

# Education

## Schools and Learning



Where can I finish my education? Where can my children study? Do I start studying immediately after arriving in Finland? It's all in this chapter.

**In this module, you will learn about:**

- Day care and pre-primary education
- Comprehensive school
- Secondary schools
- Vocational education and training
- Higher education
- Integration training for immigrants
- Labour market training for adults
- Equivalency of degrees
- Libraries

Read about this module at  
[mof.fi/sections/education/en](https://mof.fi/sections/education/en)  
or scan the QR code below



Find this module online at  
[mof.fi/exercises/education/en](https://mof.fi/exercises/education/en)  
or scan the QR code below



# Day care and pre-primary education

---

As municipal residents, you may apply for a day care spot for your children. At day care centres they will learn the Finnish language, daily rhythms and important social skills. The centres' daily routine includes both indoor and outdoor activities such as games, exercise, music, arts and crafts, and shared mealtimes. The day care fee depends on the family's income. Children often play outside in day care, and parents must prepare for this by dressing the children according to the weather conditions. Children have the right to pre-primary education for one year before their compulsory basic education begins, generally at the age of six. In pre-primary education, children will gain knowledge and skills that will aid their learning process in comprehensive school.

---

1. Read the text and finish the sentence with the right answer.
  - a. Pre-primary education lasts for \_\_\_\_\_.  
one year | two years | three years
  - b. Day care fee \_\_\_\_\_.  
is the same for everyone | depends on the family's income
  - c. Children must be dressed properly for \_\_\_\_\_.  
inside activities | outside activities | both inside and outside activities

## Comprehensive school

Let's read the text.

---

All children permanently living in Finland have an obligation to obtain a compulsory basic education. This obligation begins at the age of 6 with pre-primary education. After that, children start the comprehensive school, which lasts for 9 years and provides children with basic education. Children generally start the comprehensive school at the age of 7 and finish when the compulsory syllabus is completed, usually by the age of 16. Comprehensive school consists of primary and lower secondary level education. The primary level includes grades from 1 to 6 and the lower secondary level includes grades from 7 to 9. Parents are responsible for making sure that their children attend school on a daily basis.

---

1. Respond by "True" or "False" and explain why.
  - a. Only Finnish children are obliged to have basic education, for immigrant children it is optional.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Obligatory education is for grades from 1 to 6 only.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Parents are responsible for the school attendance of their children.  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

Children study many compulsory subjects in comprehensive school, such as mathematics, Finnish, English, history, biology, etc. All students in Finnish schools participate in physical education and art classes. There are a lot of arts and crafts in school, and visual materials are used abundantly in teaching. Usually a student is told to raise his or her hand when requesting permission to speak in class. Different languages are studied in school.

Finnish children do not have school uniforms; therefore parents are responsible for making sure their children have appropriate and practical clothes that are suitable for the season and weather conditions. For sports and physical education classes, children must have sports clothing and shoes. Classes in Finnish schools are approximately 45 minutes long. There is 15-minute break between classes, and once per day a longer lunch break in which a meal is provided.

---

2. Link the first part with the corresponding second part.

<b>a</b>	All students participate	in sports and art classes.	<b>w</b>
<b>b</b>	Parents are responsible that their children have the appropriate clothing	by raising your hand.	<b>x</b>
<b>c</b>	Requesting permission to speak in class is done	for weather and sports.	<b>y</b>
<b>d</b>	Classes last 45 minutes	and are followed by a 15-minute break.	<b>z</b>

---

Immigrant children who have just arrived in Finland are provided with preparatory teaching that prepares them for comprehensive school. Students study the Finnish language and other subjects, and strengthen their reading and writing skills. In comprehensive school, an immigrant child is placed in the grade that best suits his or her age, knowledge, and skills. Additionally, tutoring in different subjects can be arranged for newcomers. Religion is also a subject in Finnish comprehensive school and high school. Its teaching is organized according to the majority's religious denomination.

