



# **Nordic Early Childhood and Care: Perspectives of Children, Parents and Educators**

***Care et petite enfance nordique:  
points de vue des enfants, des parents et  
des éducateurs***

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# The Nordic Model

The Nordic Model includes developing a more equal society regarding social security systems and equal opportunities for men and women, and not least introducing reforms such as child allowance, parental leave and access to full day preschool for all children.

Le modèle nordique ne se résume pas aux réformes relatives aux allocations familiales, au congé parental, à l'accès de tous les enfants à un préscolaire à temps plein, mais vise une société plus égalitaire : systèmes de sécurité sociale, égalité hommes-femmes





This means that children are the responsibility of not only the family but also society, just like school education is.

Cela signifie que les enfants ne sont pas seulement sous la responsabilité de la famille mais aussi, tout comme l'école, de la société.





What stands out about childhood and early education in the Nordic countries, is the social welfare and educational policies. Early childhood education is considered national responsibility.

Ce qui caractérise l'enfance et l'éducation préscolaire : les politiques éducatives et du *welfare* social.

L'éducation de la petite enfance relève de la responsabilité nationale.





- The idea of universal ECEC services is embedded in the Nordic educational policies. Des services universels d'Accueil et d'Education des Jeunes enfants (AEJE) : une idée bien ancrée dans les politiques éducatives nordiques
- Children have the right to attend full day ECEC programmes during the years before starting school, regardless of family income or parental employment.

Droit des enfants de fréquenter une structure préscolaire à temps plein avant l'âge de l'école, quels que soient le revenu des familles et l'emploi des parents





Assist parents, who for various reasons could not take sufficient care of their children.

Assister les parents qui, pour diverses raisons, ne pouvaient pas prendre soin de leurs enfants

Rapid urbanization taking place, which demanded a more protected environment for children.

Une urbanisation rapide qui a exigé un environnement protégé pour les enfants





Increasing parental employment in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Augmentation de l'emploi parental au cours de la dernière partie du 20eme siècle

The children: their education, development, and social upbringing

Les enfants : leur éducation, développement et socialisation





- In the Nordic countries, the explosion of ECEC took off in the 1970s, when women were needed in the labour market.

Dans les pays nordiques, l'AEJE a explosé dans les années 70 quand le marché du travail a eu besoin des femmes

- The percentage of children of all age groups enrolled in ECEC has increased significantly during the past two decades.

Le pourcentage des groupes d'enfants de tout âge dans l'AEJE a augmenté de façon significative au cours des 2 dernières décades

- Today almost all children between two and five years of age spend their daily lives in preschool.

Aujourd'hui tous les enfants de 2 à 5 ans sont dans le préscolaire







# Percentage of 2-year-old and 5-year-old children attending ECEC in the Nordic countries

## Pourcentage des enfants de 2 et 5 ans dans l'AEJE nordique

Country	1990 2 years old	1990 5 years old	2011 2 years old	2011 5 years old
Denmark	63	74	91	97
Finland	53	53	52	78
Iceland	50	72	94	94
Norway	20	62	89	99
Sweden	55	90	67	98



# Early Childhood Education in Iceland

## Education de la petite enfance en Islande

**The term preschool is used for all group care services for children from the ages of 18 months to six years old**

**“Pré-école” = toute structure accueillant les 18 mois - 6 ans**

The accountability for preschools is divided between the Ministry of Education and the municipal authorities. The ministry formulates an educational policy for the preschools.

The local authorities supervise the building and operation of most preschools and bear the expenses

