

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Key Contextual Data

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Sources are briefly acknowledged below each section. Full details of all sources are to be found in the references section at the end of the key contextual data profile. Statistical data used in tables are indicated by an asterisk*, both in the relevant table and in the sources.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

ECEC system type and auspices

The Russian Federation has a multi-level approach towards early childhood education and care. Responsibilities are shared between the Federal Ministry of Education and Science (*Ministerstvo Obrasovanija i Nauki Rossijskoj Faderatcii*) and the regional Ministries of Education of the 85 administrative divisions (provinces, republics, districts [*krajas*], regions [*oblasts*], federal cities). Governance and regulatory measures are thus devolved to the regional level. At this regional level, ECEC is organised as a multi-sectoral system regarding provision for under-threes and over-threes.

Provision for the under-threes is not part of the education system and is – particularly for the under twos – provided by the private sector and regulated by the law on consumer rights. Hygiene standards are overseen by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Kindergartens for 3- to 7-year olds (ISCED 02) come under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science. In 2012, early childhood education was officially recognised as the first stage in the education system. The regional ministries of education are responsible for implementing national educational policies through steering and management strategies and through the allocation of resources. Responsibility for the organisation and co-funding of kindergartens lies with the municipalities.

Sources: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2011.
EFA 2015.

General objectives and legislative framework

The relevant legislation for early childhood education for 3- to 7-year olds (ISCED 02) is the Education Act 2012 ('On Education in the Russian Federation', No. 273-F2) and the Federal Standard of Education, No 115, 17 October 2013, known as FGOS (*Federal'nyye gosudarstvennyye standarty obshchego obrazovaniya*). The Education Act forms the basis for all education policies and sets out the general and curricular regulations for the education system.

The main document which regulates early childhood education is the Federal Standard of Pre-school Education (FGOS DO). Early childhood education for children with special needs is also regulated by a Federal Standard (FGOS-OVZ).

Overall policy goals for the field of early childhood education are:

- to improve the status of early childhood education,
- to work towards creating equality of opportunities,
- to guarantee a high level of overall quality in early childhood education,
- to create a unified system of early childhood education and care.

The main goals of FGOS DO are:

- Encouraging parents to participate in the educational process (e.g. parents' councils in kindergartens can influence financial decisions);

- Strengthening the development of social-emotional skills, learning dispositions, basic language/literacy, mathematical competences and motor skills;
- Supporting school readiness skills, particularly in the case of 6-year olds;
- Providing equal opportunities for all children according to their individual needs;
- Ensuring that early childhood services are of a high quality.

Each kindergarten can set a programme priority, such as museum pedagogics, intercultural education or an ethno-cultural component (e.g. have a German or Jewish profile).

The State Programme 'On the Development of Education' (2014, No. 295) has a sub-section on the development of the early childhood education system and on the evaluation of preschool provision. This sub-section states that the aims are to modernise the curricular framework for kindergartens, to give all children a chance to participate in early childhood education, and to improve the level of participation rates and the quality of educational outcomes. By 2016, all 3- to 7-year olds had access to early childhood education and national educational standards were introduced in all forms of pre-primary provision.

The implementation of FGOS DO is the duty of the regional ministries of education and each of them has an individual approach. Since this is a relatively new development, there are no official reports yet, but implementation of the Federal Standard has been successfully set in motion.

Sources: Bertram, T. and C. Pascal (IEA) 2016.
EFA 2015.
Ministry of Education and Science 2014.
Savinskaya, O. 2015.

ECEC entitlement and compulsory enrolment age

All children from the age of 3 years are entitled to a place in kindergarten. Attendance is not compulsory and is free of charge.

Compulsory schooling starts at age 7, although some children may begin when they are 6½ years old, others not until they are 8 years old. Delayed enrolment is only possible by special request of the parents and is only accepted in the case of developmental delays.

Source: Bertram, T. and C. Pascal (IEA) 2016.

