



Preschool information



There are eleven preschools in Akureyri. Two of these are located on the islands of Hrísey and Grímsey respectively. All of the preschools are based on the same basic principles although there is a difference in degree with respect to the philosophy applied by the preschools and their organisational structure and methods.

The management of preschool matters in Akureyri:



The school education committee representing the Akureyri town council is the managing authority regarding the affairs of preschools in Akureyri to the extent that the town council gets involved in these matters. The committee is elected by the town council. The manager of the school department and the preschool representative attend the meetings of the school education committee where they have the right to speak and propose a motion. The school education committee defines the town's policy in preschool matters.

The Akureyri school department is the administrative authority regarding preschool matters; financial matters, planning, enrolment of children, and it acts as an advisor to the preschools.

The school education manager is the head of the Akureyri school department.

The preschool representative is the supervisory authority in relations with the preschool principals.

The preschool advisor offers professional advice to the principals and teachers in matters involving the work of the various departments of the preschool.

Parents can contact the Akureyri school department regarding the enrolment of children, the work in the preschool, as well as to get information and assistance regarding matters connected with the stay of their children in the preschools.

Counseling for individual children, e.g. special education, is provided by the Akureyri school department's school service which also has a resident psychologist, and a contract has been made with a

number of speech therapists in Akureyri involving services for preschoolers.

The University of Akureyri offers each preschool professional advice.



Each preschool has a Principal who is responsible for both the professional and financial activities of the preschool. The Assistant Principal steps in for the Principal upon his/her absence. Preschools are divided into departments. Each department has its own head teacher. The head teacher of each department oversees the running of their department and works with the other teachers on the upbringing and education of children. Special-needs teachers work with children who have additional needs and abilities.

Preschools are open for all children, regardless of their circumstances. Children who require additional assistance with education or play receive that within the preschool. If

Preschool information

Akureyri

a child requires additional assistance outside of school (for instance, with speech therapy or physiotherapy) parents must contact the head teacher to find out if the preschool or parent is responsible for these sessions.

Preschools offer certain attendance times, and parents can choose from them. Parents commit to this time for one semester (4 months). However, the circumstances of parents and the preschool are taken into account

Resigning from Preschool

The mutual notice period is one month. Written resignation on required forms shall be turned in before the 1st or 15th day of the month. Parents cannot resign from preschool during the preschool's summer holiday.

Payments for preschool

Payments can be made either through credit card or invoice. Payment is made in advance and the deadline is the 15th of each month. If the payment has not been made by the deadline, then interest is added to the payment. If no payment has been made for 3 months, the child is removed from the preschool registration and the account is referred to a debt collection agency.

There are lower monthly payments for certain circumstance: single parents, parents in the education field, parents who are full time students, unemployed parents, and cases where one parent is in education and the other is unemployed. This discount applies beginning the 1st of the month following the presentation of a certificate.

Teachers planning days and training days

Preschools close all or half days for total of 48 hours during each year. The teachers use these days for planning, training or meetings. Parents are given at least one month's notice about these days.

Summer Holiday

All children should receive four consecutive week's holiday. Summer holiday arrangements are subject to each school and its Parents' Council. Parents do not pay any fee for preschool in July.

Religion

Preschools do not teach religion directly. They do however take part in Christian traditions which have developed in Icelandic society, such as Christmas and Easter. Parents that do not wish for their children to take part in these traditions are advised to discuss the matter with the head of department in the preschool. The same applies to parents who do not wish their children to consume certain foods due to religious beliefs.



Adjustment period in preschool

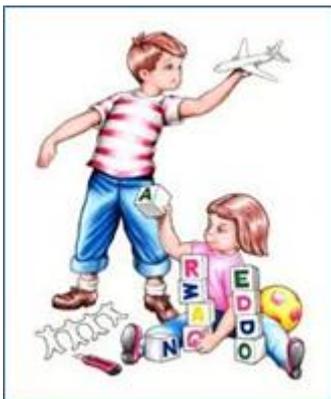
The adjustment period is the time when new children are introduced to the school, the teachers, the staff and the other children. This is also an important time for parents to become familiar with the procedures of the preschool. It is important to respect the time given for this adjustment period.

Each preschool has a different way of integrating new children. Some schools introduce several children at once, while others introduce all the children from the same department at the same time. An approach known as "participation adjustment" has emerged in recent years.

With Participation Adjustment, a specific day is selected for the first day of preschool. On this day all the parents and children who are new to the preschool arrive at the same time. Parents stay with their children during the adjustment period. They take care of their children, feed them, play with them and are generally involved with the tasks involving their children. The teachers are available to plan the day, distribute tasks, and to get to know the children and parents.

Participation Adjustment is based on the belief that parents' own security, curiosity and excitement over this new situation will have a positive effect on their children. As parents are fully involved from the first day, they gain understanding and security from knowing how the day is organized and what occurs in the preschool. They get to know the staff and also the other children and their parents.

Play



Play is the ideal method for increasing childrens' overall development, imagination, thinking skills, creativity and perception as they begin to discover the world around them. Childrens' play can be classified into four main categories depending on content and pedagogy/ educational value.

