

The Danish Education System

In Denmark, there is a tradition of lifelong learning and taking part in education through all phases of life. Consequently, education is highly prioritized, which is reflected in its high quality. Further, training is offered at all levels. This article will give you an overview of the Danish educational system, from pre-school age up until adult education.

There is a range of institution offers for children from the age of 0 and up until 1 August the year they enter school. These strengthen the child's development, well-being, play, and learning, and give the child the chance to develop his/her self-esteem in safe and challenging surroundings.

Day care

Vuggestue - Nursery: 0 up until 3 years

In a nursery, children are assigned to a specific room ("stue"), each of which typically has 10-15 children with several trained nursery nurses and nursery assistants caring for the children. This is not to say your child will only spend his/her time in one room, but it will give a sense of belonging.

Dagpleje – Day care: 6 months up until 3 years

In a day care, a day nurse hired by the municipality looks after a small group of children (typically 3-5) in his/her own home. The child is thus looked after by the same person every day.

All day care facilities must prepare an educational curriculum, one for the children aged 0-2 years and one for the children aged 3 until they start in school.

The curriculum must cover six themes:

- The comprehensive personal development of the child
- Social competencies
- Language
- Body and motion
- Nature and natural phenomena
- Cultural expressions and values

Read more about [day care](#).

Børnehave – Preschool: 2 years and 11 months up until 1 August the year that the child enters school

In preschool – or directly translated kindergarten – children develop friendships, strengthen their motor skills, become independent, create ties to other adults, learn to do things by themselves, learn routines, become creative, and experience the world outside.

The children meet other children and develop friendships. They learn how to interact and behave appropriately, and they develop their imagination and creativity through play and games. Children will learn how to compromise and accommodate others.

Children will learn to trust other adults and to do things independently. The staff will take great care of your child but can't be there every minute of every day, so your child will learn to wash his/her own hands, put on his/her coat, etc.

Children will learn routines once they experience something happening at the same time every day, like lunch. Your child will learn to wash his/her hands and to wait with eating until everyone is at the table.

Your preschool might take the children to the zoo or to the theater, and there might even be a sleepover or a weekend camp. Your child is sure to broaden his/her horizons.

Expectations to parents

It is important that you collaborate with the institution and inform them if you have challenges with your child's habits and routines. This will ensure the well-being and development of your child at home as well as in the institution.

Folkeskole – Municipal primary and lower secondary school

In Denmark, children must attend school from Kindergarten class up until 9th grade. Children can obtain their education in a municipal primary and lower secondary school (folkeskole), an independent school, or in a private school. The municipal primary and lower secondary school is publicly funded through the tax system.

The obligatory 10 years of education are divided into three parts: Pre-preparatory classes, the intermediate stage, and the secondary school program. Further, Aarhus Municipality offers basic education in Danish as a second language in reception classes.

Modtagelsesklasser - Reception classes

If your child is between 6-17 years old, and if it is estimated that he/she does not know enough Danish to be able to follow the teachings in a regular class, your child will begin in a reception class instead.

In the reception class, your child will receive basic education in Danish as a second language. The purpose is to give your child basic Danish language skills, so that he/she can follow the education in a regular class successfully.

Besides the subject Danish, your child will be taught in the other subjects of his/her grade and in Danish society. The course contents will be adapted to fit your child's age.

Once your child knows sufficient Danish, he/she will be introduced to a regular class. Your child will receive supplementing Danish education.

If the reception class takes place in another school than the district school, he/she will be granted transportation to and from school either by taxi or bus.

For further information, please contact Visitationscentret Læssøesgade which handles the placement of newly arrived students [here](#).

If you have other questions in regards to reception classes, you can contact consultant Maria Skøtt Davidsen by [mail](#) or phone at 23 38 01 26.

Indskolingen - Pre-preparatory classes

The pre-preparatory classes count kindergarten class/0 grade, 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd grade.

In kindergarten class/0 grade, focus is on language, mathematical attention, scientific phenomena, creative and musical forms of expression, body and movement, engagement and community.

In 1st grade, children are introduced to new and exciting subjects. There are most Danish and math lessons, but they will also be introduced to English as their first foreign language, music, natural sciences, arts, sports, and Christianity.

In 2nd grade, there are no new subjects, but there is more focus on arts and natural sciences.

In 3rd grade, children are introduced to the subject history, which they will continue to have throughout their school years. They will have fewer Danish lessons but more English lessons instead.

Mellemtrinnet - The intermediate stage

The intermediate stage includes 4th grade, 5th grade, and 6th grade.

4th grade is the first year of the intermediate stage. While many of the subjects remain the same, children will be introduced to a couple of new subjects, namely handicraft and design and home economics. Further, they will have more lessons in history, natural sciences, and sports.

In 5th grade, children are introduced to their second foreign language, which they choose themselves. They can either choose German or French. Additionally, they will have more lessons in English, handicraft and design, and home economics. They will have fewer hours of natural sciences and arts.