Main types of provision

Current ECEC policies in Russia are mainly directed towards expanding and improving provision for children aged 3 years up to compulsory schooling.

Provision for under-threes (ISCED 01), which can be either centre-based or home-based, only receives limited financial support, and therefore only 40% of children applying for a place can be admitted. *Centre-based* day nurseries (*yaslie*) offer places for children aged from 2 months up to 3 years on a full-day or part-time basis (usually for two to four hours daily). *Home-based* childcare facilities (*domashije gruppy*) in so-called family groups are either organised by ECEC institutions (*detskije centry*) or provided by private persons. Since this sector is only loosely regulated, business models have spread, and in the meantime large franchise chains are also offering ECEC services across the country. According to the relevant legislation, it is also possible to establish groups for children aged 2 months up to 3 years in kindergartens for up to three hours a day.

Additionally there are some sessional groups (*gruppy kratkovremennogo pribyvanija*) that admit toddlers around 1½ years of age, sometimes together with a parent, for three or four hours per day. There is no publicly funded, full-time provision for under 2-year olds. In some areas, privately run nanny agencies are available.

Kindergartens (*detskije sady*) (ISCED 02) are the main form of provision for children aged 3 up to school entry age. Most kindergartens provide full-time, part-time and extended hours services. The children play and learn together in same-age groups. Kindergartens vary greatly in size. Nearly half (46% in 2015) are attended by not more than 75 children and are open 12 hours per day.

In the context of *Perestroika* and economic upheaval, investment in education fell, as did the social level and status of teachers. It became clear that the previous system of ECEC could no longer adapt to the changing needs of families and children. Although the level of kindergarten provision is currently stable, over the past two decades a considerable decline in the total number of institutions can be observed. Whereas in 1995 there were 68,600 kindergartens in the Russian Federation, by 2013 the total number had sunk to 44,200. At the same time, the number of children attending kindergarten increased from 5.5 million in 1995 to 6.3 million in 2013. Although expenditure on ECEC rose by 18% between 2012 and 2015, inflation has resulted in an effective decrease of funding to the sector. This can be explained by the following: In recent years, old buildings have been replaced by new ones able to take in a larger number of children (entities with 300 or more children are quite common); in urban facilities in particular, there has been an increase in group size; staff who retired were not replaced by a sufficient number of fully trained younger staff, leading to a certain deprofessionalisation of the workforce. At the same time, there has been an improvement in effectiveness in the sense of rising participation rates.

Table 1

Russian Federation: Kindergarten (3-7) development between 1932 and 2013* (numbers in thousands)

1932	1940	1950	1960	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
27,5	29,9	30,2	47,6	74,5	87,9	68,6	51,3	46,5	45,1	44,2

Table 2 shows the allocation of expenditure on childcare provision and preschool education. Expenditure on ECEC programmes such as the family kindergartens or short-term stay groups has been increasing in recent years.

Table 2

Russian Federation: Expenditure on ECEC 2012-2015 (in millions of roubles)

Years	Expenditure on pre-school education	Expenditure on child care	Total expenditure
2012	144 737,4	254 509,0	399 246,4
2013	156 755,4	289 296,5	446 051,9
2014	161 536,5	298 120,3	459 656,8
2015	166 317,7	306 944,0	473 656,8

Source: Rosstat 2016.

Short-term stay groups in kindergartens (*grupy kratkovremennoe pribyvanieya*) cater mainly for children between 1½ and 5 years. They are provided on a sessional basis and usually organised in mixed-age groups (1½ to 3 years and 3 to 5 years). They are established both as preparatory groups prior to kindergarten attendance and as an alternative form to full-time attendance. These groups are also attended by children with special needs who are not able to attend kindergarten full-time. Most special needs groups are supervised by special education teachers who support the development of social and communicative skills in relationships with other children and adults. Although hours of attendance are shorter, these groups nevertheless have to adhere to the Fed-

eral Standard (FGOS DO), taking into account the specific structures regarding age and developmental differences.

