Aarhus Childcare and the Danish Basic School

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Childcare in Aarhus children aged 0-6.
Childcare

All children in Denmark are guaranteed a place in a childcare institution from when they are 26 weeks old and until they start school.

Daycare
The day care options available depend on your child's age.

Childminding
Like the nurseries, childminding is for children aged 0-3 years. The children are looked after in the childminder's own home, where they engage in activities depending on their needs, well-being and development.

Nurseries
Day nurseries/crèches receive children aged 0-3 years and employ qualified social educators and assistant social educators. At nursery, your child's development, well-being, play and learning will be supported and encouraged.

Kindergartens
A kindergarten is a day care institution which cares for children from the age of 3 and until they start school. Qualified social educators and assistant social educators ensure that your child is offered a wide range of experiences and activities, preparing it for the challenges it will encounter at school.

An international kindergarten is opening in Aarhus in the autumn 2011.

Private childcare
Most children are cared for in a childcare institution, but you can also have your child looked after in a private home.
In Aarhus Kommune we take care of about 64,000 children and youngestes (0-18 years) that we meet here:

• 330 kindergartens/nurseries.

• In the homes of our 400 childminders.

• 49 schools, 2 schools for children with special needs and our 10’th grade center.

• After-school clubs covering all ages from 6 to 16.

The day care offer depends on the child’s age.
Childcare, activities.

Playing is a central element in most daycare-activities. However, instruction must include the following themes:

- Language and communication
- Nature and natural phenomena
- Cultural expressions
- Physical activities and motor skills
- Social skills
- Community and cooperation
Day care, 6 months - 6 years

• All children in Denmark are guaranteed a place in a child care institution, starting at 26 weeks and until they start school.

• However, this does not mean, that there is complete freedom of choice.

• The municipality pays a large share of the costs of childcare. The remaining part (depending on the age of the child) is paid by the parents; approximately 2800-4000 Dkk per month.
Public day care offers (0-3 years)

• **Childminders.**
  – In the childminder’s own home.
  – Maximum 5 children.
  – Educational level is varied, but all childminders have followed at least one "childminder-program."
  – At least once per week childminders go to a center, where they meet with other childminders.
  – All meals are included.
  – A "Guest childminder"-service is given, when the childminder is ill or on vacation.
Public day care offers (0-3 years)

- Nurseries/crêches.
  - Employ qualified social educators and assistant social educators.
  - A wide range of activities.
  - Sometimes meals are included, sometimes not.
  - Sometimes in the same house as kindergartens (3-6 years).
  - Group size: around 15 children.
  - Going from 40 to around 100 children per house
Public day care offers – 3-6 years

• Kindergartens.
  – Employ qualified social educators and assistant social educators
  – A wide range of activities.
  – Sometimes meals are included, sometimes not.
  – Sometimes in the same house as nurseries (0-3 years).
  – Group size: 15-20 children on average
Private day care offers

- There are a few private day care institutions (0-6 years)
- There are also a few private childminders
- You can also hire someone to take care of your child in your private home.

In all cases the municipality still pays its share of costs. The parental share varies.
Children staying at home

According to Danish law, children with Danish as their second language that are not in daycare must receive Danish language support from the age of 3 and until starting school if a language test shows a need for this.

• Language-group for 15 or 30 hours per week. One place in Aarhus
• Language support at home, with advisors from Pædagogik & Integration controlling the quality.
• Best advice: Sign up for kindergarten!
Danish language support in kindergarten 3-6 years

• In Aarhus all children with Danish as their second language must take a Danish language test.
• The test is administered by a social educator at the kindergarten.
• Based on the results of the test, language support will be given at the kindergarten.
• All daycare centres are given special resources to carry out the language stimulation.
• Some of the staff is specially trained to supply language stimulation activities.
• Each daycare centre has a trained language counsellor.
• Each daycare centre is supervised by and receives counselling from Pædagogik og Integration.
How to subscribe and where to find more information?

http://www.aarhus.dk/da/borger/familie-boern-og-unge/Pasning.aspx
The Basic School in Aarhus children aged 7-16.
The Danish primary and lower secondary school comprises 10 school years including one pre-school year (grade 0) plus grades 1 – 9. Public school education also offers the pupils an optional 10th grade.
Pre-school

Play is a central element in pre-school education. As a minimum, instruction must include the following themes:

- Language and forms of expression
- Nature and natural phenomena
- The practical / the musical
- Movement and motor skills
- Social skills
- Community and cooperation
Public school objectives

