



Reykjavík, September 30, 2025

To: The mayor

Subject: Draft proposal for improvements in the learning and working environment of preschools – milestones

In spring, May 22, 2025, the City Council appointed a steering committee *on rules in the work of preschools*, which was given the task of "examining ways to improve staffing and working conditions for staff with the aim of significantly reducing the need for understaffing reduction measures in the city's preschools and thereby increasing predictability in the lives of families with children".

The group's topics have been as follows:

1. Children's attendance
2. Organization of preschool activities
3. Fridays from 14.00 (2. P.M.)
4. Preschool registration days
5. Fees
6. Support for administrators
7. Supervisor of preschool buildings
8. Icelandic language skills and Icelandic teaching for staff
9. Summer hires
10. Vocational training for unskilled staff

The steering group presents here in draft the group's two main proposals. They are intended as the first part of a series of actions that the group believes are necessary to achieve the goals outlined in its mandate. The group has already requested an extension from the mayor to complete the development of other important improvement proposals that also aim to meet the goals.

The objective of the proposals is to safeguard professional preschool work and ensure stability for parents/guardians, children, and staff. They address, among other things, to the organization of the preschool day, children's length of stay and preschool fees.

Proposal 1: Predictability in the registration of the length of children's stay and preschool organization.

Agreements on the length of stay



Preschools will continue to remain open from 7:30 a.m. to 16:30 (4:30 p.m.). At the beginning of a child's preschool enrollment, attendance agreements are made based on the number of hours the child's needs per week. It is expected that these agreements will range from a minimum of 30 hours to a maximum of 42.5 hours per week. Parents may continue to register varying attendance times across the days of week and requests for changes to the attendance agreement must be submitted with one month's notice.

The preschool day

All children study and play hours in the preschool are considered quality time, tailored to the children's age and development, as well as the culture and circumstances of each preschool. However, preschools should aim to organize the main components of the school curriculum in a predictable manner within a designated 5–6-hour period each day. As stated in the National Preschool Curriculum, each preschool prepares a written and accessible school curriculum that outlines the educational policy of the City of Reykjavík, the ideological approach and its values. Based on this curriculum, each preschool develops a work plan that takes effect at the beginning of the school year. To ensure good predictability, it is important that the plan is clearly communicated within the preschool community at the start of the school year.

Staffing needs The proposals aim to ensure maximum staffing in the preschools for 38 hours across all weekdays, that is, from 8:00 to 16:00 (4:00 p.m.) Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 a.m. to 14:00 (2:00 p.m.) on Fridays. Outside of these hours, staffing needs are expected to be lower.

Registration days

As before, parents will have the opportunity to register their children for preschool on the following days:

- Every weekday between Christmas and New Year.
- Three days a week leading up to Easter.
- All days during the winter breaks of primary schools, three in the fall semester and two in the spring semester.

A change will be introduced whereby registration for all such days will take place in September each year, rather than with one month's notice as currently is the case. A separate fee will be charged for each registration day used. If no registration days are used, the tuition fee for May will be waived. Staffing needs on registration days are expected to be lower.



Vinnuskylda starfsfólks	Mánudagur	Þriðjudagur	Miðvikudagur	Fimmtudagur	Föstudagur
7:30 – 8:00					
8:00 – 10:00					
10:00 – 12:00					
12:00 – 14:00					
14:00 – 16:00					
16:00 – 16:30					

Predictability

The proposed changes are intended to increase the predictability of preschool organizations and staffing needs. Registration days and the time after 14:00 (2:00 p.m.) on Fridays are designed to accommodate changes in staff working hours. With these changes, it is expected that the number of unforeseen understaffing measures implemented for safety reasons will be significantly reduced.

Proposal 2: Changed tariff based on the changed organization of the preschool day.

The current fee structure for Reykjavík preschools is divided into two categories. Category I for married couples and cohabiting partners and Category II, a discount category for single parents, both parents are students, individuals with disability, and employees of Reykjavík preschools. Fees are charged per daily attendance hours and consist of a tuition fee and board fee.

The proposed new fee structure will be based on total weekly attendance hours, with a baseline of 38 hours per week forming the basis for the standard fee. All current discount categories will be replaced by new discount categories, except for staff and siblings' discounts, which will remain. Income-based discount will be introduced for families below a certain income threshold. If a child is not registered after 14:00 (2 p.m.) on Fridays, a 25% discount on tuition will be applied. For each registration day, a fee of ISK 4000 will be charged. A new discount category will be added if none of the registration days are used; tuition fees for the entire month of May will be waived for that school year.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Above you can see the impact of the changes on different lengths of stay per week based on the current tariff and all the above discount categories except for the sibling discount. The fee is the combined board fee and tuition.

Proposal for a new tariff

The tuition fee for 38 hours per week is ISK 16,000, and financial incentives are being introduced to encourage parents to only use the hours their children actually need. For each additional half-hour, 38 hours per week, an extra fee of ISK 4,000 will be charged.



The board(meal) fee will remain unchanged and covers breakfast, afternoon refreshments and lunch. If a child's weekly attendance is less than 35 hours, the fee for afternoon refreshments will be waived.

Special discount on Fridays after 14:00 (2:00 p.m.)

If a child is not registered for attendance after 14:00 (2:00 p.m.) on Fridays, a 25% discount on tuition will be applied.