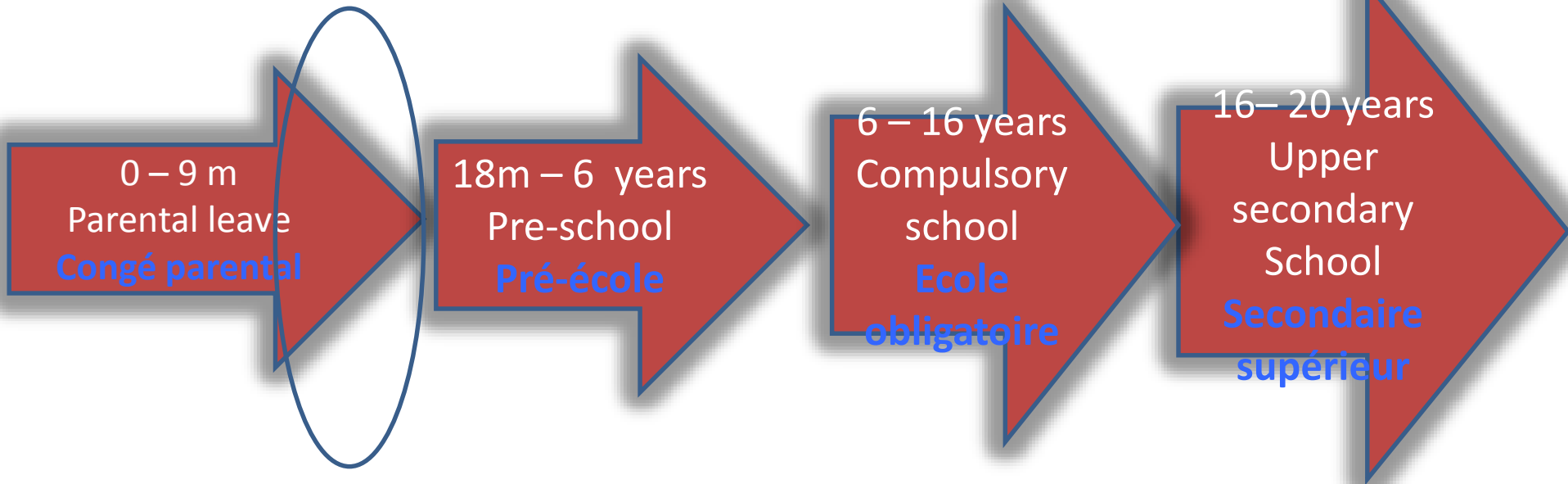
Responsabilité partagée entre le ministère de l'éducation (politique nationale) et les municipalités (équipements, fonctionnement)

According to laws from 2008 that took effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 all teacher education in Iceland is now five years university education.

Loi de 2008 (appliquée en 2011) : formation universitaire de 5 ans pour tous les enseignants

Hence, only those who have a Master's degree from an accredited university can use the occupation title "preschool teacher".

Seuls les titulaire d'un master sont “enseignants du préscolaire”





# Children's Views

Points de vue des enfants



# Findings – Looking back

# Résultats

- Social relationships were an important factor in children's thinking about their early childhood settings.

Les relations sociales sont un important facteur, chez les enfants, pour réfléchir sur les lieux qui les accueillent.

- Important social space for participation and practicing interaction with other children

Un espace social important pour la participation et la pratique des interactions avec d'autres enfants





- Friends more important than educators.

Les amis : plus importants que les éducateurs

- Many of the children mentioned the educators when they were asked about when they felt safe in preschool.

Lorsqu'on leur a demandé quand ils se sentaient en sécurité à la pré-école, de nombreux enfants ont mentionné les éducateurs





- The outdoor area and a spacious piazza where the children played together and were able to choose from various activities was mentioned as the best places

Les meilleurs endroits mentionnés par les enfants :  
espace extérieur et hall spacieux où jouer  
ensemble et choisir des activités variées





# Parents

**What do parents find most important for children to learn in preschool?**

**Selon les parents : ce que les enfants ont de plus important à apprendre à la pré-école ?**







# Parents – Social relations **Relations sociales**

Parents' main expectation of the preschools is that they work on the children's social development. Parents wanted their children to learn to interact, respect, and show empathy towards other people.

L'attente principale des parents quant à la pré-école : le développement social des enfants. Apprendre à interagir, à respecter et à témoigner de l'empathie à l'égard d'autrui





## Parents – Social relations **Les relations sociales**

Most important that their children were happy and got along well with others in the preschool; the way in which the preschool day was organized, and the content of the curriculum, were of lesser importance.

Le plus important : que leurs enfants soient heureux et s'entendent avec les autres ; l'organisation de la journée et le contenu du curriculum ont moins d'importance pour eux.





# Parents – Play **Le jeu**

Play as a central part of the preschool curriculum.  
They wanted their children to have the opportunity to enjoy themselves as individuals in preschool.