In 6th grade, children will not get any new subjects, but they will have more lessons in either German or French and religious education. They stop having arts and have fewer music lessons.

Udskolingen - The secondary school program

The secondary school program includes 7th grade, 8th grade, and 9th grade.

The 7th grade is the grade with most changes in the children's education. It is the first grade of the secondary school program and has a range of new scientific subjects. Students will receive education in geography, biology, science and chemistry, and they will stop having natural sciences, religious education, and music. Additionally, students pick an elective in 7th grade.

In 8th grade, students start taking social studies, and they are reintroduced to religious education. They will have fewer lessons in geography, and handicraft and design and home economics classes cease completely.

9th grade is for many students the last year of the municipal primary and lower secondary school. The subjects are the same as in 8th grade but the amount of time given to each changes.

Read more about [primary and lower secondary education](#).

10th grade – continuation school

10th grade is available to those who have a need for further academic qualification and clarification of choice of education to be able to complete an upper secondary education. Focus in 10th grade is thus put on guidance in relation to further education, e.g.:

- An obligatory week-long transition program to an upper secondary education
- Subjects aimed at the upper secondary educations
- An education plan that can be used as a tool in the continuous guidance about the student's future choice of education.

Efterskole

Efterskole is a special offer for students between the age of 14 and 18. Presently, some 28.500 students attend one of the app. 250 schools throughout Denmark. Depending on the school, grades 7th-10th are taught. Students live at the school and engage in many extracurricular as well as social activities. For many, the year(s) at efterskole is much more than just education – it is an experience of a lifetime where they make friends for life and find themselves turning into adults.

You must pay school fees to attend efterskole. Read more about efterskole [here](#).

Upper secondary education

In Denmark, upper secondary education divides into:

1. general education qualifying for access to higher education
and
2. vocational or technical education qualifying primarily for access to the labor market.

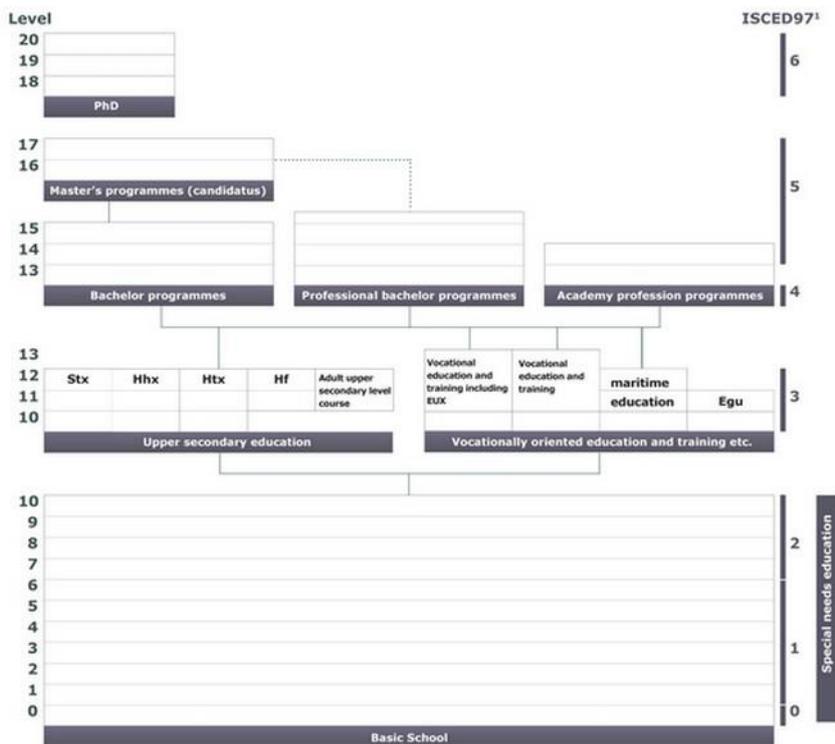
It normally caters for the 16-19-year-olds and comprises:

- the general upper secondary education provision of the gymnasium (STX)
 - the higher preparatory examination or HF-program
 - the higher commercial examination or HHX-program
 - the higher technical examination or HTX-program
- and
- the vocational education and training programs
 - the basic social and health training programs, etc.

Additionally, you can find:

- production schools
- basic vocational education and training (EGU)
- initial vocational education and training programs (IVET – EUD and EUX)
- maritime education

Read more about [upper secondary education](#) and the [individual offers](#) in detail.



Sources:

[Aarhus Kommune: Familie, børn og unge](#)

[Aarhus Kommune: Modtagelsesklasse](#)

[BusinessregionAarhus: Families and children](#)

[EMU Danmarks læringsportal: Forældre](#)

[Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality](#)

[Study in Denmark](#)

[Vocational training and education in Denmark](#)