

SWEDEN

ECEC workforce profile

Country report author

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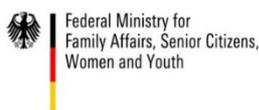
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Contents

1. ECEC governance	3
2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?	3
2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision.....	3
2.2 Structural composition of ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity	5
2.3 Main workplaces for ECEC staff.....	5
3. Initial professional studies (IPS)	7
3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational.....	7
3.2 Competencies and curricula in IPS programmes.....	9
3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability	11
4. Workplace-based learning in the IPS of core practitioners.....	13
5. Continuing professional development (CPD)	15
6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing	16
7. Recent country-specific research relating to ECEC professionalisation and staffing issues	17
8. General workforce issues	20
8.1 Remuneration.....	20
8.2 Full-time and part-time employment.....	20
8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace	21
8.4 Non-contact time	21
8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies.....	21
9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment	21
10. References.....	22

1. ECEC governance

A unified education system

ECEC in Sweden is part of a unified education system covering the ages 1-19 years. Since 1996, the Ministry of Education and Research (*Utbildningsdepartementet*) has had overall responsibility for early childhood services. The National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) and the National School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) are responsible for giving support and monitoring quality in all ECEC services.

In terms of provision for children aged 0-6 years, these include preschools¹ for children aged 1-5 years (*förskola*), preschool classes for children aged 6 years (*förskoleklass*) and leisure-time centre (*fritidsverksamhet/fritidshem*) for children from 6 years of age before and after school hours in either the preschool class or compulsory school. There are different curricular frameworks for the preschool and the preschool class/leisure-time centre. ECEC also includes facilities termed Pedagogical Care (*annan pedagogisk verksamhet*) such as family day care and open preschools.

2. Who belongs to the early years workforce?

2.1 Regular contact staff in ECEC provision

Two main groups of qualified staff work in preschools: *Förskollärare* (lit. Preschool Teachers) with a university degree and *Barnskötare* (Childcare Workers) with a specialist upper secondary vocational education. Currently, over one quarter of the workforce does not have a specialist qualification in ECEC or is unqualified (see *Table 2* in Section 2.2).

Table 1 shows the ECEC staff in centre-based settings in Sweden and also categorises the core practitioners (i.e. staff with group or centre responsibility) according to one of five ECEC professional profiles adapted from the original SEEPRO study (see *Box 1* at end of this section).

Table 1

Sweden: ECEC staff in centre-based settings

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF level/ISCED ² level
<i>Förskollärare</i> Preschool Teacher/ ECEC Teacher	<i>Förskola</i> Early childhood centre/preschool 1-5 years	Core practitioner with group responsibility	1-6 years	Bachelor's degree 3½ years university
<i>Profile:</i> Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional	<i>Förskoleklass</i> Preschool class in schools 6 years	Centre head		ECTS points: 210 EQF Level 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0112 ISCED 2011: 6
	<i>Öppen förskola</i> Open preschool			

¹ 'Preschool' is the official translation of *förskola* in government and other administrative documents.

² UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2012; 2014.

Job title	Main ECEC workplace settings and age-range	Main position/s	Main age-range focus of IPS	Minimum qualification requirement and ECTS points/EQF level/ISCED ² level
	1-5 years <i>Fritidshem</i> Leisure-time centre 6-12 years			
<i>Barnskötare</i> Childcare Worker	<i>Förskola</i> Early childhood centre/preschool 1-5 years <i>Öppen förskola</i> Open preschool 1-5 years	Qualified co-worker	Broad-based social care approach 1-10 years and beyond	Upper secondary vocational education (3 years) specialising in pedagogical work ECTS points: n/a ³ EQF Level 3/4 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 3
<i>Grundlärare med inriktning mot arbete i fritidshem</i> Primary Teacher - Extended School <i>formerly Leisure-Time Pedagogue</i> <i>Profile:</i> This profile does not currently fit into the SEEPRO categories, which focus on ECEC and not primary school. <i>Former profile:</i> Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional	<i>Fritidshem</i> Leisure-time centre 6-12 years <i>Förskoleklass</i> Preschool class in schools 6 years <i>Grundskolan</i> Primary school 7-12 years Aesthetic subjects	<i>In leisure-time centres:</i> Core practitioner with group responsibility <i>In schools:</i> Specialist teacher for practical/aesthetic subjects	6-12 years	Bachelor's degree 3 years higher education institution, specialising in leisure-time pedagogy and practical/aesthetic subjects with school-age children Award: Bachelor of Arts in Primary Education ECTS points: 180 EQF Level 6 ISCED 2013-F: 0114 ISCED 2011: 6

Box 1

SEEPRO professional profile categories for core practitioners (adapted from Oberhuemer, P., I. Schreyer, and M.J. Neuman 2010)

- *Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional* (specialist focus, 0– 6/7 years)
- *Pre-primary Education Professional* (exclusive pre-primary focus 3/4–6 years)
- *Pre-primary and Primary Education Professional* (focus on pre-primary and primary education 3/4–10/11 years)
- *Social and Childhood Pedagogy Professional* (broad focus, including ECEC, usually 0–12 years, but sometimes including adults)
- *Social Care/Health Care Professional* (sometimes early childhood focus, sometimes broad focus, including adults)

³ n/a = not applicable

2.2 Structural composition of ECEC workforce: qualifications, gender, ethnicity

Table 2 shows the proportion of various staff categories in all preschools, both municipal and independent, according to their structural composition.

Table 2

Sweden: Structural composition of ECEC workforce in centre-based settings: qualifications, gender, ethnicity, 2016

Staff categories	Proportion of workforce
Staff with specialist higher education degree	39.3 % Preschool Teachers 1.7 % Compulsory School Teachers, 0.7 % Leisure-time Pedagogues/Teachers
Staff with specialist vocational qualification (upper secondary)	20.4%
Staff with non-specialist vocational qualification	9.9 % in municipal preschools 11.6 % in independent preschools
Staff with no relevant or no formal IPS	28.1 % total - municipal preschools: 25.1 % - independent preschools: 39.9 % - open preschools: 2.3%
Specialist support staff (e.g. support for children with disabilities integrated in regular preschools)	approx. 5%
Male staff	4.3% of all staff in preschools (30.2 % of these with a preschool teacher degree) 6.9% of all staff in preschool classes 6.9 % of all centre heads 7.7% of specialist support staff.
Staff with a background of migration	Preschools: No systematically compiled national data Preschool class: 9.9 % of staff members were foreign-born (<i>utomlands födda</i>) in the school year 2016/2017.

Sources: Skolverket 2017a; Skolverket 2017b.

