are recorded here. The objectives are set for the activities of the personnel.

Example: We will provide support for Arttu when he participates in group activities. Arttu has said that he does not want to speak in a large group (when there are a lot of children, adults, sounds and noise around him). He talks a lot when alone with a member of personnel and in play and games. We have agreed with Arttu and his guardians that we will together practice the skill of courage. (the example continues in 4.3)

Example: We will help Nea to calm down in situations in which everyone is required to sit still. Nea likes singing and participating in the singing sessions of the entire group of children. (the example continues in 4.3)

*Example: (Background information: Abdullah's family moved to Finland a year ago and he started ECEC two months ago)
We will start naming things and using pictures to improve Abdullah's vocabulary. The family can use the pictures attached to the diary to talk about Abdullah's day with him at home.*

4.3 Measures and methods for achieving the objectives

The concrete pedagogical practices and methods for achieving the objectives are recorded here. The methods must be recorded in such a concrete manner that it will be possible to assess how well they have been realised.

Example: continued from 4.2

We will encourage Arttu to say what he thinks in a group situation, for example, using the thumb up – thumb down method, and later verbally. We will talk about the skill of courage and about anxiety with all children and learn to encourage another person. We will make sure that the atmosphere is encouraging.

Example: continued from 4.2

We will try to keep the amount of sitting to the minimum and make it possible to be physically active between the activities if sitting is necessary. We have also tried a weighted dog, it would seem to calm Nea down.

We asked Nea what would help her most: "When I have the dog, it presses here (pointing to her leg) and they don't move. I don't feel so active then. Jumping would help, too."



4.4. Possible other support needs for development and learning, and objectives and agreed arrangements related to implementing the support

When a child is provided with support for development and learning, the following things are included in the child's individual plan:

Pedagogical and structural solutions

- solutions related to learning environments
- solutions related to the number of personnel and the group structure
- solutions related to the support provided to the child, such as differentiation of activities, individual guidance, small group activities and use of signs and visual aids
- interpretation and assistance services and the use of special aids

Example: We use visual aids in all our activities with Eero. Pictures help him to concentrate on getting dressed and divide activities into smaller parts.

Example: Once a week, Veera takes part in the interactive play group lead by a special ECEC teacher. The purpose of the group is especially to...

Example: We have noticed that especially a structured environment and permanence are important to Anni. We will split the tasks (challenging tasks first) We will ensure a quiet place for her to work (especially noises!) We will try providing the facilities and activities with visual aids (will ask the special ECEC teacher for a picture folder) It would be important to stick to the routines, and permanence in terms of personnel would be important!

Cooperation and services required for the support

- cooperation with the child and the guardian
- responsibilities for implementing the support provided for the child
- use of special experts, such as special ECEC teacher services
- guidance and consultation provided by social and health-care professionals
- arrangements and responsibilities for possible transport

Arrangements supporting wellbeing may include guidance and consultation provided by experts of the social and health care services (e.g. speech therapy, occupational therapy). The responsibilities and contact details related to arranging the above-mentioned support are described here. It is possible to discuss what kind of support is needed at home here.

Monitoring and assessment of the support

- monitoring how well the objectives have been achieved
- assessment of the effectiveness of the support measures and the dates for assessment.



4.5 Specifications according to the child's needs during the operating period (4.2 and 4.3)

The purpose of this part is to ensure continuous monitoring of how the objectives included in the child's individual plan are realised. The assessment of possible support measures and the dates for their monitoring and assessment are recorded here. If there are changes in the child's development, the need for support will be re-assessed.

Example: continued from 4.3

Arttu has already found the courage to say a few sentences in group situations.

Example: continued from 4.3

Nea participated in the singing rehearsals in the hall and, for two weeks, has managed to sit still.

5. Other matters to be considered in supporting the child's wellbeing

Other matters to be considered in supporting the child's wellbeing are recorded here, such as anything to do with nap times, meals and outdoor activities.

6. Documents and plans used in drawing up the individual plan

When drawing up the child's individual plan, other possible plans, such as a medical treatment plan and a plan for Finnish as a second language, can be used.

7. Dates for monitoring and assessment

A further plan concerning the next assessment of the individual plan as agreed with the guardians is recorded here.