

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Key contextual data

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Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Please note

In alignment with country-specific usage, the term used in this report for the main type of centre-based ECEC provision is **kindergarten** (*detskije sady*, 0–6/7)¹. Any additional forms are described where appropriate.

Historical milestones in ECEC in Russia

1860	The first, mostly private, kindergartens are established in Russia from this time onwards, some of them attached to schools, and strongly influenced by the pedagogical ideas of Pestalozzi and Froebel.
1866 – 1917	The first non-fee-paying "people's kindergarten" is established in St. Petersburg in 1866, as well as the first fee-paying private kindergarten for children of the educated classes. Since this time, Western pioneers such as Friedrich Froebel and later Maria Montessori had a continuing influence on the professional work of early childhood educators.
1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Even before the October Revolution, attempts were made to establish a public education system. After the revolution, all institutions are nationalised. – "Declarations on early education" – Between 1918 and 1920 the number of kindergartens rises from 400 to 4,823.
1920s and 1930s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lev Vygotsky's ideas start to influence the philosophical principles of (early childhood) education – and continue to do so up to the present day. – Children start school when they are 8 years old.
From 1927 to early 1950s	During the period of Stalinist rule, many progressive thinkers are repressed and deported. Education, including early childhood education, becomes increasingly influenced by propaganda.
1932/34	First national curricular guidelines for kindergartens to ensure continuity between early education and school.
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	In 1959, a new type of early childhood educational institution is established – the nursery-kindergarten (<i>yasly-sad</i>), which, at the request of parents, children can attend from 2 months to 7 years. During the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, resources are allocated towards building a competitive science and research sector.
1964	A new comprehensive education programme becomes mandatory for kindergartens.
1980-2010	School entry age is reduced to 7 years (optionally also for 6 year-olds).

¹ **Editors' note:** International data sources use varying ways of presenting the age range of children enrolled in ECEC settings. We have chosen the following age-inclusive format for the SEEPRO-3 reports: **0–2** years for children **up to** 3 years of age and **3–5** years for 3, 4 and 5 year-olds. For Russia, the relevant formats are **0–2** years and **3–5/6** years. Whereas children usually start school at 6, earlier or later enrolment is also possible.

1985	The Standard Educational Programme for Kindergartens (<i>Tipovaya Programma Vospitaniya v Detskom Sadu</i> , 1962) is revised and specifies for all Soviet kindergartens what children learn as well as the didactic-methodological approaches of the professionals.
1989	Another revision of the curricular programme under <i>perestroika</i> allows under the "new vision for early childhood education" (<i>Novaya Kontseptsiya Doshkol'nogo Vospitaniya</i>) more variation in terms of educational content and methods.
Early 1990s	Alternative educational programmes that place more emphasis on play and creativity appear, such as Golden Key (" <i>Zolotoy klyuchik</i> "), Step by Step (" <i>Shag za shagom</i> "), Waldorf or Montessori.
1990s until 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In the context of <i>perestroika</i> and economic upheaval, investment in education falls, as did the social level and status of the skilled workers. – A new curriculum for kindergartens (1989) is introduced. This is the basis for the 1992 Early Education Act and the 1996 amendments regarding the "quality and function of early educational institutions and the development of children's psychological and physical health, their intellectual and personal development and care for the emotional well-being of each child". At the same time, under Boris Yeltsin, the first steps towards inclusion are taken – Many private, fee-paying settings are founded.
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Education Act "On Education in the Russian Federation" codifies the right of all citizens to education. – Children from the age of 2 months to 7 years are legally entitled to a free place in an early education setting. – Children can start school between 6½ and 8 years of age.
2013	Ministerial Order "On the Validation of a Federal State Standard for Early Childhood Education".
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The state programme "On the Development of Education" puts a special emphasis on early childhood education. – The Federal Standard (FGOS OV2) changes the policy agenda for children with special needs to full inclusion.
2018	The Ministry of Education and Science is divided into two separate ministries: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.
2022	Ministerial Order "On the validation of the federal educational programme for preschool education"

Sources: Volkova 2018; Bodrova and Yudina 2018; Shiyan et al. 2018; Baskaeva and Tatrova 2020

ECEC system type and auspices

The system of early childhood education and care in the Russian Federation is characterized by multi-level governance. Responsibilities are divided between the Ministry of Education (*Ministerstvo prosveshcheniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii*) and the regional ministries of education of the administrative units or so-called 'subjects' of the Federation (provinces, republics, regions (*kraja, oblasti*), autonomous republics, autonomous districts (*avtonomnye okruga*), cities of federal significance).

The Ministry of Education is responsible for issuing and implementing state regulations and legislation for educational provision, including ECEC settings, as well as for the development of quality assessment methods (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation 2019).

The regional ministries of education are responsible for implementing national education strategies through steering and management strategies and by allocating funds. The municipalities are responsible for the organisation and co-funding of kindergartens. Each



kindergarten is responsible for the implementation of the education programme (Bertram and Pascal 2016, 115).

Kindergartens are the main form of educational provision up to school entry age. The Education Act stipulated that early education can start from the age of 2 months. However, most parents do not send their children to kindergarten until the end of paid parental leave, i.e. when they are 18 months old.

General objectives and legislative framework

Supporting vulnerable children and reducing social disadvantages and inequalities is seen as an important goal of the early childhood education system. ECEC settings are also seen as support measures for balancing parental employment with family duties. Preparation for school and citizenship are also stated goals (Bertram and Pascal 2016, 24, 160). Article 63 of the Education Act (No. 273, Parliament of the Russian Federation 2012, see also below) confirms the early education sector as the first, non-compulsory, stage of general education.

The aims of early childhood education in general are to promote the development of motor, intellectual, moral, aesthetic and personal characteristics; educational programmes should take into account the age-appropriate individual characteristics of children (see also chapter *Curricular Framework*).

The relevant legislation for the early childhood education of 3 to 7 year-olds (ISCED 02) is the Education Act 2012 No. 273 "On Education in the Russian Federation", with amendments from 2023 (Parliament of the Russian Federation 2012). It forms the basis for all education policies and sets out the general and curricular regulations for the education system. Among other things it also emphasises the need for the ongoing reform of regulations and legislation, taking into account the needs of individuals and society (Federal Centre for Educational Legislation 2021).

Based on the Education Act, the main document which regulates early childhood education is the Federal Standard for Early Childhood Education (Ministerial Order No. 1155) 17 October 2013, *Federal'nyye gosudarstvennyye standarty obshchego obrazovaniya*, known as FGOS DO; Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation 2013), which is based on the Russian Constitution and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It sets mandatory requirements and regulates the activities of ECEC settings in general. These include the implementation of the education programme which can be adapted in individual cases. The overall focus is on equality of opportunities, including children with special needs and supporting families.

