

What is group-form preparatory education?

Contents and implementation of preparatory education for comprehensive education

Preparatory education is intended for children aged 6–17 years who do not yet speak Finnish well enough to begin their basic education.

Preparatory education can take different forms. The child's age determines the type of instruction they will receive. The children receive 24–26 hours of teaching per week. The teaching is based on a separate curriculum for preparatory education for comprehensive education.

Pupils may attend preparatory education for a maximum of one calendar year. If the pupil can follow teaching in Finnish, their preparatory education may end sooner. The teacher will assess the child's skills.

Preparatory education for pupils aged 9–17

From 3rd grade on, pupils in preparatory education study in their own groups that specialise in preparatory education. Preparatory education groups feature pupils with different backgrounds. The groups feature learners of different ages, either aged 9–12 or 12–15.

Education plan

A personal education plan is created for every pupil in preparatory education. The education plan details the pupil's schooling history, strengths and challenges, personal goals, subjects to be studied and their number of hours, and arrangements related to the teaching. The education plan is created in collaboration between the pupil, their guardians and the teacher.

Finnish language

The main focus of the teaching is on Finnish language studies. The goal is to attain developing elementary language skills.

- The pupil is able to manage most commonly recurring language use situations.
- The pupil is able to name familiar things and recognises familiar words and phrases in spoken and written language.
- The pupil understands short instructions and familiar subjects from slow speech that is repeated if necessary.
- The pupil understands the topic of the teaching from the teacher's speech and the textbook with the help of images and clearly indicated key words.
- The pupil is able to write familiar words and short sentences.

Developing elementary language skills mean that the learner still needs plenty of support.

- The pupil needs plenty of models and support as well as provided vocabulary in order to produce a short oral or written text.

- The pupil still needs plenty of support in their native language in order to absorb new things.
- The pupil needs plenty of illustration and image support, as well as clear and slow speech, repetition and translation.

In addition to the Finnish language, the preparatory education group studies other comprehensive school subjects. The most common subject is mathematics, and pupils also study contents from biology, geography, physics, chemistry, history, visual arts, music, physical education and crafts. The teacher selects the contents to be studied based on the group's skills and needs.

In addition to the actual teaching, the Finnish language is emphasised in all activities. The teacher verbalises everyday activities and interaction and uses as much image support and other illustrative aids as possible in all teaching. The pupil is encouraged to use the Finnish language without hesitation.

Integration

In preparatory education, the pupils already participate in lessons for a normal Finnish-language class as well, in accordance with their skills. These integration lessons often begin with subjects such as physical education and music. Some pupils also attend lessons in subjects such as mathematics or environmental studies.

Depending on the pupil's previous studies and skill level, the teaching is arranged in a manner that enables the pupil to utilise their previously acquired skills and develop as much as possible in everything that their Finnish-speaking peers study.

Native language

As part of preparatory education, the pupil also receives teaching of their native language for two hours per week. The native language teaching does not necessarily take place at the same school as the other teaching.

Evaluation

When the preparatory education is about to end, the pupil's learning is evaluated for the education plan. The evaluation is oral. The evaluation focuses on how well the pupil has reached the goals set for them. Some of the school's own intermediate evaluation or self-evaluation tools may also be used.

The pupil will receive a certificate for participating in preparatory education.

After preparatory education

After completing preparatory education, the pupil will move on to basic education. The pupil is transferred to their local school if the preparatory education was provided somewhere else. The pupil can also request to continue their studies at the school that provided the preparatory education. If there are places available at the school, the principal can also accept a pupil from another school.

After the preparatory education, the pupil is transferred to a grade corresponding with their age. If the pupil has not attained elementary language skills in preparatory education or has major shortcomings in their skills, they may be allowed to transfer to a grade one level below their age-appropriate grade. This will give the pupil's Finnish language skills more time to develop before the end of basic education.