

Sweden



Care Work with Children

Anders Ljungstedts Gymnasium
Linghemsskolan

Childcare in Sweden



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1. Introduction

1.1. Dear Student

◆ *Welcome to Sweden! We are very pleased to have you here doing your practical study period, and hope it proves to be a productive and pleasant experience for you. This material is to assist You to get an overlook on development of the social protection of the children in Sweden. The materials are to give You an overall description of the structure of social protection on the whole and furthermore focus in more detailed way on the benefits important to the children. The issues selected are ones that reflect important legislative changes or events that have had important impact on the situation of the children in Sweden. The manual also includes more practical information. The chapter “The professional child care worker” is directives and recommendations guiding the care work with children. In the chapter “A visit to a Swedish pre school” you can read a case study about a typical day at a pre school both for the children and the staff. If you want to know more about the curriculum for the pre-school, you will find it in the chapter “The aims of educational care work”. The final chapter, “Education system in Sweden” describe the Swedish school system including the Child Recreation Programme. A lot of information is packed into this handbook. You get the most out of it by using it as both a reference and guidebook. Please read the table of contents carefully in order to find the relevant material when you need it in different situations.*

We wish you all the best for your time in Sweden-learn and enjoy!

1.2. Children's Rights and Social Policy in the EU

◆ The Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) is the most universally accepted human rights instrument in history. It has been ratified by 191 countries. By ratifying this instrument national governments have committed themselves to protect and ensure children's rights. It spells out the basic human rights that the children without discrimination have the right:

- ◆ to survival
- ◆ to develop to the fullest
- ◆ to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation
- ◆ to participate fully in family, cultural and social life

The rights of the Child gives the guiding principles to social policy and decision making in Europe. Social policy and social protection are seen as factors promoting economic growth (The European community treaty signed in Maastricht 1992). At the EU level social policy-decision making is restricted in drawing up general guidelines and that are found in different council recommendations and charters. However, social policy is a co-responsibility of the member states. Nevertheless the EU has laid down only minimum standards and minimum rights. The European Social Charter that represents consensus over the basic economic, those are viewed in social and cultural rights. The implementation of these rights is to be executed by member states.

1.3. About Sweden

◆ Social services play a key role in Swedish welfare policy. The overall goals for all operations within social services can be found in Section 1 of the Swedish Social Services Act (Socialtjänstlagen) (SOL). Social Services comprise to main areas: individual and family care and nursing and care of older people and disabled people.

You can read more about this on: <http://www.sos.se>

In Sweden all families, where the parents are working or studying, can apply for a pre-school place. The government and the parliament are trying to introduce family policies that will give parents a better chance of combining work with their joint responsibilities for their children. Other reasons for the families to apply for a pre-school place are financial status, sex equality or to give their children pedagogical activities. The Swedish government has decided about a new reform for children whose parents are unemployed and on parental leave. They now have the right to get a pre-school place three hours/day. The Swedish government has also decided that all children from the age of four are entitled to a place three hours/day that will be free of charge.



1.4. Introduction to the Content

◆ The content gives an overall description of the structure of social protection on the whole and focuses in a more detailed way on the benefits important to the children. The issues selected are ones that reflect significant legislative changes or events that have had an important impact on Swedish children.

Chapter 1: Here you can read about children's rights and a short presentation about Sweden.

Chapter 2: Here you will find information about a visit to a Swedish pre-school.

Chapter 3: Here you will find e.g. information about the aims of educational care work, ethical principles and multiculturalism at pre-schools.

Chapter 4: Here you will find information about welfare policy in Sweden e.g child care services and benefits for families.

Chapter 5: Here you will find how to work as a child care worker in Sweden e.g. job description and guidelines for best practices.

Chapter 6: Here you can read about child care, both an historical account and plans for the future as well as the labour market for a child care worker.

Chapter 7: Here you will find information about the educational system in Sweden.

2. A Visit to Swedish Pre-School

◆ This pre-school is located in a suburb just outside the city of Linköping. About two thousand people live in the area in their own houses and work in the city. There are five pre-schools, four leisure-time centres, seven family day care homes and two schools in the suburb. The following is a description of an ordinary day at a pre-school, where we can follow staff members and a typical Swedish family.

Staff members:

Carina Svensson, practical nurse, works part time. Carina lives in the city and commutes by train. She is a single mother and takes her three year old daughter to a pre-school near their home.

Carina's mother helps Carina out with the fetching of her daughter, especially when Carina closes the pre-school or has to stay late for evening staff meetings.

Susan Carlsson, pre-school teacher, works full time. Susan lives on a farm 8 kilometres from the suburb. Her husband is an engineer and works in the city. Their two children both go to school in the suburb and take the school bus from their home. Both Susan and her husband go by car to work.

The Jonson family

Emelie Jonson, five years old has attended this pre-school since she was two years old. After the summer holidays Emelie will start in a pre-school class together with twenty six year olds. She is in a group called "The Butterflies" with

ten other five year olds. This group meets twice a week to work on the theme they have found interesting, "Shadows" where they can find out more about shadows.

Johanna Jonson, three years old also started here when she was two years old. She is very fond of her big sister Emelie and often goes to her for comfort and help. She also has a theme group, "The Bumblebees" to attend and they meet once a week to sing, play games and talk about different topics of interest. Johanna loves going to "her" group and feels big and important, just like her sister Emelie!

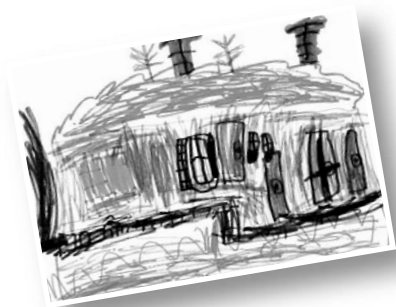
Mrs. Jonson, is a hairdresser and has her own salon in the city. She works full time, but has one day off during the week. To compensate this she works two evenings a week. This means two long days and one day at home for her two little girls.

Mr Jonson, is a teacher at one of the schools in the suburb. He teaches English and Swedish in different classes and has been employed at this school for six years. He also works full time.

A day at a Swedish pre-school:

6.30 Emelie and Johanna have just left their home to go to the pre-school. They have a ten minute walk to the pre-school and both their parents are taking them there this morning. Johanna is rather tired and in a bad mood. She does not want to do anything today! Emelie was the only one who could help her get dressed and Johanna refuses to get

into her push-chair unless she can take her new bag to the pre-school. With her new bag tightly in her arms she is quite satisfied when they arrive at the pre-school.



6.45 Carina is expecting the Jonson family and is not a bit surprised to hear about Johanna's bad mood. She knows Johanna well and specially takes care to cheer her up after waving good-bye. Soon the next child arrives and lucky for Johanna it is her best friend, Anna. Johanna is quick in helping Anna hang up her clothes and also wants Anna to see her nice new bag.