Family kindergartens (*semeynyi detskiy sad*) are a form of family day care for families with three or more children from 2 months up to 7 years. The family kindergarten is connected with a regular kindergarten near the family's home. In special courses mothers or fathers are taught basic knowledge in pedagogical and psychological issues. Following that they can take care of their own children or other children from families with three or more children - at most three children below kindergarten age. The mother (or father) is officially employed by the kindergarten and receives a salary plus money for meals.

Other forms of educational provision are:

- Kindergartens prioritising one or several directions of child development (intellectual, artistic and aesthetic, physical etc.);
- Health support kindergartens prioritising health improvement measures and procedures;
- Combined kindergartens which may include general development, compensatory and health improvement groups in various combinations;
- Child development centres - kindergartens which emphasise the physical and psychological development, and adaptation and health improvement of all children in the centre;
- Consultation points in government kindergartens where specialists provide psychological and pedagogical support for parents of children not attending preschools;
- Early child care services which provide medical/social and psychology support for young children with developmental delays or from disadvantaged/vulnerable families;
- Children's support centres, which provide pedagogical work directed to the early ages from 6 months to 3 years; these centres are mainly affiliated to kindergartens.
- *Legotheka*, open for children from 2 months to 7 years not enrolled in the public preschool system because of health or developmental problems who need support in psychosocial, health or pedagogic issues.

Sources: Bertram, T. and C. Pascal (IEA) 2016.
*Rosstat 2015.
Taratukhina, M.S. et al. 2006.
Skorolupova, O. 2013.

Provider structures

Most kindergartens are provided by regional governments or municipalities (i.e. they are either state or municipal public institutions). There is some private provision, run by organisations/legal entities. These are required to have a license and are not subsidised through state funds. They are regulated in terms of sanitary standards, the centre-specific education programme and zoning criteria. In the larger cities there are also private facilities which do not have an official licence and these are often known as 'learning centres' or 'short-term stay facilities'. There are no national statistical data available for this form of private provision.

Source: Volkova, T. 2017.

Participation rates in regulated provision

Over the past ten years, the participation rates of children aged 3 to under 7 years increased from 57.3% in 2005 to almost two-thirds (64.6%) of the age-group in 2014*. There are no national statistical data available for participation rates of children under 3 years of age.

Table 3

Russian Federation: Participation rates in kindergartens, 2005-2014*

Year	0 to under 3 years, in %	3 to under 7 years, in %
2005	n/a	57.3
2010	n/a	59.2
2014	n/a	64.6

Source: *Rosstat 2016.

Financing and costs for parents

Participation in the Russian education system is free of charge. This means that no parental fees are required for kindergarten attendance. This free provision covers food and materials and the basic educational programme. This also applies to some programmes for children under age 3. However, nearly all kindergartens offer additional courses for children such as swimming, hand-crafts, arts, etc., for which the parents have to pay. This also applies to additional support provided by speech therapists or psychologists. These extra-curricular activities boost the kindergarten's revenue and enable extra payments to be made to the teachers. Some kindergartens generate an additional budget of 100,000 -200,000 EUR per year¹.

Early childhood education is jointly funded through federal and municipal budgets. It is government policy to make education organisations more independent from federal-level funding and to promote a system of competition and entrepreneurship. In most regions, teachers' salaries are thus dependent on the financial success and overall rating of educational institutions through the national rating system.

For attendance at private ECEC facilities, which receive no state funding and therefore have to cover their own running costs entirely, parents pay a fee. This may be as high as between 1,000€ and 1,500€ per month. Staff salaries are higher in private provision and the group size smaller.

There is no information available regarding parental fees for children in day nurseries or other forms of childcare provision.

Staff-child ratios

According to the national standards the number of children in a group is related to the square meters of the premises. A typical kindergarten unit is divided into four areas: living/playing/learning room, sleeping room, bathroom and room for housekeeping. The group is staffed with two pre-school-teachers working in two shifts and one assistant. In terms of figures (6,000,000 children, 485,000 teachers in two shifts) the average group in 2012 comprised 25 children for which one teacher is responsible. Usually there is an additional teacher (for music, sport) present which reduces the number of children per teacher.

