

Special needs education and student welfare services - basis for quality and equality



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For learning and competence

Strong individual support

- ◆ All students have the same objectives and possibilities
- ◆ The good quality of educational performance of the whole age group
- ◆ Small variation between schools

Special support

- ◆ Students with difficulties, disorders and disadvantages drop away from the pace of others without extra support
- ◆ Every student has a right to be supported in learning and in personal development and welfare
- ◆ The forms of support depend on the **quality and extent** of the difficulties
- ◆ It is central to **identify** the need of support as early as possible and to begin supportive action



The Basic Education Act and education policy



Education shall be provided and organized according to the pupils' **age** and **capabilities**, and so as to promote pupils' **healthy growth** and **development**.

The objective of special needs education in the school laws

- ◆ The objective of special needs education is to help and support pupils in such a way as to give them **equal opportunities** to complete compulsory schooling in accordance with their abilities and alongside their peers.
- ◆ **The first alternative** for providing special needs education is **to include pupils** with SEN in mainstream classes and, when necessary, provide special needs education in small teaching groups. Only when this is not feasible is **the second alternative** considered: the provision of special needs **education in a special group, class or school.**



Children in need of special support in the school laws

- ◆ Their conditions for development, growth and learning have been affected by illness, disability or reduced functional ability
- ◆ Require mental and social support
- ◆ Have, according to the experts in pupil welfare services and parents, risk factors in their development that affect learning

Right to special support in the school laws

Pupils in need of special support have **the right to receive**

- ◆ their education
- ◆ interpretation
- ◆ assistant services
- ◆ any special aids

required for participation in education **free of charge.**

Special needs education is provided in **all stages of education** from pre-primary education to upper secondary education and vocational education.

The definition of student welfare

The Basic Education Act

- ◆ Student welfare refers to the promotion and maintenance of good learning, good mental and physical health as well as social well-being of students, and conditions conducive to these.
- ◆ Welfare consists of every day care and safe school environment, social and psychological support, health and dental care, school meals and school transport.

Pupil/student welfare in the school laws

Holistic approach to well-being

- ◆ child's well-being as a prerequisite for learning
- ◆ healthy growth and development
- ◆ subjective right/guidance to seek pupil/student welfare

Safety

- ◆ safe and healthy learning environment
- ◆ plan for safeguarding pupils/students against violence, bullying and harassment

Right to student welfare

Basic education

- ◆ Students are entitled to **free student welfare** necessary for participation in education.
- ◆ Every school day students are entitled to a **free**, well organized and full **school meal**.

General and vocational upper secondary education

- ◆ The education provider shall ensure that students are given **information** about health and social services and that he/she is **guided to seek** these services.
- ◆ Students are entitled to a **free school meal**.



Student welfare

National Core Curriculum

- ◆ **Individual** support to the child's physical, psychological and social development
- ◆ Well-being, security and interaction of the school **community**
- ◆ **Preventing and taking care of different problems** (absences; bullying, violence and harassment; mental health issues; abuse of intoxicating substances; accidents, misfortunes and deaths)
- ◆ **Transport** to and from school and **school meals**



Teaching pupils in special needs education

National Core Curriculum

The starting-point:

- ◆ Pupil's **strengths and personal needs** in learning and development

Education is required to promote **pupils' initiative** and **self-confidence**.

Organising teaching and the prerequisites for learning:

- ◆ The **right place and time** for studying
- ◆ Decisions made on **different activities**
- ◆ Sufficient **resources**



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**PUPIL ASSESSMENT
-BASED ON CRITERIA OF
GENERAL SYLLABI**

**PUPIL ASSESSMENT
-BASED ON GOALS SET IN AN
INDIVIDUAL SYLLABI**

GENERAL SYLLABI

**ADJUSTED
SYLLABI
-IN ONE OR SEVERAL SUBJECTS**

**INDIVIDUAL PLAN OF EDUCATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
-INCLUDES A PLAN OF ARRANGEMENTS (INTEGRATED, PARTLY
INTEGRATED, SPECIAL CLASS), GOALS, CONTENTS, SUPPORT,
PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT
- INCLUDES DECISIONS OF SYLLABI**