7.00 The next staff member arrives which enables Carina to go to the kitchen to prepare breakfast for the children. One of Emelie's little friends, Jennie has arrived as well as six more children. Emelie and Johanna are playing "house" in the doll's corner. They are very busy feeding their babies and a little boy is lying under the table. He is our little dog, you see! Emelie explains.

8.00 Time for breakfast. The children eagerly sit down and sing a little song before they start. Emelie helps the little boy next to her. She is quite a little mother when she ties his bib for him. Emelie also wants to feed him but he would rather manage on his own to her dismay. Carina has made porridge, which most of the children love. They can have a glass of milk and/or sandwiches if they choose to. Johanna has two large helpings and is in a very good mood now. She has so much to talk about and is just telling Anna about her visit to her grandmother's and the lovely bag her grandmother gave her. Emelie wants her friend Jennie to know that she also got a bag, but that she did not want to bring it to the pre-school in case any harm should come to it. Instead she invites Jennie to come round to her house this afternoon to see the bag and play with her. Carina clears the table and takes the trolley to the kitchen. She will now prepare tea and coffee for the morning break.

9.00 All the members of the staff have come to the pre-school by now and they will take turns in having a break. They may spend about 15 min in the staff room, and talk over a cup of coffee /tea or maybe a fruit. Meanwhile Emelie, Johanna, Anna and Jennie decide to play a game together. Emelie helps the two younger children to count the number of dots on the dice. But the game takes far too long to finish, so they put it back on the shelf after a while.

10.00 The children also need something to eat. Susan has brought a bowl of fruit and summons the children to the table. Johanna has a piece of apple and Emelie settles for half a banana. As soon as they have eaten up they all go to the washroom to wash their hands and visit the toilet. They know it is time to get themselves ready for playing outdoors. Today the three to five year olds will be going to the nearby woods to play. A five minute walk brings them to the woods and they soon reach the spot they have picked as their own, the place they always go to. In the woods there is fun for everyone.



Building houses, climbing trees, discovering the wonders of nature, picking flowers and playing, playing, playing! Emelie and Jennie are playing “shop” with bark, leaves, flowers, beetles, sticks and stones to sell. Johanna and Anna have found a fallen down tree and changed it into an aeroplane. At the moment they are wondering what to use for wings when Johanna has a brainwave. They stretch out



their arms and fly away on exciting adventures with Johanna as the commanding pilot.

11.30 All the children are back at the pre-school preparing for lunch. It is Emelie’s turn to fetch the food on the trolley. She has also set the table where she will sit with some of the other five year olds. In training for the pre-school class they have lunch and manage on their own without any staff at the table (though they are always under supervision should they need help in anyway). A favourite is on the menu today, spaghetti and meatballs!

12.00 After lunch Susan reads a story for the children who want to listen. Johanna wanted to choose a book out of the box of books borrowed from the small local library. This is one of her favourite stories and she wants to hear it over and over again. Susan tries to vary it by changing a few words here and there which Johanna finds very amusing and is quick in noticing the “mistakes”. Emelie and Jennie want to paint with water colours. Emelie loves drawing houses, flowers and princesses but today

she has done a picture of a cat. She explains to Jennie that it is her grandmother's cat who lives in heaven. Jennie knows all about the cat that has been run over by a car.

14.00 Carina has finished work for today and gone home. Susan takes a 30 minute break and after that she will prepare an afternoon snack for those of the children who are still at the pre-school.

14.45 Jennie's mother has come to take her home and Johanna has decided to go along too. But this is not the right day to play at Jennie's house and this sends Johanna into a rage. Susan has just come with the trolley and tries to get Johanna to help her. With a great deal of persuasion Johanna gets a grip of herself and calms down when Emelie arrives on the scene and does her best to explain to Johanna that you have to ask mummy first.

15.00 The children have a snack of milk and sandwiches and then it is time to play outdoors again. The pre-school grounds offer a variety of different activities. The play house is just the place for Emelie, Johanna and Jennie to play "house". Susan will be closing the pre-school so she has to do the dishes from the afternoon snack. About 30 children have eaten and it will take Susan half an hour to clean up and close the kitchen. The cook works part

time and always leaves shortly after lunch which means pre-school staff have to do some work in the kitchen. On her way out Susan looks at the children's lists to count how many are left and when they are due to go home.

17.00 Time for the second last of the staff to go home. By now Emelie and Johanna are the only children left. Most of the toys have been put away and to Johanna's relief her father comes in through the gate. The two girls rush to meet him and are indeed pleased to see him. Emelie wants to show him the painting she did today and takes him inside to show him. Susan helps Johanna into her push-chair. Johanna uses her new bag as a pillow for her head and looks as if she could fall asleep any minute. Emelie and her father smile at Johanna when they come out again. Susan gives a brief account of what has happened during the day and soon waves good-bye to our little friends Emelie and Johanna.

17.30 Susan now has a last look at the children's lists to make sure all the children have been ticked off. Then it is time to check that the windows are closed, nappy-bins emptied and lights switched off. After this she leaves and locks the doors thus concluding a day at a Swedish pre-school.

3. The Aims of Educational Care Work

3.1. General Aims of Early Childhood Education

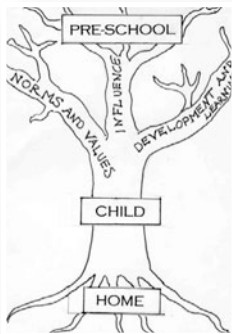
◆ Since January 1st 1998, the National Agency for Education (Skolverket) has acted as the supervisory authority for the pre-school as well as for other pre-school activities and school age child care. The legislation was incorporated into the Education Act on the same date. The curriculum is based on a division of responsibility where the state determines the overall goals and guidelines for the pre-school and where the municipalities take responsibility for implementation. In its structure the curriculum of the pre school is consistent with the other curricula for the school system. As a result of the introduction of a curriculum for the pre-school, the education system as a whole now comprises three curricula, one for the pre-school (Lpfö 98), one for the compulsory school system also covering the pre-school class and the leisure time centres (Lpo 94) as well as a curriculum for the upper secondary school system (Lpf 94). The aim is that the three curricula should link into each other and have a common view of knowledge, development and learning. The curriculum highlights the significance of the pre-school as the first step on the path to lifelong learning. The curriculum is intended to provide guidelines for the family day care homes. The Swedish parliament has also instructed the National Agency for Education to draw up general

directives for the activities of family day care homes and open pre-schools. The educational principles contained in the pre-school curriculum are based around the idea that welfare/care and education are linked. Adults should give children support in developing, trust and self-confidence and it should inspire children to explore the surrounding world. Good welfare/care provides a basis for development and learning, just as it entails a part of education. The significance of play in children's learning and development is also highlighted along with children's own activities. Play and enjoyment in all its various forms stimulates the child's imagination, insight, communication and the ability to think symbolically as well as the ability to co-operate and solve problems. Through creative and imaginary games, the child is given the opportunity to express work through experience and feelings. The pre-school should provide a secure environment, be fun and educational for all children involved. Goals and guidelines for the pre-schools are given for the following areas:

- ◆ Norms and values e.g. openness, respect, solidarity and responsibility
- ◆ Development and learning e.g. develop their curiosity and enjoyment at the same time as the ability to play and learn

- ◆ Influence of the child e.g. to express their thoughts and views and thus have the opportunity of influencing their own situation
- ◆ Pre school and home e.g. show respect for parents and feel responsible for developing good relationships between the staff of the pre school and children's families
- ◆ Co-operation between the pre school class, the school and the leisure time centre e.g. together with the staff pay due attention to each child's need for stimulation and support

You can read more about this on: <http://www.skolverket.se>



Portfolio method

◆ A method of documentation which is increasing in use is the portfolio method. The idea is to collect work samples from each child in a file or portfolio. Items to be found in a portfolio could be:

- ◆ Drawings and paintings
- ◆ Written documentations
- ◆ Short stories written by the child or staff
- ◆ Photoes taken during different activities

The samples for the portfolio can be chosen either by the child or in co-operation with the staff. The child is given the opportunity to follow his/her progress in work and play through this method of self-evaluation. For the parents the portfolio can be seen as a long lasting memory and an easy way to keep up to date with their child's education and development at the pre -school.

3.2. Ethical Principles

◆ In the curriculum for the pre-school (Lpfö 98) you can read about the ethical attitude which shall characterise all pre school activity. The ethical principles are based on democracy forms e.g. understanding and compassion for others as well as objectivity and comprehensiveness. An important task of the pre-school is to establish and help children acquire the values on which our society is based. Children assimilate ethical values and norms primarily through their concrete experiences. The attitudes of adults influence the child's understanding, respect for the rights and obligations that apply in a democratic society. For this reason adult serve an important role as models.

You can read more about this on: <http://www.skolverket.se>

3.3. Theoretical Orientation

◆ Pedagogical work in Swedish pre-schools is based on a long pedagogic tradition. The German educator Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852) introduced the first Kindergarten in Sweden and a new and decisive phase in the history of pre-schools started. Fröbel's idea was that the pre-school should be the first educational step in a child's life and a great importance to its future development. Through developing its natural abilities the child would become a complete human being. Fröbel soon had followers such as Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), Maria Montessori (1870-1952), John Dewey (1859-1952) ("Learning by doing") and Loris Malaguzzi (1922-1994) ("Reggio Emilia")

Most of these pedagogues are agreed on:

- ◆ that children need to explore their surroundings to reach higher levels of knowledge
- ◆ that education material must be concrete and be well known for the children
- ◆ that children reach knowledge and experience through their own senses
- ◆ that children must have the possibility to work in their own pace with help from grown ups

3.4. Multiculturalism in Pre-School

◆ A change in the immigration situation can be noticed during the past decades. Immigrant labour in the middle of the 20th century has since the 1980's been replaced by refugee immigrants. As a pre-school teacher you will most likely come across children who have been through war and oppression. Certain knowledge of what these children might have experienced can be of great value and help to you when trying to understand their most common reactions. The reception and first encounter with the new country can be of vital importance to these children in this revolutionary stage of their life. In the pre-school curriculum you can read that Swedish society has become internationalized and demands a great ability to live with and understand the values that can be found in a multicultural society. Staff with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are desirable at pre-schools. Immigrant children can identify themselves with them which help them feel more secure. It is essential that pre school staff have a positive attitude that shows how differences can enrich and help the understanding of cultural diversity. Staff must meet with immigrant parents needs for child care and offer stimulating pedagogical activities. The environment and material should be well thought out and easily applicable to different cultures.

4. Welfare Policy and Practice

4.1. Welfare Policy in Sweden

◆ In Sweden the state takes social responsibility for all citizens. The aim is to give people a certain level of social security and reasonable living conditions. The efforts to create welfare for people are summed up in social welfare politics. The Social Welfare Service carries out its work in close contact to people. To create equity and security in all parts of the country there are laws for social care. One of the laws is called The Law on Social Welfare Services. It is a “frame” law, which means that social welfare service must be available in all Swedish municipalities. How a municipality chooses to carry out social welfare service varies according to population, age structure, geographical size etc. The first goals of The Law on Social Welfare Services describe the aims of service, care and treatment within the Social Welfare Services.

The first paragraph of the law states that people have the right to:

- ◆ Financial and social security
- ◆ Equal living conditions
- ◆ Active participation in society

The Social Welfare Services should aim at liberating and developing the resources of individuals and groups, with consideration taken to human beings’ responsibility for their own social situation and that of others. The Work of the Social Welfare Services shall be based on respect of the

individual’s independence and integrity. Actions concerning children should be carried out with special consideration for each individual child’s specific needs such as motor skills, intellectual skills, social skills and emotional skills according to The Education Act from 1998. In The Education Act you will find the curriculum for the pre-school (Lpfö 98).

There you will find that the pre-school should strive to ensure that each child develops openness, respect, solidarity and responsibility

- ◆ the ability to take account of and empathise with the situation of others as well as willingness to help others
- ◆ their ability to discover, reflect on and work out their position on different ethical dilemmas and fundamental questions of life in daily reality
- ◆ an understanding that all persons have equal value independent of gender, social or ethnic background
- ◆ respect for all forms of life as well as care for the surrounding environment

4.2. General Goals of Family Policy

◆ In accordance with The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the aim of the Swedish family policy is to improve conditions for families. Sweden has therefore a generous system of parental insurance, comprehensive school and pre-school. Social insurance is financed by contributions from employers, employees and taxes.

Swedish family policy is based on the principles of universality and individual rights.

It comprises:

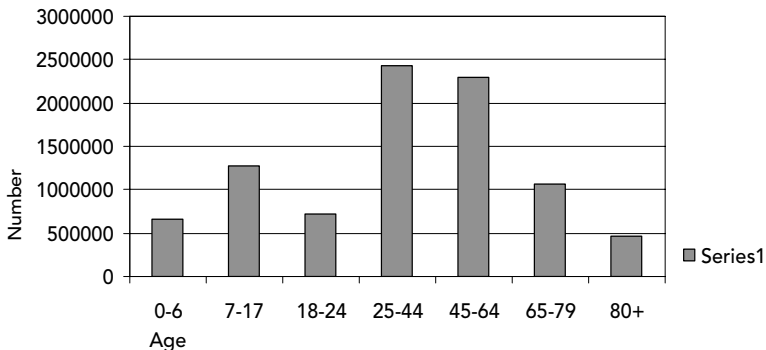
- child and family benefits e.g. child allowances are paid to all children 87.4 euro/month for children under the age of 16
- parental insurance e.g. parental allowance and temporary parental allowance
- high quality day care e.g. pre-school services in Sweden are distinguished by high standards of quality and by the principle of universal availability

You can read more about this on:

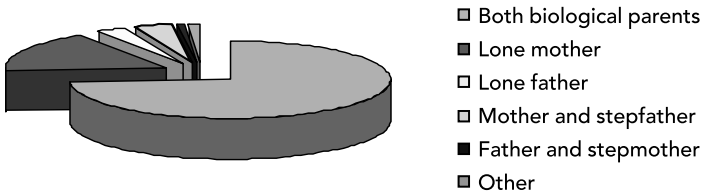
<http://www.fk.se>

<http://www.fhi.se>

Sweden's population on 31 December 2001



Children by familytype 31.12.1999 Percent



In Sweden a person under the age of 18 is referred to as a child. In 2000 they were fully 1,5 million. Most children live with their biological parents.