Goals of the Federal Standard for Early Childhood Education (FGOS DO) are to:

- Raise the social status of early childhood education
- Work towards creating equal opportunities for each child (including taking into account the rights of children with a non-Russian background and children with disabilities)
- Guarantee a high level of overall quality in early childhood education
- Create a unified system of early childhood education and care based on the unity of mandatory requirements for the implementation, structure and outcomes of educational programmes for ECEC.

Educational activities in kindergartens are carried out according to the main general educational programmes for Preschool Education (Order No. 373, 2020). The new, unified, Federal Educational programme (Order No. 1028, 2022) came into force in 2023 and is the basis of work for all kindergartens from September 1, 2023. The purpose of this programme is the flexible development of the child during the preschool years, taking into account age and individual characteristics, based on the spiritual and moral values of the multinational peoples of Russia

and on historical and national cultural traditions (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation 2022).

ECEC entitlement and compulsory attendance

All children from the age of 2 months have a right to a place in an early education setting; however, most parents are not yet aware of this and therefore rarely take advantage of it (Bagirova 2021). This means that, as a rule, the early childhood education system in Russia begins at the age of 3. Attendance is free of charge and not compulsory.

Compulsory schooling usually starts at age 7, but may vary between 6½ and 8 years.

Main types of provision

Although all children from 2 months to 8 years have a legal right to a place in a public ECEC centre, there is no publicly funded full-time provision for the under 2 year-olds. Altogether, there are hardly any stand-alone settings for this age group. Since these few settings are exclusively in the private sector, they tend to be cost-prohibitive for parents.

In accordance with paragraph 29 of the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of October 27, 2011 No. 2562 “On Approval of the Model Regulations on a Preschool Educational Institution” (Ministry of Education and Science 2011), “the number and ratio of age groups of children in a preschool educational institution is determined by the founder.” This means that the founder, represented by the municipality (city authorities), has the right to decide who to admit to kindergarten and nursery and who not to admit. (Aif.ru 2014).

ECEC settings/groups for children under 7 years of age can have a general developmental *or* compensatory *or* health-promoting *or* a combined orientation. In this section, the regular forms of ECEC provision (kindergartens) are presented first, followed by commercial and home-based ECEC settings and ending with a brief description of the specialised early childhood education programmes.

Kindergartens (*detskije sady*) are the main form of ECEC provision for children aged 3–6/7 years. They also exist as multi-age centres (2 months to 7 years). Although parents can apply to enrol their child in a kindergarten from the age of 2 months, most of the younger children in kindergartens (public and private) are at least 1½ years old.

Most kindergartens offer full-day, part-time and extended hours services and are open 12 hours a day. Basically, there are five models: up to 5 hours per day (short day), 8 – 10 hours per day (extended short day), 10½ – 12 hours (full day), 13 – 14 hours (extended day), and around the clock. At the request of the parents, it is possible to organise the work of the groups also on weekends and holidays. However, only groups that are open for longer than three hours work according to the educational programme.

Kindergartens vary greatly in size, with nearly half attended by no more than 75 children. A full-day programme (from 7:00 till 19:00) includes 1½ to 3 hours of quiet time, four meals, outdoor activities twice a day, and a combination of educator-initiated activities in accordance with the objectives of the educational programme and free play. Children play and learn together in same-age groups.

According to a Parliamentary report, 240 kindergartens were built in 2022 and more than 1,000 in the past three years that provided more than 150,000 children with a place in an ECEC institution. Plans are underway to establish 69 settings (13,200 places) in 2023 for children under 3 years of age and 36 settings (5,400 places) for 3 to 7 year-olds as well as 2,000 places in private settings. This will contribute towards reducing the shortage of places and increase availability for families. The Ministry of Education notes that the accessibility of pre-primary education for children aged 3 to 7 years is currently 99.6%. For children aged 2 months to 3 years, the availability rate has increased over the past year and exceeded 98% (Aif.ru 2023). These accessibility rates include *all* forms of publicly registered childcare, including those in home-based family kindergartens or those in short-stay groups.

Part-time or short-stay groups in kindergartens (*grupy kratkovremennoe pribyvaniya*) cater mainly for children between 1½ and 5 years of age. They are usually organised in mixed-age groups (1½ to 3 years and 3 to 5 years). For children from 1½–3 years, these short-stay groups are provided for three to four hours/day with lunch (9:00–12/13:00), sometimes together with a parent. However, only a relatively small number of kindergartens have such a group with a special programme for the youngest children.

They are set up both as preparatory groups prior to kindergarten attendance and as an alternative to full-day attendance. These groups are also attended by children with special needs who are unable to attend full-day kindergarten. 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 attendance times are shorter, these groups must also adhere to the Federal Standard (FGOS DO) and take into account specific age structures and developmental differences.

Part-time programmes are provided in both public and private institutions; some are offered only in the evening or at weekends or during holidays. So-called "clubs" (see chapter *Provider structures*) also offer such part-time programmes. These then belong to the rather loosely regulated system of supplementary education and provide either activities that are rarely offered in kindergartens, such as foreign languages or dance, or activities that complement the educational programme, such as mathematical or linguistic activities. They are also used by children in addition to regular kindergarten attendance (Bodrova and Yudina 2018).

Family kindergartens (*semeynyi detskiy sad*) are a form of home-based provision for children from 2 months to 7 years. This form of ECEC is part of public ECEC provision. In large families with three or more children between 2 months and 7 years of age, additional children of the same age can be cared of in the family home. This form of provision was created in 2007 and became popular all over Russia, also as a means of social support. They are usually registered as a section of a municipal kindergarten. If the parents have a pedagogical qualification they are considered educators and have to submit reports on their work; they receive the same salary as an educator in the kindergarten to which they are affiliated. If they do not have a pedagogical qualification their duties are only supervision and caring of the children and their salaries are lower (Volkova and Chervova 2011; Tsapenko et al. 2012).

Private-commercial childcare settings are generally run fully through private funding, but there are also some examples of a mixed-funding model (public subsidies and private financing). The Ministry of Education is investigating possibilities to subsidise places in private institutions if there are not sufficient places in a public one. These private settings do not offer the official educational programme and are open between 3 to 5 hours and 24 hours. Because the sector is only lightly regulated, different business models have been able to proliferate and large franchises now offer childcare provision across the country.