2.3 Main workplaces for ECEC staff

Preschool/Early Childhood Centre 1-6 years

As can be seen in the above table, in addition to Preschool Teachers and Childcare Workers, 0.7% Leisure Time Pedagogues/Teachers (*fritidspedagoger*), 1.7% Compulsory School Teachers (*grundlärare*) and various support staff (5%) also work in preschools (*förskolan*). Some staff members (9.9%) who work with the children may have other kinds of non-specialist education. Looking at the municipal and independent preschools separately, the percentage of educated staff is generally lower in the independent preschools:

Table 3

Sweden: Proportions of the ECEC workforce qualifications according to provider in %, 2016*

	Qualified Preschool Teachers	Qualified Leisure-Time Pedagogues/ Teachers**	Qualified Teachers	Upper secondary education specialist vocational (Child Care Workers)	Non-specialist vocational education	No formal pre-service education for working with children
Municipal preschools	39.3	0.7	1.7	20.4	9.9	28.1
Independent preschools	27.1	0.7	2.1	18.6	11.6	39.9

*Source: Skolverket 2017a

**Note: Although the official term for students who graduate from the current teacher education programme is *Primary Teacher – Extended School*, the former term (Leisure-Time Pedagogue - *fritidspedagog*) is still in current use, for example in statistics from the National Agency. This will presumably change when the number of graduates with the new qualification increases.

A large group of staff members in the preschools lack any formal or pre-service education for working with children: 39.9% in the independent preschools) and 28.1% in the municipal preschools (Skolverket 2017a). According to the Education Act (SFS 2010:800, chapter 2, §13) the work in the preschool should be carried out by educated/qualified Preschool Teachers. In addition, staff with relevant training and/or experience may also work in the preschool as long as they can support children's development and learning and work towards reaching the goals in the curriculum (Skolverket 2016a). Such a high number of uneducated staff causes concern when it comes to quality in the preschool. The revised curriculum demands enhanced responsibility for preschool teachers with regard to work in the preschool. They are responsible for maintaining high quality and making sure that the work is carried out in accordance with the overarching goals in the curriculum (Skolverket 2016a).

Preschool class in schools

With the intention to stimulate children's development and learning and to prepare them for compulsory school, the preschool class (*förskoleklassen*) provides a minimum of 525 hours in a school year (SFS 2010:800, chapter 1, §4). As with the preschool, attendance in the preschool class is not mandatory but municipalities are obliged to offer the service. They must provide a place in the preschool class for all children regardless of whether the parents work or study. Although it is not compulsory, attendance has been very high ever since the preschool class was first established. In 2016-2017, 97.8% of all 6-year olds were enrolled (0.6% 5-year olds and 1.2% 7-year olds) (Skolverket 2017c).

Out of the 80.4 % of the staff with university education 53.2% are preschool teachers, 22.3 % are Compulsory School Teachers and 4.9 % are Leisure-Time Pedagogues (also in the preschool class some may have the new extended qualification as Primary Teacher - Extended School, meaning qualified for work in leisure time-centre, preschool class and the first years of compulsory school) (Skolverket 2017c).

Open preschool

Open preschools (*öppen förskola*) are a service for children aged 1-5 years accompanied by their parents or another adult. Children do not have to be registered in the open preschool, nor do they have to attend regularly. 69.5% of staff in these settings are qualified Preschool Teachers, 2.6 % are educated Leisure-Time Teachers, some of whom may have the newer qualification (see *Table 1* and *Table 6*), 13.9.1% are qualified Childcare Workers and 11.7 % have some kind of education for working with children. Only 2.3% of the staff are unqualified (Skolverket 2017d).

Leisure-time centres for children in preschool classes and school

Leisure-time/after school centres (*fritidshem*) offer activities, care and education for children attending preschool classes and school, and are open before and after school hours and during school holidays. They are available for children aged 6-12 years whose parents work or study or need extra support and are a form of complementary provision to both. The curriculum for 6- to 16-year olds states the aims for the preschool class, the leisure-time centre and the compulsory school (Skolverket 2016b). The curriculum has recently been revised and the notion of teaching in the leisure-time centre has been emphasized (SKOLFS 2016:38).

Currently there are 4,238 centres in the country catering for 478,021 children, which means that 84.3% of all children in the age group 6-9 years and 21.5 % of children aged 10-12 years attend such a centre. 23.7% of the staff in the leisure-time centres are qualified Leisure-Time Pedagogues with a university degree (some may have the new extended qualification as Primary Teacher - Extended School specialised for work in leisure-time centres). 11.9% of the staff are qualified preschool teachers, and a further 9.1% qualified school teachers. Approximately 20% have some kind of non-specialist education for working with children such as leisure activities or social care. As with the preschool, a large group lack any kind of formal qualification: 35.2% in the municipal centres, 26.9% in the state centres (there are altogether

14 state centres with a total of 344 children. In earlier statistics these centres were included in the statistics for the independent settings). In the independent centres 56.2% lack any formal qualification (Skolverket 2017e).

3. Initial professional studies (IPS)

3.1 Initial qualifying routes – higher education and vocational

The three main groups of staff in ECEC follow different qualifying routes. Whereas Preschool Teachers and Primary Teachers – Extended School (formerly Leisure-Time Pedagogues) are educated at university level, Childcare Workers have an upper secondary vocational education specialising in pedagogical work. *Tables 4-6* set out the details of these different routes.

According to legislative probations in 2011 it was decided that all teachers must be certified or licensed (*legitimerade*) as teachers with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) from the National Agency for Education in order to work in preschools and schools. Since December 2013, only Preschool Teachers and Primary Teachers who have QTS are accepted for a permanent post (SFS 2011:326).

Table 4

Sweden: Preschool/ECEC Teacher (IPS)

Job title in Swedish: <i>Förskollärare</i> Profile: <i>Early Childhood Pedagogy Professional</i>
<p><i>Since 2011</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: 12 years of schooling (9 years compulsory schooling, 3 years upper secondary level) + matriculation</p> <p>Professional studies: 3½ years (7 semesters) at a higher education institution for the education/training of teachers/university department of child and youth studies. Students specialise in early childhood education (0 to 7 years)</p> <p>Award: Bachelor of Arts in Preschool Education (<i>Förskollärarexamen, grundnivå, 210 hp</i>) Since 2013: Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) necessary for permanent employment.</p> <p>ECTS points: 210</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0112</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Early childhood centre (<i>Förskola</i>), full-day provision for 1- to 5-year olds; Preschool class in schools (<i>Förskoleklass</i>) mainly for 6-year olds, open 3 hours daily. Also: Open preschool (<i>Öppen förskola</i>) for parents, family day carers and children aged 1 year and older as auxiliary worker; Leisure-time centres (<i>Fritidshem</i>) for children aged 6-12 years as a complement to the preschool class, open before and after school hours and during holidays.</p>
<p><i>2001- 2011</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: General: 12 years of schooling (9 years compulsory schooling, 3 years upper secondary level) with + matriculation*): The specific requirements include three subjects: English, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. (This applies to both the 2001 and the 2011 programme).</p> <p>Professional studies: 3½ years (7 semesters) at a higher education institution for the education of teachers. Students specialise in early childhood education (0 to 7 years) and sometimes also in the first years of primary education (7 to 9 years), depending on the modules taken as part of the degree course.</p> <p>Award: Bachelor of Education for the early years I (ECEC and Years 1-2 of school) <i>Lärarexamen avsedd för pedagogisk verksamhet i förskola , förskoleklass, fritidshem och grundskolan år 1 och 2</i></p> <p>ECTS points: 210</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0112</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p>

Main ECEC workplaces: Early childhood centre (*Förskola*), full-day provision for 1- to 5-year olds; Preschool class in schools (*Förskoleklass*) mainly for 6-year olds, open 3 hours daily; Open preschool (*Öppen förskola*) for parents, family day carers and children aged 1 year and older as auxiliary worker; Leisure-time centres (*Fritidshem*) for children aged 6-12 years as a complement to the preschool class, open before and after school hours and during holidays.

