The Nordic Child Care Model - components, investments and outcomes


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Overview

• Definition of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

• Gender equality and dual earner/dual carer as underscoring idea

• Approach to ECEC in Scandinavian/Nordic countries

• Parental leave and childcare

• ECEC models

• The social investment paradigm and ECEC

• Evidence for ECEC - outcome factors
Parental leave, childcare and gender equality in the Nordic countries


Other contributors are Berit Brandth, Ann-Zofie Duvander, Johanna Lammi-Taskula and Tine Rostgaard
Definition of ECEC

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) include:

- “all government activities designed to influence the supply of and/or demand for ECEC and the quality of services provided

- including direct delivery of services, direct and indirect financial subsidies to private providers,

- but also financial subsidies to parents both direct and indirect and cash benefits that enable parents to stay at home to look after their children”

(Kamerman, 2000)
Gender equality and best interest of the child as underscoring idea for development of ECEC

Gender equality and the dual earner/dual carer an important rationale for the establishment and further development of childcare and parental leave benefits

Although initially more pragmatic approach to childcare with emphasis on women’s labour force participation, today also emphasis on father’s rights to participate in childcare and on the benefits for the child.

Strong political agency for gender equality: women in grassroots organizations and national politics, Social democratic and other left-wing political parties, academics, and men in government commissions and grassroots organizations

Also strong emphasis on agenda of best of the child: strong labour union of pedagogues, in DK influencing the development of institutionalised childcare

Nordic countries highest coverage rates in childcare, especially among the under-3s. And among the first to introduce parental leave and the pioneers (Norway) in introducing the father’s quota
Approach to Early Childhood Education and Care in the Nordic countries: Maternity, paternity and maternal leave

- Paid parental leave of short/medium duration
- Home Care Allowance (HCA), but of varied importance
- Father’s quota
Leave time with income-related compensation, no of weeks.

Figure 1. Parental leave length in the Nordic countries in 2010 (number of weeks on income-related compensation).

Source: Duvander & Lammi-Taskula, in Gislason & Eydal, 2012
Total length of leave and HCA time parents can spend with child, no. of months

Figure 2. Length of childcare leave in the Nordic countries (number of months on income-related, flat rate, or no compensation).

Source: Duvander & Lammi-Taskula, in Gislason & Eydal, 2012
Father’s quota: Length and year of introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Iceland</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of father’s quota</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>4 weeks*</td>
<td>12 weeks (in 2016, 5 months)**</td>
<td>14 weeks</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eydal and Rostgaard, 2010. Note: legislated leave with payment. * Bonus on top of available leave. ** As of 2016, 5 father’s quota months (5+5+2 months)
Fathers' share of parental leave days

(Source: Haataja, 2009)
Approach to Early Childhood Education and Care in the Nordic countries: Childcare

- Universal approach in services
- Organised as institutional care (0-2, 3-school age or age-integrated) or childminding (mainly 0-2s)
- Full-time and part-time care, all-year round
- Care and education integrated
- Mainly public provision of services
- Right to day care, in DK from age of ½ year, in N from age of 1
- Mainly tax-based financing supplemented by parental fees
- Reduced or waived fee for low-income groups
- …but parental fee for care for 3-school age
- Quality and safety regulation in institutions and with childminders
- Childminders employed by municipality, compulsory training
- Free play although schoolification in last decade
- Investment in care for the youngest children
- Using the nature and being out-door
Childcare: From institutions for few- to preschool for all

• Originally, childcare institutions were established for special groups of children

• After the Second World War, childcare became a public and a political issue in the Nordic countries

• Shift of policy ideals: The benefits of pre-school education for all children emphasized

Nursery in Kolding, 1906
Childcare and gender equality project

• 1960s and 1970s: The Nordic gender-equality project encouraged women’s participation in the labour market

• All the countries developed extensive policies in order to enable equality among both men and women

• Public day-care services: Denmark first to address day care in legislation (1964), followed by Finland, Iceland and Sweden (1973) and later Norway (1975)

• Services based on universal principles, and heavily subsidized and regulated by the public sector. Local authorities gained great autonomy regarding the volume of day care. Day care guarantee

• In spite of these similarities different levels of provision can be observed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note day care includes both family day-care which is usually used for the youngest children and day care in preschools. Source: NOSOSKO 2007-8, 2009; NOSOSKO 2009-10, 2011.
Recent decades: Politics of child care services

- During 1990s and into the next millennium increasing volumes of day care – public and institutionalised childhood

- Focus on the educational aspects of day care – EduCare model (OECD)