¹ The sums mentioned are based on personal communications and differ from kindergarten to kindergarten. The idea is to give an indication of possible additional budgets.

Source: Rosstat 2016.

Curricular frameworks

Education in the Soviet system was quite effective in dealing with the tasks set by the State. The programme in those times was adapted to different age groups, prescribing a particular regime of the number and content of lessons necessary for each age group, as well as norms for children's physical and psychological development (what a child should know and be able to do at each age level). However, the period following *Perestroika* made new demands on the curricular framework for early childhood education. In 1989 a new curricular programme for kindergartens was introduced, providing the basis for the new Law on Preschool Education in 1992.

Today, kindergartens have to work within the framework of the Federal Standard (2013) for preschool education (FGOS DO). A broad and balanced approach to the curriculum is encouraged, including personal and emotional development as well as respecting diversity and individuality; social development and citizenship; learning dispositions; physical and health education; language and communication; reading and literacy; mathematical skills; understanding the natural world; science; technology and the digital world; and second/foreign language acquisition. The general pedagogical approach foregrounds play-based learning, creativity, communication and experiential learning. Parental involvement is encouraged. Recognising specific developmental and learning difficulties at an early stage also constitutes an important goal of early childhood education.

The daily educational programme is organised according to a tight schedule which allows only minimum time for free play. The content has to be age-specific and 'play-based'.

There is no official curricular framework for work with under 3-year olds.

Sources: Bertram, T. and C. Pascal (IEA) 2016.
EFA 2015.

Inclusion agenda

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

With the ministerial decrees of 19.12.2014 (No. 1598 and No. 1599) issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation**, the segregation of children with disabilities and other complex needs in special educational institutions was officially ended. According to article 28 of the federal Education Act (29.12.2012 No.273-F3 'On Education in the Russian Federation'***), the role of the state and municipal authorities in providing for these children and the conditions for educational activities for children with special/complex needs are spelled out in detail. Each educational institution can choose its own strategies and approaches towards working with children with special educational needs.

Today, each child with special/complex needs is entitled to attend a mainstream kindergarten. Kindergartens, like schools, are obliged to accept every child wishing to enrol and to provide a special learning programme which includes children without special/complex needs. Didactical support is organised by the Herzen University St. Petersburg. Currently, a number of pilot schemes are being conducted in different institutions, working on models of 'best practice', which will be reviewed by the Ministry of Education and Science. This concerns programme schedules as well as normative documents that have to be officially approved in order to fulfil the requirements for administrative monitoring. The final recommendations will be published by the Ministry, providing a framework of federal-level standards.

The regional ministries of education are currently engaged in the implementation of these decrees and in organising related professional development courses for teachers. In rural areas there are still problems of access, whereas in the large cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, the inclusion agenda is well organised – from early childhood up to adult age.

Before entering the early childhood education system each child with special needs and disabilities receives a medical statement about the given level of special needs. It is then aimed to give each child the appropriate support, e.g. through speech therapists, physiologists or psychologists or special education teachers. Children with significant physical and/or psychological disorders are supported by an individual tutor who is paid by the government. Mobility and access to the buildings is assured.

There are different inclusive and integrative models available in mainstream settings for these children. One of the forms is to establish a separate group for them within the regular setting.

In 2014, 54,691 children with disabilities up to 7 years of age attended a pre-school institution. Taking into account that a total 6.3 million children are enrolled in preschool provision, this indicates a proportion of roughly 1% (0.9%).

Table 4

Russian Federation: Number of children with disabilities in early childhood provision who receive state subsidies, 2014*

Age-group	number
Under 1 year	3
1-year olds	277
2-year olds	3,148
3-year olds	7,440
4-year olds	11,304
5-year olds	13,491
6-year olds	14,066
7-year olds and older	4,962
Total	54,691

According to national statistical data, 57.4% of children with special educational needs attended a kindergarten in 2016. Health grounds are the reason for the majority of those not attending. In Moscow in 2016, for example, there were 228 children with special needs attending 114 kindergartens.