- The goals in the primary and lower secondary schools are:
  - Pupils’ acquisition of knowledge and skills
  - Preparing pupils for continuing higher education
  - Preparing pupils for participation, responsibility,
  - rights and duties in a free and democratic society
Education in grades 1 - 9 is divided into 3 scholastic areas:

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<tr>
<th>HUMANITIES</th>
<th>PRACTICAL SUBJECTS AND MUSIC</th>
<th>NATURAL SCIENCES</th>
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<td>Danish (all grades)</td>
<td>Gym (all grades)</td>
<td>Mathematics (all grades)</td>
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<tr>
<td>English (grades 3 – 9)</td>
<td>Music (grades 1 – 6)</td>
<td>Natural sciences (grades 1 – 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christianity (all grades except that in which pupils are preparing for confirmation)</td>
<td>Visual arts (grades 1 – 5)</td>
<td>Geography (grades 7 – 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>History (grades 3 – 9)</td>
<td>Sewing, workshop and home economics (one or more grades in grades 4 – 7)</td>
<td>Biology (grades 7 – 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social studies (grades 8 and 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Physics/chemistry (grades 7 – 9)</td>
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(The public school act sec. 5-9)

Instruction in Danish as a second language is provided, as needed, for pupils who require support with the Danish language.
Education in 10th grade

10th grade is an educational opportunity for youngsters who need better scholastic achievement and clarification of vocational choice in order to complete an upper secondary education. The 10th grade is comprised of a compulsory part and an optional part.
A written lesson plan must be produced for all public school pupils in all grades from pre-school up to and including 7th grade. A lesson plan is a document drawn up by the school for each individual pupil. The lesson plan is part of the regular status report to the pupil and the parents regarding the pupil’s benefits gained from school attendance. The lesson plan is also extremely relevant in discussions of how the parents and the school can continue in their support of the pupil’s education.
Lesson plans and education plans

Pupils in 8th and 9th grades must have a written lesson and education plan. In addition to an evaluation of the pupil, it is used to help the pupil choose scholastic and vocational direction upon completion of 9th grade.
Tests

The benefits of the pupils’ education are to be regularly assessed. Compulsory tests in the following subjects will therefore be given in the indicated grades:

- Danish, with an emphasis on reading in grades 2, 4, 6 and 8
- English in grade 7
- Mathematics in grades 3 and 6
- Geography in grade 8
- Biology in grade 8
- Physics/chemistry in grade 8
At the completion of 9th grade, pupils must take the compulsory public school final examinations. Each pupil must take two examinations in the subject Danish and one examination in each of the following subjects: mathematics, english, and physics/chemistry.

In addition, each pupil must take two examinations in two other subjects, to be chosen by drawing lots.
Continuous assessment marks are not given to pupils in pre-school and in grades 1 – 7. But the pupils and the parents are to be regularly informed of the school’s evaluation of the pupil’s benefits of his/her education.

Continuous assessment marks are given at least twice a year in grades 8 and 10.
Abseances and truancy

All pupils who are registered at school must participate in instruction. Attendance during instruction is checked daily by the school. Is a pupil absent from instruction the parents must inform the school, in person or in writing, of the reason.
The school board

Every school has a school board comprising representatives for the parents, the teachers and the pupils. The school board sets the principles for, among other things, the organization of instruction, collaboration between school and home, reporting of the benefits of pupils’ education and school camp stays. The school board also determines the school’s regulations and set of values.
School-home meetings and parent meetings

School-home meetings – often twice a year – are a tradition in the Danish public schools. At these meetings the individual pupil and the pupil’s parents usually speak with the pupil’s homeroom teacher (Danish teacher) and math teacher about the pupil’s scholastic progress and other topics regarding the pupil’s schooling.

A parents’ meeting is also held for all the class’s parents together. Apart from the topics concerning scholastic issues, the meetings are often used as a forum in which parents set the general rules for the children in the class, for example, regarding birthdays. In the higher grades the parents often discuss attitudes regarding alcohol, parties, etc.
The Folkeskole (DK) in Figures

- 98 municipalities
- 1605 municipal schools
- 595,573 students
- 28,591 classes
- The average number of students per class is 19.6
- The teacher/student ratio is 1:10.7
- 50,972 teachers, of which 67% are women and 47% are below 45 years
- 10,491 students receive extensive special educational assistance
- 59,869 bilingual students.
The Folkeskole (Aarhus) in Figures