FULL TIME SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

- AN OFFICIAL DECISION
- HEARING OF PARENTS
- BASED ON PSYCHOLOGICAL OR MEDICAL OR SOCIAL STATEMENT
- POSSIBLE TO MAKE A NEW DECISION > TRANSFER TO GENERAL INSTRUCTION

PART-TIME SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

- SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION TEACHER
- MINOR DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING OR ADJUSTMENT
- COOPERATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHER
- INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN, IF NEEDED

•REMEDIAL TEACHING

- FOR STUDENTS LAGGING BEHIND IN THEIR STUDIES
- STUDENT WELFARE AND EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE
- COOPERATION WITH PARENTS

Different forms of support

Remedial teaching

Form of differentiation

- ◆ should be given, when a pupil has **temporary** learning difficulties
- ◆ **before** the success in studies is assessed as weak
- ◆ **immediately** after the appearance of learning difficulties
- ◆ **often enough** and as **widely** as necessary
- ◆ Initiated, primarily, by the teacher
- ◆ Should be organised in **co-operation** with the parents
- ◆ Should be given during or out of lessons



Different forms of support

Part-time special needs education

Is provided to a pupil, who:

- ◆ has slight difficulties in learning and adjustment
- ◆ needs special support to overcome learning difficulties

Special education is arranged:

- ◆ in general education, as team teaching
- ◆ in small groups
- ◆ individually

When necessary, the education plan is drawn up in co-operation with the parents, teachers and experts

IEP

National Core Curriculum

When the decision of **special needs education** is made

- ◆ the syllabus
- ◆ teaching arrangements
- ◆ support services

will be defined in the IEP

Multiprofessional approach

- ◆ Traditional arena of multiprofessional work at school
- ◆ Cross-sectoral cooperation in writing the curriculum
- ◆ Student welfare is the concern of everyone working in the school community
 - early intervention and preventive practices
- ◆ School health care, school social workers and psychologists
- ◆ Student welfare teams
- ◆ Cooperation with parents
- ◆ Cooperation outside the school

◆ Pre-school education

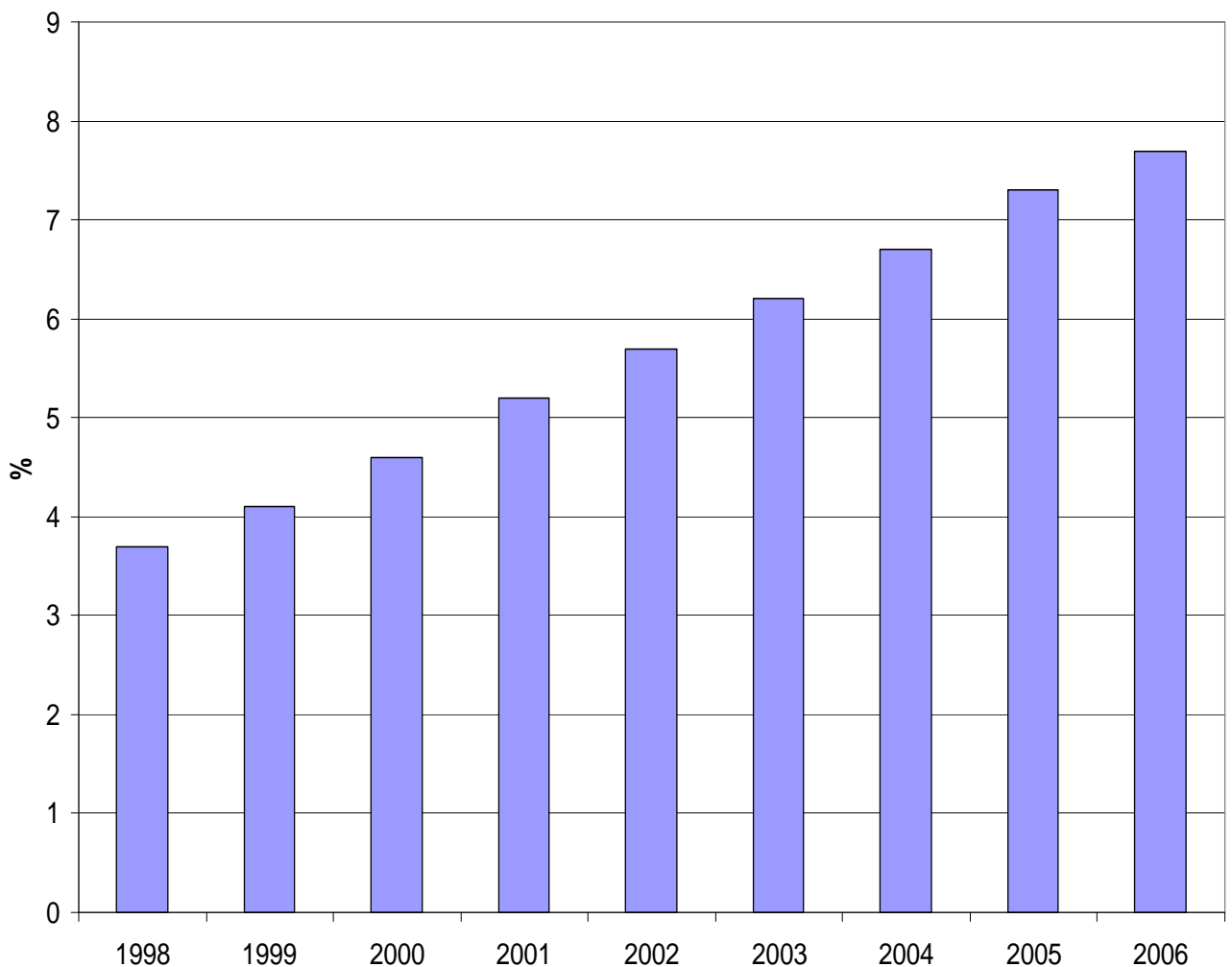
- 96% of 6 year olds
- Core curriculum for pre-school education in Finland 2000; Alteration 2003