---

3. Immigrant students receive the teaching of the topics also in Finnish. What benefits does this bring in your opinion?

---

---

4. Religious teaching is organised according to the majority's religious denomination, and yet a child's parents have a right to request teaching religion according to their own denomination, and it would be arranged **if possible**. Instead of religious teaching, children can also participate in ethics teaching. Do you think parents should be able to request teaching any belief for their children? What would religious teaching be like in Finland in your opinion? Do you think it has some differences compared to your previous experiences?
- 
- 



- Whether in pre-primary education or in comprehensive school, parents have an important role in supporting the education of their children.

5. On the following table, there is a description of certain practices. Comment on whether these practices can be found in Finland or not, and what do you think of these practices and why.

		Occurs in Finland	Opinion and justification
a	Girls and boys studying together		
b	Students using the teacher's first name		
c	Eating lunch at the school		
d	Punishment		
e	Parents following the studying of their children		
f	Students standing up when teacher is coming		
g	Wearing a uniform		
h	Studying longer than six hours a day		
i	Swimming classes		

6. As a student, you may come across certain situations that are new to you. Here are some examples that may or may not happen. What would you do?

<b>a</b>	Someone harassed or bullied you at school.	
<b>b</b>	The teacher wants to meet you.	
<b>c</b>	Something is not clear about the lesson	
<b>d</b>	Something happened at home and you cannot do your homework	
<b>e</b>	A student asked you to eat together.	

7. As a parent, you will be constantly in contact with the teachers of your children. Here are some examples of situations that may or may not happen. What would you do?

<b>a</b>	The teacher wants to meet you.	
<b>b</b>	Your child would need to participate in an event that you have some objections about.	
<b>c</b>	Your child has not done the assigned homework.	
<b>d</b>	Your child is misbehaving at school.	
<b>e</b>	Your child made excellent progress at school.	
<b>f</b>	Your child does not want to go to school.	

# Upper secondary school

The following text is taken from the lesson webpage. The link to this page can be found at the beginning of this module. Did you find it? It looks like [mof.fi/sections/education/en](https://mof.fi/sections/education/en) and you can find a lot of information that would help you find the answers to the following exercise.

---

A person can apply for upper secondary education with a school-leaving certificate from the comprehensive school. The studies can be completed within 2 to 4 years. The studies' aim is the final national examinations, where general knowledge is tested on a broad scale. On completing the upper secondary school the student receives a diploma. After successfully completing the matriculation examinations, the student also receives a matriculation examination certificate. Upper secondary school is required for higher education studies.

---

1. When is upper secondary school?  

---
2. How long does upper secondary school last?  

---
3. Which education level requires that upper secondary school studies are finished?  

---

# Vocational training

Below are two paragraphs about vocational education, let's read them.

## Vocational education and training

A high number of vocational institutions in Finland offer a broad selection of vocational education and training programmes, which give qualifications for practical professions. In the vocational education a young person can study and gain a vocational qualification, which takes approximately 2 to 3 years. Vocational education is very practical. The students attend trainee periods and practical studies at different workplaces. One can apply for vocational training either with a school-leaving certificate from the comprehensive school or with an equivalent educational certificate. Because the language of instruction in vocational training programmes is Finnish, it is important to learn Finnish at the earliest stage as possible.

## Preparatory vocational training for immigrant youth

After completing the comprehensive education a person can choose either the vocational school or the upper secondary school. If an immigrant youngster needs extra studies in Finnish or Swedish language or other basic education subjects, they may attend a 10th grade in the comprehensive education or a year in preparatory vocational training. In the preparatory vocational training the student strengthens their language skills. The student also studies working life skills and different professions, and prepares for further vocational studies. During preparatory training the student will have an opportunity to identify their personal professional strengths and interests.

1. When is the vocational school?

---

2. What is the difference between vocational education and upper secondary school?

---

3. What is preparatory vocational training for immigrant youth?

---

4. Below you find a list of characteristics. Identify which are specific to the preparatory vocational training for immigrant youth and which are common?

- a. Prepares for a profession
- b. Strengthens Finnish language skills
- c. Can enter with comprehensive school leaving certificate or equivalent
- d. Prepares for vocational studies

5. After vocational studies, can you start working right away or do you need further studies?

---

## Higher education and universities

Let's read this extract from the lesson's page.

