



SANDEFJORD  
KOMMUNE

# I BARNEHAGEN SAMMEN

Informasjon til foreldre med barn i barnehage i  
Sandefjord



**ENGELSK**

Denne brosjyren er utarbeidet i Sandefjord kommune gjennom prosjektet «I BARNEHAGEN SAMMEN». Prosjektet er finansiert av Utdanningsdirektoratet og har som mål å øke andelen minoritetsspråklige barn som går i barnehage.

Takk til prosjektgruppa for gode diskusjoner om hvilke temaer som burde være med.

Tusen takk til styrerne i Elverhøy barnehage, Barnas Have (sentrum), Prestekragen / Krokusen barnehage og Bugården / Kapteinløkka barnehage for grundig gjennomlesning og gode innspill.

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# TOGETHER AT KINDERGARTEN

## Information to parents with children in kindergarten in Sandefjord

This information is for you who have children in a municipal or private kindergarten. We will describe the kindergartens' framework, values, organisation and content. Furthermore, we will say a little about daily routines and the course of the year. We also want to convey the important societal role of the kindergarten, both in preparation for school and as an arena for inclusion. We will also emphasize the important relationship between kindergarten and home.

Approximately 92% of all children in Norway attend kindergarten. In some countries, it is not common for children to attend kindergarten at all. Kindergartens in various countries can be quite different in several areas. What is considered to be good care and upbringing can also be culturally dependent. Society's expectations of parents and children also varies between different countries.

This brochure is made especially with minority language parents in mind<sup>1</sup> and describes what characterises Norwegian kindergartens in general and kindergartens in Sandefjord. We want to clarify some expectations and help strengthen the collaboration between parents and kindergarten.

### 1. KINDERGARTENS' FRAMEWORK AND VALUES

The Kindergarten Act (see link 1 at the end of the document) has been passed by Stortinget and regulates content and objectives for all kindergartens in Norway. Both municipal and private kindergartens are covered by the same legislation. The Kindergarten Act section 1 gives a good description of the kindergartens main objective:

*The kindergarten, in collaboration and close understanding with the home, must safeguard the children's need for care and play, and promote learning and formation as a basis for all-round development.*

The National Framework Plan for Kindergartens (link 2) describes the kindergartens' content and objectives more specifically. It states that the kindergartens' work must be based on the following values: democracy, diversity, mutual respect, equality, sustainable development and health.

The Framework Plan also describes what subject areas should be included in the kindergartens' activities and plans:

- Communication, language and texts
- Body, movement, nutrition and health.
- Art, culture and creativity

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<sup>1</sup> By 'minority language' we mean people with a language background other than Norwegian, Sami, Swedish, Danish and English.

- Nature, environment and technology
- Numbers, space and shape
- Ethics, religion and philosophy
- Local environment and society

Kindergartens also have their own statutes, which, among other things, describe rules for admission, payment, and parents' opportunity for co-determination. The statutes are the contract between the kindergarten and parents, and it is important to read and understand them.

The kindergartens also draw up an annual plan every year, and this is their most important pedagogical document. The annual plan is a work tool for the kindergartens and gives parents information about what will be taking place in the kindergarten throughout the year. The kindergarten can also have periodic plans and projects.

## 2. THE KINDERGARTENS' SOCIETAL ROLE

It is not compulsory to attend kindergarten in Norway; however, we still see it as the first step in the educational process. Approximately 92% of all children in Norway attend kindergarten for a shorter or longer period. The share of minority language children attending kindergarten is a little lower, around 82%; however, this is increasing every year. Research shows that minority language children who attended kindergarten do better in the school than those who do not.

It can be especially important for children with a different mother tongue than Norwegian to attend kindergarten for several years. In this way, the child can learn Norwegian well before starting school, whilst also learning their mother tongue at home. Children are able to learn multiple languages at the same time - this is common in large parts of the world. It is important that the parents speak their mother tongue with the child; both the home and the kindergarten should support the development of the child's multilingualism. The kindergartens have good competence in language development. They must support children using their mother tongue, but at the same time work actively with the children's Norwegian language knowledge.

The kindergartens provide a good foundation for further education for all children. In Norwegian society, it is very important to have an education - most jobs require more than 10 years of primary school. The goal is that everyone should have the opportunity to complete a minimum of secondary school.

