

# Special Needs Education in Sweden Based on the Need of the Individual Child and the Swedish commitment to self-government for municipalities

## All children have the right to achievement according to their maximal potential

Swedish legislation stipulates equal opportunities for all learners, thus there is no legal definition of SEN. Pupils in need of support are not regarded as a group separated from other learners.

There are however special programmes for pupils with learning disabilities, and special schools for a few well defined groups of pupils with particular learning profile, e.g. bilingual schools with instruction in sign language, deaf-blind-born pupils, pupils with blindness and learning disabilities, as well as pupils with severe language impairment.

The responsibility for carrying out the education lies with the municipality according to the Education Act (2010:800) and other related laws.

### The compulsory school

School attendance is obligatory for all children resident in Sweden. The school are accountable for providing adequate support according to the following governing principles:

🇸🇪 *A pupil in need of support is entitled adequate measures*

🇸🇪 *Considerations' regarding the best interest of the child constitutes the foundation for all educational efforts*

🇸🇪 *All pupils are entitled guidance and support according to their needs in that they may achieve their maximal potential*

### The Role of the Municipality

Sweden's 290 municipalities are run according to national legislative and regulatory frameworks. Municipal responsibility for schools is based on the Swedish commitment to self-government and democracy. Among their duties, municipalities:

- 🇸🇪 Provide preschool activities and education for their residents.
- 🇸🇪 Set goals and make decisions about preschools and other education.
- 🇸🇪 Set priorities and allocate resources.
- 🇸🇪 Fund independent schools for students registered in the municipality.
- 🇸🇪 Act as the employer for teachers and other school staff.

Education should be equivalent irrespective of where pupils attend school.

### Educational System

The *Education Act*, decided on by the Swedish Parliament (Riksdagen) contains fundamental regulations. *Ordinances* contain regulations and are decided on by the government. *The curriculum* stipulates the fundamental goals and guidelines for the school, and includes *syllabuses* which set up the goals for teaching in each specific subject. The syllabuses are supplemented by *knowledge requirements* describing the knowledge required for acceptable knowledge in school years 3 and 6, and for different grades in the 9th year. Summative assessment (grades) is given in grade 8 and 9.



Swedish Education Law  
Curricula Syllabuses



Work Plan for the municipality



Work Plan for the School



Action Program



Individual Education  
Plan



Action Plan - if a pupil experiences  
difficulties = intervention

### The Action Plan

The Action Plan must meet the pupil's needs.

The plan must contain

- 🇸🇪 Information on the specific needs of the child
- 🇸🇪 Information on the needed measurements
- 🇸🇪 Information on evaluation during intervention process

The plan must be implemented promptly. The caregivers are always engaged in the process. Responsibility for allocation of the resources needed rests with the head teacher.

### National Level

The Government's responsibility for national evaluations is carried out by the national agencies in their respective field of responsibility. Agencies in the field of education support the process of raising standards and achieving the goals of all parts of the educational system. The organisation is comprised of three authorities:

- 🇸🇪 The National Agency for Education
- 🇸🇪 The Swedish Schools Inspectorate
- 🇸🇪 The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools

### Formative Assessment

During all school years, the pupil, teacher and the pupil's guardian meet to discuss progress in school and the emotional wellbeing. In this *development dialogue*, an *individual development plan* is drawn up and documented in writing. The individual development plan should contain written assessments.

If there are evidence that the pupil experience difficulties in achieving any stipulated learning goal an *action plan* must be developed without delay.

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