

2024

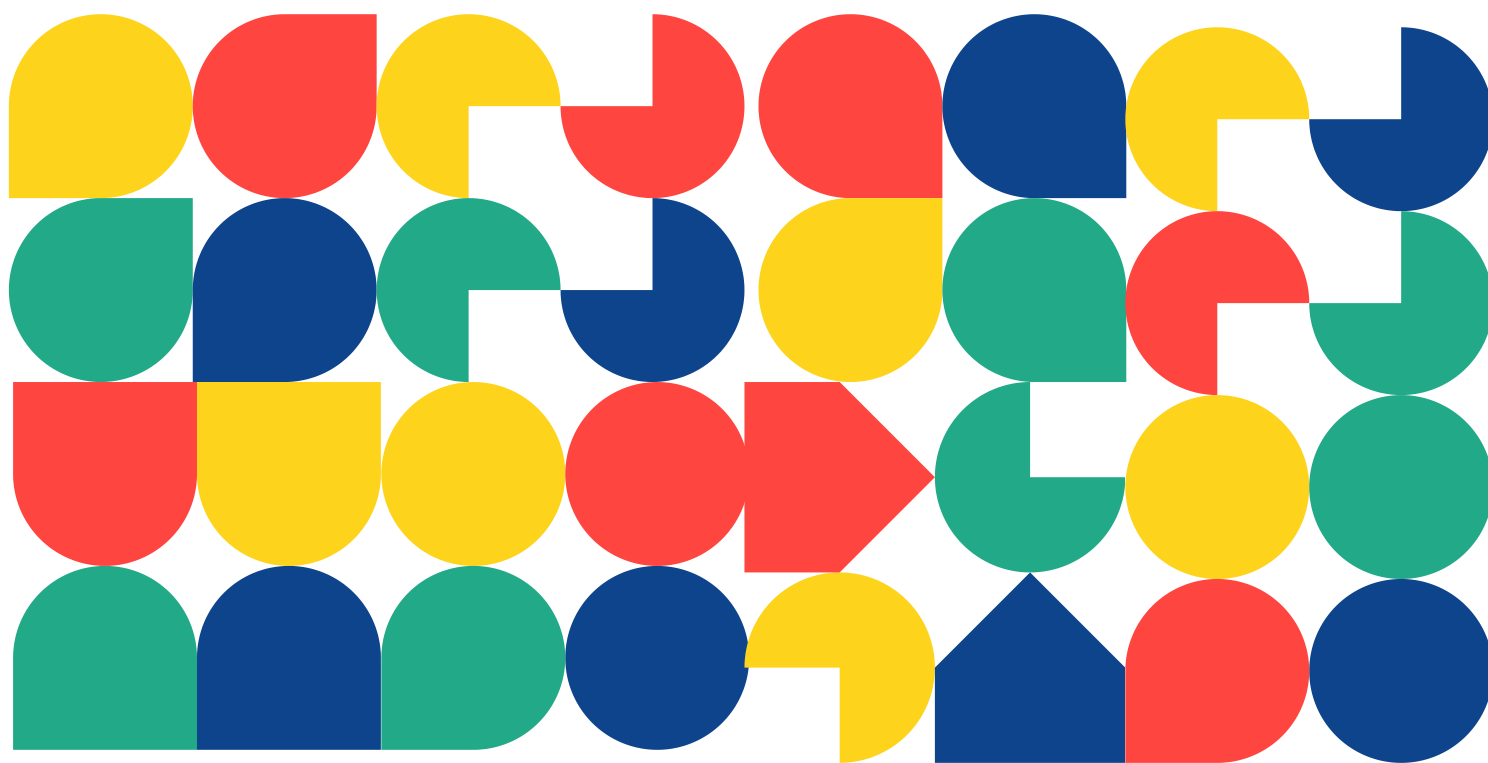


Child Guarantee analysis

DENMARK

Support to children with disabilities within the
National Action Plan for the implementation of the
EU Child Guarantee