***Note:** There are two kinds of admission criteria to all university study programmes, *basic admission criteria* (mainly grades from upper secondary education) and *special admission criteria*. Both are related to the programme chosen. There are also three main selection groups for admission into university: (1) based on grades (minimum third of available places), (2) based on results on the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test, *högskoleprovet* (third of available places) and 3) selection decided by universities or university colleges themselves (maximum third of the places) (Swedish Council for Higher Education 2016).

Table 5

Sweden: Childcare Worker (IPS)

Job title in Swedish: <i>Barnskötare</i>
<p><i>Since 2011</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: 9 years compulsory schooling with school leaving certificate.</p> <p>Professional studies: 3 years upper secondary level of comprehensive school in the childcare and leisure-time education programme - specialisation in <i>pedagogical work</i> (including 15 weeks in practical placement);</p> <p>Awards: Matriculation Certificate - <i>Pedagogical Work</i> awarded by the school authorities. Students who have passed the exam and have taken courses in Swedish and English are qualified to apply for university education.</p> <p>ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 or 4 ISCED 2013-F: 0922 ISCED 2011: 3</p> <p>Main ECEC workplace: Early childhood centre (<i>Förskola</i>), full-day provision for 1- to 5-year olds, as auxiliary worker; open preschool (<i>Öppen förskola</i>) for parents, family day carers and children aged 1 year and older as auxiliary worker.</p>
<p><i>1992-2011</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: 9 years compulsory schooling with school leaving certificate</p> <p>Professional studies: 3 years upper secondary level of comprehensive school in the childcare and leisure-time education programme – specialisation in <i>pedagogical work</i> (including 15 weeks practicum)</p> <p>Award: Matriculation Certificate awarded by the school authorities Students who have passed the exam and have taken courses in Swedish and English are qualified to apply for university education.</p> <p>ECTS points: n/a EQF level: 3 or 4 ISCED 1997: 3A</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Early childhood centre (<i>Förskola</i>), full-day provision for 1- to 5-year olds, as auxiliary worker; open preschool (<i>Öppen förskola</i>) for parents, family day carers and children aged 1 year and older as auxiliary worker, Assistants in primary schools.</p>

Note: Some child care workers who have been in the workforce for many years and who completed their professional training before 1992, when a two-year upper secondary programme (comprehensive school, specialising in childcare only) was introduced, may have shorter-length qualifications.

Table 6

Sweden: Primary Teacher – Extended School (formerly Leisure-Time Pedagogue) (IPS)

Job title in Swedish: <i>Grundlärare med inriktning mot arbete i fritidshem</i>
<p>Profile: Primary Teacher specialising in leisure-time pedagogy and practical/aesthetic subjects</p>
<p><i>Since 2011</i></p> <p>Entry requirements: 12 years schooling (9 years compulsory schooling, 3 years upper secondary level) + matriculation</p> <p>Professional studies: 3 years (6 semesters) at a higher education institution for the education/training of</p>

<p>Job title in Swedish: <i>Grundlärare med inriktning mot arbete i fritidshem</i></p> <p>Profile: Primary Teacher specialising in leisure-time pedagogy and practical/aesthetic subjects</p>
<p>teachers/university department of child and youth studies, specialisation in leisure-time pedagogy and practical/aesthetic subjects with school-age children 6 to 12 years.</p> <p>Award: Bachelor of Arts in Primary Education - Extended School. (<i>Grundlärare med inriktning mot arbete i fritidshem, 180 hp, grundnivå</i>).</p> <p>ECTS points: 180</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2013-F: 0114</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Out-of-school/leisure-time centres (<i>Fritidshem</i>), 6- to 12-year olds - most centres are integrated within school premises; Preschool class in schools (<i>Förskoleklass</i>), mainly for 6-year olds; <i>plus:</i> Primary school (<i>Grundskola</i>), 7- to 12-year olds, practical/aesthetic subjects</p> <p>2001-2011 (see note below):</p> <p>Entry requirements: 12 years schooling (9 years compulsory schooling, 3 years upper secondary level)</p> <p>Professional studies: 3½ years (7 semesters) at a higher education institution for the education/training of teachers/university department of child and youth studies, following the same course as early childhood pedagogues but with a specialisation in leisure-time pedagogy with school-age children 6 to 12 years</p> <p>Award: Bachelor of Education for the early years I (ECEC and Years 1-2 of school) <i>Lärarexamen avsedd för pedagogisk verksamhet i förskola, förskoleklass, fritidshem och grundskolan år 1 och 2</i></p> <p>ECTS points: 210</p> <p>EQF level: 6</p> <p>ISCED 2011: 6</p> <p>Main ECEC workplaces: Out-of-school/leisure-time centres (<i>Fritidshem</i>), 6- to 12-year olds - most centres are integrated within school premises; Preschool class in schools (<i>Förskoleklass</i>), mainly for 6-year olds, open 3 hours daily; <i>plus:</i> Primary school (<i>Grundskola</i>), 7- to 9-year olds, alongside the school teacher.</p>

Note: The 2001-2011 programme did not offer a special orientation for Leisure-Time Pedagogues on a universal basis. While the University of Gothenburg offered some courses covering a broad age range, where work in leisure-time centres was included, other universities, such as the University of Jönköping, offered a specialisation designed specifically for work in out-of-school hours.

3.2 Competencies and curricula in IPS programmes

Preschool Teacher/Primary Teacher – Extended School (*Förskollärare, Grundlärare med inriktning mot arbete i fritidshem*)

Teacher education since 2011

In 2011, teacher education programmes were reintroduced related to distinctive age specialisations. Currently, teachers who specialise in early childhood education in preschools and teachers who specialise in leisure-time pedagogy/practical/aesthetic subjects follow two different programmes:

- Preschool teacher education for work in preschools (children aged 1-5 years), comprising 7 semesters (210 ECTS points).
- Primary teacher education specialised for work in leisure-time centres and for teaching practical/aesthetic subjects in the first years of compulsory school (extended school for children aged 6-12 years), comprising 6 semesters (180 ECTS points).