You can read more about this on:
<http://www.infoservice@scb.se>
<http://www.scb.se/eng>

4.3. The Service Providers

◆ During the 1990's, governance by the rulebook has been replaced by more target-orientated and result-orientated system. This means that the central government now outlines the overall goals for child care while the local authorities e.g municipalities are responsible for implementing them. The government financially contributes the local authorities through grants. Today, the National Agency for Education is the central supervisory authority for both child care and schooling. Its tasks include ensuring fulfilment of the national goals for child care by means of follow-ups, evaluation, development, research and supervisory

works and generally supporting progress in child care sector. The regulations governing child care are set out in The Education Act. The municipalities are responsible for providing pre-school services and for ensuring that children are actually offered these services. Services organised by individual institutes are an alternative to those provided by the municipality. These pre schools vary slightly depending on what staff find essential. Some may choose to emphasize outdoor activities in a natural environment. Others may find music essential or perhaps a specific pedagogy such as Montessori, Waldorf or Reggio Emilia.

Some pre-schools are run by a group of staff, parents or co-operative. They may also be run by an association, foundation or church. In order to start a pre-school under private management, permission must be granted by the municipality. The municipalities are also responsible for the quality of pre-school services. They must engage staff with adequate training or experience to ensure that the child's need for welfare is met with and that sound educational services are provided. The

premises should be appropriate to group sizes, age distribution and activities. The services should be based around each child's needs. The municipalities have a particular responsibility for children who require special support in their development. These children should be offered a place in a pre-school if their needs cannot be met in other ways. This also applies if the child is less than one year old. The child does not only have a right to a place, but also to services of such a standard as to ensure that the special needs of the child are actually met with. The municipality should seek to ensure that the child makes use of the place and to keep parents informed about the services and its purposes.

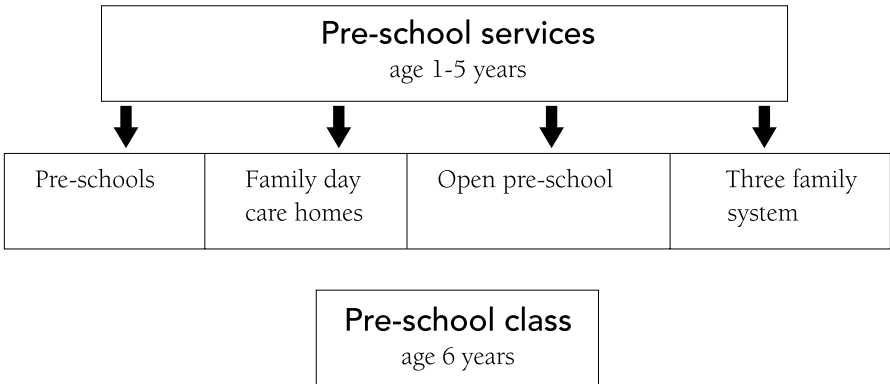
4.4. Structure of Service System

◆ Swedish legislation for children's rights is based on *United Nations Child Convention* appointed by the UN's general assembly in 1989. The child convention has been in force since 1990 in Sweden. According to the convention each child should be guaranteed fundamental rights and protection against violation and exploitation. All states within the convention are pledged to work for children's access to schools, pre-schools and after-school centers. The education of children should develop capability and respect for human values, lay the cultural and environmental foundations as well as prepare the child for a life in peace and equality. The convention recommends

a compulsory school, free of charge and accessible to all. Furthermore each child is entitled to rest, recreation and time to play as well as the opportunity to take part in cultural and creative activities.

Child care/pre-school services and pre-school class

◆ In Sweden child care is equivalent to pre-school services and eligible for children from one year of age until they start school (six or seven years old). The municipalities are obliged to provide pre-school services to children of working or studying parents, or cases where the child has an individual need. A place should be offered without unreasonable delay, which means normally within three or four months after the parents have registered their need for a place. A place should be offered as close to the child's home as possible. Most children aged one to five years are registered in pre-schools and family day care homes. Since 1st January 2003, universal pre-school is to be introduced for all four and five-year olds. These children will be offered free pre-schools for three hours per day during the school terms and it will be on a voluntary basis. Pre-school services are operated in the form of pre-schools, family day care homes, three family system and open pre-school.



The Pre-school provides educational group activity for registered children between the ages of one and five years. Pre-schools are generally open all year round and for most of the day. The opening times are adapted to parents' working/study hours (six pm - six am) or to the children's needs.

In the Family day care home a child minder takes care of registered children during the time when parents

are working or studying. In general this takes place in the child minder's home. Children in family day care homes should have access to the services provided by pre-schools.

The Three family system also counts as a family day care centre, i.e. services where one qualified practical nurse is responsible for the childcare of two or three families in one of the families' homes.

Percentage of children in different age groups, enrolled in fulltime 1990-1998

Year	Pre-school 1-5 years	Family day care 1-5 years	Total 1-5 years
1990	39	17	56
1995	52	14	67
1996	56	14	70
1997	59	13	72
1998	61	12	73

The Open pre-school provides child minders and parents who are at home with the opportunity to combine with staff to develop educational group activities for children. There is no registration. In many municipalities the open pre-schools work together with the local social services and/or with child-and mother-healthcare services.

The Pre-school classes

As from 1998 all children are entitled to join a pre-school class the year before they start school. Pre-school classes are for three hours per day during the school term and are free from charge. The National Agency for Education is responsible for pre-school, pre-school classes and schools in Sweden. Pre-school classes have the same curriculum as the compulsory schools where learning basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics is emphasised.

The staff at the pre-school form a team usually consisting of pre-school teachers, school teachers and recreational instructors. When the day at the pre-school class ends, most of the children goes to a leisure center and others return back to their homes.

Maximum fees

◆ The Maximum Fee for pre-school activities and care of school aged children was introduced on 1st January, 2002. This means a ceiling will be set on the fees payable by parents for their children. Though voluntary, most municipalities have decided to introduce this new reform. At pre-schools the fees charged may be no

more than between 1-3% of the families income, depending on how many children the family has. The fee may not, however, exceed 122 euro per month for the family's first child, 81 euro for the second child and 41 euro for the third child.