Kindergartens are a safe arena for children to play, develop and explore. The shared knowledge, challenges and experiences that children acquire in kindergarten, create friendships and networks that are often important for the future. Many parents also develop a social network through kindergarten.

The kindergarten is a "society in miniature" where various children, parents and staff meet and where diversity is seen as a resource. Private and municipal kindergartens in Sandefjord have created a common "Standard for an equal and adapted kindergarten provision" ([link 3](#)). It describes how all children and families should be included and participate in the kindergarten's community, based on their own abilities and needs and should have the opportunity to influence the community.

As mentioned, all kindergartens in Norway have a common set of values, described in the Framework Plan. Among other things, the kindergarten will contribute to children developing democratic values and norms that form the basis of the society we have today. Furthermore, kindergartens must promote diversity and mutual respect by showing that there are different ways of thinking and living. The kindergarten must also promote equality and comparability, regardless of gender, functional ability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, social status, language and religion. In addition, they have an important task when it comes to sustainable development: the kindergarten will contribute to teaching children to take care of nature today and for the coming generation. Life skills and health must also be included in the kindergartens' values. This means, amongst other things, that children will experience well-being, joy of life, mastering and a sense of self-worth. The kindergarten should be a safe haven and should encourage fellowship and combat bullying.

### 3. START-UP AND ADAPTATION

The kindergartens in Sandefjord place great emphasis on giving children a good start-up and confident relations to other children and adults. A brochure on start-up and adaptation has been made and it has been translated into multiple languages (link 4). Amongst other things it states:

*“All children and parents and guardians<sup>2</sup> will receive adequate information about the kindergarten and the family will be appointed a contact person who will follow up the child. All children will be seen and heard and have the kindergarten content adapted to fit their needs”.*

Many kindergartens invite you to visit before start-up, to get to get to know you a little better and to offer information. When your child starts at kindergarten, you will be invited to a start-up meeting. The kindergarten wishes to know more about the child's background, development and needs, to be able to care for the child in the best possible way.

To begin with, the parents have to stay with the child. The adaptation period is different for each child and his/her particular needs. Some take three days, others three weeks. You can take as long as you need to feel confident.

### 4. THE KINDERGARTEN DAY

At start-up you will be given information about the kindergarten's daily rhythm and routines. Most kindergartens are open Monday to Friday from 07.00 to 16.30; however, check with your child's kindergarten. The parents choose when they bring the child to kindergarten in the morning, and when to collect in the afternoon - but it is good for the child to have a familiar daily routine and get to take part in activities along with others. Most kindergartens want the child to arrive no later than 09.30. A member of staff must be contacted when the child is dropped off and picked up. If the child is staying at home on any day, the kindergarten needs to be notified. The same applies if the child is being picked up by someone other than the usual person.

Sick children cannot attend kindergarten. In case of vomiting and diarrhoea, the child must stay home for a minimum of 48 hours after the last time he or she vomited or had diarrhoea. Children

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<sup>2</sup> 'Guardian' means the child's parents or others who care for the child.

should not be at kindergarten with a temperature or if they need e.g. paracetamol. It is also important that children with a severe cough or signs of respiratory infection stay at home. There are national guidelines for when children need to stay at home (link 5). Feel free to ask the kindergarten for more information. If the child becomes unwell during the day at kindergarten you will be contacted, and in such case, you must collect the child straight away.

It is normal to pay for food in the kindergarten (subsistence charge). The price varies between kindergartens, depending on what types of meals are offered. In most kindergartens, children also bring a packed lunch from home. The kindergartens focus on a healthy diet, with a lot of fruit and vegetables and less sugar. Children's allergies or other individual dietary needs are taken into account, and if your child has allergies etc., it is important that you inform about these at start-up.

A lot of activities take place at the kindergarten through the day, both in small and larger groups, both outdoors and indoors. It is normal that the children spend a lot of time outdoors, all year round. Fresh air and outdoor activity are considered to be of great value, regardless of weather and temperature, and getting dirty is part of the experience! This is quite unique in Norwegian kindergartens, and children need to have appropriate clothing for this type of activity (link 6). The kindergarten will inform you at start-up about what types of clothing and equipment the child needs. It is very common for children to have clothes handed down, for example from siblings and friends, and to buy things second hand.