Certified nanny. The project "Professional nannies (babysitters) for children!" provides for the issuance of a certificate to parents with children from 1.5 to 3 years old to receive services from a certified specialist. At the same time, the task of the state is to train and certify those who wish to work as a nanny. This project was initiated by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and realised since 2018, so that, with the assistance of the state, babysitting services become available to a wide range of families. Certification of babysitting services provides a guarantee the quality of care and supervision of children. In 2020-2021, 28 regional centres for the training of professional nannies were established; 350 nannies were trained and 161 nannies were certified, respectively (Oprf.ru 2021).

Early development centres. There are many early development centres (mostly fee-paying ones), precisely because the state kindergartens do not provide opportunities (or too few) for young children under 3 years old. Parents can also sign up for such centres and choose a development topic through the public services web portal, where a navigator for various early development centres is offered.

Early childhood specialist provision

Besides regular kindergartens, there are a number of other kinds of educational provision for young children:

- Kindergartens prioritising one or several directions of child development (intellectual, artistic and aesthetic, physical etc.)
- Health support kindergartens prioritising health improvement measures and procedures, particularly for children with a long-term illness
- Compensatory groups attended by children with special needs and children with disabilities
- Combined groups attended by healthy children and children with disabilities together
- 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.

Provider structures

Most ECEC settings are publicly funded settings provided by regional governments or municipalities. There are some private facilities run by organisations or legal entities. These must be licensed and are not subsidised through government funds. They are regulated in terms of health standards, the centre-specific educational programme and regional criteria. Private facilities are usually more flexible in their daily programme and also in terms of curriculum. However, private institutions that offer both care and education are subject to stricter rules. This is why many private facilities register under the name "club" – which is supposed to offer only care, but also includes educational elements (Bodrova and Yudina 2018). There are no national statistical data for this type of setting.

From 2015 to 2017, the number of private settings increased by 78% (from 8,166 to 14,547). They often provide various additional activities compared with regular kindergartens – more recently digital technology or parent-child activities such as yoga (Seliverstova 2021).

In 2019, a total of 2.6% of kindergartens had a private provider. The demand for private kindergarten places increased by 23% – mainly also due to the Corona pandemic (Invest Foresight 2021).

Although private kindergartens are eligible for state support if they offer places to children who cannot be admitted to a municipal kindergarten, they tend to avoid doing this because of the increased monitoring this may involve.

In 2022, a Ministry of Education report stated that a total of 139,296 children of different preschool ages were enrolled in private ECEC institutions or development centres. Most of these children (132,452 children; 1.89% of the age group) attended settings, which are licensed to carry out educational activities (not just development activities), whereas 6,844 children attended services that did not follow an educational programme (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation 2023a, 15-16).

Participation rates in regulated provision

Following a decline between 2005 and 2010, enrolment rates for under 3 year-olds started to increase again, reaching 19% in 2017 and 24.2% in 2019 (Rosstat 2022a), although with considerable regional differences (Baskaeva and Tatrova 2020). While in 2021, overall 26.9% of under 3 year-olds were enrolled, the rates ranged from 53% in the Komi Republic to only 7.5% in the Republic of Dagestan (Rosstat 2022a).

In 2021, 73.2% of children aged 1–6 years were enrolled in early childhood education institutions. Again, regional differences are significant: while in the Ural Federal District 82.9% attended an ECE institution, the share in the North Caucasian District was only 51.6% (Statista 2023c). Whereas in 2021, 7.34 million children were enrolled in a kindergarten, indicating a slight decrease since the previous year (Statista 2023b), by 2022 numbers had decreased further to just over 7 million children (see *Table 1*).

Table 1

Russian Federation: Number of children enrolled in ECEC institutions, 2019 to 2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of children in organisations providing preschool education programmes and childcare services	7,606,700	7,442,900	7,340,600	7,008,100
Number of children in private settings	n.d.	n.d.	109,234	105,028
Enrolment rate: under 3 years	24.2%	25.2%	26.9%	n.d.
Enrolment rate: 3–6 years	84.9%	85.5%	87.8%	n.d.
Enrolment rate: 1–6 years	69.4%	70.7%	73.2%	n.d.

Source: Rosstat 2022c, Tab 1,6,11 (data sets incomplete in May 2023)

According to the report of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation on the implementation of strategic planning documents for 2022, on average the coverage rate of available and publicly provided preschool education (including family kindergartens and short-

stay groups) for children aged 1½–3 years as of January 1, 2023 was 98.19%, a rise of 1.94% since January 2022

The total number of children aged 1½–3 years registered in state or municipal kindergartens was 623,312 on January 1, 2023, 12.93% less than one year earlier. Measures to achieve accessibility for this age group in all regions of the Russian Federation are being carried out primarily through the creation of additional places in preschool institutions within the framework of both federal state and national projects.

On average in the Russian Federation, the indicator of accessibility of preschool education for children aged 3 to 7 years as of January 1, 2023 was 99.66%, a slight rise (0.08%) since January 2022. The number of children aged 3 to 7 years who are not provided with a place in kindergartens amounted to 19,236 in January 2023, 5,653 (22.1%) less than at the beginning of January 2022 (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation 2023, 11-14).

Financing and costs for parents

In 2019, 3.7% of GDP was spent on education. In 2020, spending increased to 4% and fell again to 3.6% in 2021 (Rosstat 2023c, 189). The share spent on early childhood education and care 0–6 years is not specified.

Overall, public institutions are financed through state and municipal budgets. Current policy tries to make educational institutions less dependent on state subsidies and to initiate competition among them. Therefore, in many regions, salaries are dependent on national assessments of educational institutions and successful management of available financial resources (Volkova 2018). Private non-profit kindergartens are operated within a state educational institution and financed with public and private funds.

Government funding – both in public and independent settings – is used primarily for salaries, materials, and building maintenance. It also subsidises reduced fees for parents. Parents receive at least 20% of the average parental contribution for the first child, 50% for the second and 70% for the third and each additional child (Bertram and Pascal 2016, 61).

Educational sessions in kindergartens are free of charge for parents of children aged 3 years and over. This includes meals and materials and the basic educational programme, and also applies to some programmes for under 3 year-olds. Care services as well as additional activities such as dance, foreign languages etc., as well as support from speech therapists or psychologists, have to be paid for. For children with special educational needs, foster children, children from military families and low-income families, the costs are subsidised (Bodrova and Yudina 2018).

Fees for public full-day kindergartens are fixed and cost between RUB 1,900 and 2,700 (€28,82 to €40,96²) per month in 2017, depending on the region. Parents have to pay fees for private institutions, as they do not receive any state subsidies. In contrast to state-run facilities, staff salaries are higher, child groups are smaller and fees are significantly higher (up to €1,000 or €1,500 per month).

Although private facilities are significantly more expensive, there are indications that many parents are willing to bear these costs and/or pay for additional hours (Seliverstova 2021).