◆ Before- and After-school activities

- pupils in grades 1-2 or pupils transferred to special needs education
- Core Curriculum for Before- and After-school Activities 2004

Special needs students

Pupils transferred to SNE



Statistical information

- ◆ **The number of pupils with the decision of special education has increased during last 10 years:**

1996: 2,9 % - 2006: 7.7 %

-Girls 32%, boys 68%

-Developmental disorders in language have become more common



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Statistical information

- ◆ **21.9 % of all the pupils in basic education have participated in part time special needs education**
- **Girls have often problems in learning mathematics, boys have behavioral problems**
- ◆ **Individualization of syllabus in single subject has become more common**



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New Strategy for Special Needs Education

- ◆ On 14.3.2006 the Ministry of Education appointed a steering group to prepare a proposal for a long-term strategy for the development of pre-primary and basic special education.
- ◆ Strategy paper published in November 2007.

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- ◆ The steering group proposes that the current practice be changed to focus on a clearly earlier support and prevention
 - ◆ This intensified, "stepped-up support", be adopted as the primary form of support before a decision on special education is made.
 - ◆ The stepped-up support would be used to bolster learning and growth and prevent the aggravation and escalation of problems relating to learning, social interaction or development.



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- ◆ When arranging education for a special needs pupil, the local school's abilities to teach such a pupil will always be explored first.
 - ◆ This also involves assessing the resources and support measures required by the school in order to provide education
 - ◆ If the assessment indicates that the pupil's support needs are particularly demanding, to the extent that it is impossible to provide education at the local school, education should be provided wherever it can be implemented for the benefit of the pupil

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- ◆ 233 municipalities got 7,4 M € for projects to develop stepped-up and special support, 116 municipalities and 20 private schools got 4,4 M € to develop guidance and counselling
 - ◆ 100 municipalities have got 1,58 M € (2007-2008) to develop pupil welfare services. 1,29 M € is available to continue this work
 - ◆ Ministry of Education is also supporting teachers' in-service education

Future challenges

- ◆ Equality in education, equality in student welfare
- ◆ Municipal autonomy
 - regional differences in resources
- ◆ Pre-service and in-service teacher training
 - skills of early identification of problems, interaction, group dynamics, etc.
- ◆ Towards the culture of wellbeing

Future challenges

- ◆ spreading the developed models to all schools and municipalities
- ◆ co-operation between general education teachers and special needs teachers
- ◆ increasing amount of pupils in special needs education
- ◆ to give support to mainstream schools