Children with special needs and their parents can apply for support services provided by NGOs. These services are offered on the website of the “Common Government Services” (*gosudarstvennykh i municipalnykh uslug*) which is accredited by every regional government. Parents have to pay for the services, unless they are from disadvantaged backgrounds or have more than three children.

Children with a background of migration

Russia is a multi-ethnic country, with around 200 different minorities. In 2015, 86% of the population were Russians; 3.2 % Tatar, 1% Chechen and 10% ‘others’. Russia officially recognizes Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism as traditional religions. About 15% to 20% are Orthodox, 10% to 15% Muslims, 2% other Christians. The number of special ethnic or religious kindergartens is very low and these institutions do not play a role in ECEC overall. Immigrants are mainly living and working illegally in Russia. Enrolment in a kindergarten is tied to the place of registration. Since most immigrants are not legally registered, their children are therefore not entitled to attend a kindergarten or a school. Private provision is the only alternative, which is usually too expensive.

There are no state funded programmes on inclusion/integration.

Sources: Common Government Services 2016.
EFA 2015.
***Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation , Federal Law 2012.
**Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation 2014.
*Rosstat 2016.

Monitoring – Evaluation – Research

The main organ at the federal level is the Federal Agency for Supervision in the Field of Education and Science (*Federalnoe agenstvo po obrasovaniyu - Rosobrasovanie*). Its tasks are threefold: assuring that federal education standards are followed; licensing; and state accreditation. Each level of administration reports to the next higher one. Under the law, quality assurance is the duty of the regional administrations. Inspections of the kindergartens and schools focus on issues of compliance with regulations (room size, heating, equipment, meals, safety aspects) and with educational standards (organisation of daily programme and learning processes), management and funding. Results are reported to the settings, to the service providers, and also published on the internet. For teachers, this kind of administrative monitoring is mostly seen as a bureaucratic burden, since the reports are not used to establish a system of quality improvement but merely to assure that the requirements of the federal standards are met.

Russia has several institutions of higher education which conduct research on early childhood education issues, such as the Chair in Pedagogy at Lomonosow University, Herzen University in St. Petersburg, and Moscow Pedagogical State University. Further institutions working on topics of preschool education are the Russian Academy of Education (RAO) and Federal Institute of Education (FIRO), which are (independent) government institutions. Also all 85 federal subjects (political divisions) have a regional academy/didactical centre for school and early childhood education, responsible for vocational education and training but also conducting scientific research.

However, the quality of research often does not meet international standards. Also, because of a language gap, the work of Russian scientists is only rarely published internationally, and therefore rankings in the citation indices tend to be low. For researchers and teachers, hundreds of conferences, roundtables and seminars take place at the local, regional and federal levels each year. These provide a professional development context for teachers to present on 'best practices' and research, exchange with colleagues, and also to publish articles in the conference documentation.

Since 2012, the news agency RIA Novosti, together with the Russian Academy of Education, started to rate municipal kindergartens in Russia. In 2014, 7,100 out of a total of 43,000 kindergartens took part in this assessment. Participation was voluntary and depended on the interest of the local authorities. Therefore the figures and ratings do not provide statistical evidence. But data indicate that the implementation of the Federal Standard leaves a lot to be desired, particularly in rural areas.

RIA Novosti describes the purpose of the rating as follows: "By publishing ratings of the social domain, the Agency wishes to attain the following goals:

- transparency and openness of the social domain, reduction of corruption;
- public control;
- detection of progress and errors in the development and implementation of the social policy;
- stimulation of a healthy competition between the institutions of social domain;
- more accessible services of the social domain for the population;
- stimulation of a public discussion of the ways to reform the social domain."

The ratings show that, although they have been applied for several years now, none of the evaluated kindergartens met the requirements of the best group (100%-75% of all attainable points).