1. Sensory and Movement. Within this category there are many games and activities that develop the senses (touch, smell and taste.) These also include movement games (outdoor play, walking, gymnastics, dance, etc.)
2. Creative and Building. Within this category are games and activities that develop creativity; such as painting, coloring and clay modeling, These also include building activities using a variety of materials.
3. Role play and Imagination. In these games children take on roles that vary from their everyday life, such as doctors, nurses, police etc.
4. Rule games. These games are based on following rules, such as card games, board games, etc.

Outdoor activities / útivera

Outdoor activities are an important factor in preschool, where motor skills and play are held in high regard. Most preschools offer children outdoor activities every day, sometimes twice a day. During outdoor activities the children have access to the preschool grounds, or the children and teachers will go for a long or short trip in the neighborhood of the preschool.



Quality time / samverustundir

During quality time the teacher and children sit down together for some quiet time. This may include singing, reading or discussions about what interests them.

Group work / hópastarf

During group work children are divided into groups depending on either age or ability. In each group there are a certain number of children and one group leader. Group work is usually one to two times a week. Group work involves the children working on a chosen topic or theme over a long or short period.

Children's last year of preschool

Most preschools offer a specific program for children who are in their final year of preschool. These children do various research projects, learning activities, go on field trips, and do other exciting work. Emphasis is placed on working with children's general knowledge and skills in various ways.

Youngest children

The youngest children's teaching is based on the belief that they need physical contact, affection, stability and security. Attention is focused on play, and on awakening interests in a diverse and creative environment. Each day has its own fixed timetable so the children feel secure in their environment.

Children's clothing

Children's clothing needs to be suitable for the various activities that occur during the day. It is important that children bring spare clothes to school, both for outdoor and indoor activities. All clothing must be clearly marked with the child's name. Parents of children who use diapers must bring them to the preschool, unless otherwise specified. Children spend time outdoors when the weather permits. It is therefore essential that they have good outdoor clothing. Parents are asked to take care of their children's clothes at the beginning and end of each school day.

The absence of children from preschool

Parents must inform the school if their child will be absent, for instance, due to illness or vacation. If the child does not want to come to school, it is important to talk to the head teacher to find a solution. For security reasons it is very important that parents notify the head teacher if someone other than the parents will be dropping off or picking up their child. That person must be at least 12 years of age. Parents may allow their children to stay home from preschool, but they must always inform the child's department head.

Incidents/accidents and insurance

An accident or incident can always happen with a group of children. All children who attend a school in Akureyri are insured against accidents during the school day. If a child needs medical assistance due to an accident during school hours, the teacher will call the parents. In case of a serious injury, an ambulance is called. If a child has to be taken to the emergency room or dentist the preschool will pay for this first appointment. If further appointments are needed due to the incident, the parents will pay, but they can apply for reimbursement from their insurance company. For more information, please contact your insurance company. If a child's personal item is damaged, such as glasses or clothing, the parents will pay the cost. If the damage is linked to any irresponsibility of a school staff member, the school covers all costs.



Illness

Preschool is intended for healthy children. When children suffer from an infectious illness they must remain at home until they have recuperated, that is, without a fever for at least 1 – 2 days. When they return to school, they may be exempt from outdoor activities for 1 – 2 days, depending on the circumstances of each individual. Parents

should discuss this with the head teacher.

Food intolerance or food allergy

Children in preschool are given food and drink. If a child has an intolerance or allergy to some foods, it is important that the teachers are informed. A medical certificate must also be submitted. In such cases, an alternative food or drink is offered.



Confidentiality and Requirements

All staff is bound by confidentiality, but this does not cover incidents in which staff are obligated to report information due to the Law of Child Protection.

Parental Cooperation

Preschool teachers believe that good cooperation between parents and teachers is the key to children feeling secure in the school environment. Both teachers and parents need to provide information on the daily well-being of the children. It should be noted that even a small event in the life of a child can cause them heartache, and change their behavior and general well-being.

Parental conversations / interviews:

Parents are invited for a conversation or interview with the teacher once a year. This includes discussing their child's well-being, development and needs. Parents can always request an interview, or request extra discussions if needed.

Presentation of work in school or department:

In the Autumn, parents are invited to the school to look at the school curriculum, plan and the department's schedule for coming season. Parents are always welcome to visit the school and to participate in the activities being carried out.

Parent board

There is a parent board in operation at each preschool. The aim of this is to strengthen ties between parents and teachers, and to increase parental involvement in school activities and ensure that the welfare of the children is being met. All parents automatically become members when their children begin preschool.

Parent council

According to the 11th article about preschools (Number 90/2008) parents should be elected to be on the parent council of the preschool. The council should include a minimum of three parents. The role of the parent council includes discussions about preschool matters, and feedback to preschool staff/principal and the school board about the school curriculum and other issue relating to the school. It also includes monitoring the implementation of future programs and presenting them to parents. The council also expresses the views and ideas of the parents to school administrators and the school board, and works with the Principal of the preschool in the interests of the children and preschool.

