This article presents teaching and learning in the preschool, read more about the preschool in chapter 4, Early Childhood Education and Care [1].

**Steering Documents and Types of Activities**

Since autumn 1998, the preschool (förskolan [2]) has had its own curriculum, which is laid down in an ordinance. The curriculum for the preschool (Läroplan för förskolan Lpfö 98, reviderad 2016) [3], is set by the Swedish Parliament (riksdagen [4]) and the Government (regeringen [5]). The curriculum emphasises the importance of preschool as the first step in lifelong learning. Within the set laws and frameworks, individual municipalities (kommuner [6]) are free to decide on how to conduct their preschool operations. The curriculum sets out fundamental values and tasks, national goals and guidelines for the preschool. The educational principles of the curriculum are based on the assumption that care and education go hand in hand. A good caring environment is essential for development and learning, while care in itself provides educational content. The curriculum also emphasises the importance of play in the child's learning and development, and the child's own active participation. The preschool is meant to be fun, secure and educational for all children.

In many countries, there is a tendency towards setting goals and assessing the progress of preschool children but the Swedish system focuses more on basic values such as playing together, tolerance and consideration for others. The Swedish preschool curriculum does not include goals for individual children and their learning progress at particular stages, but to stimulate and support each child's learning the preschool needs knowledge about each child's development. The child-specific knowledge should not be used to categorise or compare the children, but to contribute to the planning of the entire preschool and its activities.

The preschool curriculum was revised in 2010 with clearer objectives for children's development in language and mathematics, natural sciences and technology. The guidelines for staff responsibilities were also clarified, both at individual teacher level and at a team level. New sections on monitoring, evaluation and development, and the responsibilities of preschool heads were added.

The government has decided on a new revision of the curriculum for the preschool which will enter into force on 1 July 2019. The starting point for this revision has been that the preschool curriculum should have a similar structure as the curricula of the other school forms. The 2019 curriculum has been updated in accordance to current national strategies and legislation such as for example the Education Act (Skollagen SFS 2010:800 [7]). The concepts of education and teaching have also been incorporated into the curriculum to emphasize that the preschool is a part of the school system. The language and wording of the curriculum has been revised in relation to for example democracy and gender equality. A great emphasis is put on the fundamental values and that the preschool education should reflect the values expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The concept of care has been incorporated into several places in the curriculum to clarify that care,
development and learning constitute a whole in preschool. Based on the governments national digital strategy for the school system, the revised preschool curriculum states that the education should give the children the opportunity to develop digital skills through an understanding of the digitalisation that they encounter in their daily lives.

In addition to the curriculum, a preschool may have policy documents or working plans of its own, which may broaden, focus or specify its orientation or working methods provided there is no conflict with the curriculum. These documents may be seen as supplementing the national curriculum in individual preschools.

**Teaching Methods and Materials**

The preschool staff determines how the goals of the curriculum are to be achieved in accordance with the set frameworks and laws and that the work promotes the development and learning of each child.

The curriculum is based on the notion that children of preschool age learn mainly through their own activities in contexts that are natural and meaningful to them. By using a topic-based method, children are given the opportunity to explore, investigate and experiment and through music, drama, art and craft, playing, conversing, singing etc., they can digest their experiences, step by step gaining new insights and building knowledge. Children can also learn more about a particular area through books and listen to stories. The preschool curriculum states that the education should enable children to experience, form and communicate through different aesthetic expressions such as image, form, drama, movement, song, music and dance. The children should be able to design, shape and create using different materials and techniques.

Day-to-day teaching should include the whole group of children, as well as takes place in the form of organised and/or spontaneously formed smaller groups for various activities. The development and learning of the individual child should be supported in close cooperation between the preschool and the home.

A few preschools use alternative pedagogical methods, e.g. Montessori, Waldorf etc., some specialise in areas such as sport, science, arts and craft, computers, nature and ecology and some spend most hours outdoors in so called ‘Rain and Shine preschools’ (‘Ur och skur förskola’) where such activities as artistic and pedagogical work as well as meals etc. take place outdoors, either in the vicinity of the preschool or in nature.

The self-esteem and identity of the child develops in interaction with other children and adults. Therefore it is important that the child group creates conditions for the individual child to enter into relationships with other children and with the staff. Preschools can have better prerequisites for goal achievement when teaching based on the curriculum takes place in different ways throughout the day in the children's group.

Part of the goal fulfillment in the preschool is to help ensure that children with a mother tongue other than Swedish are given the opportunity to develop both the Swedish language and their mother tongue.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket)

The Curriculum for the preschool (Läroplan för förskolan Lpfö 98, reviderad 2016)
The Education Act ([Skollagen SFS 2010:800](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/legislation-71_en#Skollag2010800))