---

In Finland, higher education can be achieved either at the universities of applied sciences or at the universities. The studies can be completed within 3 to 4 or 5 years. The requirement for the admission is either an upper secondary certificate or a vocational education certificate. Most university degrees consist of a bachelor's degree, followed by a master's degree. There may be entrance exams for higher education programmes.

---

1. True or false?

a. You can go to higher education only from upper secondary school.

---

b. Higher education is only at universities of applied sciences.

---

c. Most university degrees include a bachelor's and a baster's degree.

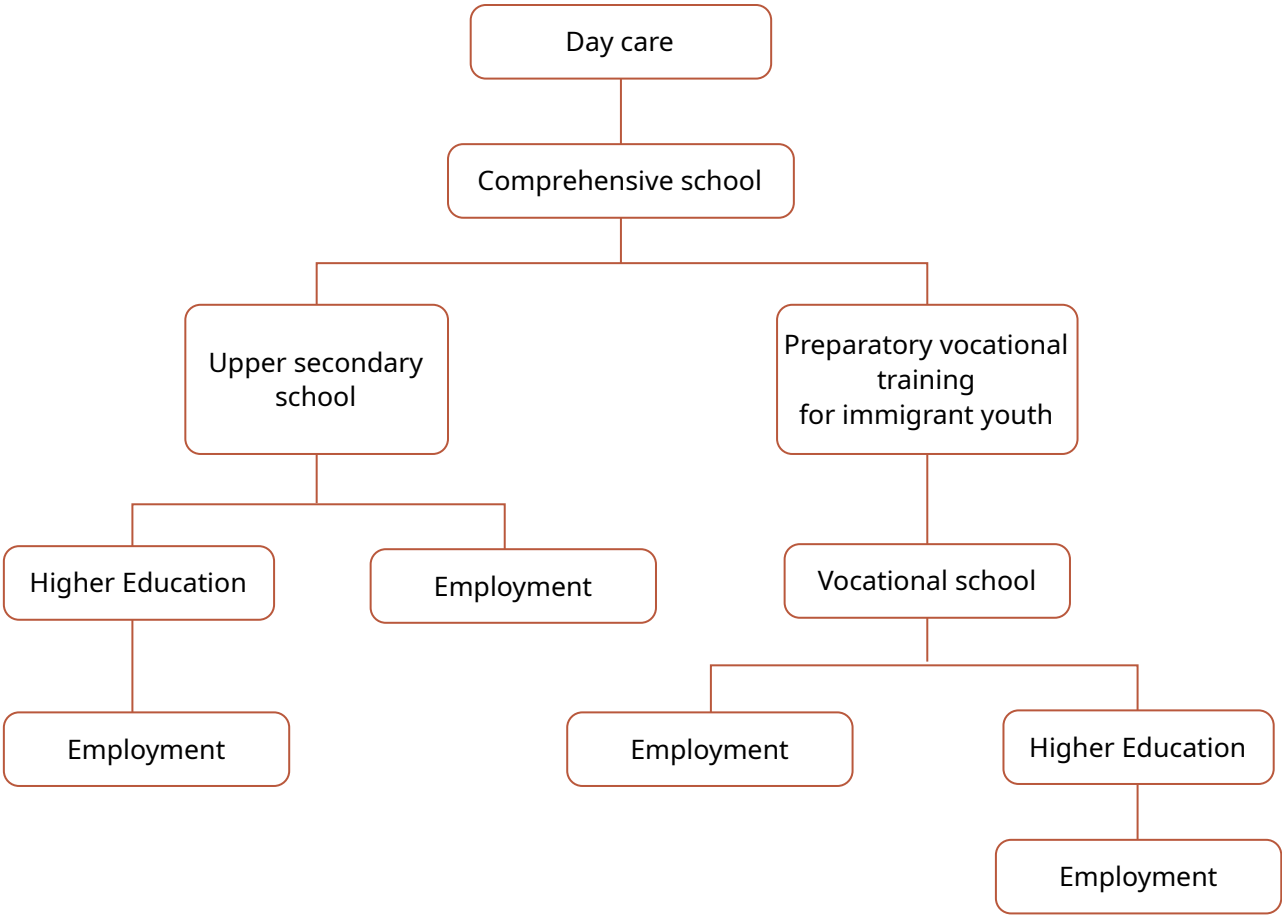
---





- After comprehensive school, a person can choose to go to upper secondary school or to vocational school. Both have their advantages.
- Vocational school is oriented for those who want to start a professional life. Upper secondary school is oriented for those who want to study more. You are given the choice.
- If you need help with your language and other skills, you can have an additional year of preparation. Ask about the options in your municipality.

