

EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (EASIE)

**Austria 2016/2017
data background information**



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How the official decision of special educational needs (SEN) in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

Operational definition

“An official decision leads to a child/learner being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.”

Criteria for an official decision of SEN

- There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team
- The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child's/learner's (pre)school
- There is a legal document which describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning
- The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process

Educational assessment procedure in the country

Special educational needs are defined when a child/learner has a disability (§ 8 of the Compulsory Education Law).

According to § 3 of the Federal Law on the Equalisation of Persons with Disabilities in Society, disability is the effect of a physical, intellectual, psychological or sensory functional impairment, which is not temporary and which makes participation in community life more difficult. An impairment is not considered temporary if its duration is more than six months.

Special educational needs can be categorised as follows:

- Sensory impairment
- Speech impairment
- Movement-related
- Learning impairment
- Combinations of impairments.

How the multi-disciplinary team is comprised in the country

The determination of special educational needs can be requested either by the parents or, in special cases, ex officio. In the sense of an academic partnership, transparency and the greatest possible agreement must be ensured. Special needs education is determined by the school board. In its decision, it relies in particular on a special educational report. Upon receipt of the application, a suitably qualified person will be instructed to create a



report. The results of this report will be explained during the consultation. With the parents' consent, a school psychology report can be prepared. In addition, the parents can provide their own reports in the procedure.

The legal document used in the country to outline the support that the child/learner is eligible to receive

With the valid decision, the parents decide which school their child should attend: a special primary school, new middle school, polytechnic school, general education lower-secondary school, home-schooling or a suitable special school.

How the document is used as the basis for planning in the country

The accompanying teachers create an individual plan for each child/learner with SEN. The measures provided are varied and tailored to the individual situation. In accordance with the requirements of the decision of the Provincial School Council, these are based on the curricula established there. Depending on the available options, additional staff may be employed. The school board decides on the type and extent of additional staffing.

The formal, regular review process in the country

When transferring to a new school, children/learners with sensory disabilities are assessed. Otherwise, at any time, the school or the parents may request reviews or amendments.

Proxy indicator for the 80% benchmark used for the country's data collection

The EASIE work uses an 80% benchmark of inclusive education. This is defined as:

“An inclusive setting refers to education where the child/learner with SEN follows education in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers for most – 80% or more – of the school week.”

Proxy indicator used

Actual data is available to verify the 80% benchmark.

Details on what the country proxy is

There are no statistics on this topic. The Ministry of Education assumes that children/learners with SEN are 100% integrated in mainstream classes together with their non-disabled peers. Individually, there are distinct solutions. For a limited period of time (different lessons), children/learners with disabilities will be separated. Schools can autonomously decide on the spot.

There are differences between primary schools and secondary schools. In primary schools, the optimistic estimate is that learners both with and without disabilities stay together for 80% of the time. In secondary schools, the gap is assumed to be bigger, especially in languages and mathematics.



Why this proxy was used

No other data is available.

Difficulties in using the proxy

In the statistics, children/learners with SEN are often wrongly assigned to special schools because of the special education curriculum. In reality, they attend a mainstream class. It is certain that, in Austria, there are more learners in inclusive settings than the official data suggests.

Specific country issues in applying the proxy indicator

Children/learners with SEN participate in special schools or attend a mainstream class. In a mainstream class, the children/learners with SEN are only separated from their peers for brief periods. There is no dual placement system in mainstream classes.

Detailed description of what ‘out of formal education’ means within the country

The 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines ‘formal education’ as follows:

“[...] education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and, – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning.”

(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011, International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011, p. 11).

Do the country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education differ from the ISCED definitions?

No, Austria uses the same definitions as ISCED.

How specific cases – such as home-educated children/learners – are considered

In Austria, parents can apply to the school board to teach their own children or send them to a private school (private schools do not publish school reports). At the end of the school year, the children are examined in a public school. If the school goals are not achieved, the children must attend a public school. About 0.2% of parents teach their children themselves.



Children/learners who are considered out of formal education (meaning those not in formal education as defined by ISCED)

All children/learners are part of formal education, including those with multiple disabilities or those in time-out classes. In a few exceptional cases, children/learners are temporarily excluded from school attendance as a therapeutic measure (cooling-down phase). In addition, some children/learners refuse to attend school, but the number is small.

How the population of children/learners who are out of formal education is defined

In exceptional cases, there are home-educated learners. However, this is part of formal education.

Provision of data on private sector education

The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the child/learner population in the private sector.

Private sector education in the country

In Austria, there are 55,299 schools in total, comprising compulsory schools, upper-secondary schools and vocational schools (figures for 2016/2017). About 4,000 of these schools are privately-run. The Catholic Church runs 3,125 of these schools. For some of these schools, the children/learners have to pay school fees. However, all of these schools have a 'public right', which means they are entitled to hold final examinations and issue certificates. Other private schools must send their learners to public schools for final examinations and certificates.

Child/learner population counted for each relevant question

Nine school years are obligatory in Austria. All children/learners aged from 6 to 15 are part of the statistics. A few learners stay in the public school system for longer, due to repeating one or more school years.

Specific issues with providing data on private sector education and how these have been overcome in the data collection

There is no problem with collecting data from private schools. All private schools that have a 'public right' are allowed to hold final exams and issue certificates to the learners. All these schools have the same rights and duties as government-run schools. They get free school books for the learners and are controlled by the public school administration. Statistics Austria collects numbers and facts. Private schools without a public right (children/learners take an exam in a public school each year) are part of the group of children/learners educated at home.

ISCED level age ranges

The following are the most common (pre)school entrance ages and (pre)school leaving ages for the different ISCED levels:



Age range in the country at ISCED level 02 (pre-primary): 4 to 6

Age range in the country at ISCED level 1: 6 to 10

Age range in the country at ISCED level 2: 11 to 14

Age range in the country at ISCED level 3: 15 to 18

Miscellaneous

Additional remarks, comments or explanations on the country background information

There are problems with the statistical evaluation: by law, all learners' data must be anonymised. As a result, in the statistics, children/learners with SEN are often wrongly assigned to special schools because of the special education curriculum. In reality, they attend a mainstream class. It is certain that, in Austria, there are more learners in inclusive settings than the official data suggests.