Client - staff ratio

◆ Nowadays Sweden has no rules or regulations about client - staff ratio. It is up to each municipality to decide the client - staff ratio. Earlier there were norms about size of the groups, *the National Commission on Child Care* (Barnstugeutredningen) (SOU 1972:27) recommended maximally 20 children in each group, but both the staff and *The Nation Board of Health and Welfare* wished smaller groups. However, with *the State Grant System* in 1984 the amount of the government subsidy per school change from the school capacity to actual number of children. Therefore the recommendations made by the *National Board of Health and Welfare* regarding group sizes were no longer needed.

You can read more about this on:
<http://www.regeringskansliet.se>

Health services

◆ Until the child start school they are registered to The Child Welfare Center. The children are continuous calling for health controls. When they start school they become registered at common Health Service. Up to the age of 20 everyone have dental service and medical treatment for free.

You can read more about this on:
<http://www.fk.se>
<http://www.fhi.se>

4.5. Benefits for Families

◆ In Sweden the social insurance scheme is administered by the Social of insurance offices, who also see to it that you receive the benefits to which you are entitled. Benefits for families with children:

- ◆ Expecting a child
- ◆ Parental allowance
- ◆ Temporary parental allowance
- ◆ Child allowance and large-family supplement
- ◆ Maintenance support
- ◆ Child care allowance

Expecting a child

◆ When you are pregnant you are entitled to be transferred to other duties if you have a physically demanding job which you cannot do because of the pregnancy, or have been suspended from work under the Work Environment Act. If the employer cannot transfer you, you may draw pregnancy allowance when:

- your capacity for work is reduced by at least one quarter on account of the pregnancy and you have a physically demanding job.
- you have a job which you cannot do because of risks in the work environment

You may draw pregnancy allowance for maximum of 50 days and not earlier than 60 days before the expected date of birth of the baby. If you have such work for part of the day you can apply for three-quarter, half or quarter pregnancy allowance.

Parental allowance

◆ When you have had a child you can draw a parental allowance for 450 days in order to stay at home from work and look after the child. The days of parental allowance are divided equally between the parents. Except for 30 days they can be transferred to the other parent. A person who is the sole legal guardian is entitled to all the days. The mother can start drawing parental allowance 60 days before expected confinement. The parental allowance may be drawn at any time until the child has reached the age of eight years or has completed the first class at school. You can choose between drawing full, three-quarter, half or quarter parental allowance.

Temporary parental allowance

◆ If you have to stay at home to take care of a sick child who has not reached the age of 12, you are entitled to a temporary parental allowance. This also applies if the person who normally minds the child falls ill. If you have to go to the doctor or to the Child Health Centre with your child you can also draw temporary parental allowance. Parents together are entitled to temporary parental allowance

for 60 days per child per year. Benefit can be paid for a whole, three-quarter, half or quarter day, according to how much time you need to take off from work. You cannot draw benefit for non-working days. A person who has just become a father of a child is entitled to ten days' leave on temporary parental allowance in connection with the child's birth or adoption. These days are not counted in the other days of temporary parental allowance.

Child allowance and large-family supplement

◆ For a child under the age of 16 you will receive a child allowance. When your child has reached the age of 16, the general child allowance ceases and is replaced by extended child allowance if the child is attending nine-year compulsory school. Extended child allowance is paid up to and including the month in which the child leaves the compulsory school.

If you have three or more children you are also entitled to a large-family supplement. Children who continue to study without interruption after the age of 16 can also be counted for large-family supplement.

Maintenance support

◆ A parent who does not live together with his/her child must help to provide for the child by paying maintenance to the person who is looking after the child. The parent who has to pay is referred to as the parent who is liable for maintenance.

Child care allowance

◆ You may obtain a child care allowance if as a parent you care for a sick or handicapped child at home. You can obtain the child care allowance as soon as the child is born until the child reaches the age of 16.

Adoptive parents have the same rights as biological parents.

You can read more about this on: <http://www.fk.se>

5. The Professional Childcare Worker

5.1. Occupational Profiles



Supervisor

Responsible for the day running of the facility.

Hour of work: 40 per full time

Rate of pay: 1656 - 1840 euro

Qualifications:

Pre-school teacher

Experience of identifying development needs of children and staff and meet with these needs.

Organizational and administrative skills.

Key duties:

Providing an appropriate supervision for staff.

Liaising with the management in relation to issues affecting the facility.

Ensuring structure, monitoring and recording issues such as sickness, attendance, holiday leave and payment.

Recruitment and selection of new staff.

Arrange supplies and resources for the facility.

Pre-school teacher/Practical nurse

Ensure the care and well being of the children attending the facility and be responsible for the day to day running of the facility.

Hour of work: 40 full time

Rate of pay: 1288 - 1656 euro

Qualifications:

Recognized child care qualification

Experience of identifying development of needs of children and meet with these needs.

Liaising with the management in relation to issues affecting the facility.

Ensuring structure, monitoring and recording issues such as sickness, attendance, holiday leave and payment.

Recruitment and selection of new staff.

Arrange supplies and resources for the facility.

5.2. Job Descriptions

◆ Most of the work at a pre-school is carried out by the pre-school teachers or practical nurses.

Over half of all pre-school employees have a university degree in pre-school education while just over 40% of the employees are practical nurses with upper- secondary qualifications. Working hours for a full time job is 40 hours per week which includes two staff meetings per month. On average a pre-school teacher earns 1970 euro per month and a practical nurse earns 1790 euro per month (October 2002). Work is done in a team and members of the team share all tasks. Team work is important for the well-being of the staff and when functioning well together they serve as good models for the children. A stable group of staff help give the children the basic security they require in the process of learning and development. Staff at a pre-school will find several different roles in their profession, such as service, teaching and caring. All roles are equally important and no clear distinction can be seen between the different roles. Administrative work at the pre-school is done by the staff as well as the district head who has the main responsibility.