For the work in settings with under-threes a number of learning outcomes are detailed in the curricular framework, e.g. relating to language and social development. However, there are no assessments carried out at the federal or regional level or reports on these outcomes.

Sources: Bertram, T. and C. Pascal (IEA) 2016.
RIA Novost 2012.

Parental leave arrangements

Maternity leave (*otpusk po berennosti i rodam*) is granted on a paid basis for 140 days (70 days before and 70 days after the child's birth). In the case of a difficult birth or the birth of twins, the period of leave is extended to 156 or 194 days. During this time the mothers receive a payment based on their last average salary.

After the second birth, women can apply for the so called 'Mothers' Capital' (*materinskij kapital*)*. This money (in 2017, 505.000 RUB –7369€) is not paid directly in cash but is used to improve the capital stock on the mother's pension fund (this can be done by writing an enquiry to the pension fund), to improve the housing situation (if you buy a flat engaging in a special state-supported mortgage programme for new buildings, you can use this as a first rate on your mortgage) or to pay for the children's education and childcare fees, although it is not entirely clear how this really functions in practice. In addition, several child allowance programmes for young families or families with more than three children have been established at local levels.

Mothers are entitled to a three-year period of parental leave (*otpusk po ukhodu za rebenkom*). For a period up to 18 months, the most recent monthly salary is paid. Fathers do not have this entitlement. After 18 months and up to a maximum of 3 years, the monthly payment is limited to 50 RUB (0.73€). There are also other forms of support, e.g. families with three or more children receive free bus tickets or discount on fees for water, electricity and gas.

Source: Maternity Capital Programme. 2017.

Historical highlights and shifts

1860	From this date onwards the first, mostly private kindergartens are established in Russia, some of them attached to an elementary school, and strongly influenced by the pedagogical ideas of Pestalozzi and Froebel.
1917	Attempts to establish a public education system had already been made before the October Revolution. Following the Revolution, all education institutions are nationalised. Since this time, western pioneers such as Friedrich Froebel – and later Maria Montessori – have a sustained influence on the professional work of early childhood pedagogues.
1920s and 1930s	Lev Vygotsky's ideas start to influence the philosophical principles of (early childhood) education – and continue to do so up to the present day.
From 1927 to early 1950s	During the period of Stalinist rule, many progressive thinkers are repressed and deported. Education, including early childhood education, becomes more and more influenced by propaganda.
1930s and 1940s	The humanist ideas and moral ('character') education approaches of A.S. Makarenko, one of the most influential Soviet pedagogues, contribute towards the shaping of the

	education system in the context of communist ideals. He developed the idea of collective learning processes which included new group structures, combining various stages of development, and integrating methods of aesthetic and activity education. He is considered to have established the structure of the Soviet education system.
1950s and 1960s	During the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, resources are allocated towards building a competitive science sector.
1990s until 2005	<i>Perestroika</i> and change of the society system. Lack of financial support, very poor working conditions for teachers. Overall stagnation. 1989 new curricular programme for kindergartens, which was the basis for the new law on preschool education in 1992 and the amendment in 1996 regarding the “quality and function of preschool organisations and the development of psychological and physical health of children, their intellectual and personal development and the care of emotional wellbeing of every child”. Also at this time, under Boris Yeltsin, first steps towards inclusion were initiated.
2012	The Education Act ‘On Education in the Russian Federation’ codifies the right of all citizens to education.
2013	Ministerial Order “On the Validation of a Federal State Standard for Early Childhood Education”
2014	The State Programme “On the Development of Education” puts a special emphasis on early childhood education. The Federal Standard (FGOS OVZ) changes the policy agenda for children with special needs to full inclusion.

Source: Compiled by Tatiana Volkova.