There are also a lot of exciting things happening inside, such as drawing and other creative activities, reading, music and various games. There is also a lot of play time at kindergarten. Play time can be organised by the staff or the children can create their own activity, with help from staff when needed. Children's right to play is described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (link 7). Learning through playing is an important principle in Norwegian kindergartens. Through play time, both indoors and outdoors, children develop language proficiency. Play time also imparts knowledge about nature and the environment, technology, numbers, volume and shapes. Children also develop social competence at kindergarten. They learn to care for others, to share, to listen to others and find their place in a group, among other things.

Children who need to nap in kindergarten, usually sleep outside in a pram. We believe that the fresh air is good for children and they sleep better outside. The kindergartens have adapted areas for this, with a roof and/or walls. There are well-practiced routines for looking after the children when they are sleeping. Children must have a pram, duvet and other similar equipment in order to sleep outside. Parents need to wash these items on a regular basis. If the child is to sleep inside, this must be arranged with the kindergarten.

## **5. THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AT KINDERGARTEN**

Activities at kindergarten are arranged according to season and the calendar. In the winter, there can be outdoor play in the snow and in puddles; in spring we watch everything starting to grow; and in the summer perhaps play with water. In addition, the kindergarten sometimes visits a

park, a farm, a museum and other places. Through all these activities, the kindergarten incorporates the various subject areas, as outlined in the Framework Plan.

The kindergarten prepares for and marks various festive occasions that are common in Norway, such as Easter, 17 May (Constitution Day), and Christmas. Furthermore, it is common to mark the Sami National Day on 6 February and St. Lucia's Day on 13 December. In addition, kindergartens celebrate several international festivals and red-letter days, like carnival, UN-day, and mother tongue day.

The Framework Plan states: "The staff will give children knowledge of and mark red-letter days, holidays, and traditions in the Christian cultural heritage and in other life philosophies represented in the kindergarten." In many kindergartens, they mark Hindu Diwali, Kurdish Newroz and the Islamic festival Id Al Fitr. This does not mean that the kindergarten conducts religious education, but that both Christian and other festive occasions are marked. Children should receive confirmation of their identity and feel included. At the same time, the kindergarten contributes to children developing tolerance and respect for others.

The kindergarten also marks children's birthdays, with crowns, songs, balloons and other activities. If you wish to know more, feel free to speak to your kindergarten about this.

## **6. KINDERGARTEN STAFF**

All kindergartens have a Head Teacher (leader), kindergarten teachers, specialist workers and assistants. The kindergarten is divided into sections or bases, some with young children (0-3 years), and some with older children (3-5 years). A law has been passed regarding minimum staffing in kindergartens. The section/base with small children must have minimum of one educational supervisor per 7 children. Additionally, there must be at least 1 member of staff per 3 children. In the section with older children, there must be at least one educational supervisor per 14 children and one member of staff per 6 children.

The kindergartens have competent and trained staff, who have good knowledge of children's needs and development, physically and mentally, linguistically and socially. It is good to be able to use the kindergarten's employees as resources, for information and as teachers during the children's early years, when needed.

All kindergarten staff have a duty of confidentiality. This means that information related to parents and children will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons. Employees must also present an approved criminal record certificate, before starting work.

## **7. COLLABORATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND KINDERGARTEN**

The relationship with mother, father or other guardian is the child's most important relationship, also when the child is attending kindergarten. The kindergartens must foster a close collaboration with the home, built on mutual openness and trust. Norwegian kindergartens are different to kindergartens in other countries when it comes to close collaboration with parents. The staff and parents have a joint responsibility to address matters with one another, through

daily contact or conversations and meetings. Most kindergartens also use digital communication (e-mail, "SPOR", app). Most of this communication is in Norwegian, and it is important to ask if there is anything you do not understand.

Parents are invited to a minimum of two parent-teacher meetings through the year, where you meet an educational supervisor to talk about the child and kindergarten. Other specialised workers can be invited if this is agreed. If needed, it is important to request an interpreter. The kindergarten can also assess whether there is a need for an interpreter for better communication.