A normal working day

Staff on morning shift:

Opens pre-school, receives children
Prepares and supervises breakfast
Attends to laundry
Cleans children's shelves and mugs
Morning break at nine a'clock

Staff on afternoon shift:

Prepares and serves afternoon snack
Does the dishes from after noon snack
Takes out the garbage
Switches off the dish-washer
Takes a 30 minute break in the afternoon
Checks lights, doors and windows when closing

Other tasks to be done by the working team:

Read a story, play games
Change nappies
Attend to each child's personal hygiene
Dress the children for outdoors
Solve conflicts
Help and comfort
Take part in meals
Encourage to tidy up and put things back after play
Arrange and assist in different activities
Pedagogical documentation
Fill in list for arrivals and departures

When a child has been accepted to a place at the pre-school the child and parents will be invited to visit the pre-school. One member of the staff will be appointed to take special care of the new child during the first weeks. In the beginning the child will stay for a short time and the parents are given the chance to take part in the every day care of their child. By increasing the number of hours the child successively gets used to the new environment and eventually feels secure enough to be separated from his/her parents for longer periods. This flexible start can vary from one municipality to another. During the introduction period, staff will make sure to find out as much as possible from the parents about the new child's background, needs and habits. This is to help parents and child feel comfortable and confident at the pre-school. All pre-school children are automatically insured by the municipality. The insurance covers the entire stay at the pre-school including going to and from the home. In case of an accident staff will fill in a "Casualty Report" giving a description of what happened, number of staff working on the occasion, treatment required (hospital care, doctor, nurse etc.). Also measures and precautions to be taken in order to prevent further accidents of the same kind from happening again. This report is to be signed by staff involved and sent to the district head. The parents are to fill in a form together with staff describing what happened, injuries that occurred, treatment needed and costs. They will then be refunded for all costs in connection with the accident. Should a

child become ill during its stay the parent will be notified and required to fetch the child as soon as possible. Parents are recommended to keep their child at home one day after recovering from having had a temperature. When one of the siblings in a family is ill, the other siblings may attend the pre-school. Staff are not recommended to give medicines such as antibiotics or for reduction of fever. When a child is compelled to take some kind of medication in order to be able to lead a normal life parents should give written permission to staff. An annual fire-drill should take place at the pre-school to prepare children and staff in case of a fire. The staff and children will practice what to do when the fire alarm goes off. They will learn how to crawl under the smoke and leave the building as fast as possible. Parents are informed in good time in order to be able to explain to their children and thus eliminate any child being scared or frightened by the fire-drill. Staff also regularly go through the procedures of how to assist the children, make sure that the building is empty, the fire-brigade alerted and gather all the children and staff outside. There should also be a plan of the pre-school showing all the fire exits.

Co-operation with parents

◆ Talking to parents on informal terms, when leaving or fetching the child, is a good means of information home - pre-school - home. Minor problems can be discussed and solved or changes in child's schedule for attendance can be

done. Close co-operation between staff and parents is essential to the child's well being at the pre-school. An educational plan (see appendix 1), based on the pre-school curriculum should be used as a basis for each child's care and education. Parents are invited to the pre-school once a term to take part of the plan through discussions, thus increasing their possibility of influencing their child's development. If the child should prove to be in need of special help, a plan for further measures will be worked out. This will enable the pre-school to call in expert help such as social workers, medical staff, speech therapists, psychologists, special assistant etc.

Maintaining confidentiality

◆ Each employee at the pre-school is obliged to sign a paper, making a commitment of confidentiality. This means that employees may not discuss a child or parent with any person other than members of the team working with the child.

Parent councils/committees


◆ A representative chosen from all of the parents at each pre-school in the district is to be summoned by the district head of the pre-schools to meetings each term. Objectives and principles of the pre-school management could be discussed at these meetings.

5.3. Guidelines for Best Practices

◆ Once a year each work team will be called to a meeting by the district head of the pre-schools. At these meetings employees evaluate their work in terms of co-operation, working conditions and schedules. Each employee is also entitled to an individual discussion with the head, if necessary. Twice a term the pre-school closes for a study day. Parents are informed of the dates well in advance and are also reminded shortly before the study day. This is to enable the parents to make alternative arrangements for their child. A study day could be used for a guest lecturer, discussions or evaluations of work at pre-school, recreation and health etc.

6. The Development in Childcare

1900 1950 1960 1962 1967 1975 1980 1998



Pre school development

- 1896 Kindergarten was introduced in Sweden by Fröbel, Germany
- 1935 The first commission on conditions for children and their families
- 1962 Guidelines for child care
- 1968 The National Commission on Child Care (Barnstugeutredningen, BU68)
- 1975 The Pre school law (Förskolagen)
- 1982 The Law on Social Welfare Services (Socialtjänstlagen)
- 1998 The Pre school got their own curriculum (LPfö98)

6.1. Past

◆ The roots of the Swedish child care system can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century. The pre-school of today is based on traditions from two different directions

- a) social child care
- b) pedagogical ambitions to prepare the child for school.

Social child care was offered by crèches, which were later renamed day nurseries. Kindergartens were educationally orientated and were intended for the children of well-to-do families. They were very often privately run. After the Second World War female labour was in demand and the need for child care increased. The demand for labour decreased in the 1950's and women went back to work as housewives. At this stage there was a debate going on where experts claimed that mothers needed to stay at home with their children for the child's own good. In the familiar environment the child would feel more secure in it's development

and learning. An increase in demand for labour in the 1960's called for child care again. Day care and play-schools were now considered important for a child's well-being. In 1962 the National Swedish Social Welfare Board presented the guidelines for child care. Qualified staff, the number of children and size of playing area and equipment were stipulated. In 1967 all day care centres and play-school were to serve the interests of children as well as allow parents to work and study. In 1975 a new law came were day care centres and play schools were to go under the joint name of pre-school. Also a work-plan was to be the guideline for all pre-school staff. All six-year olds were now entitled to go to a pre-school group and the emphasis was more on the pedagogical work than on the social care work, this no longer beeing in accordance with the appointment of 1967. The National Agency for Education became the supervisory body for pre-schools.

Pre-schools for one to five year olds and pre-school classes for six year olds are now included in the educational system where learning can be seen as a lifelong process. This means that the pre school assignment is pedagogical and meets with the need for childcare (Lpfö98).

6.2. The Plans for the Future

6.2.1. National Strategies

◆ The extreme low rate of nativity in Sweden has called for a different approach to family policy. The government has therefore planned a number of reforms aimed at providing more children access to pre-school and leisure time centres. This represents an important step towards the government's long-term goal: Free child care facilities that are available to all children. Municipalities will become liable to offer places at pre-schools or in family day care homes to children between one and five years old and whose parents are unemployed. From 1st January 2003 a universal pre-school is to be introduced for all four and five-year olds. All children will be offered free schooling for at least 525 hours/year.

6.2.2. Labour Market

◆ Due to the fact that the pre-school has its own curriculum demand for highly qualified staff will increase. This means that the pre-school teachers will get on better in the labour market than the practical nurses. But the present situation shows a shortage of staff which means that practical nurses and graduates from the Child Recreation Programme will easily find a job.

The labor market will in the future be influenced by other factors such as nativity, staff frequency and labour market development on the whole. Nativity has during the past years been on the low level, but certain prognosis point toward a slight increase. The government resolution to introduce a universal pre-school, will probably also mean an increased demand for pre-school places and pre-school staff. The maximum fees will also have a certain effect on the demand.