In 2018, a couple with two children spent about 2% of net household income on childcare costs³ (OECD.Stat 2023).

² Average exchange rate in 2017: 65,91 RUB/EUR

³ The calculation is based on the following fictitious model: two parents working full-time (average income); two 2 and 3 year-old children in full-time care; relevant care allowances taken into account.

In terms of consolidated government spending on ECEC, a monthly average of RUB 197.150 bn (approx. €2,01 billion)⁴ was spent between January 2005 and July 2022 (CEIC 2022).

Table 3 shows the allocation of expenditure for childcare and early education. In particular, expenditure on early childhood education programmes such as short-stay groups and family kindergartens has increased in recent years.

Table 3

Russian Federation: Expenditure on ECEC, 2012–2015–2020 (in RUB)

Year	Expenditure on early education	Expenditure on childcare	Total expenditure
2012 (1€ = 30,84 RUB)	RUB 144.737.400.000 EUR 4.693.171.206	RUB 254.509.000.000 EUR 8.252.561.608	RUB 399.246.400.000 EUR 12.945.732.815
2015 (1€=60,93 RUB)	RUB 166.317.700.000 EUR 2.729.652.060	RUB 306.944.000.000 EUR 5.037.649.762	RUB 473.656.800.000 EUR 7.773.786.312
2020 (1€=82,7 RUB)	n.d.	n.d.	RUB 987.000.000.000 € 11.934.703.748

Source: Gokhberg et al. 2022; OECD 2023

Staff to child ratios and group size

Currently, the number of children per group is determined by the size of the rooms and not by the number of professionals. A typical kindergarten is divided into four room areas: living/playing/learning; sleeping and resting; washing; and cooking/household. According to the regulations of the Sanitary Rules SP 2.4.3648-20 "Sanitary and epidemiological requirements for organisations of education and training, recreation and rehabilitation of children and youth" (Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation 2020) at least 2.5 square metres of space must be available for a child up to 3 years of age, and at least 2 square meters for a child from 3 to 7 years of age, not including furniture in each case. That is, the larger the room the more children can be accommodated (up to 25 and more). Furthermore, there might be extra rooms for music, sport, laundry room, eating. Other regulations regarding the staff to child ratios do not exist at present.

In a 12-hour day, two professionals usually work in two shifts (7:00–14:00 and 12:00–19:00) in one group. During the two-hour overlap the teacher who works in the morning informs the teacher who works in the afternoon about important issues.

Each professional has an assistant (assigned to the junior staff) who is responsible for cleaning, ensuring that hygiene rules are observed, preparing materials or supervising the children when the group leader is absent.

As a rule, an additional teacher (for music or sport) is present, which reduces the number of children per staff member somewhat.

In 2021, one kindergarten teacher was responsible for an average of 14 children (Statista 2023f). Surmounting the challenge of large group sizes and high child-adult ratios suggests that teachers will need to master instructional strategies designed for working with large groups of children (Bodrova and Yudina 2018, 68).

⁴ Please note that the exchange rates are average rates that differ considerably due to high volatility/political situations.

Curricular framework

On November 25 2022, a new Federal Educational Programme for Preschool Education was approved by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and came in force in January 2023 (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation 2022). From September 2023, all kindergartens are obliged to work according to this programme. This new Federal Educational Programme for Preschool Education is also designed for working with children from 2 months to 3 years. Age categories according to the programme are: 2 months to 1 year; 1 to 3 years and 3 to 7 years.

In 2013, the Federal Standard for Early Childhood Education (FGOS DO) was adopted as the basis for curricular work in **kindergartens**. Within this framework, 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. Activities are appropriate to the age and needs of the children and also take into account ethnic-cultural aspects. Based on these principles, each institution develops its own curriculum, supported by guidelines published by the Ministry of Education.

This framework represents a clear departure from the teacher-led pedagogy that prevailed in most Soviet and post-Soviet institutions.

The Federal Standard also defines the conditions for positive child development: Direct communication with each child ensures emotional well-being, children are free to choose activities, friendly interactions prevail between children regardless of their cultural or religious background, each child's individual development is evaluated and parents are involved in educational issues (Shiyan et al. 2018).

Digital education

The project "Modern Digital Educational Environment in the Russian Federation" is included in the State Programme of the Russian Federation "Educational Development" for the period 2018 to 2025 (No. 1642, 2017) – based on the Education Act (No. 273, Parliament of the Russian Federation 2012) and the State Education Standard FGOS DO. Digital media are mentioned as a means of interaction between professionals, children and families. The organisation of a modern digital environment in ECEC settings is seen as contributing to the implementation of the key principles, goals and objectives of the Federal State Standard for Preschool Education (FGOS DO). However, there are no concrete statements on the promotion of digital competences before school enrolment.

During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian ECEC system accumulated extensive experience in interacting with families and children through digital technologies, including forms of online teaching with children through multi-media (Volkova and Mansarliyskaya 2020).

Monitoring – evaluation

Child-related assessment

Following the adoption of the Federal Standard for Early Childhood Education (2013), it is explicitly forbidden to use data on children's performance in the evaluation of the quality of the educational programme. The assessment of children is reserved for formative purposes only (Bodrova and Yudina 2018). However, there are explicit expectations of what a child should be able to do at a certain age (see chapter *Curricular Framework*).

Centre-based self-evaluation

Instruments for self-evaluation by professionals are currently being developed, as well as instruments that allow outsiders (e.g. parents) to assess the programmes (Bodrova and Yudina 2018). For example, several kindergartens are piloting the ECERS-R rating scale to assess the learning environment, team self-reflection or staff-child interaction. Another initiative uses observations, parent surveys and document analysis to assess, among other things, programme content, staff qualifications, how inclusive the setting is, or the quality of the buildings (Bodrova and Yudina 2018).

External evaluation

Federal and regional supervisory agencies are responsible for inspections.

The main authority at the federal level is the Federal Education Supervision Agency (*Federalnoe agentstvo po obrasovaniyu*). It has three main tasks: to ensure that the federal standards are met; to issue licences; and to carry out state accreditation. Each level of administration reports to the next higher level. Quality assurance is a legal duty of regional administrations. Inspections of kindergartens and schools focus on compliance with regulations (room size, heating, equipment, meals, safety aspects) and on educational standards (organisation of daily routines and learning processes), management and financing. The results are communicated to the institutions and providers and also published on the internet. Professionals usually consider this kind of administrative monitoring as a bureaucratic burden, as the reports are not used to set up a system of quality improvement, but only to make sure that the regulations of the Federal Standard is followed.