The overarching aims and competencies required for a degree in both programmes are regulated in the Higher Education Act/*Högskolelagen* (SFS 1992:1434) and the Higher Education Ordinance/*Högskoleförordningen* (SFS 1993:100). Graduates must demonstrate the knowledge and skills required for independent work as a preschool teacher/primary and leisure-time teacher in preschools and leisure-time centres/schools. The overarching aims are

then further specified under the headings *Knowledge and understanding, Competence and skills, Judgement and approach*.

Four principles characterise the 2011 teacher education: a scientific and critical approach, a historical perspective, an international perspective, and IT as an educational resource. Based on these principles, three domains of knowledge make up the content of the IPS of both Preschool Teachers and Primary Teachers-Extended School specialising in leisure-time centre work:

- 1) educational sciences
- 2) subject knowledge including subject didactics
- 3) work placement - practicum.

In addition, students in both programmes have to produce a professionally relevant dissertation (degree project) of 15 ECTS (Karlsson Lohmander 2014).

In Sweden, universities have a high degree of autonomy. As long as they abide by the overarching aims and guidelines such as the Higher Education Act and Qualifications Ordinance (SFS 1992:1434), individual higher education institutions (HEI) can choose to focus on certain domains of knowledge. It is the local Board of Studies for initial teacher education programmes at respective universities that are responsible for translating the overall aims and guidelines in the Government Bill and Higher Education Act and Qualifications Ordinance to local curricula and syllabi. Therefore it is not possible to give detailed information about curricular areas and pedagogic-didactic approaches for the education of teachers across all HEI institutions in Sweden. The following information reflects the programmes offered by the University of Gothenburg.

Box 2

Sweden: Preschool Teacher education – course modules, University of Gothenburg

Preschool Teachers have a university degree of 3½ years' duration with a possibility to extend this to 4 years. The overarching principles and domains of knowledge that make up the content are translated into different themes/course modules (Göteborgs universitet, Lärarutbildningsnämnden 2016a)

1. Educational sciences (60 ECTS points)

Four integrated and overlapping themes make up this domain of knowledge:

1. Learning, development and didactics
2. Curriculum theory, organisation, follow up and assessment of learning and development
3. Leadership, special education, social relations and conflict resolution
4. Theory of science, research methodology, evaluation and developmental work

2. Subject studies including subject-related didactics within the domain of early childhood education (105), and a dissertation (15) (total: 120 ECTS points)

Six themes make up this domain of knowledge:

1. Children's learning, communication and literacy
2. Children's mathematical learning
3. Play, learning, development and care
4. Co-operation with carers, preschool class, leisure-time centre and school
5. Aesthetic learning processes
6. Nature, environment and technique/technology

Course modules are offered at both initial and advanced level.

3. Work placement – practicum, 20 weeks (30 ECTS points)

The practicum as a supervised work placement is organised as four distinctive course modules comprising a total of 30 ECTS points.

Students wishing to work in leisure-time settings, preschool class and compulsory school have a university degree of 3 years' duration, 6 semesters. As with the Preschool Teacher education the same domains of knowledge apply to this programme: (1) educational science with the same four sub-themes, comprising 60 ECTS points, (2) subject studies and subject-related didactics (90 ECTS points) and (3) work placement, comprising 30 ECTS points. The two programmes are different in length, 210 ECTS for Preschool Teachers and 180 ECTS for Primary

and Leisure-Time Teachers. The work placement also takes place in settings that are professionally relevant for the two groups, preschool and leisure-time centres /schools. In addition the subject studies are oriented towards the future profession.

Box 3

Sweden: Primary Teacher- Extended School – course modules, University of Gothenburg

For students qualifying for work in leisure-time centres subject studies include the following (Göteborgs universitet, Lärarutbildningsnämnden 2016b):

Subject studies including subject-related didactics within leisure-time education (75), and a dissertation (15) (total: 90 ECTS points)

The subject studies include five themes:

- Leisure-time centres as a social practice
- Children's upbringing and leisure in the local environment
- Children's digital media cultures
- Outdoor Education
- Language and creative processes

In addition to the above students are expected to specialise in one or more of the following subjects a) arts, b) home economics, c) sports and health and d) music.

Child care workers (*Barnskötare*)

Child care workers are required to follow a three-year upper secondary vocational education specialising in pedagogical work. The overarching aim of the IPS is to prepare students for working primarily alongside Preschool Teachers in early childhood settings. The education comprises both compulsory and optional courses focusing on children's development, learning, needs and rights as well as on various educational activities. During the course of the programme students have 15 weeks' work placement. The programme prepares students for work in the preschool or for work as student assistants in schools. Together with assessing the theoretical courses, the student's abilities to perform common tasks in the professional field are also assessed (Skolverket 2011).

3.3 Alternative entry and qualification routes, system permeability

Alternative pathways

Since 2007, experienced teachers/preschool teachers who have an incomplete degree from a Swedish university or a degree from a foreign university but lack a formal teaching qualification, are offered an alternative route (SFS 2008:1101). The supplementary course usually comprises 90 ECTS points and is offered on a part-time basis alongside concurrent employment. The mode of delivery is internet-based in combination with campus-based studies. Through individual validations of previous courses taken, the length of study can be shortened.

Experienced childcare workers/equivalent (3 years of full-time or five years of part-time work experience) can qualify as preschool teachers by taking supplementary education courses at higher education institutions. At the University of Gothenburg their programme comprises 180 ECTS points over 4 years of study. The education is co-funded by the municipalities and the Childcare Workers themselves. Municipalities pay the costs for substitute staff at the various settings. Some also pay for course literature. The mode of delivery is a combination of campus-based and online study. The practitioners receive reduced salaries when they are on leave from work one day a week to participate in the teaching that takes place at the university. The rest of the time they study online.

Recently, due to the large number of migrants coming to Sweden, five universities in Sweden, University of Gothenburg being one of them, have launched a so-called fast track for Preschool Teachers and teachers with a migrant background, *snabbspår* (Regeringskansliet 2016a; University of Gothenburg 2016). This means organising a faster pathway than the regular one through the system to take advantage of the experience the migrants bring both regarding language skills and cultural experience. It is hoped that this may be one way of reducing the vacancies and the shortage of teachers.

Moving up the career ladder

Adjunct teachers at the university

With the aim of including valuable expertise from experienced preschool teachers and school teachers in teacher education courses, and of strengthening the cooperation between work settings and the university, practising preschool teachers can be appointed as adjunct teachers (*adjungerad universitetsadjunkt*) at the university. They are usually employed on a part-time basis while working concurrently in preschools and schools. Long-term competence requirements for employment as an adjunct teacher responsible for the workplace-based courses in the university study programme include the following:

- Preschool teacher degree
- A course on “Teaching and Learning in Higher Education” (7.5 ECTS points)
- A course on “Supervision in Preschool, School and Leisure-time centre” (7.5 ECTS points)

Local Teacher Educator

Certified Preschool Teachers and Leisure-Time Pedagogues/Primary Teachers in schools can take a special mentoring course at the university comprising 7.5 ECTS points. This qualifies them to work as workplace-based learning teachers/on-site mentors (*lokala lärarutbildare*) in ECEC and leisure-time centres with responsibility for the mentoring of students.