6.2.3. Responsibility and Control

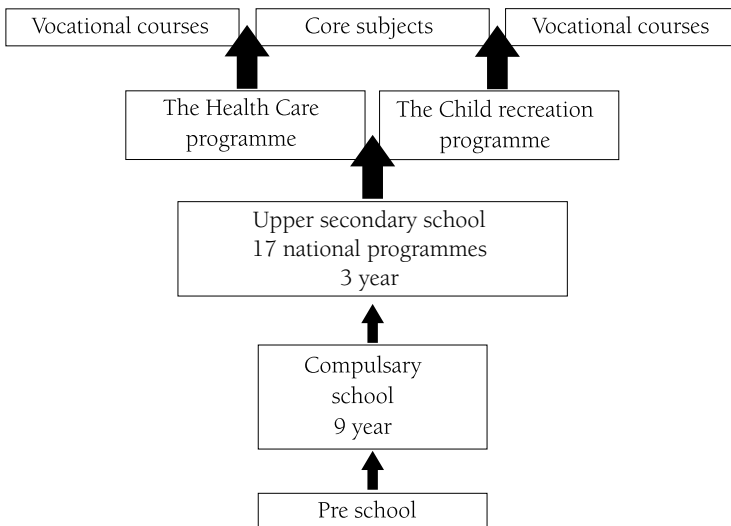
◆ Curricula, national objectives and guidelines for state schooling in Sweden are defined by Parliament (Riksdag) and the government. The national budget includes grants to the municipalities for their various functions.

7. Education and Childcare Training

Upper Secondary School

◆ The Swedish public school system comprises compulsory school and various types of voluntary schooling. Compulsory school includes compulsory basic school (for children with impaired sight, hearing or speech), and compulsory school for mentally handicapped. Voluntary schools comprise upper secondary school, municipal adult education and education for mentally handicapped adults. Tuition in the state school is free. Neither pupils nor their parents usually incur any costs for teaching materials, school meals, health care, school transport, etc.

◆ Almost all the pupils attending compulsory basic school continue directly to upper secondary school, and usually complete their upper secondary schooling within three years. Upper secondary school is divided into 17 three-year national programmes, all of which are intended to provide a broad-based education and confer general eligibility for further studies in higher education. In addition to the national programmes there are also specially designed and individual programmes. Young persons are entitled to enter upper secondary school up to the age of twenty. After this they can choose between various forms of municipal adult education.



The Child Recreation Programme

◆ The Child Recreation Programme strives to give students basic knowledge for working with people of all ages within the social and pedagogical work sector as well as cultural and recreation sector. The programme also wants to give the student an educational base for further knowledge in working life, high schools or universities. After completing this programme jobs can be found at pre-schools or leisure time centres, with disabled persons

or elderly people. The Child Recreation Programme is part of the voluntary educational system. Due to the present market situation, about 90% of the pupils chose to carry on their studies at upper secondary school. The upper secondary school have 17 national programmes, of which the Child Recreation Programme is one. This three year programme has core subjects and vocational subjects. Every subject contains one or more courses.

Vocational courses

Pedagogical leadership
Optional courses

3rd
year

Leisure/Child and pedagogy
Communication
Recreation knowledge

2nd
year

Health education
Development, living conditions
and socialisation
Children, culture and recreation
Ways of working and learning

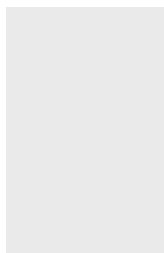
1st
year

* Optional courses
Global and international
Integration
Child, youth and adult
with special needs
Projects and enterprise
Swimming
Recreation centres
and recreation
environments

Core subject

Individual option

Swedish
English
Mathematics
Artistic activities
Physical education
and health
Civics
Religion
Science studies



Vocational training is a part of all vocational courses

Practical Experience

All students do core subjects where the vocational subjects give each programme its specific profile. The Child Recreation Programme has two variations: Recreation and Pedagogical and social activities give a deeper knowledge about children's and young peoples development and needs. It takes up leadership and group dynamics. Both variants emphasize the students personal development. Selective courses provide a broader education and also shape the Child Recreation Programme in different ways from one school to another. Each programme includes working on a project to help students take more responsibility for the whole process - from idea to ready product. Over and above the selective courses students must make an individual choice for all upper secondary schools in the municipality. An individual choice could be: photo, dance and theatre, technology, bakery or perhaps a new language such as Russian or Spanish. The students individual choice must not necessarily have the same aim as the Child Recreation Programme.

◆ The Child Recreation Programme includes practical experience for at least 15 weeks the so called APU which means work at a practical placement. Work placement is essential to link theory and practice. Work placement can take place where cultural and leisure activities for children are offered. It is up to each school to decide at which stage of the education the work placement should be and whether it should go on for a longer period than 15 weeks.

Anders Ljungstedts Gymnasium, Linköping

◆ Anders Ljungstedts Gymnasium is one of largest upper secondary schools and has 2400 students. It offers 14 of 17 national programmes. The school has changed from a traditional vocational school to an education which prepares the students for different professions.

The Child Recreation Programme at Anders Ljungstedts Gymnasium

3 rd year	Core subject	Vocational courses	Optional courses theory/vocational training		Project work	Individual option
2 nd year	Core subject	Vocational courses	Optional courses	Vocational training	Individual option	
1 st year	Core subject		Vocational courses	Vocational training		

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Appendix

1. Educational plan
2. “A day at a Swedish pre school” Video tape with a presentation of the pre school system in Sweden. Duration 20 mins.
3. Glossary

Appendix 1

An example of an Educational plan

See the Child Now

In what way does the child show that he/she is happy (or not) at the pre-school.
How does the child get on when playing?
Play-mates, what does he/she like to play?
Does the child enjoy group activities?
How does he/she show that they like or dislike it?
What does the child like doing (ask child)
What doesn't the child want to do(ask child)
Other things the child often talks about.
Parent's impression of the child
Personel's impression of the child.
Summary of parent's and personel's impression of the child.

Norms and Values

In what way does the child show that he/she feels secure at the pre-school.
In what way does the child show respect and consideration towards others.
Does the child take responsibility for his/her actions or not. In what way.
How does the child show his/her feelings of compassion.

Development and Learning

Are the child's motor skills satisfactory.
In what way does the child show that his/ identity and independence has developed.
How has the child's verbal ability developed.
How does the child show trust in his/her own ability
How does the child show his/her ability

to learn and play.

Is the child aware of his/her own culture or other cultures.

The Child's Influence

How does the child influence the work at the pre school
How does the child show that he/she can express thoughts and opinions.
How does the child show his/her ability to listen and adapt to the situation.

How to procede from here

How we can support the child in his/her future development.
What can the parents do.
What can the personel

“A day at a Swedish pre-school”

We would like to welcome you to a Swedish pre-school. This pre-school is open for children between the ages of one and five, and whose parents are working or studying or who may need special support for their child.