Current challenges for the system of Early Childhood Education and Care in Russia

Country expert assessment by Tatiana Volkova

Creating a stable financing system

During recent years, the Russian early childhood education system has been facing immense changes. Unfortunately the financing is no longer stable. Whereas before the crises about 3 billion USD from the federal budget were spent on modernising buildings, further investment is now decreasing. This unstable situation has led to high levels of uncertainty among teachers since salaries are declining (by inflation or by less money on additional education) and because money additionally earned is allocated to renovations and other expenses. An immediate challenge for the future is to ensure that a certain percentage of the State budget is allocated and invested in education in order to mitigate the huge regional disparities in the education system.

Ensuring quality in staff development

The development of human resources will be another huge challenge. This does not only mean improving salaries or supporting life-long learning. In the current economic situation, the need for newly qualified pedagogical staff is leading to a focus on secondary vocational education rather than higher education.

It is also necessary to establish a nationwide system of quality management in preschool education settings as well as in the institutions responsible for the initial professional studies of teachers. The variety of standards in teacher education is widespread and does not always meet the needs of a modern education system.

A pathway for a structured curricular development is urgently needed and the TVET (Teachers' Vocational Education and Training) - education has to be reformed by teaching relevant knowledge and involvement of social partners in the education process.

Linking early childhood education and social inclusion issues

The federal law on preschool education and on inclusion is an important step towards modernising early childhood education. It aims to equalise educational opportunities and provide a framework for regions and organisations which are below average. Until now steps have been taken to implement the new laws, but only a limited number of the recommendations worked out by several working groups have been approved by the federal Ministry of Education and Science (particularly regarding the issues of inclusion). So at the present time, Russia still faces considerable regional disparities regarding the quality of early childhood education.

Social exclusion is also a problem to be faced in early childhood education. Families with two or more children are financially excluded from the additional, fee-paying education programmes in kindergartens, which support specific skills and the development of children. Possibilities of escaping social exclusion through education are not high. The government is focusing on providing the basics of education and social support. Links could and should be set on a regional basis.

Demographic data

Total population

During the period of political and economic turmoil in the 1990s, the birth rate fell dramatically and – combined with a high mortality rate – led to a significant drop in population numbers. It is only since 2013 that the population in Russia has begun to increase again: whereas the birth rate in the year 2000 was 1.19, it had risen to 1.75 by 2015.

Table 6

Russian Federation: Population and households in numbers, changes between 1995 and 2015*

Year	Population	Estimated number of households
1995	148,293,000	54,923,000
2005	143,801,000	53,260,000
2014	143,667,000	53,210,000
2015	146,267,000	54,173,000

16% of the population is aged 0-14 years, 70% 15-64 years, and 14% are 65 or older.

Source: * Rosstat 2016.

Children under age 7

Since most children do not start school until age 7 in the Russian Federation and since demographic data are available, children up to age 7 are included in this section.

In 2012, 7.9% of the entire population in Russia were children under 7 years of age, 3.6% were children under 3 years of age, and 4.3% children between 3 and 7 years. While these shares were

well below the then EU-average in 1995, in 2012 they were slightly above the EU27 average. No more recent data are available.

Table 7
Russian Federation: Children under 7 years of age, 2012

Age	Number of children
Under age 1	1,837,406
1-year olds	1,722,170
2-year olds	1,670,080
Total under age 3	5,229,656
3-year olds	1,676,178
4-year olds	1,627,374
5-year olds	1,520,797
6-year olds	1,464,992
Total 3 to under age 7	6,289,341
Total 0- to under 7-year olds	11,518,997

Table 8
Russian Federation: Children under 7 years of age – share in total population compared with EU countries, 1995-2012, in %*

Age	1995	Ø EU15 ²	2005	Ø EU25	2012	Ø EU27
Under 3 years	2.9	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.6	3.2
3 to under 7 years	3.8	4.7	4,4	4.2	4,3	4.2
0 to under 7 years	6.7	8.0	7.9	7.3	7,9	7.4

* own calculations, deviations due to roundings

Sources: *Eurostat 2015.
Rosstat 2016.

Single households with children under age 6

There are no national data available on the number/proportion of single households with children under age 6.