ECEC Centre Head/Preschool Director

If a position as Centre Head (*enhetschef/förskolechef*) becomes available, Preschool Teachers and Leisure-Time Pedagogues/Primary Teachers can apply for this position, which usually means a higher salary. However, heads of ECEC centres do not necessarily need to have a specialised ECEC qualification. Applicants may have other kinds of valuable competences and skills, such as leadership, accountancy, etc. (see also *Section 5*). In 2016, 4,800 Centre Heads were responsible for on average two preschools each (Skolverket 2017f).

Pedagogical Leader

There are also posts of responsibility as Pedagogical Leaders (*pedagogisk utvecklingsledare*) with a higher salary and particular tasks regarding different aspects of the work in the ECEC setting such as quality assurance, mentoring, professional development, etc.

First Teachers and Senior Teachers

‘First Teachers’ (*förstelärare*) and Senior Teachers (*lektor*) were introduced by the Government following the reform (2011) of teacher education programmes (Utbildningsdepartementet 2012). The idea was to make use of the expertise of certified teachers considered to be highly qualified and who have demonstrated excellence in their work over a period of at least four years in the workplace. Initially this did *not* involve Preschool Teachers. However, various municipalities have introduced these possibilities for their preschool teachers. From 1st January, 2017 these positions are available for staff in preschools in Gothenburg.

4. Workplace-based learning in the IPS of core practitioners

Workplace-based learning comprises an important part of all teacher education. It is in the workplace that students can acquire essential professional skills and competences that university-based courses alone cannot provide (Karlsson Lohmander 2015). The relation between the two parts of teacher education was highlighted in the most recent teacher education reforms (SOU 1999:63; SOU 2008:109). Following a discussion between the Government, representatives from the teachers' union and municipalities, the Government decided that a five-year trial period with special placements in schools and preschools would be implemented (SFS 2014:2). Since 2014, the University of Gothenburg (together with 14 other universities across Sweden) has been participating in the so called Placement School Project (*Övningskoleprojektet*). Participating universities receive state funding to remunerate municipalities for the mentoring work of preschool teachers and other teachers and for the additional qualification required for the position.

Preschool Teacher (*Förskollärare*)

Since the main form of ECEC provision is preschool and the largest group of core practitioners are Preschool Teachers, the following will focus on the workplace-based learning (practicum) for this group. However, the overall structure and organisation apply to the education of primary teachers specialising for work in the leisure-time centre as well. And again, this is valid for preschool teacher education at the University of Gothenburg. The following organisation applies to all students from the autumn semester of 2014. This means in effect that approximately 1,400 preschool student teachers are participating in this trialling period between 2014 and 2019.

The 'Placement Preschool Project'

The importance of workplace-based learning (practicum) is underlined in the guidelines for workplace-based learning:

"It is during the placement in the preschool, that the students lay the foundation for their ability to act as teachers. Work placements thus play a core function in the student's knowledge acquisition." (Göteborgs universitet, Lärarutbildningsnämnden 2013).

With a clear focus on the age-group 1-6 years, students spend approximately 20 weeks (corresponding to 30 ECTS points) in the workplace during the course of their studies.

During placements students are organised into small groups and placed in the same preschool in a particular area during all workplace-based modules. So called area managers (*områdeschefer*), heads of preschools (*förskolechefer*) and placement coordinators (*VFU-koordinatorer*) are involved in the nomination of the most skilled preschool teachers (and preschools) in the field to act as local teacher educators, on-site mentors, and safeguard a high quality of field-based studies.

The focus of the work placement modules is on *Investigating*, *Implementing* and *Synthesising* (Göteborgs universitet, Lärarutbildningsnämnden 2013), indicating gradually increasing complexity - from novice in the first module to a competent professional in the fourth and last module. Work placements take place in four different course modules comprising 7.5 ECTS points each: in semesters 1, 3, 4 and 6. 100% attendance at the workplace is required, which corresponds to the normal working hours of a full-time employee. Exceptions are made for time scheduled for participation in lectures, seminars and exams.

Module 1, semester 1: Observations focusing on the overall organisation of the setting and everyday practice. Investigating how the steering documents, including curricular frameworks, are implemented.

Module 2, semester 3: Central to this module is the planning, implementation and documentation of theme-oriented work with children, integrating mathematics, language and communication and aesthetics. Further, emphasis is placed on investigating how the setting uses digital tools to support children's learning and development and on developing own professional digital competence.

Module 3, semester 4: This course aims to develop knowledge and understanding of educational leadership and its importance for social relationships and conflict management. The focus is on systematic approaches towards promoting children's development and learning. Students are encouraged to gradually 'replace' the Preschool Teacher and take independent responsibility for planning and implementing different activities with children and to collaborate with the work team and parents/guardians.

Module 4, semester 6: Equality and equity in children's development and learning. How does the setting work towards reaching the goals in the curriculum in these respects?

For each course students are expected to keep a reflective journal (log book) and participate in introductory lectures, praxis seminars and exams. They also have to submit an individual written assignment. In addition to these tasks, three written documents are required: a self-evaluation by the students, the local teacher educator's report on the student's presence and activities during placement, and a report from the visiting university course teacher. The final grade is based on all of these. Students who fail a workplace-based learning course have the right to a second placement.

Both the university and the preschools participate in the planning of the workplace-based learning periods. Local teacher educators, university-based teachers/workplace-based course teachers (*VFU-kurslärare*), municipal workplace-based coordinators and students form a fixed team throughout the four modules. The team reflects on and discusses possible amendments/developments of the various modules in terms of safeguarding high quality. The university-based teachers visit students during their practicum. Together with the local teacher educator they assess the performance of the students and discuss with them areas for development and possible need for support. Further, the university-based teacher will also consult and discuss the performance of each student with the local teacher educator before reporting the grades.

The local teacher educators do not receive a specific remuneration. At the same time, taking on the responsibility as a local teacher educator is considered to be an important criterion when negotiating salaries at annual appraisal meetings. The time allocated for the mentoring work is 6 hours for one student per practicum period/module.

In order to become a local teacher educator, prospective candidates have to be fully qualified and certified preschool teachers and are obliged to complete a qualifying mentoring course (*Training Tutors in School, Preschool and Leisure-time Centres*, 7.5 ECTS points) before the end of 2018. The course is either campus-based on a part time basis (25%) or internet-based over two semesters. This applies to those local teacher educators who are involved in preschool teacher education at the University of Gothenburg.