2. Now that you know how the Finnish education system works, draw the path that you or your child or relative could do. Discuss and ask your instructor if you have any questions.



- The vocational education path is normally faster than the higher education path, yet both have their advantages. Discuss with your school, employment and social service office personnel about your options.

# Integration training for immigrants

Now that you know how the Finnish education system works in general, how about the cases when an adult immigrant arrives in Finland with or without previous studies in another country? You will find out, however before you start there is a very important question that needs to be answered.

1. What education-related or employment-related goal would you like to achieve in Finland?

---

---

---

Now let's read the following text together.

---

Upon arriving in the country, immigrants are enrolled in an integration training programme, which consists of studies in Finnish language, social studies, everyday life skills, cultural knowledge, as well as study advice and counselling for further studies and employment. Additionally, the programme includes trainee periods at a workplace.

---

2. What do you think is needed in order to achieve your goal? Circle the ones that you think are needed.

Finnish language | social studies | everyday life skills | cultural knowledge | counselling for further studies and employment | traineeship | personal plan for further studies

3. Is there something else you think you need to achieve your goal?

## Vocational education and training for adults and labour market training for adults

---

Similarly to the young immigrants, adult immigrants can also apply for vocational education and training in order to gain a professional qualification needed in the Finnish labour markets. An applicant is eligible to apply if they have a certificate from a comprehensive school or an equivalent educational certificate. Sufficient skills in the Finnish language are also required. Remember to bring your original education certificates with you if you have them. Completing a vocational degree in Finland is recommended, because it strengthens an immigrant's position in the labour market.

---

---

Unemployed immigrants, who have completed the integration training and achieved the level of Finnish language required for the vocational education, are eligible for a labour market training. The labour market training is oriented towards working life and consists of variety of subjects, and most often leads to a full or partial vocational qualification.

---

1. What are the two requirements to apply for vocational education in Finland?

---

2. Why is completing a vocational education recommended?

---

3. Who is eligible for labour market training?

---

4. What does the labour market training often lead to?

---

5. Below you can find a list of goals. Choose those that you are interested in and estimate how long you think it would take to achieve them.

a. Learning Finnish | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

b. Learning Swedish | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

c. Enrolling in preparatory vocational programme | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

d. Enrolling in a vocational degree programme | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

e. Enrolling in a bachelor programme | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

f. Enrolling in a master programme | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

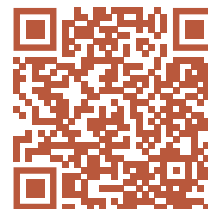
g. Getting my first traineeship | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

h. Getting my first employment | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

i. Starting my own company | \_\_\_\_ month(s) / year(s)

# Accreditation of studies and degrees completed abroad

If you have a degree from another country, you can apply for its accreditation in Finland. You can read about the Finnish National Agency for Education, to whom you apply to have your accreditation at [oph.fi/english/services/recognition](https://oph.fi/english/services/recognition) or by scanning the following QR code.



1. Already where you are now, there is one very important thing to remember when it comes to degrees and certificates. Let's discover it by completing the following paragraph with missing words.

It is important that you bring all the \_\_\_\_\_ or certified copies of basic education, vocational \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ programmes and work \_\_\_\_\_ with you to Finland. It is best to get these copies \_\_\_\_\_ and translated into \_\_\_\_\_ already now.

experience | education | degree | original | English | certified



- Adult immigrants have an integration training and counselling for further studies and employment, as well as traineeship.
- Vocational education to upgrade your skills to meet the qualifications of labour market, is also accessible to adult immigrants.
- If you have any certificates, translate them and bring them with you to Finland.

