

Parents are engaged in evaluating the experiment for providing five-year-olds with free early childhood education and care

The Government has launched an experiment for providing five-year-olds with free early childhood education and care (ECEC) for the period 2018–2020. The experiment involves providing families with 20 hours of free ECEC for their children born in 2013. The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is responsible for evaluating the experiment.

Survey for parents

As part of the evaluation, FINEEC carries out a survey among the parents and guardians of five-year-old children in municipalities participating in the experiment as well as in reference municipalities. The aim of the evaluation is to investigate the achievement of the goals set by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the free ECEC, including whether providing ECEC free of charge increases the participation of five-year-olds and their siblings in ECEC. FINEEC also wishes to obtain responses from families that care for their five-year-old at home. FINEEC wishes that families participate actively in the survey:

- Responding to the survey allows guardians to produce valuable knowledge on the childcare solutions made by families. At the same time, the guardians get to influence what kinds of services municipalities offer to families in the future. Indeed, one of the goals of the evaluation is to produce knowledge to inform decision-making, says Laura Repo of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre.

In total, there are 13,400 five-year-old children in the 19 municipalities participating in the experiment at the first phase.