Country Fact Sheets



Date of publication

National Action Plan (2022) [DK](#) / [EN](#)

Biennial report (2024) [EN](#)

Overall Opinion

The Danish welfare system offers a comprehensive range of services and provisions that align well with the objectives of the Child Guarantee. There are clear synergies between existing social welfare measures and the Child Guarantee's goals. The Danish National Action Plan (NAP) outlines various initiatives to support children with disabilities, particularly in the field of education. Support is provided throughout mainstream primary to upper secondary education, including reasonable accommodations, specialised pedagogical support, and dedicated classes. There is a strong emphasis on assisting children with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, especially at the primary level. Furthermore, Denmark has taken steps to address gaps in data collection concerning children with disabilities—an area that was largely underdeveloped at the time the NAP was published. Despite these strengths, the plan lacks clearly defined objectives, new initiatives, and specific actions, particularly concerning healthcare for children with disabilities. Overall, while the National Action Plan and Biennial report highlight relevant ongoing measures, they fall short of offering a clear roadmap for future progress.



Key data and figures

Children with disabilities

- There is no clear definition or central register of children with disabilities. Based on the number receiving support under the [Social Services Act](#)¹, it is estimated that **around 30-35,000 children aged 0 to 18 had a disability** in 2016 ([Social Policy Statement, 2019](#)²). The actual number might be higher as it only includes those receiving support. As of 1 July 2021, authorities providing services to children with disabilities under the Social Service Act are required to report statistical data. This resulted in the first statistics on children with disabilities, published in June 2023, which were incorporated into the [Social Policy Statement](#) of 2024.
- Among primary and lower secondary school pupils, only 39% of parents with children in special needs classes have attained a higher level of education compared to 60% for parents of children in mainstream classes. For children in treatment and special educational facilities or in care accommodation, the figure is approximately 35%, reflecting the connection between parental education levels and the type of educational setting.

Children in alternative care

- **Decrease of children in alternative care:** This trend has been observed since 2012, and figures went from approximately 15,600 to 13,700 children from 2020 to 2022.
- **Increasing preference for foster care:** Foster care placements grew from 7,000 in 2007 to 8,500 in 2020. By 2020, 65% of children placed away from home were in foster care. The main decrease has been among children placed in residential institutions or care facilities.

¹ The Social Service Act sets the provisions on assistance for children and adults with special needs. This consists of various support services and benefits offered by municipalities. As of January 1, 2024, special support for children and young people is provided under the Child's Act. More information is furnished on page 3 of this document.

² The Social Policy Statement (*Socialpolitisk Redegørelse*) is a report published at the end of each year that tracks and analyses Danish social policy. It comprises various thematic chapters addressing measures targeting different groups. Notably, it examines trends in preventive measures, well-being, mental illness, alternative care and rehabilitation. The Biennial Report used the Social Policy Statement as a framework for the forward-looking monitoring of the Child Guarantee's implementation. Efforts are ongoing to adapt the Social Policy Statement to better monitor European Child Guarantee objectives.

Key challenges

The Danish National Action Plan does not present the key challenges and barriers the different categories of children identified as in need face.

National legal framework

- **Social Services Act:** This act establishes a framework for social initiatives specifically aimed at supporting children and young people with disabilities, as well as their families. The purpose is to help them to thrive like everyone else, despite their challenges.
- **Child's Act:** Entered into force on January 1, 2024, the Child's Act replaced the Act on Social Services concerning special support for children and young people, including out-of-home care placements. The Act consolidates all regulations related to supporting vulnerable children and young people, as well as those with disabilities. It allows placement in special day-care facilities for children with significant and permanent physical or mental impairments. These facilities are designed for children who require extensive support that cannot be provided in regular day-care settings.

Key targets and objectives

The National Action Plan lacks specific targets and objectives. This is not addressed by the Biennial report.