- Socialisation and integration – the day care institution as the bearer of cultural values and promoter of language skills

- Mainly institutional care, but some childminder care for the smaller children

- Universalism, but regional disparities

- Focus on the cost for families
Financing of child care – high user share in Nordic countries

User payment, parents share of total costs, %

- **Denmark**: 25% for 0-2 year olds, 18% for 3-6 year olds
- **Iceland**: 25% for 0-2 year olds, 17% for 3-6 year olds
- **Norway**: 25% for 0-2 year olds, 18% for 3-6 year olds
- **Finland**: 15% for 0-2 year olds, 8% for 3-6 year olds
- **Sweden**: 18% for 0-2 year olds, 7% for 3-6 year olds
- **OECD**: 17% for 0-2 year olds, 6% for 3-6 year olds
- **EU-27**: 18% for 0-2 year olds, 17% for 3-6 year olds
...but parents pay less in % of average earnings

Source: Eydal and Rostgaard, 2010
Quality of care increasingly an issue

No apparent Nordic model for smaller children in terms of child:staff ratio. More distinct for older children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child:staff ratio: no of children per staff member</th>
<th>0-2 years</th>
<th>3-school age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>7,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>7,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>5,5</td>
<td>8,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5,2</td>
<td>5,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>15,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>7,0</td>
<td>14,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>8,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eydal and Rostgaard, 2010
Quality concerns in Denmark

• Fewer staff members over time

• However, quality less an issue about child:staff norms, than of:
  1) quality of staff basic education,
  2) quality of pedagogical approach,
  3) systematic continued training of staff  
  (Nordahl et al, 2012)

• 1/3 of kindergartens now take in children below the age of 3

• 50% of nurseries now do not provide a warm meal
## Affordability and quality

### Share of people who think that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Child care is affordable (Very + Fairly)</th>
<th>Child care is of good quality (very good + fairly good)</th>
<th>Support for public and private day care centre/pre-school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurobarometer, 2010
## How is the child cared for best?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Public and private day care centre/ preschool</th>
<th>Childcare predominantly by the mother</th>
<th>Childcare by both the mother and the father</th>
<th>Childcare by grand-parents or other relatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU27</td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurobarometer, 2010
And even good enough for a prince…

Prince Christian on his first day in the nursery

Addition building for bodyguards
Typical Danish childcare ‘career’

- **0-12 months: at home with parents**

- **1 year: nursery (childminders)**
  - Full-time (and part-time), 6/7 a.m.-5/6 p.m.
  - Parental payment: 420 Euro monthly full-time (Family day care 317 Euro monthly), incl. meal

- **3-5/6 years: kindergarten**
  - Full-time (and part-time), 6/7 a.m.-5/6 p.m
  - Parental payment 277 Euro monthly full-time, incl. meal
# The Nordic child care model, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Iceland</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1 year</td>
<td>Paid parental leave (50-64 weeks) Day care services (17%)</td>
<td>Paid parental leave (44 weeks) Day care services (1%)</td>
<td>Paid parental leave (39 weeks) Day care services (7%)</td>
<td>Paid parental leave (*42-52 weeks) Day care services (4%)</td>
<td>Paid parental leave (69 weeks) Day care services (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 year</td>
<td>Day care services (90%) (Cash-for-care)</td>
<td>Cash-for-care Day care services (41%)</td>
<td>Care gap – private solutions Municipal schemes of cash-for-care Day care services (80%)</td>
<td>Cash-for-care Day care services (79%)</td>
<td>Paid parental leave Municipal schemes of cash-for-care Day care services (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 year</td>
<td>Day care services (98%)</td>
<td>Day care services (73%)</td>
<td>Day care services (95%)</td>
<td>Day care services (96%)</td>
<td>Day care services (97%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ECEC models
ECEC models

- **Universalist countries of Northern Europa**: Societal approach to daycare encompasses the full-employment paradigm. State/LA organise and provide parental leave, childcare and family-friendly jobs.

- **Central Europe**: Long leave schemes with low or no pay. Germany as an exception.

- **Countries belonging to residual/Liberal model as in UK/Ireland**: Encouragement of female labour take up but no public and/or subsidized provision of day care.