In addition to increasing the quality of students' education, the project aims to promote development in preschools. At the national level, the Swedish Higher Education Authority (*Universitetskanslerämbetet, UKÄ*) will evaluate the project. Locally, the University of Gothenburg conducts regular evaluations during the course of the trialling period (Forsknings- och Innovationskontoret 2016).

5. Continuing professional development (CPD)

Framework, forms of CPD and entitlement

There is no specific **national or regional framework** that regulates CPD for ECEC staff. Municipalities have the main responsibility for the organisation and management of preschools including CPD, and there is no national coherent and transparent system which includes formal, informal and centre-based forms. Consequently, CPD may vary between different municipalities across the country.

At the national level, the government may outline and target domains of knowledge for CPD and allocate money to the municipalities. One example was the 'Boost for Preschool' **CPD initiative** (*förskolelyftet*) in 2009 and 2011 where both Preschool Teachers and Childcare Workers were offered advanced continuing professional education courses of varying length, shorter courses for Childcare Workers than for Preschool Teachers and Preschool Heads. The main focus was on children's development in language, mathematics, natural sciences and technology.

Apart from the above-mentioned government Initiatives, the most common forms of CPD are **study days for all members of staff** where the focus is on current issues such as pedagogical documentation, difficult conversations, the professional role, etc. In some municipalities there is a strong focus on 'Reggio Emilia pedagogy' and this has been a recurring focus for CPD in many preschools. There are also digital programmes available, e.g. listening to online lectures addressing various topics. In some cases, Childcare Workers may be offered supplementary training which will deepen and expand their professional competences and skills. Likewise, unqualified workers may receive training to make them more professionally competent.

There is no regulation regarding the **number of days per year** granted for CPD. Preschools are usually closed for two days per semester. These days are used for the planning of the work in the setting and for CPD. The individual teacher's/childcare worker's need for competence development is discussed at the annual appraisal meetings and formulated in the competence development plan (*Kompetensutvecklingsplan*). The heads of preschools make the final decision about CPD and it is their responsibility to make sure that all members of staff are well qualified for the work they are expected to do (Skolverket 2016a).

CPD activities that are organised and funded (total or partial costs) by the individual preschool, the municipality or the government are **compulsory** for those members of staff who are invited/nominated to participate. The cost for any CPD that is not approved by the head of the preschool must be covered by the individual and has to take place outside working hours.

There is a multitude of CPD activities available such as high quality seminars, conferences, lectures and courses addressing various domains of knowledge. In recent years the number of different **providers** has increased substantially. In addition to the National Agency for Education, universities, municipalities and regional development centres, there are now a large number of independent providers, such as the Teacher's Union and private consultants, the latter often at very high costs. Municipalities/preschools are free to choose the topic and provider that suits them.

Regularly occurring problems regarding **access** opportunities to CPD have to do with the overall economy; the sum of money usually set aside for CPD for each practitioner is very small. At the same time, costs for attending various forms of CPD may be very high, which makes it difficult to participate. Another problem is the shortage of staff. Even if there is money available it still might not be possible for practitioners to attend since there is no substitute staff to replace them.

Concerning **formal recognition** of participation in CPD in terms of career advancement, participation in a number of CPD courses can be helpful if practitioners apply for a new job. They are able to show that they are well qualified and their knowledge is updated.

In the revised preschool curriculum of 2011, the role and responsibilities of **heads of preschools** (*enhetschefer*) were clarified. In a later revision (Skolverket 2016a) it was stated that the head has overall responsibility for quality issues in the ECEC centre. As a consequence, the role of heads of preschools has changed. They are now responsible for maintaining quality, sometimes in a number of preschools, and their work has become more administrative. Not only has the role become increasingly complex, but since the Centre Heads do not have to be qualified preschool teachers, there is also a need for pedagogical support in terms of implementing the goals of the of the national curriculum. Many municipalities have therefore contracted so called pedagogical leaders (*Pedagogiska utvecklingsledare*) to support heads of preschools. Before 2010, there was no particular qualification required for heads of preschools, although some had extra training. Special leadership education is still not formally required but heads of preschools are strongly recommended to follow a programme for school leaders (*Rektorsprogrammet*) to ensure their competence and managerial work.

No **large-scale research projects** on the CPD activities of ECEC personnel have received funding over the past five years.

Supplementary/additional study routes

There are additional study routes available, e.g. Master's degree programmes and doctoral studies. Participation is usually not supported by state or employer funding although there are some exceptions.

A consortium of five universities have organised so called Research Schools for practising Preschool Teachers and Leisure-time Pedagogues. The overall focus has been on different domains of knowledge relevant for the profession, the most recent one focussing on communication and relationships as the foundational competencies needed to promote children's learning.

Students study part time while working concurrently. Participation is funded by municipalities and universities. After completion students are awarded a *Licentiate* degree.

6. Recent policy reforms and initiatives relating to ECEC staffing

In addition to the initiatives and reforms regarding career advancement and CPD such as the introduction of 'First Teachers', the 'Placement Preschool Project', the 'Teacher Salary Boost', and the licensing of teachers (*Sections 3.3, 4 and 5*) there are also a number of other current reforms and initiatives, such as the ones mentioned below.

Pilot phase of complementary admission criteria for the qualification route for Preschool Teachers

Starting in the autumn of 2016 two universities, Växjö and Jönköping, use interviews and written assignments to complement the general admission criteria. Admission will be based on grades or results of the Scholastic Aptitude Test in combination with assessment of personal suitability for the profession (SFS 2015:566). The interview and the assignment will focus on communicative ability, interactive capability, the ability for self-reflection, the ability to take a leadership role and motivation for the future professional role. Suitability tests are hoped to attract the most qualified applicants for teacher education, reduce dropout rates and ultimately improve the quality of teachers and the outcomes in preschools and schools. The project is coordinated by the Swedish Council for Higher Education (*Universitets- och högskolerådet*) and will also be evaluated by them. A final report is expected for May 2018. Subsequently, the government will decide on whether to go ahead with this form of admission criteria or not.

Clarified responsibility for Preschool Teachers

The revised preschool curriculum (Skolverket 2016a), together with the 2011 teacher education programme and the Education Act (SFS 2010:800), have been important reforms with implications for ECEC staffing. The responsibilities of individual Preschool Teachers as well as those of the work team have been clarified and extended. For Preschool Teachers this means that they now are responsible for teaching, monitoring and evaluating everyday practice. The head of the preschool has to clarify the responsibilities and duties of preschool teachers, as well as those of the entire work team. The work has to be carried out by all members of staff (including childcare workers), but it is the responsibility of the Preschool Teachers to ensure and decide how it will happen.

Traditionally, the concept 'teaching' has not been related to the preschool context in a formal way. In recent years the notion of teaching in preschool has received increased attention and the National Agency for Education has commissioned a review of current research regarding the concepts of education and teaching in preschool (Skolverket 2017g; Regeringen 2017).