The Federal Agency for Supervision in Education and Science *Rospotrebnadzor* carries out planned inspections in kindergartens. A commission consisting of a representative of the agency, an education inspector, an expert in the field of early childhood education and an observer mainly inspects the kitchen in kindergartens as well as the food, its preparation and storage with regard to hygienic and health-related aspects. Furthermore, the size of the rooms, lighting, sports equipment as well as medical and training certificates of the professionals and the bookkeeping are checked.

According to the Regulation on Monitoring the Education System (2013, No. 662, §5), *Rospotrebnadzor* is responsible for collecting, processing and analysing information regarding the quality of education. From 2016-2018, the agency conducted a longitudinal study in kindergartens using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R) to measure quality. It was found that, for example, the quality of the educational activities carried out or the quality of the work with parents is not satisfactory – which is partly due to the fact that kindergartens have been using a variety of their own monitoring instruments since 2014. However, in order to improve the quality of education in ECEC settings, it will be necessary to create a uniform monitoring system based on reliable data and which involves all stakeholders.

Inclusion agenda

Social inclusion – children with special educational needs and disabilities

During the Soviet period, the state stimulated and supported the deepening of differentiation in the system of education for children with disabilities. There was a well-developed compensatory system to support the development and education of children with special needs, with disabilities and child invalids. In recent years the integration of children with disabilities into the general education system has been underway. Therefore, 'inclusion' is often narrowly understood, only as the joint education of children with developmental disabilities with normotypical children (Volkova and Hentschel 2020).

Moving towards developing the country's educational sector in line with an inclusive ideology and acceptance of differences and diversity, Russia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 (Bahdanovich Hanssen and Erina 2021). Early childhood education for children with special needs and disabilities is also governed by a Federal Standard (FGOS-DO). The Ministerial Decisions of 19.12.2014 (No 1598 and 1599) published by the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, officially ended the segregation of children with special educational needs. Article 28 of the National Education Law ("On Education in the Russian Federation," 2012) details the role of state and municipal authorities providing for these children, as well as the conditions of educational activities for children with special/complex needs (Bahdanovich Hanssen and Erina 2021). Every child with special needs has the right to attend a regular kindergarten, and kindergartens, like schools, are obliged to accommodate children with special educational needs at the request of parents. Nevertheless, the number of inclusive settings is relatively small. In addition, the term "inclusion" is interpreted in different ways (Bodrova and Yudina 2018) and is mostly defined in medical terms; inclusion in a broader sense is only gradually being accepted by society at large (see Volkova and Hentschel 2020).

Concerning the historical development of Russia and its multi-national population, the multi-cultural/multi-confessional component of 'inclusivity' can be considered quite well developed. Russia is a multi-national (multi-ethnic) state, as reflected in the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Volkova and Topaj 2020), with four main religions: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and with a freedom of choice of religion in general. Due to this historical path of the country, living with cultural diversity has a long tradition. However, in terms of understanding inclusion as the joint education of normo-typical children and children with disabilities, there have been certain difficulties along this path in Russian society. Russian educational organisations have encountered a number of problems when wishing to implement inclusive practices. These include a lack of teachers' special needs qualifications, a lack in teachers' attention to normatively developing children and a lack of acceptance of children with disabilities by healthy children (Volkova and Hentschel 2020.)

Before children with special educational needs are enrolled in a kindergarten, a medical diagnosis of their needs is made, based on which the child then receives appropriate support, e.g. from speech or physiotherapists, psychologists or other specially trained staff. Children with severe physical and/or mental disabilities are assisted by a support worker who is paid by the state. Mobility and access to the building is also provided.

Kindergartens can choose their own strategies and approaches – based on the national curriculum. For children with disabilities, adapted, individual educational programmes are created. In addition, the "National Action Strategy for Children 2012-2017" (President of the Russian Federation 2012a) was adopted in 2012, in which, among other things, child protection and equal opportunities for all are high priorities. One of the goals concerns reducing the number of separate special needs institutions in order to promote inclusive education.



Regional psychological-medical-educational commissions diagnose the child's condition and expected to assist families in creating conditions for the comprehensive support of children with disabilities. Also, regional state organisations work with parents to assess each child's needs and provide appropriate support, such as the State Psychological and Pedagogical Centre in Moscow. The main goal of the Centre's activity is to provide high-quality psychological, pedagogical, and social support, free of charge, including complex assistance to children with disabilities.

Non-governmental organisations also support parents in their demand for quality education for children with disabilities (Bahdanovich Hanssen and Erina 2021). The parents of children with special needs can apply to support services provided by these non-governmental organisations. These are available on the website of the "general government services" (*gosudarstvennykh i municipalnykh uslug* (Public services 2023), accredited by each regional government. Such organisations provide both free and paid services, depending on the family situation. In accordance with the law, paid social services are aimed primarily at citizens who have no grounds for being provided with free social services (Parliament of the Russian Federation 2013). The regional ministries of education are currently involved in the implementation of these Decisions and organising training for professionals. In rural areas there are still problems with access, but in large cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg the inclusion agenda is well organised – from early childhood to adulthood.

The psychological-medical-pedagogical commission also determines the conditions according to which the education of children with disabilities is organised, such as the support of visually impaired, hard of hearing or physically disabled children by assistants or by the provision of certain materials. The following specialised support staff can be included in the staff calculation: Specialists for learning disabilities, for education of the deaf and visually impaired, for speech therapy as well as psychologists and assistants for each group. Each group is also supported by at least one tutor.

According to Bahdanovich Hanssen, and Erina (2021), networks and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been formed to develop parental involvement capabilities and promote inclusion in education. For example, NGOs support families with children with SEN, developing parent awareness of various aspects of inclusion and in independently monitoring legislation implementation (UNESCO 2021, 138); and the All-Russian Organisation of Parents of Disabled Children (VORDI), a public association created in 2018, helps to implement parents' initiatives to create decent living conditions in society and social and educational inclusion of children with disabilities. With the support of the government, it implements federal projects on social support for families with children and adults with disabilities or holds competitions inviting non-profit organisations whose activities are aimed at supporting families raising children and adults with disabilities. (VORDI 2020, 2023).

In 2022, a total of 86,863 children up to 7 years of age with disabilities were enrolled in early education settings. Out of a total of 7 million children in ECEC settings, this corresponded to 1.2% (Rosstat 2023f). In 2020, 21.8% of ECEC settings had a barrier-free environment (Rosstat 2022h, 23).

In compensatory groups, a certain maximum number of children per group should not be exceeded (see *Table 4*).