# Library and extracurricular activities

Most municipalities in Finland have a public library, which is open to all residents. You can borrow books or e.g. read different magazines in different languages for free. You can use the internet and study in the library as well. You must apply for a library card in order to borrow the books in the library.

1. Let's find out where you can find libraries in Finland. Go to the website [hakemisto.kirjastot.fi](http://hakemisto.kirjastot.fi) or visit the website by scanning the following QR code.



2. What hobbies do you have? Do you think your hobby is practiced in Finland? If your hobby is not found in Finland or in your new municipality, would you be ready to start a club yourself?

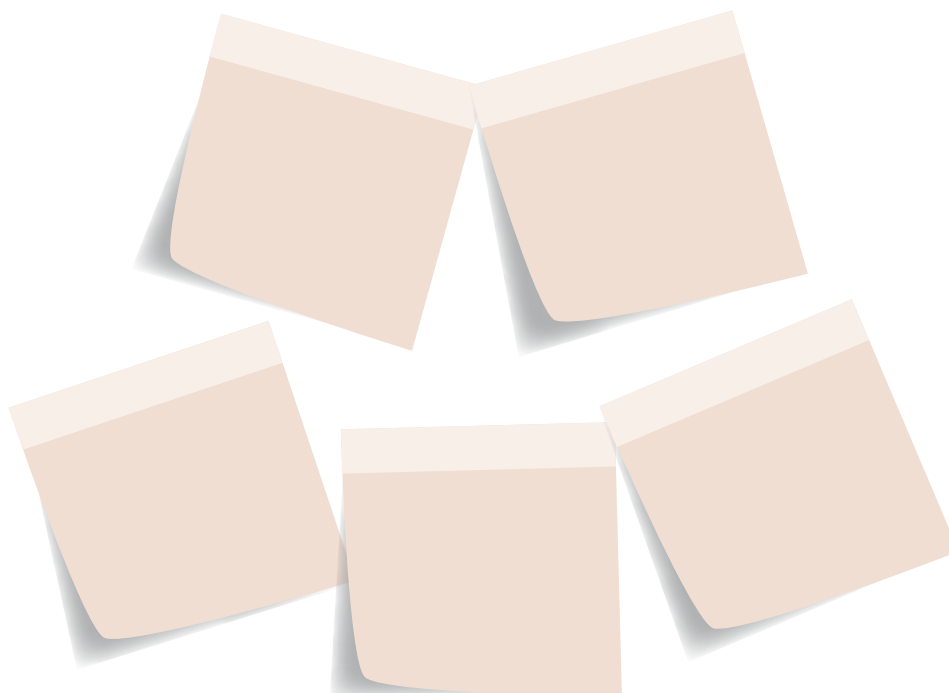
---

---

---

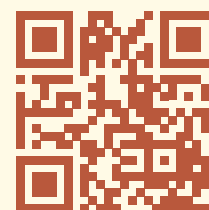


Now that you finished the module, let's summarise what you learned.



### Bonus task!

Find out where you can practice your hobby at [harrastushaku.fi](http://harrastushaku.fi) or by scanning the QR code. If you need help with the Finnish language, ask help from your instructor, colleague, or counsellor.



- The education system in Finland is ranked as one of the best in the world. Set your personal goal and study well to have the success you wish in your life.

# Answers

## Day care and pre-primary education

1. The answers can be found on the following table.

a.	b.	c.
one year	depends on the family's income	both inside and outside activities

## Comprehensive school

1. The answers can be found on the following table.

a.	False	Basic education is obligatory for all children permanently living in Finland.
b.	False	Obligatory education is for the grades 1 to 6 and 7 to 9.
c.	True	Parents have an obligation to make sure their children attend school.

2. The answers can be found on the following table.

a.	b.	c.	d.
w.	y.	x.	z.

