

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE DRAFT LAW



QUALITY

Which childcare organisations must use a preschool education program?

Only childcare centers that offer daycare, will be required to use a preschool education program. This obligation therefore does not apply to host parent care, out-of-school care and flexible care. All forms of childcare must stimulate the development of children in the areas of language, (preparatory) science, motor skills and social-emotional skills. How an organization does this should be evident from the activity program. Think for example, of activities such as reading aloud, guided play and sports. This has been clarified in the proposal for the new law.

Which program for preschool education must the daycare use?

The program BES(t) 4 kids facilitates an implementation process of Kaleidoscoop / High Scope, but in principle an organisation is free to choose the program that will be offered. This has been clarified in the draft law.

A varied activity program is hardly possible in out-of-school care due to the large amount of homework.

The draft law includes the requirement that child care organisations must provide a varied activity program. This means that out-of-school care should not only consist of homework supervision, but that there is sufficient availability of other activities. At the moment, children seem to have a lot of homework from school, which makes it almost impossible to organise other activities due to lack of time. This requires consultation and coordination with the primary schools to ensure that this requirement is met. The Public Entity will therefore put this subject on the agenda of the island pedagogical network, on behalf of the BES(t) 4 kids program.

What is regulated for children with a need for care?

One of the departure points of the draft law is that children can make use of childcare, including children who need extra support or care. Childcare organisations are therefore enabled to accommodate and supervise care children within their own organization as much as possible. We call this inclusive care. In pilot projects on each island, it will be investigated how inclusive childcare can be realized, how the childcare organisations can use specialized expertise and facilities needed to support care children and what the costs are. At the same time, the policy development needed to organise the care structure, will take place. Based on the results of the pilot projects and the elaboration of the care structure, the public entities and the central government will establish (financial) agreements in a specific regulation. This subject is therefore not yet elaborated in the proposal for the new law.

FINANCING

Why should parents pay the parental contribution to the central government instead of the childcare provider?

When the law is in force, parents will make agreements with the childcare organisation about the care of their child(ren), as it is now. Those agreements will be recorded, just as they are now. What will change is that parents will pay the parental contribution to the RCN unit SZW, instead of to the childcare organisation. The RCN unit SZW then pays the reimbursement for the costs of childcare (which are much higher than the parental contribution) to the childcare organisations in one go. This has several advantages:

- Parents can start paying according to their means, so that childcare is accessible to all parents. Low-income parents are eligible for a reduced rate. They can submit an application for this to the RCN SZW unit on the island where they live. This way, the childcare organisation does not know what income the parent has.

- To make it easier to pay the parental contribution, parents can choose to have this settled against the child benefit they receive each month from SZW. This relieves parents of a monthly administrative burden.
- Childcare organisations receive certainty about the payment of the childcare allowance for the costs of childcare, regardless of what parents (can) pay. Childcare centers and host parents no longer have to worry about whether parents pay their bill (on time). The risk then lies with the government.
- An additional advantage of having parents pay the RCN unit SZW is that there is a check on the report (of the number of children and half-days) by childcare organizations.

Is the childcare allowance for childcare organisations sufficient, does it cover all extra costs?

The departure point in determining the amount of the child care allowance is that all regular costs of childcare can be paid with it. Thus also the extra costs that arise as a result of the requirements in the law. Examples are the costs for (sports) activities, healthy food, better salaries for professionals and extra care during school vacations.

Is it allowed to generate additional income?

It is not allowed to charge parents an additional parental contribution, or to charge fees for certain activities. Also, parents may not be charged a registration fee. However, a child care organisation may raise funds or organise a fundraise event. But even a fundraising campaign may not lead to children whose parents do not participate, not being able to participate in the childcare or in the activities financed by said fundraising. This has been clarified in the draft law.

If a parent does not pay the parental contribution, does that affect the childcare allowance that the childcare provider receives from the government?

No, if the parent has not paid the parental contribution after three months, the RCN-Unit SZW will settle the parental contribution with the child benefit. This means that the parental contribution is still paid, that the child can remain in the daycare and that the childcare organisation receives the childcare allowance. In exceptional cases where settlement is not possible (for example if the parent does not receive child benefit), this will have consequences for the childcare allowance. If a parent refuses to make up for the payment arrears, the government can decide that this family can no longer use childcare. At that time, the childcare allowance that a childcare organisation receives for this child also stops. Organisations will be informed about this in due time.

How is the amount of parental contribution determined?

According to the draft law parents have to pay for the childcare. The amount of the parental contribution is determined by the central government after consultation with the public entity. It will be a limited contribution because we want the childcare to be affordable for all parents. The amount will probably be between \$100 and \$150 per month for fulltime use of daycare, and between \$50 and \$75 for out-of-school care. Parents with a low income can be partially compensated by RCN unit SZW. For them, the contribution per month will be approximately \$40 for daycare and \$25 for out-of-school care. These reduced amounts are roughly equal to the costs that a parent would incur for meals, diapers and activities. Effectively, then, childcare is more or less for free. If a parent is also unable to pay the reduced parental contribution, the parent can apply to the Public Entity to reimburse the payment of the parental contribution.

What will happen later if I have questions or a complaint about the financing?

RCN unit SZW will implement the scheme. Childcare organisations and parents can contact the RCN unit SZW on their own island to ask questions about the financing, to supply requested information, and to report complaints.