Table 4

Russian Federation: Maximum number of children in compensatory ECEC settings

Groups with ...	Below 3 years	3 years and above
Children with severe speech disorders/ visual impairment	6	10 (6 for blind children)



Groups with ...	Below 3 years	3 years and above
Children with phonetic speech disorders		12
Children with hearing impairment	6	8
Children with visual impairment	6	10
Deaf children	6	6
Children with disorders of the musculoskeletal system	6	8
Children with intellectual disabilities	6	10 (8 in the case of severe mental disability)
Children with autism / with complex multiple disabilities	5	5

Source: Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation 2020

In combined groups attended by children with and without disabilities, there should be no more than 10 children under and over 3 years of age, of which no more than three should be children with disabilities. If there are 15 children over the age of 3 in a group, there should be a maximum of four children with disabilities, and if there are 17 children, there should be a maximum of five. Care must be taken to ensure that the children in a group do not belong to more than three different disability categories. When combining children with various developmental disabilities, the orientation of the adapted educational programmes of preschool education and the possibility of their simultaneous implementation in one group are taken into account.

It is allowed to organise different-age groups of compensatory or combined orientation for children from 2 months to 3 years and from 3 years and older, taking into account the possibility of observing a daily schedule corresponding to the anatomical and physiological characteristics of children of each age group, with a maximum occupancy of 6 and 12 children, respectively (Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation 2020).

Table 5

Russian Federation: Number of children with disabilities in state-subsidised early childhood settings, 2020

Age	Number of children
Under 1 year	90
1 year-olds	458
2 year-olds	3,360
3 year-olds	8,495
4 year-olds	14,766
5 year-olds	19,745
6 year-olds	22,657
7 year-olds and above	13,878
Total	83,449

Source: Rosstat 2021b

The multi-national indigenous population of Russia and children with a migration background

Citizens of Russia historically have different ethnic origins, officially 193 different ethnic groups (nationalities). In 2020, the four largest minority groups were Tatars (3.6%), Ukrainians (1.3%), Bashkirs (1.2%) and Chuvash (0.8%) (Rosstat 2023d, 97). According to the 2021 census, 71.7% of the population is ethnically of Russian origin – a decrease of 6% since the 2010 census (The Jamestown Foundation 2023).

In accordance with the "Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025", one of the priorities is preserving the ethnocultural and linguistic diversity of the Russian Federation (President of the Russian Federation 2012b).

The 193 ethnic groups use – alongside Russian as the state language – approximately 277 languages (according to other sources 295) and dialects (Koryakov et al. 2022; Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation 2021). At the same time, 105 languages are used in the state education system, of which 24 are used as the language of instruction and 81 as a subject language (President of the Russian Federation 2012b). According to data on language proficiency among residents of the Russian Federation, excluding Dagestan, about 56-57 indigenous languages are used in Russia. And taking into account the 24 languages of Dagestan, this number increases to about 80. Local languages in the regions of the Russian Federation also include: Ukrainian, Kazakh, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Finnish, German (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation 2021).

Both during the period of the Soviet Union and in modern Russia, there are public kindergartens with an ethno-cultural component in order to maintain the culture and language of native ethnic groups and regional nationalities. Kindergartens provide a number of support programmes for children of ethnic minority groups (Bertram and Pascal 2016, 79). Educational activities can also be offered in a minority language or in a foreign language if they are aligned with the educational programme.

Since 2013, early childhood education has been offered along the nomadic routes in the north in so-called nomadic camps. In 2018, 64% of children from indigenous ethnic minorities were prepared for school (UNESCO 2022).

In accordance with the guidelines for the implementation of the new Federal Educational Programme for Preschool Education (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation 2022), the implementation of the federal programme is also possible in the native language of students.

Migrant population in Russia

In 2021, 667,922 persons in the total population were of non-Russian (citizenship) origin (0.5% out of 146,171,015) (Rosstat 2023d and own calculations). These included:

- 606,190 persons from CIS ("commonwealth of independent states") countries (mostly from Tajikistan (126,840), followed by Ukraine (122,669)
- 8,250 persons from EU countries (mostly from Germany (2,404), followed by Latvia (1,193); and
- 53,482 persons from other countries, mostly from India (7,132), followed by Georgia (6,506), China (6,465), and Vietnam (5,426) (Rosstat 2023c, 90, 108).

According to the "Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation" for the period up to 2025 (President of the Russian Federation 2018), priority tasks are to assist migrants (adults and children) in the process of their social and cultural adaptation and integration. For educational institutions this includes teaching children the Russian language and creating an infrastructure to facilitate their adaptation and integration into the host culture (Volkova and Topaj 2020).

In addition to supportive, educational initiatives, there are also a number of social measures, including those related to language. In the Moscow Metro, for example, signs are duplicated in Uzbek and Tajik to make it easier for labour migrants from these countries to navigate.

The number of specifically ethnic or religious kindergartens for migrants is low. Immigrants often live and work illegally in Russia. Enrolment in a kindergarten is always linked to the place of registration. However, since most immigrants are not legally registered, their children are not



entitled to attend kindergarten or school. The only alternative is private institutions, but these are usually too expensive.

Curricular guidelines to support staff in this area primarily address children with a migration background and bilingual children (UNESCO 2021, 97).

Parental leave arrangements⁵

Maternity leave (*otpusk po berennosti i rodam*) is not mandatory and lasts 140 days (70 days before and 70 days after birth). In the case of a difficult birth or a twin birth, this period is extended to 156 and 194 days respectively. During this period, the average income of the last two years is paid, up to a monthly limit of RUB 83,299 (€842.54), with a minimum of RUB 16,252 (€164.38).

There is no legal entitlement to **Paternity leave**.

3 years of **Childcare leave** (*otpusk po ukhodu za rebenkom*) after birth is a family entitlement. 40% of average earnings during the two years preceding the birth are paid until the child is 18 months old (minimum RUB 8,591.47 (€86.90) and maximum RUB 33,281.80 (€336.63). Since 2023, unemployed persons receive a minimum childcare benefit of RUB 8,591.46 (€86.90) per month if their household income does not exceed the regional subsistence minimum. Beyond receiving the allowances during the childcare period, it is also possible to work part-time.

Women can apply for the so-called **Maternity capital** (*materinskij kapital*), which in 2023 was 586,946.72 RUB (€5,963.78) for the first child and 188,681.53 RUB (€1,908.45) for the second child. This amount is not paid in cash; it is used e.g. for improving housing conditions or for the education of the children. In some regions, also a regional maternity capital is paid.

Only 9.4% of mothers took three or more years of Childcare leave in 2019 (Seliverstova 2021). 2% of the persons taking parental leave were men in 2019. Beyond that, no detailed information on take-up is available.

Current challenges for the ECEC system in Russia

Country expert assessment by Tatiana Volkova

Creating a stable remuneration system and improving working conditions

According to government sources, 1,623 kindergartens for 235,100 children were built and put into operation between 2019 and 2023 (Government of the Russian Federation 2023). This has made it possible to significantly reduce the shortage of places in kindergartens in the regions and increase their availability for families.