- The answers vary, however keep in mind that teaching in Finnish supports the development of the language skills and prepares the students better for further education opportunities.
- The answers vary. Discuss the possibilities with the school authorities. Generally, religious teaching in Finland focuses on teaching objectively about the religion's history and practices. Ethics teaching is also generally available.
- Girls and boys study together in Finland. This is a good thing for many reasons. In general, there is no separation between genders in Finnish society.
  - Students use the teacher's first name in Finland. This is a good thing because it eliminates hierarchy, which is rare in Finnish society in general. Using the teacher's first name does not mean that you are being disrespectful.
  - In Finland students eat their lunch at school during lunch breaks. This is usually a good thing for multiple reasons. In some schools, food is provided and food quality is well monitored. If you have any dietary issues, inform the administration.
  - Punishment in a physical manner is prohibited in Finland. This prohibition is good because no one has the right to touch another person in a harmful way. Consequences depend on the situation and the type of misbehaviour.
  - Parents follow the educational progress of their children in Finland. This is good because it allows the parents to know about the learning of their children and to help them.
  - Students do not stand up when the teacher comes. This is good because it eliminates hierarchy. You can be respectful to your teacher by learning and helping during the lessons.
  - Students do not wear a uniform in Finland. This is good because not being able to purchase uniforms would not affect your possibility to attend school, and because students are free to wear what they want as long as it is suitable for school environment and weather conditions.
  - Study days in comprehensive school are not longer than six hours a day in general. This is good for many reasons, including students having time for extracurricular activities.
  - Swimming is usually part of the curriculum in Finland. This is good as it encourages physical activity. Swimming skills are important in Finland because of the number of lakes and the presence of the sea. If you have any concerns about this, discuss with the school.

6.

- a. Immediately inform your teacher. Do not wait or hope for the situation to improve.
- b. Arrange for the meeting and be present on time.
- c. Always ask whenever something is not clear.
- d. Inform your teacher immediately.
- e. It is always good to meet new people. If you are interested in eating together then do so, otherwise decline politely and respectfully.

7.

- a. Arrange for the meeting and be present on time.
- b. Do not prohibit your child from attending. Inform the administration with your concerns.
- c. Do not punish your child. Talk to your child. Discuss your concerns with the teacher.
- d. Do not punish your child. Talk to your child. Discuss your concerns with the teacher.
- e. Reward and encourage your child.
- f. Do not punish your child. Talk to your child. Discuss your concerns with the teacher.

## Upper secondary school

- 1. Upper secondary school is after comprehensive school.
- 2. Upper secondary school lasts from 2 to 4 years.
- 3. Upper secondary school is a prerequisite for higher education studies.

## Vocational training

- 1. After completing the comprehensive education a person can choose either the vocational school or the upper secondary school.
- 2. Vocational education is very practical. The students attend plenty of training and practical studies at different workplaces.
- 3. If an immigrant youngster needs extra studies in Finnish or Swedish language or other basic education subjects, he or she may attend 10th grade in the comprehensive education or a year in preparatory vocational training.
- 4. The answers can be found on the following table.

	a	b	c	d
Vocational education and training to Finns and immigrants	x		x	
Preparatory vocational training for immigrant youth	x	x	x	x

- 5. Both; after vocational studies you can either start working immediately or also study more.

## Higher education and universities

- 1. The answers can be found on the following table.

a.	b.	c.
False	False	True

- 2. The answers vary depending on your personal preferences.

## Integration training for immigrants

1. The answers vary depending on your personal preferences.
2. The answers vary. Keep in mind that a lot of effort is needed nevertheless and language skills are the key to studying and working in Finland.
3. The answers vary depending on your personal preferences.

## Vocational education and training for adults and labour market training for adults

1. The requirements include a certificate from a comprehensive school or an equivalent educational certificate, as well as sufficient skills in the Finnish language.
2. Completing a vocational degree in Finland is recommended because it strengthens an immigrant's position in the labour market.
3. Unemployed immigrants, who have completed the integration training and know Finnish well enough are eligible for a labour market training.
4. The labour market training most often leads to a full or partial vocational qualification.
5. The answers vary depending on your personal preferences.

## Accreditation of studies and degrees completed abroad

1. original | education | degree | experience | certified | English

## Library and extracurricular activities

1. The answers vary depending on your location.
2. The answers vary depending on your personal preferences and location. Be aware that starting a new club to practice your hobby is encouraged.
3. The answers vary.