Income thresholds, sibling and staff discounts

Additional discounts based on income thresholds will be introduced in the new fee structure, aimed at supporting low-income families and those in vulnerable situations. Income thresholds for individuals and cohabiting couples will be based on annual total income, as reported in tax return from the Iceland Revenue and Customs.

Income thresholds for single parents.

The lower income threshold is based on annual income under ISK 6.5 million, and the higher income threshold is based on annual income from ISK 6.5 – 9.5 million.

The lower income threshold provides an 80% discount on preschool tuition and the higher income threshold 40% discount on tuition.

Income criteria for married couples and cohabiting partners.

The lower income threshold is based on an annual income under ISK 9.5 million per year, and the higher income threshold is based on an annual income of 9.5 – ISK 12 million. The lower income threshold provides a 60% discount on preschool tuition, and the higher income threshold provides a 30% discount on tuition.

Staff discount

The discount for Reykjavík preschool staff is 40% of the tuition.

The highest discount on preschool tuition, which is 80%, applies to the above-mentioned categories, and discounts cannot be combined.

Sibling discount

The sibling discount remains unchanged, meaning a 100% discount on tuition fees for the older child for the same number of attendance hours as the younger child. A 100% discount on the board(meal) fees is granted for families with more than two children. This discount applies across preschool, compulsory school, and after school centers.

Examples of the impact of fee changes

A calculator for proposed changes to the preschool fee structure will soon be available on the City of Reykjavík's website.

Report

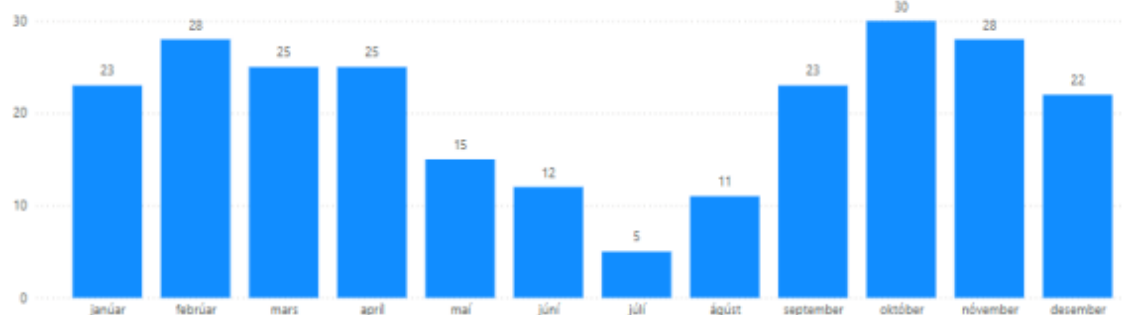


Reykjavík



The working environment in preschools has undergone significant changes over the past ten years. These include an increase in the number of children and staff from diverse cultural backgrounds, and a decrease in the number of preschool teachers, and at the same time professional demands have increased. Improvements to facilities have also

Fjöldi leikskóla þar sem börn hafa verið send heim hluta úr degi eða allan daginn vegna fálidunar eftir mánuðum 2024



had a major impact, with several preschools having to relocate departments or even the entire school due to various building related such as air quality problems. In addition, the increased number of preparation hours, changes in staff work obligations and extended leave have created new challenges.

Many measures have been taken to respond to these changes, such as a leave for staff to obtain teaching licenses, Icelandic language courses, actions to reduce the number of children per room, registration days to support changes in changes in staff duties and an increase in the management ratio for assistant preschool principals. Significant support is also provided through the fact that school services are now closer to the field via the project *A better city for children*, and professional coordinators in each district offer support to preschool principals.

In 2021, the report on *Professional Status of Managers in School and Leisure Activities* was published, analyzing challenges faced by managers at SFS¹ institutions and presenting proposals for improvement. The report clearly highlighted that preschools stood out from other institutions in terms of the challenges related to staff shortages and absences on the one hand, and a lack of professional staff on the other. These remain the main challenges faced by are still the preschool managers, as can be seen in regular news reports about understaffing and unforeseen reduction in children's preschool attendance, along with the resulting reduction in services for children and parents. For example, in 2024, 49 of 67 city-run preschools had to implement understaffing measures at some point during the year.

Further information on understaffing in Reykjavík preschools in 2024 can be found here:

¹ Translator's note: It is not certain what SFS stands for in this context.



In recent years, the Department of Education and Youth has undertaken a special initiative aimed at increasing the number of qualified preschool teachers, as it is widely recognized that the shortage of preschool teachers is one of the biggest challenges facing preschools. According to the Act on the Education, competence, and Recruitment of Teachers and School Administrators in Preschools, Primary Schools and Upper Secondary Schools from 2019, it is stated that two-thirds of position in each preschool should be filled by qualified teachers for teaching, care, and upbringing of children.

A recent report from the Ministry of Education and Children on the status of the preschool system in Iceland, shows that the proportion of qualified teachers has been declining in recent years. The report states that in 2016, the proportion of preschool teachers was 33%, but by 2023, it had dropped to 25%. Furthermore, the report reveals that in 15 out of the 260 preschools in Iceland, there was no qualified preschool teacher working, apart from the preschool principal. The steering committee believes that one of the most important ways to increase the number of preschool teachers is to implement necessary improvements to the working conditions and environment in Reykjavík Preschools.

The proposals above are, among other things, intended, to counter unforeseen understaffing measures which place a significant burden on parents and instead create predictability, while safeguarding the professional quality of preschool work.