On the one hand, considerable attention is being paid to the expansion of early childhood education and care. On the other hand, the problem of kindergarten teachers' salaries remains. According to Rosstat, teachers in preschool institutions in Russia receive approximately 46,000 roubles (approx. €525⁶) per month. However, this amount is nominal, while the real salary in different areas varies between 14,000 and 30,000 roubles (€160–€342). In cities with a population of one million, the recorded average slightly exceeds the average for the country as

⁵ The brief overview in this section is based mainly on the country note for the Russian Federation by Anna Bagirova in the *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2023* (see *References*).

⁶ Conversion rate May 2023

a whole: in St. Petersburg – 59,441 roubles (€678); in Novosibirsk – 46,512 roubles (€531) (Kp.ru 2023).

The work of an educator is undoubtedly a socially important work. This profession is one of the most popular and in demand. However, working conditions are often harsh and staff turnover high. Difficulties often encountered include: large groups due to staff shortages, with only one kindergarten teacher working from 7:00 to 19:00 and sometimes without an assistant (meaning that clearing up and cleaning also fall on the teacher); documentation tasks; frequent psychological discomfort due to parents' expectations regarding preparing children for school; issues of traumatised children; a frequent lack of professional qualifications among educators to work in inclusive groups (for normotypical children and children with disabilities). This leads to high levels of burnout among educators. Unfortunately, the work in early childhood settings is viewed by policy makers to be more of a “mission” or a “vocation” rather than an appropriately remunerated profession.

Ensuring quality in the initial professional education of early childhood staff

In the current socio-economic situation, the need for newly qualified pedagogical staff is leading to a focus on secondary vocational education rather than on higher education. It is necessary to establish a nationwide system of assessing the quality of education not only in preschool settings but also in the institutions responsible for the initial professional education of teachers.

In accordance with the "Concept for the training of pedagogical personnel for the education system for the period up to 2030" (the concept was approved by Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of June 24, 2022 N 1688-r (Government of the Russian Federation 2022), the current network of **higher education institutions** implementing teacher education/training programmes has a productive experience in the development, implementation and translation of best practices in pedagogical and general education. This experience was in part gained, during the implementation of a comprehensive project for the modernisation of teacher education from 2014–2017. Within this framework and on the basis of the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standards of general education and the Professional Standard of the teaching profession, new standards of higher education were developed. These included a modular programme design, improving the practical orientation and research components of pedagogical education, and proposing the independent assessment of the professional competences of graduates.

At the same time, the content, technologies, management and infrastructure of teacher education require constant adaptation and transformation associated with the changes taking place in the general education system. Challenges remain to ensure the quality of teaching staff. These include addressing the:

- Imbalance in the quality and conditions of initial professional education (IPE) in different educational organisations (vocational and higher education) and the lack of unified approaches regarding mechanisms and tools for assessing quality
- Gap between the pace of renewal of the content and infrastructure of teacher preparation and the pace of renewal of general education
- Lack of advanced scientific research in the field of education for reforming the content of the IPE of pedagogical personnel
- Insufficient correspondence of the results of the training of a graduate (young teacher) to the current needs of the education industry, society and state
- Weak involvement of employers, including regional education systems, in the process of training teachers



- Shortage of teaching staff and insufficient training of higher education graduates working in teacher education programmes
- Lack of comprehensive measures in the early career guidance of school leavers directing them towards the teaching professions.

To solve these problems, it is necessary to implement a set of measures related not only to improving the system of initial professional education, but also to supporting teachers at all stages in their professional life cycle. This includes the basic principles of the national system of professional growth of teachers in the Russian Federation, approved by the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of December 31, 2019 N 3273-g (Government of the Russian Federation 2019).

Issues of social inclusion and readiness of teachers to work under new conditions

Inclusive education is both a promising and a problematic area of work for modern educational organizations which is rapidly developing in large cities in Russia. Whereas previously, children with developmental disabilities were isolated and pupils allocated to groups according to their abilities, the modern practice of education calls for inclusiveness (Volkova and Prochukhayeva 2019).

A Russian psychologist and defectologist and a member of the Russian Academy of Education, V. I. Lubovsky, has referred to the dismantling of the correctional system that was successfully developed in the Soviet education system (Lubovsky 2017). At the beginning of the implementation of inclusive principles in education, problems of rejection and aggression on the part of both parents and teachers arose, who did not know how to act under the new conditions and expectations.

One of the serious tasks of modernising preschool education and developing inclusion is to find optimal models for the readiness of educators to work with children with special needs. In this regard, the readiness of educators to carry out professional activities in the context of the implementation of the Federal State Educational Standards for Preschool Education is of great importance. The issues of readiness of a teacher to support children with special needs are reflected in a number of documents such as the Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation”, “On the Social Protection of Disabled Persons in the Russian Federation”, “National Strategy for Action in the Interests of Children for 2012-2017”, Federal State Educational Standards for Preschool Education. These emphasise the importance of supportive conditions, goals, objectives, means and methods of working with children with special needs in a regular preschool educational environment.

Beyond this, there are problems of working conditions and the prevention of professional burnout of teachers in ECEC settings. In the context of modern trends in education, when the principles of the tolerance and an inclusive approach are at the forefront, it is important for teachers to have both meta skills and the ability to solve several problems at the same time, using an interdisciplinary approach. To do this, teachers need to constantly learn, develop and improve their level of professional competence, to know the main stages, patterns of development and features of the psychophysiology of children, including pupils with developmental disabilities (Volkova 2020).



Demographic data

Please note: For reasons of comparability, data on children are always reported up to 6 years of age, even if compulsory schooling starts earlier or later in some countries.

Total population

During the times of political and economic transformation during the 1990s, the birth rate dropped drastically and, in connection with a high mortality rate, led to a significant drop in population figures. Since about 2009, population numbers have started to rise again, although during the last few years they have decreased slightly (2000: 146,890,128; 2005: 143,474,219; 2010: 141,914,509; 2015: 146,443,000; 2020: 146,443,000). In 2021, the total population in Russia was 145,764,000 (Eurostat 2023a).

Total fertility rate

In 2021, the average total fertility rate in the EU27 (from 2020) was 1.53. The highest total fertility rate among SEEPRO-3 countries was in France (1.84), and the lowest in Malta (1.13)⁷ (Eurostat 2023b). At 1.50, the Russian Federation was slightly below the EU27 average in 2021 (The World Bank 2021). The birth rate fell steadily from 1988 (2.12) to 1999 (1.25), after which it rose again. After a renewed decline in 2016 it rose again (Rosstat 2022d) and has remained stable since 2019 (macrotrends 2023). Through the Maternity Capital (see section on Parental Leave), the state has tried to make having children more attractive to women. However, the latest official demographic data recorded the largest drop in the birth rate in Russia's modern history. According to Rosstat, only 96,131 children were born in the country in April 2023. This is the country's lowest figure since the beginning of the 21st century (Rosstat 2023e).