Review of the curriculum for the preschool, Lpfö98. Revised 2016

The Government has commissioned the National Agency for Education to conduct a review of the current curriculum for the preschool (Skolverket 2016a; Skolverket 2017g; Regeringen 2017).

The overarching values, goals and principles will not change. Rather, the revision will in particular focus on and take into account:

- a child's rights perspective
- a disability perspective
- the rights of national minorities
- the rights of the Sami as indigenous peoples

The revision is planned to be reported to the Government in March 2018.

Further reform initiatives

Education and teacher education has been and still is high on the political agenda both for the previous centre-right coalition government between 2006 and 2014 and the current government (Social Democrats in coalition with the Green party). Since 2010, a number of reforms have taken place and education is a recurring topic in political and public debate. In a recent document (SOU 2016:38) the Government suggests a number of strategies to further develop education in general, including teacher education. For example, by:

- Strengthening teacher education - resources, quality and recruitment of students;
- Increasing the number of certified teachers in schools;
- Making sure that professional and competence development are more equal and systematic.

Reforms such as the introduction of Qualified Teacher Status (see *Section 3.1*), the 'First Teacher'/'Senior Teacher' status (see *Section 3.3*) and the Teacher Salary Boost (*Section 8.1*) are hoped to make the teaching profession more attractive.

7. Recent country-specific research relating to ECEC professionalisation and staffing issues

There is a large and growing body of research on preschool with a mixture of both small-scale and large-scale projects. Many studies/projects focus on different aspects of the listed domains of knowledge in the preschool curriculum (Skolverket 2016a) or other aspects of the everyday practice in the preschool. In these projects the role of teachers is often addressed.

Some projects focus on issues of professionalism in a direct way. The four examples mentioned below are all externally funded large-scale studies lasting over three years with a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. Further, they were all conducted by senior researchers and address issues of professionalism, albeit in different ways.

Group size in preschool (2014-2016)

Sources: Within the framework of the project data presented below, a number of journal articles and books have been published. Two examples: (1) Williams, P., S. Sheridan, H. Harju-Luukkainen, and I. Pramling Samuelsson. 2015. (2) Williams, P., S. Sheridan, and I. Pramling Samuelsson. 2016. (see *References* for full details).

Background and aim: In past decades, group size in preschools has been widely discussed both among Preschool Teachers and parents. According to Preschool Teachers, large groups of children impact negatively on their working conditions and have implications for children's development and learning. The project therefore aimed to investigate these issues.

Procedure: A questionnaire was answered by 698 practising Preschool Teachers in 46 different municipalities. 12 different preschools from urban and rural areas across the country were followed as case studies. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 Preschool Teachers from the case study preschools. Both the questionnaire and the interview covered areas such as composition of the current group of children, group size, content, organisation and structure of the daily activities and the curriculum for the preschool in relation to children's learning and participation.

Findings: This overview of the project points to the complex relationship between the number of children in the group and both children's learning and teachers' work. The number of children can never be the only key issue that determines the quality of the preschool. Three dimensions constituted various interacting factors with an impact on the work of the teachers; Preschool Teacher qualifications and competence, physical indoor and outdoor environment and the composition of the group of children. According to the Preschool Teachers, large groups of children made it difficult for them to organise certain activities such as painting and excursions and they therefore tended to avoid these. Moreover, it was difficult to stimulate and challenge each individual child in line with the curriculum (Skolverket 2016a). With too many children of different ages and needs there was a risk of teacher-child dialogues becoming too superficial.

The project was funded by the Swedish Research Council.

Preschool teaching in Sweden - a changing profession (2007-2011)

Source: Sheridan, S., P. Williams, A. Sandberg, and T. Vuorinen. 2011 (see *References* for full details).

Background: A number of educational reforms in terms of both preschool and preschool teacher education have taken place over the last decade or two. During this period, preschools became part of the overall educational system and a curriculum for preschool was issued with increased emphasis on specific domains of knowledge. Taken together, these reforms have had implications for the profession of the Preschool Teacher and the competencies needed for the job.

Aim: The aim of this study was to investigate how practising Preschool Teachers perceive their competence in communicating and interacting with children in relation to the overall goals of the preschool curriculum.

Procedure: Altogether, 30 Preschool Teachers from 15 preschools in Stockholm and Gothenburg (the two largest cities in Sweden) and 15 preschools in a rural area in mid-Sweden representing different geographic, demographic, ethnic aspects and varied socioeconomic structures participated in the study. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to compare similarities and differences between competences teachers claimed they had and competences they wished to develop.

Findings: According to the findings a Preschool Teacher's competence is constituted in the intersection of values, knowledge and ideologies at different levels of the ECEC system. Guided by policy and curriculum intentions, teachers create shared understandings of the meaning of teacher competence both for today and tomorrow. According to this study, three intertwined dimensions constitute preschool teacher competence: Competence as knowledge of What? Why? and How?, with interactive, relational and transactional aspects. Seen together, these aspects highlight preschool teacher competence as a complex, multidimensional and relational phenomenon, constituted from a range of interacting abilities. These include, for example, subject knowledge and didactics, reflection, leadership, organisational skills, social and communicative competence.

The project was funded by the Swedish Research Council.

Clarifying the responsibilities of Preschool Teachers - balancing a democratic approach and a professional way of working (2013-2015)

Source: Eriksson, A. 2014 (see *References* for full details).

Background: Following the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) and the 2011 revised curriculum for the preschool, the overall responsibility for the pedagogical work in the preschool was transferred from a joint responsibility of the work team (Preschool Teachers and Childcare Workers) to the single responsibility of the Preschool Teacher. Within the framework of the research project three different studies were conducted. One of them is presented below.

Aim: The overall aim of the project was to investigate how the clarified and increased responsibility for preschool was interpreted at a municipal level and translated into pedagogical practice in the preschool.

Procedure: Interviews were conducted in one medium size and one small municipality with six Preschool Teachers, one Childcare Worker, one Centre Head and one Pedagogical Leader. In addition to the interviews local documents were analysed.

Findings: Findings indicate that while the Preschool Head and Pedagogical Leader claimed that the difference in responsibility was related to the difference in qualifications and was therefore not problematic, practising Preschool Teachers found that it was a difficult and sensitive matter to discuss in work teams where there were both qualified Preschool Teachers and Childcare Workers.

The project was funded by the Swedish Research Council.

'Teaching' in preschool (2016-2018)

Sources: (1) Vallberg Roth, A.-C. 2016; (2) Vallberg Roth, A.-C. 2017 (see *References* for full details).

Background: In Sweden, the concept 'teaching' has not been used traditionally in the preschool context. However, the Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010:800) stipulates that the concept applies not only to compulsory school but also to preschool. The ongoing project *Teaching in Preschool* is a research and development project conducted by Malmö University in conjunction with the independent Institute for Innovation, Research and Development in School and Preschool (Ifous) in Malmö.