**Le jeu a une place centrale dans le curriculum  
préscolaire. Les parents veulent que leurs enfants  
prennent du plaisir à la pré-école, en tant qu'individus.**





# Parents – Self-reliance/independence

## Confiance en soi/ indépendance

Promotion of self-reliance and independence were important aims of preschool education in the minds of the parents.

Pour les parents, promouvoir confiance en soi et indépendance sont des buts importants de l'éducation préscolaire.





# Preschool teachers **Enseignants préscolaires**

Recent research in Icelandic preschools that shows that although preschool teachers emphasize social skills, informal teaching through play, and creative activities, there are also differences of opinion and practice among them.

Des études récentes réalisées dans les pré-écoles islandaises montrent que, si les enseignants préscolaires insistent sur les compétences sociales, l'enseignement informel par le jeu et les activités créatives, il existe chez eux des différences dans leurs opinions et leurs pratiques





# Preschool teachers Enseignants préscolaires

1. Preschool years as the golden age of free play and development. Preschool is to provide care as well as emotional and social support.

Les années de pré-école : âge d'or du jeu libre et du développement.

La pré-école doit prendre soin des enfants et les soutenir émotionnellement et socialement





# Preschool teachers Enseignants préscolaires

2. Preschool as the first level of formal education, where adults are teachers who make sure that children learn what they need to learn.

Les pré-écoles : premier niveau d'éducation formelle, où les enseignants s'assurent que les enfants apprennent ce qu'ils doivent apprendre





# Preschool teachers **Enseignants préscolaires**

3. Care-giving and teaching are inclusive concepts, not only compatible but also both necessary in order to ensure a high quality experience and outcomes for Icelandic children prior to their entrance into formal schooling.

Prendre soin et enseigner sont des concepts inclusifs, non seulement compatibles entre eux mais encore nécessaires, tous deux, pour garantir une expérience et des résultats de grande qualité aux enfants islandais avant leur entrée à l'école.





# Conclusion



Icelandic preschool policy and the view parents, children and most preschool teachers are consistent with the social pedagogy approach (OECD 2006), and with studies in the other Nordic countries where preschool is seen as a complement to the home where children are expected to learn to play and to exercise social competency.

La politique préscolaire islandaise et les points de vue des parents, des enfants et les enseignants renvoient à la pédagogie sociale (OCDE, 2006) et au préscolaire des autres pays nordiques, conçu comme complément à la maison, où l'on attend que les enfants apprennent à jouer et à exercer leurs compétences sociales.





# Conclusion

Concordant with the social pedagogic approach, preschool is seen as a life space in which children learn to be, to know, to do, and to live together (Bennett 2005).

Selon la pédagogie sociale, la pré-école est considérée comme un lieu de vie où les enfants apprennent à être, à connaître, à faire et à vivre ensemble (Bennett, 2005)





# The Nordic Model **Le modèle nordique**

- The next supermodel!

**Le prochain supermodèle**

- A Recipe for a Better Life!

**Une recette pour une vie meilleure**

- The Nordic Model is no longer a holy grail

**Le modèle nordique n'est plus le Saint Graal**

- Farewell, Nordic Model: The end of another European dream

**Adieu, modèle nordique : fin d'un autre rêve européen**





# Challenges

## Défis

- Not all the Nordic countries are the same

Les pays nordiques ne sont pas identiques

- Gap between parental leave and preschool

Un trou entre le congé parental et la pré-école

- Shortage of preschool teachers

Une pénurie d'enseignants préscolaires

- Large turnover of staff

Un important turnover





# Challenges **Défis** – Immigration **Immigration**

- The population of people born in other countries:

Personnes nées dans d'autres pays :

- 1.6% in 1996
- 6% in 2006
- 12% in 2015

- Preschool children with a foreign mother tongue:

A la pré-école : enfants qui parlent une langue étrangère :

1998 – 3.7%

2006 – 7.7%

2014 – 11%





# Challenges Défis



- Schoolification – play being challenged. **Scolarisation – jeu**
- The Nordic Model has to a large extent, emphasized play and children's own activities. **Le modèle nordique a, dans une large mesure, insisté sur le jeu et les activités propres des enfants**
- Indications that this might be changing – standardized assessment testing are becoming more common. **Cela pourrait changer : des évaluations standardisées se développent.**





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