A day at the pre-school has just started and the first member of the staff, Carina has just arrived. It is 6.30 in the morning and the first children are due to arrive shortly after the pre-school opens. Carina is one of seven in the pre-school working team. Carina works part time which means 6 1/2 hours, including a 30 minute long break. This team takes care of 36 Children, divided into two groups with 18 children in each group.

The environment indoors has been carefully planned by the working team in close co-operation with the children. It is designed to stimulate fantasy and creativity and inspire an active search for knowledge.

Carina is a trained pre-school nurse just like three other members of the team. The rest of the team staff are pre-school teachers.

Our first children, Johanna, aged three and her big sister Emelie aged five have just arrived. Today both their parents accompany them to the pre-school. Carina makes sure Johanna and Emelie settle in. This is an important part of the day and the separation from their parents

should be made as easy as possible. This is to help both parents and children enjoy a successful day apart from one another. For the children that have not been able to eat before leaving home, breakfast will be served at eight o'clock and an afternoon snack will be available after lunch.

Listening to a story helps pass time between arrivals and breakfast. Each child needs a well-balanced daily rhythm in an environment suitable for their age and time spent at the pre-school.

It is 9 o'clock and time for Carina to have a well-earned break. She can enjoy a chance to talk to her colleagues over a cup of coffee. Susan has just arrived. She will be working for 8 1/2 hours and closes the preschool at 5.30 this afternoon.

This is one of the theme groups. A theme-orientated approach to work helps broaden and enrich the child's learning. A theme chosen by the group could last for an unlimited period of time. The aim is not the final result, but instead emphasis is on the actual process of learning. Language and learning are closely linked and the pre-school should help the child develop a rich and varied spoken language. The children are divided into age groups where children of the same age have a lot in common. In the group children can train their ability to listen and feel secure enough to share their thoughts and ideas and to express themselves in many different ways.

In the theme-group one of the staff should be able to document, by taking either notes or photos of the pedagogical activities. By documenting, each child can be specially focused on giving both the child and parents a new aspect on learning and development. Learning should be based on not only the interaction between adults and children, but also on what children learn from one another. By documenting, activities can be made more explicit thus providing an important basis for discussion and assessment of the quality of activities and the need for development.

Children are in constant search of knowledge through observing and exploring their surroundings and should be given the opportunity to explore an issue in greater detail and find solutions and answers of their own. A sense of exploration, curiosity and desire to learn should form the foundations for pedagogical activities. These should be based on the child's experiences, interests, needs and views. The adult can be seen as a "co-explorer" on life's expedition!

Before going outside to play the children need to prepare themselves. This is an excellent situation to encourage and strengthen the child's sense of compassion and empathy. By helping one another the child's sense of care and consideration towards others will be emphasised. The child will learn more about individual freedom and integrity, respect and understanding for other people and their needs. Thus providing the foundation for a growing responsibility.

Some children spend as many as 10 hours at the pre-school and during their stay they will need a rest. The youngest children will usually take a morning or afternoon nap either indoors or outdoors.

Given the opportunity to switch activities during the course of the day each child's creativity and imagination in play is stimulated. The outdoor environment has been partly created by the children at the pre-school. By observing the way children play and amuse themselves, the working team can learn more about the children's special notions and needs. Thus being able to create an environment that meets with the children wishes.

An adult will always be close at hand to assist the child. The pre-school should ensure that the children develop the ability to function individually and in group in both work and play. Also the child must learn to handle conflicts, work out misunderstandings and understand rights and obligations as well as take responsibility for common rules and for their own actions. To develop self-autonomy and confidence in their own ability is also of importance in the child's learning process.

Time spent outdoors provides numerous opportunities for play and other activities. Natural environment such as a nearby forest help the child's understanding of the process of nature. Through gaining knowledge about animals and plants the child learns to respect nature in all forms of life and require a caring attitude to our shared environment. This will help the child understand

that they are a part of nature's recycling process and that they can contribute to a better world both now and in future.

Each member of the working team is entitled to individual planning time (1 hour/week).

It is almost 12 o'clock and soon time for lunch. Today it is Emelie's turn to set the table. Emelie and her five year old friends will sit at the table entirely on their own, in preparation for their pre-school class. Each child is encouraged to manage on their own as much as possible.

Carina and other staff members will eat their meals together with the children and serve an important role as models for the children. Eating together is one of the highlights of the day with time to enjoy a hot meal in the company of friends. Meals are prepared (part-time cook) on location which gives the children insight in the domestic part of pre-school life.

After lunch it is time for Carina to go home but she will return to the pre-school this evening. The working team meets twice a month to plan and evaluate their work as well as discuss each individual child and their development. Parent meetings take place once a year.

While some of the younger children take a nap, the other children can choose activities such as: playing a game, doing a jig-saw puzzle or bead work. The potential in each child should be seen and emphasized, both individually and in a group. Each child is entitled to experience the satisfaction that comes from overcoming difficulties and making progress.

Creating and communicating by different forms of expression, such as pictures, song and music, drama, dance and movement as well as building and woodwork make up both the contents and methods to be used by the pre-school in promoting the development and learning of the child. A number of mirrors have been placed at suitable levels for the children. When seeing their reflection in the mirror they learn more about themselves. They can compare themselves with other children.

Susan will soon have an afternoon break when she can relax in the staff-room for half an hour.

The pre-school should meet each child's need for physical activities and try to ensure that children develop their motor skills, their ability to co-ordinate and an awareness of their own body, as well as an understanding of the importance of maintaining their own health and well-being.

It is almost five o'clock and our two little friends, Emelie and Joanna are waiting for their father to fetch them. While gathering their belongings Susan will talk to the parent informing him of his daughters' day at her pre-school. The working team should support parents in their role of bringing up and helping their children grow and develop.

Susan waves goodbye and bids them welcome back the next day again. When the last child has left Susan will tidy up and prepare for the staff meeting concluding a day at a Swedish pre-school.

Appendix 3

Glossary

English	Explanation	Swedish
Pre-school	Day care for children between 1-5 years old	Förskola
Pre-school class	Pre-school groups for children aged 6-7 years old	Förskoleklass
Child care worker/	Works at pre-school / pr- school class/	
Practical nurse	leisure time centre/ school	Barnskötare
Pre-school teacher	Works at pre-school/ pre-school class/ leisure time centre/ school	Förskollärare
Leisure time centre	Day care for school children 6-10 years old	Fritidshem
Portfolio method	An Australian method for documentation of children´s work	Portfoliometoden
Child Recreation Programme		Barn- och fritidsprogrammet
The Board of Education		Skolstyrelsen
The Education Act		Lpfö 98 Lpf 94 Lpo 94
The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs		Socialdepartementet
The National Board of Health and Welfare		Socialstyrelsen
Social Welfare Service		Socialtjänst
Social Welfare politics		
The Swedish Parliament		Regeringen
The Social Bureau of Insurance		Försäkringskassan
Municipality		Kommun

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