- **Eastern Europe**: Day care replaced by extended leave schemes.
The Social Investment perspective

Goals:
• Moving from ’repair’ to ‘prepare’: Increase social inclusion, minimize intergenerational transfer of disadvantage and increase employability

Outcome:
• Enabling individuals and families to maintain responsibilities for their well-being
• Alleviate threat to social protection regimes coming from ageing societies and high dependency rates

Policy response:
• Privileges state investment in human capital, investment in children and making work pay (Jensen, 2009)
Social investment strategy and specific EU targets and policy measures on childcare

• Contingent convergence around ideas about a developmental welfare state, that depends in large part on a child-centred social investment strategy and a human capital investment push (Social policy as a productive factor (Dutch Presidency of 1997); Amsterdam treaty, 1999; Lisbon Agenda, 2000)

Barcelona targets of 2002:
• By 2010 MS should provide child care for at least 90 per cent of children aged three to the mandatory school age, and 33 per cent of children below the age of three

ET2020 meeting for EU education ministers, in 2009:
• By 2020 at least 95% of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education

EC (Com) (2011) 66 Communication on ECEC: Calling for policy cooperation. Too much focus on quantity: “need to improve ECEC across the EU by complementing the existing quantitative targets with measures to improve access and to ensure the quality of provision”
Continuous societal ‘investment’

Unlike other policy fields, overall increase in spending on ECEC (Lohmann, Rostgaard and Spiess, 2009). No sign of welfare state retrenchment

**DK example:**

**Public expenditure for childcare per child family:**
Increased from 1.150 Euro annually in 1995, to 7.170 Euro annually in 2005 (2005 figures), equaling an increase of 5.3 %.

**Total public expenditure on childcare:**
Excl. parental payment, total public expenditure in 2005 was 3.2 billion Euro (Bonke 2009), approx. 1.7 % of GDP (OECD).

*(Total net social expenditure (i.e. including taxes and social contributions) 25.7% of GDP in DK, compared to 18.3% in Ireland, (Adema, W. and M. Ladayque, 2009))*
ECEC expenditure, % of GDP

Public expenditure on child care and pre-school education services, per cent of GDP, 2003

Family spending in cash, services and tax measures, in percentage of GDP, in 2005 or latest year available

ECEC take-up rate, 0-2 year-olds

(Plantenga and Remery, 2009)
Hours of ECEC, 0-2 year-olds

Graph 12. Use of formal childcare arrangements by hours, 0–2-year-olds


(Plantenga and Remery, 2009)
ECEC take-up rate, 3-school age

(Graph 15. Use of formal childcare arrangements, 3 years to mandatory school age)


(Plantenga and Remery, 2009)
Hours of ECEC, 3-school age

(Plantenga and Remery, 2009)
Evidence of ECEC?
Female employment rate?

(Plantenga and Remery, 2009)
Effect on maternal employment?

**Figure 2: Childcare enrolment facilitates maternal employment**

Does parenthood affect employment?

Graph 4. Employment impact of parenthood on men and women 2006


(Plantenga and Remery, 2009)
Does ECEC affect fertility?

Figure 3: Early childhood spending can help promote female employment and fertility

12 August 2012

Danish nurseries offer free childcare so parents can make more babies

A group of Danish nurseries has come up with a novel way to help the country's low birth rate – offering parents an evening of free child care so they can go home and make more babies.
Does ECEC affect child poverty?

(Plantenga and Remery, 2009)
Does ECEC affect subjective well-being?

Figure 1.17. The majority of OECD children report higher than median levels of life satisfaction, 2005-06

Proportion of children, aged 11 to 15 years, ranking their life as 6 or above on a scale of 0 to 10

Note: Data missing for Australia, Chile, Japan, Korea, Mexico and New Zealand.
Academic performance

• Early ECEC associated with an improvement in academic performance at the age of 13: “Early entrance into day care tends to predict a creative, socially confident, popular, open and independent adolescent.” (Swedish longitudinal study, early 1990s)

• The longer attendance in ECEC, the more positive grades in elementary education, especially for children from disadvantaged homes (French study of 20,000 children)

• Children participating in Early Head Start in the US better cognitive and language development, more capable of sustained attention and behave less aggressively towards others (3,000 families, 2005)

• Danish longitudinal studies find that quality matters: High staff:child ratio leads to better cognitive development at 9th grade. Also important with male staff, pedagogic education, and non-Danish background of staff. Especially affecting boys. (Sources: UNICEF, 2008; Bauchmüller, Görtz and Rasmussen, 2011)
Summing up

- Distinctive Nordic ECEC model, although with variation and with cash for care (HCA) as trigger

- Relatively short/median length leaves with relative high cash benefits and efficient built-in gender equality incentives

- Full-time, subsidized and (still) high quality childcare - although cost and quality increasing issue

- Nordic ECEC approach inspiration for the social investment paradigm

- Indication of a positive outcome of the Nordic ECEC approach for fertility, female labour force participation, child well-being, child poverty and academic performance
Thank you for your attention!