Key measures

ECEC

- **Limiting screen use:** Since July 2024, the use of digital tools for children aged 0-2 has been limited, allowing it only in exceptional cases to support the well-being, learning or development of children with disabilities.
- **Postponement of enrolment in education:** Passed in 2023 and effective as of January 1, 2024, the new legislation allows children to postpone starting school³. This decision requires an assessment by the ECEC leader if a child's learning or development raises doubts about school readiness.

³ In Denmark compulsory education begins at the age of six.

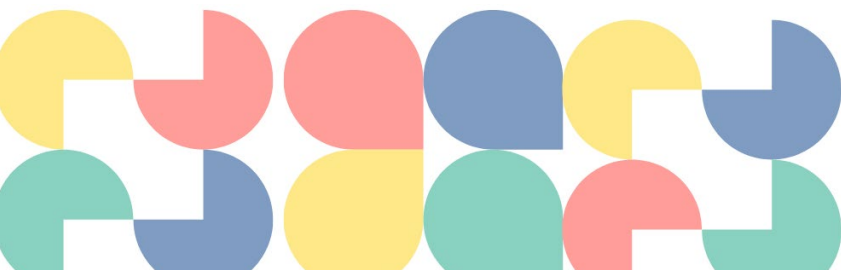


Primary education

- **Dyslexia packages I, II, III, IV and V:** Efforts to improve support for people with dyslexia have intensified since 2019. In 2021, new actions included developing a new detection tool for year 2 students, establishing a national forum for dyslexia educators and allocating DKK 6 million for training additional reading counsellors and teachers.
- **New evaluation and assessment approaches:** A political agreement adopted in 2021 introduced a new system in schools to identify students with difficulties, including mandatory screening for reading issues and dyslexia. Schools must also use a notice book (*meddelelsesbog*) to track efforts for students needing special attention, with follow-up.
- **'Children first' in education:** Adopted in 2022 and effective as of July 1, 2024, the new legislation improves education for vulnerable children and those in care. It strengthens municipal responsibility for day-care and special education and enhances coordination across institutions.
- **Special pedagogical support:** Students enrolled at independent elementary schools, independent boarding schools, vocational education and training courses, and in upper secondary and higher education can apply for special pedagogical support if they have significant physical or mental impairments. This support is based on a professional assessment and may include assistive tools, extra study support, specially designed materials, sign language interpreting and personal assistance.

Secondary education

- **Special classes for children with autistic spectrum disorder:** There are small special classes in upper secondary for students with autism spectrum disorders providing them with special support (of up to 12 pupils).
- **Extension of courses for students with disabilities or learning difficulties:** The March 2022 agreement allows trials for extended courses for young people in care, starting in the 2022/23 school year.
- **Extension of part 2 of the basic cycle:** This is possible since January 2022 for students with severe difficulties. Participation in these trials is voluntary for both schools and students. Support is provided by vocational training providers.



Healthcare

There are **no specific healthcare actions for children with disabilities** presented in the NAP. Children's development and health are regularly assessed, and municipalities provide special support to children and families, ensuring equal opportunities for development, health and independence. Additional services, like home visits, are offered based on professional assessments.

Housing

- **Housing benefit:** It is a separate scheme, granted after an objective calculation based on the housing expenditure, the income of the household (excluding children's income), the area of the dwelling and the composition of the household, including the presence of children. It is payable to all tenants on low incomes or as a loan to house owners receiving a
- disability pension.

For more information on the Child Guarantee contact: EASPD Junior Policy Officer Clara Massé, at clara.masse@easpd.eu.



European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities

Nerviërslaan/ Avenue des Nerviens 85, 1040, Brussels Belgium

+32(0) 2 233 77 20 | info@easpd.eu



Easpd Brussels



@EASPD_Brussels



EASPD



EASPD

Copyright © EASPD 2024

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system without the prior permission of the copyright.

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by
the European Union