The kindergarten will also invite you to one or more parent meetings through the year. You are expected to attend – the meetings are both interesting and pleasant. It is fine to ask questions about anything you may be wondering about. The meeting is also a good way to get to know other parents. Many kindergartens will also invite you events such as, for example, an Easter breakfast, summer party or other things.

The parents of all the children in the kindergarten are together called the "parent council". The parent council contributes to good collaboration between the staff, and also selects representatives for FAU (Parents' Working Committee) and SU (Parent-Teacher Committee) The fact that parents have the opportunity for participation in the kindergartens in Norway is also different from a lot of other countries.

FAU consists of parents from each section/base. FAU, for example, can arrange social gatherings for children, families and staff, in addition to other forms of collaboration with the kindergarten. SU consists of representatives of both parents and employees. This group will address matters concerning the kindergarten's content, parent collaboration and annual plan.

## 8. COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

The kindergartens collaborate with several professional agencies, such as PPT (educational and psychological counselling service), family centre and child welfare services, to ensure that all children receive the best possible provision in the kindergarten, based on their needs. When it has been decided that children require services from these agencies, co-operation is extra important; however, both the kindergarten and parents can also consult the professional agencies for advice and guidance.

If the kindergarten has concerns about the child's care situation in the home, for example regarding food, health or hygiene, they have a duty to report this to the child welfare services. It is the child welfare services that evaluate whether they should look further into the matter. The same applies if the kindergarten is concerned about whether children are being exposed to mental or physical violence, or sexual abuse.

Section 104 of the Constitution (link 8) emphasizes that "for actions and decisions that affect children, the best interests of the child shall be a fundamental consideration.". The law also states that "The authorities of the state shall create conditions that facilitate the child's development, including ensuring that the child is provided with the necessary economic, social and health security, preferably within their own family".

## 9. TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

When a child gets a place in kindergarten, the place is kept until the start of school, unless the place is given up by the parents. The oldest children in kindergarten are called “school starters”. The kindergarten ensures that these children are given knowledge and challenges that give them a good basis for starting school.

Before the child leaves kindergarten, the kindergarten fills out a transition form that is sent to the school that the child will go to. The form contains information on what the school needs to know in order to be able to adapt their education programme in the best possible way for the child. The form is sent to the school with the parents' consent and thus describes the child's point of view before the transition to school.

## 10. MORE INFORMATION

You can find more information about each kindergarten in the kindergartens' statutes and plans. You can also ask the kindergarten staff.

On these pages you can find more information and texts in several languages:

Theme “mother tongue”: <https://www.morsmal.no/no/>

Multilingual material: <https://www.morsmal.no/no/tospraklig-materiell>

Children in multilingual families : <https://www.morsmal.no/no/foreldresamarbeid/veiledning-til-foreldre/5135-informasjonsheftet-barn-i-flerspraklige-familier>

The multilingual library: <https://dfb.nb.no/>

## 11. REFERENCES

1) The Kindergarten Act (Norwegian): <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-06-17-64>

2) The Framework Plan (Norwegian): <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/rammeplan/>

3) Sandefjord municipality: Standard for an equal and adapted kindergarten provision (Norwegian): <https://www.sandefjord.kommune.no/globalassets/oppvekst-og-kunnskap/ok-dokumenter/barnehagemyndigheten/standard-for-et-likeverdige-og-tilrettelagt-barnehagetilbud-i-sandefjord-kommune.pdf>

4) Sandefjord municipality: Start-up and adaption to kindergarten (several languages). <https://www.sandefjord.kommune.no/Skole-og-barnehage/Barnehage/information-in-other-languages/>

5) The Norwegian Institute of Public Health When does the child need to stay home from kindergarten? (Norwegian): <https://www.fhi.no/sv/barnehage/nar-ma-barnet-vare-hjemme-fra-barne/#naar-skal-barna-vaere-hjemme-fra-barnehagen>

6) Dress your child appropriately when it is cold (several languages):

<https://morsmal.no/no/foreldre-norsk/2382-kle-barna-riktig-i-vinterkulda>

7) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Norwegian) <https://barneombudet.no/for-voksne/barnekonvensjonen/hele-barnekonvensjonen/>

8) The Constitution of Norway: <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1814-05-17-nn> (§ 104 concerning the child's best interests)