Employment rates of parents with children under age 6

The overall employment rate in the Russian Federation in the year 2016 was 66.6%³ (compared with 58.5% in 2000 and 62.7% in 2010). The proportion of male and female workers is roughly the same (51% and 49%). The unemployment rate is officially 5.2 %. The figures show a relatively low overall employment rate. This is due to the fact that not all economic activities are registered in the statistics.

With 64% of mothers with children under 6 years of age in employment, the proportion of working mothers in 2014 was slightly above that of the EU28 average (60.7%). There are no statistical data available for the percentage of working fathers.

² The 1995 data are for the EU15 countries at the time (AT, BE, DK, DE, IE, EL, ES, F, FI, IT, LU, NL, PT, SE, UK); the 2005 data (EU25) also include CY, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LT, MT, PL, SI, SK. Data for 2014 include the additional EU28 countries BG, RO und HR.

³ The labour force participation rate includes jobseekers who are not employed; due to the social system, people do not apply for government subsidies in the case of unemployment.

Table 9

Russian Federation: Employment rates of parents with children under age 6 compared with EU states, 2005-2014

	Year	Mothers in per cent	Fathers in per cent
Russian Federation*	2005	n/a	n/a
	2010	63.3	n/a
	2014/15	64.0	n/a
European Union**	EU15 – 2005	56.2	90.0
	EU27 – 2010	58.2	86.6
	EU28 – 2014	60.7	86.5
Highest rate of employment	2005	Slovenia – 76.8	Cyprus – 95.3
	2010	Slovenia – 76.7	Netherlands – 93.5
	2014	Sweden – 79.2	Malta/Czech Republic – 93.9
Lowest rate of employment	2005	Malta – 29.3	Bulgaria – 72.4
	2010	Hungary – 32.7	Latvia – 74.8
	2014	Slovak Republic – 38.1	Spain – 76.5

Sources: *Rosstat 2016
**Eurostat 2015.

Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion

Around 60% of the population in Russia lives at least temporarily in poverty. Poverty in Russia is defined as income below the minimum wage. This minimum wage is set by the regional governments in relation to the economic circumstances⁴. The figures for 2015 show that nearly 35% of the population is either living in or is at risk of falling into poverty. According to Rosstat, in 2015, 13.3 % of all Russians were living below subsistence level (compared with 10.7% in 2012 and 11.2% in 2014). Major risk factors include place of residence, health status, and household composition. Official statistics show that families with children have a high risk of poverty. Likewise, a study by the Moscow Higher School of Economics, published in 2014*, indicates that children are at major risk of poverty: “Just 10% of households with two children avoid low-income poverty, while more than half of such families fall into chronic poverty.” Moreover, “The risk is even higher for households with three children, of which more than 80% fall into chronic poverty”**. Children living in rural areas are especially at risk of poverty.

Table 10

Russian Federation: Number of households living below subsistence level and percentage of these households with and without children***

	2002	2005	2010	2014
Number of households living below subsistence level	12,916,000	9,480,000	6,738,000	6,067,000
Households without children in %	46.7	50.0	42.5	37.1
Households with children up to 16 years in %	53.3	50.0	57.5	62.9
Among them: with				
1 child in %	34.2	31.2	31.2	30.7
2 children in %	15.7	15.2	20.3	23.6
3 and more children in %	3.3	3.6	6.0	8.6

Source: Rosstat 2016 and own calculations

⁴ According to Rosstat, the median-wage in 2015 was 22,729 RUB. Rosstat only provides numbers for 2014 and 2015.

The table shows that the number of households living under subsistence level dropped from 46.7% in 2002 to 37.1% in 2014, whereas the percentage of households with children living under subsistence level rose from 53.3% to 62.9%. A closer look at the data shows that especially households with 2 or more children have a higher risk of falling into poverty, even though net wages rose significantly during this period.

Sources: **National Research University Higher School of Economics 2014.
***Rosstat 2016.
*Slobodenyuk, E. 2014.

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