• 49 municipal schools
• 28,964 students
• 1435 classes
• The average number of students per class is 20.1
• The teacher/student ratio is 1:11.6
• 2,552 teachers, of which 67% are women and 47% are below 45 years
• 837 students receive extensive special educational assistance
• bilingual students.
“The Folkeskole” constitutes the free, public school system aswell as the individual municipal schools, that is to say the places where the teaching takes place. On the national level, the Danish Folkeskole is regulated by the Folkeskole Act, which provides the overall framework for the schools’ activities.
By means of this Act and the Executive Orders it contains, all municipal primary and lower secondary schools share a common aim, standard requirements concerning the subjects that are to be taught at the specific form levels, standard regulations concerning the so-called Common Objectives for the teaching in the individual subjects, as well as standard regulations concerning the leadership and organisation of the school system.
However, it is the responsibility of the individual municipal boards to determine how the municipality’s schools are to be organised in practice, within the framework established by law.

The municipal boards themselves determine the municipal level of service for the Folkeskole within this overriding framework and can set their own additional objectives for the schools.
Thus, the Danish Folkeskole is subject to a range of common regulations, and a child who changes schools will, on the whole, find a school routine in the new school familiar to the one he or she has previously attended. On the other hand, there is the freedom to allow for each school to incorporate their own local characteristics.
The individual municipal boards must prepare an annual Quality report. The quality report must describe the municipality’s school system, the schools’ academic level, the measures the municipal board has taken in order to evaluate the academic level, and the steps the municipal board has taken in response to the previous quality report.
Bilingual children / newcomers

• According to the terminology of The Ministry of Education the children are named ”Bilingual children”
• The official definition: bilingual children are children with another mother tongue than Danish, they will (probably) not learn Danish until they come in contact with the surrounding society, for example through education in school
Bilingual children in primary and lower secondary education

• Newcomers who do not speak or understand Danish are referred to basic instruction in Danish in a reception class

Aims of the instruction in a reception class:
• To learn Danish up to a certain level that enables the pupil to be transferred to a mainstream class corresponding to his/her age
• …up to a level where the pupil will benefit from taking part in the instruction – maybe / often with some support
Organisation of reception classes in Aarhus

• In the school year 2012/13 we have 23 reception classes at 5 schools
• Level 0: corresponding to Pre-School Class (6 year old)
• Level A: corresponding to 1st-3rd form (7-9 years)
• Level B: corresponding to 4th-6th form (10-12 years)
• Level C: corresponding to 7th-9th form (13-15 years)
• Level D: corresponding to 10th form + … (16-18 years)

Not all of the 5 schools have classes at all levels. If possible brothers and sisters are referred to the same school.
More about the aims of the instruction:

- Danish...Danish...Danish – in all subjects and activities
- Other subjects as math, topic/project work (history, biology, geography) social and cultural orientation, P.E., music and art
- "Going-to-school-in-Denmark" (the pupil’s role, the teacher’s role, different ways of learning and working)
International welcome classes at Læssøesgades School

- Level A: 1st-3rd form (7-9 years)
- Level B +: 4th-6th form + (10- about 14 years)

Target group:
Children with a good and age-appropriate school background from their home country

Aim:
To complete a relatively short but intense course in Danish before they are transferred to a mainstream class
The transfer from wellcome class to a mainstream class

- The duration of the wellcome class will be at least 3-4 months
- The teachers in the class will assess when the pupil is ready
- To ”confirm” the teachers assessment a speech therapist will make an overall evaluation of the pupil’s level in Danish
- Elements in the evaluation: the pupil’s reaction to the evaluation situation, understanding of Danish (conjugated forms, grammar), vocabulary, etc.
- The speech therapist makes a conclusion based on the evaluation
- The result of the evaluation is included in a written report
- The report is sent to the new school
Mainstream class in which school?

- The district school
- The school where the wellcome class or reception class is placed
- Another school (special rules and procedures)
Where do the newcomers come from?

- About 130-150 newcomers per year
- Representing 30-35 different nationalities
- 2010/11: Germany, Poland, Iceland, Bulgaria, Greenland, Thailand, Libanon, Iran, etc.
- 2011/12 (Nov. 8th): Rumania, Iceland, Greenland, Thailand, Somalia, Vietnam

Mother tongue tuition:
- Children provided for by a person living in Denmark and who is a citizen in another member state in the EU or in a state included in the European economic co-operation agreement
- Children in whose homes Faroese or Greenlandic is the spoken language
Additional objectives for the schools in Aarhus

• The 95% objective
• Inclusion
• Collaboration between the schools and the parents
• Differentiation