Children under age 6

Table 6

Russian Federation: Number of children under 3 years and 3 to under 6 years, 2022

Age	Number of children
Under 1 year	1,393,821
1 year-olds	1,433,365
2 year-olds	1,478,871
3 year-olds	1,602,814
4 year-olds	1,688,798
5 year-olds	1,886,882
Total 0 to under 6 year-olds	9,484,551

Source: Rosstat 2022e

In 2022, the share of children under 3 years of age was 2.7%, that of under 6 year-olds 6.5%. These proportions were well above the EU27 average.

⁷ Data for **Ukraine** and the **UK** (2021) are from Statista (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/296567/fertility-rate-in-ukraine/> and <https://www.statista.com/statistics/284042/fertility-rate-in-the-united-kingdom-uk/>).



Table 7

Russia: Children under 6 years of age – share in total population, compared with the average of the EU27(2020) countries, 2022, in %*

Year	Comparison Russia/EU	Under 3 year-olds	3 to under 6 year-olds	0 to under 6 year-olds
2022	Russia	3.0	3.6	6.5
	Ø EU27(2020)	2.7	2.9	5.7

Source: Eurostat 2023a, Rosstat 2022e, * own calculations, deviations due to rounding

Single households with children under age 6

No national data are available on the number of single-parent households with children under 6 years of age.

Based on the results of the 2020–2021 All-Russian Population Census, there are 4,854,000 single mothers and over 1,128,000 single fathers in Russia raising children under 18 years of age (Rosstat 2022f, 28).

According to the same Census, there are 27.7 million children under the age of 18 in Russia. 88% of these children live with parents, of whom 61.5% live with both parents, 31.3% with their mothers and 7.3% with their fathers. Since the 2010 census, the proportion of single families increased: the share of single mothers rose from 28.9% to 31.3% and that of single fathers almost doubled from 3.7% to 7.3% (Tinkoff Bank 2023).

Employment rates of parents with children under 6 years of age

In the Russian Federation, in 2022, the overall employment rate for men (15-70 years) was 70.4% and for women 55.6% (BRICS 2023). These relatively low overall employment rates are due to the fact that not all economic activities are registered in the statistics.

In 2021, 67.1% of women with preschool-aged children were employed (Rosstat 2022h, 29). This share is above the EU-average (64% in 2021) (Eurostat 2023c, own calculations). There are no data available on employed fathers with children under 6 years.

Table 8a

Russian Federation: Employment rates of parents with children under 6 compared with EU countries, 2010 and 2021

	2010	
	Mothers, in %	Fathers, in %
Russian Federation*	63.3	n.d.
Highest rate of employment in 27 EU countries ⁸	Denmark: 82.7	Netherlands: 93.4
Lowest rate of employment in 27 EU countries	Hungary: 31.7	Latvia: 72.7
	2021	
	Mothers, in %	Fathers, in %
Russian Federation (women with preschool aged children)**	67.1	n.d.
Highest rate of employment in 27 (2020) EU countries ⁹	Netherlands: 80.5	Malta: 95.8
Lowest rate of employment in 27 (2020) EU countries	Czech Rep.: 42.3	Romania: 81.5

Source: Eurostat 2023e; *Rosstat 2022g, 22; **Rosstat 2022h, 29

⁸ AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DK, DE, EE, EL, ES, F, FI, IE, IT, HU, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK

⁹ AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DK, DE, EE, EL, ES, F, FI, IE, IT, HR, HU, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK

For other SEEPRO-3 countries that were not part of the EU27(2020) in 2021/2022 – like the Russian Federation – data are displayed in *Table 8b*.

Table 8b

Employment rates in non-EU SEEPRO-3 countries, 2021/2022/2023

Countries	Parents with children under 6 years		Overall employment rate	
	Mothers in %	Fathers in %	Women in %	Men in %
*Norway (2022)	82.9	94.3	75.4	80.1
*Serbia (2022)	64.4	78.3	57.9	71.0
**Switzerland (2022/2023)	46.9	95.3	60.0 61.1 (2023)	83.5 84.2 (2023)
⁺ Ukraine (2021)	n.d.	n.d.	60.7	69.9
+++United Kingdom (2021/2023) with dependent children with children under 2 years with children 3–4 years	75.6	92.1	⁺⁺ 72.3	⁺⁺ 79.2
	72.4	93.1	⁺⁺ 72.1 (2023)	⁺⁺ 79.4 (2023)
	70.7	95.0		

*Eurostat 2023c, 2023e

**[BFS] Bundesamt für Statistik. 2023. *Erwerbsquoten in Vollzeitäquivalenten nach Geschlecht, Nationalität, Altersgruppen, Familientyp* [Full-time equivalent employment rates by gender, nationality, age groups, family type]. <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/asset/de/je-d-03.02.00.01.03>

⁺[SSSU] State Statistics Service of Ukraine. 2022. *Employed population in 2021, by age group, sex and place of residence*. <https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2017/rp/eans/eanse/Archznmve.htm>

⁺⁺Statista. 2023. *Employment rate in the United Kingdom from June 1971 to January 2023, by gender*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/280120/employment-rate-in-the-uk-by-gender/>

⁺⁺⁺Office for National Statistics. 2023. *Families and the labour market, UK: 2021*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2021>

Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion

The number of persons earning the minimum wage (January 2023: RUB 16,242 (€185), Statista 2023d), decreased in 2022 to 9.8% (from 13.5% in mid-2019) of the population; subjectively 72% assessed their income as being below it. In a Rosstat survey, 29.6% described their material situation as (very) poor (Russian Analytical Digest 2021). 60% of those living below the subsistence level are families with children. This means that about a quarter of children live below the poverty line (The Borgen Project 2021).

According to national statistics, in 2019, 23.6% of children under 18 lived in families with less than the subsistence minimum (RUB 11,653, €136 in 2019). The most affected by poverty were children from large families (48.3%), followed by children in rural areas (44.5%) and children from low-income families (32.8%) (Rosstat 2021a, 2023a; Reshetova 2021).

In January 2023, the monthly subsistence minimum was 15,669 RUB (€180) for the working age population and 14,375 (€165) on average (Statista 2023e). The population with incomes below the poverty line in the second quarter of 2022 amounted to 17.6 million people, or 12.1% of the country's population (Rosstat 2023b).

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