

# Support for children in early childhood education and care

## GUIDE FOR GUARDIANS



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### Dear Guardian,

In our early childhood education and care services (ECEC), your child's well-being, development and learning are all important matters for us, and we consider your child's individual needs within the group they are part of.

Every child in ECEC has the right to timely, individualised support which meets their particular needs and is provided through different flexible arrangements.

The starting point for arranging such support is your child's strengths and needs in terms of their learning, development and well-being.

In this guide, you can find the most important information about the support provided in ECEC, so you can refer to this guide whenever questions arise. Further information is available at [kasvuvauhdissa.fi](http://kasvuvauhdissa.fi).

**Every child  
matters!**



# SUPPORT



## GENERAL SUPPORT

General support is the first option for responding to a child's support needs. In these cases, the needs do not last long and the child benefits from receiving individual support.

## ENHANCED SUPPORT

Enhanced support is more individualised and the need for support may be for either a shorter or longer period. The child has a need for multiple forms of support that are provided regularly and simultaneously.

## SPECIAL SUPPORT

Special support is the highest level of support in early childhood education and care, and it is individually planned for each child.

**The forms of support** used at all the different levels are:

**PEDAGOGICAL,  
STRUCTURAL  
and  
CARE-BASED  
SUPPORT**



# LEVELS OF SUPPORT

## At all levels of support

Records are made in the child's ECEC plan of all the support they need, including the level, forms and implementation as well as the related responsibilities and division of tasks. It is possible to flexibly move between the different levels, and the required level is always assessed individually for each child. The ECEC plan is reviewed whenever needed, and at least once a year

## General support

- consists of individual forms of support, such as pedagogical solutions and support measures to address the situation at an early stage
- is for short-term support needs
- can include making an administrative decision, if this is needed
- can include interpreting and assistance services or assistive devices for communication, hearing, vision, movement or other physical needs.

## Enhanced support

- is more individual and consists of multiple forms of support provided at the same time
- can be for shorter or longer periods
- involves support given either individually within the group or in communal settings such as small groups
- involves making an administrative decision.

## Special support

- is the strongest level of support in ECEC
- is individually designed
- is ongoing and full-time
- involves multiple forms of support and services
- can be provided due to a disability, an illness, developmental delays or other learning and development support needs which significantly impair the child's ability to function
- requires an administrative decision.



# FORMS OF SUPPORT

## Pedagogical support

- predictable daily rhythm
- small group activities
- ways of interacting and communicating
- planning, implementation, documentation and evaluation of activities
- ECEC special education teacher
- cooperation
- the learning environment
- involvement of children and guardians.

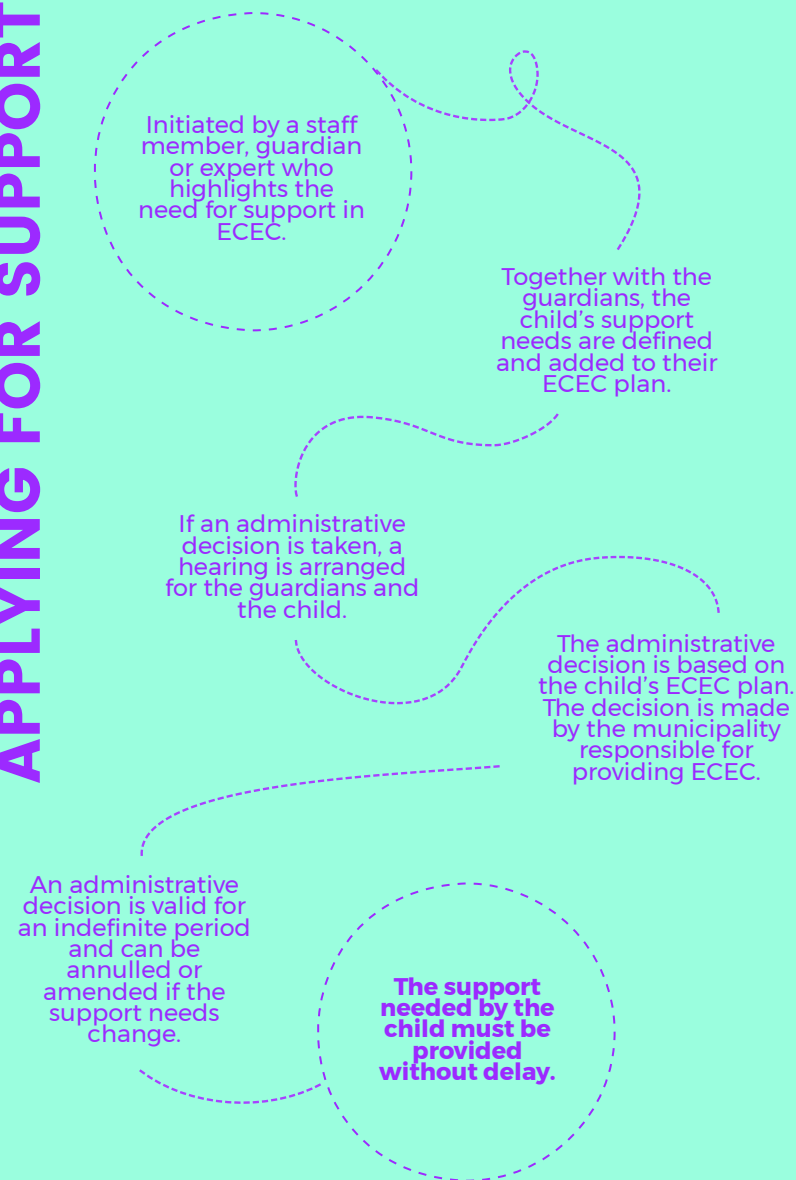
## Structural support

- a small group or special group
- matching the structure and number of staff involved to fit the child's support needs, e.g. ECEC special education teacher for early childhood education or assistant
- interpreting and assistance services
- use of assistive devices
- accessibility taken into account
- continuing professional education for staff members

## Care-based support

- methods and practices for responding to a child's need for nurture, care and assistance
- the child's health needs, e.g. treatment of long-term illnesses, medication, diet, and mobility needs. Assessment is made case-by-case as to whether the support can be provided as part of the group's basic activities.
- guidance for personnel and consultation with social welfare and health care professionals.

# APPLYING FOR SUPPORT



Cooperation with you, the guardians, is an important part of your child's early childhood education and care.

We seek to create an environment where it is easy to have conversations about your child's support needs, as the aim is to examine together any possible need for support and to find suitable means for addressing it.

If it would be beneficial for your child to involve an ECEC special education teacher, a speech therapist, specialised medical care, child welfare or some other organisation or body, such cooperation is primarily initiated with the consent of you, the child's guardians. This kind of cooperation is also always carried out in accordance with the rules on confidentiality and exchange of information.

When providing support, it is important to maintain consistency if the child changes to a different ECEC unit and as they progress from early childhood education to pre-school and then into comprehensive school. This requires seamless cooperation and communication between you, the ECEC provider, and any other organisations and bodies involved.

## Contacts

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