Aim: The aim of the research project is to develop knowledge about teaching and co-assessment in preschool based on policy documents, scientific theory and evidence and proven experience and to reconsider the alternative concept of 'multi-level teaching and co-assessment' [*flerstämmig undervisning och sambedömning*]. The focus is on teaching language-communication, music and mathematics in preschool.

Procedure: Preschool Teachers/Childcare Workers, Preschool Directors and management representatives in about 100 preschools in ten Swedish municipalities are participating in the project, which involves some 3,400 participants altogether. The project design includes a mixed-methods approach, including case studies, text analysis of participants' 'written

thoughts' on key features of teaching and assessment, analysis of work plans, and video-documentation and evaluation of assignments.

Findings: The project is ongoing and runs from 2016-2018. Data are still being compiled and analysed. Findings have not yet been published.

8. General workforce issues

8.1 Remuneration

Preschool Teachers do not usually receive the same salary as Compulsory School Teachers. One of the justifications given for this difference is that the length of the Initial Professional Studies differs. However, salaries are individually negotiated and given the shortage of qualified Preschool Teachers, there can be considerable variation in salaries between different parts of the same city and between municipalities across the country. While a common starting point may be SEK 27,000-29,000 (2,796-3,004€) per month, some municipalities have been offering up to SEK 36,000 (3,720€) per month as an introductory salary. Staff usually receive a higher salary for posts of responsibility e.g. as Centre Head or Pedagogical Leader. Preschool Teachers who take on the responsibility for the mentoring of students do not automatically receive a pay rise. However, it is considered an important criterion when discussing salaries at the annual appraisal.

The average introductory salary per month for Childcare Workers is approximately SEK 22,000-24,000 (2,279-2,480 €). Salaries for this group are also individually negotiated and may vary across the country depending on, for example, work experience. It is just about possible to live on this salary, although much depends on the living costs and family composition (e.g. single parents and number of children) and the area of residence.

Teacher Salary Boost

The Teacher Salary Boost (*lönelyftet*) is a government initiative, introduced in the autumn of 2016; specially qualified preschool teachers and primary teachers-extended school/ leisure-time teachers may receive a salary increase of about 1,000–5,000 SEK (ca. 106–529€) monthly. The aim of this initiative is to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession and thereby improve outcomes in schools. The Government has set aside 3,000,000,000 SEK (ca. 310,622,000€) annually (Skolverket 2016c).

8.2 Full-time and part-time employment

Full-time employment for Preschool Teachers in Sweden means 40 hours of paid work per week. Part-time employment can involve any percentage up to full time. Part-time employees have the right to change to full time if they so wish. There are no available data for part-time and full-time employment in preschools/leisure-time centres. Staff members with young children are entitled to work part time if they have children under the age of 12 years. Working six hours a day for four or five days is a common solution for many.

In terms of permanent or temporary employment, a total of 105.849 employees work in preschool which equals 97,309 full-time permanent posts. The remainder are employed on a temporary basis (Skolverket 2017f)

8.3 Staff support measures in the workplace

Newly-qualified teachers have an induction period of approximately one year (SKOLFS 2014:44). Supported by a personal mentor, the aim of this period is to provide support for the professional, personal and social development of the new teacher and to develop an understanding of the school as a workplace and its role in society. At the annual appraisal meetings individual members of staff can discuss the need for support and for developing their competences in various areas.

8.4 Non-contact time

Non-contact time is not regulated but the teacher's union recommends four hours/week for Preschool Teachers. There is no such recommendation for Childcare Workers. It is up to the individual Centre Head if they want to allow non-contact time for this job category as well.

8.5 Staff shortages and recruitment strategies

Currently, recruitment and retention of qualified preschool staff is in crisis. One reason is the number of teachers approaching or taking retirement, resulting in an estimated future shortage of preschool teachers (Regeringskansliet 2016b). According to a prognosis the total need for pedagogical staff in preschools (including Childcare Workers) is estimated to increase by 10,000 full-time positions from 2014 until 2024. The need for Preschool Teachers alone is expected to increase by 3,100 full-time positions by 2029 (Skolverket 2015).

Specific recruitment strategies include the 'Teacher Salary Boost' and various new career posts (see Section 3.3). Since there has been a shortage of Preschool Teachers, the number of places in the preschool teacher education programmes has increased in recent years.

9. Workforce challenges – country expert assessment

As mentioned above, the **recruitment and retention** of certified Preschool Teachers is a significant challenge for the ECEC system in Sweden. Currently, there is a substantial shortage of Preschool Teachers and there is a risk that this will increase in the years to come due to upcoming retirement among practising teachers (Regeringskansliet 2016b). Recently there has also been a growing shortage of qualified Childcare Workers. Another important challenge is the low percentage of male preschool teachers and how to make the profession more attractive to them.

Given the crucial role staff qualifications play for the child's development and learning as well as for working towards the curriculum goals, it is problematic that the number of **staff lacking relevant professional or formal education** of any kind currently working in preschools is very high.

Linked to the challenge of staff qualification is the **group size** in ECEC centres. A lack of qualified staff and large groups of children imply a worsening of the conditions needed (e.g. non-contact time) to take on the overall responsibility for pedagogical work aligned with the curriculum, including planning, documentation, cooperation with parents (Skolverket 2016a; Williams, Sheridan, and Pramling Samuelsson 2016). Furthermore, children might not receive the attention, support and trust needed for their development, wellbeing and learning. The youngest children are especially vulnerable in this respect (Skolinspektionen 2016). To safeguard high, even and equal quality in preschools across the country the above mentioned structural factors need to be addressed.

CPD opportunities for preschool staff also need to increase. Given the enhanced responsibility of Preschool Teachers regarding ‘teaching’ and the additional domains of knowledge included in the curriculum (e.g. the natural sciences and technology) (Skolverket 2016a), Preschool Teachers need to develop subject knowledge in these domains and subject-related didactics knowledge about children’s learning at different ages and from various socio-economic, cultural and language backgrounds. As in many other countries, the number of foreign-born families in Sweden has increased in recent years. To support these children and families in the most appropriate way, Preschool Teachers need more knowledge about the family backgrounds in regards to both language and cultural traditions. They also need to develop skills and competences regarding how to work with multilingual groups of children and their families (Harju-Luukkainen and Kultti 2017). As a response to these needs, in recent years some initiatives have been taken to offer CPD focusing on linguistic and cultural diversity and inclusion.

Furthermore, practitioners also need competences to support children in developing ‘**digital competency**’ including the role of media in society. From an early age children need to learn to become responsible users of digital tools (Skolverket 2016f).

The Government has initiated a number of reforms already reported, such as the salary boost and career advancement strategies. The Government has also commissioned a review on how to make the teaching profession more attractive. Areas to look into are, for example, an induction period for newly qualified graduates, CPD opportunities, teachers’ administrative tasks/work load (Regeringskansliet 2016c). Taken together these initiatives and reforms are hoped to make the teaching profession more attractive.

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