

City impression Amsterdam
February 2019

Number of inhabitants in Amsterdam: 854.000.

Number of nationalities: 170 nationalities, of which the largest groups from the Netherlands (720.000), United Kingdom (10.000), Turkey, Morocco, Italy, Germany, United States, France and Spain (5.700).

Number of children 0-6 years: 63.000, of whom 28.000 without migration background (1st and 2nd generation).

Use of day care 0-6 years: 27.000 children, of whom 20.000 in crèches, 8.000 in extramural day care and 600 with host families.

Number of toddlers 2,5 - 4 years: 13.000, of whom 6.000 (46%) in pre-school education

Use of pre-school: 37% toddlers with (language) deficiency, 63% without (language) deficiency.

Number of day care centres with and without pre-school: 536 locations of which half with pre-school education.

Number of primary schools with and without early school education: 206 schools, of which 200 with a form of early school education.

Ambition

It is Amsterdam's ambition to realize a basic provision for toddlers which is of high quality, fits in with the primary school and the needs of the parents, a provision that is accessible to all toddlers of parents, working or not, with and without (language) deficiencies in every neighbourhood of the city. Parents pay an income related parental contribution. National legislation and rules do not yet make it possible to offer a provision to toddlers that is free of charge for everyone, like primary school.

16 hour provision

All toddlers from 2 - 4 years are allowed to attend a pre-school for 16 hours per week. This used to be 12 hours per week for children with a deficiency and 6 hours for children without a deficiency.

The number of hours for provision for toddlers has not only increased; the provision has also gained in quality.

- Heterogeneous toddler groups, which reflect the city's diversity. Since all children can attend during the same number of hours, the groups become more stable and more mixed. Fewer changes in the group result in greater emotional safety. Attendance is not influenced by the fact that parents receive an extra allowance or the fact that the child is eligible for pre-school. Children with various backgrounds and home situations are allowed to attend the same pre-school provisions.
- A stable environment for development, in which professionals can tailor the provision to the children's needs. On the basis of their observations pedagogues get a clear idea about individual children's developmental needs and challenges for the group as a whole.

Professional staff and organisations

Amsterdam has invested a lot in professionalization of staff, which proved successful. As the requirements are higher than the national ones, Amsterdam professional pre-school and early school staff are well trained and permanent education is the norm. Starting professionals have basic knowledge about the learning and development of young children and the skills to support and stimulate this development.

The members of a pre-school team have a mix of specialities and training. Staff members can acquire further qualifications and specialise in themes that fit in with the children at their location. In each pre-school group there is a graduate, who raises the quality as a coach or as a senior pedagogue.

The responsibility for the maintenance of quality and further staff development lies with the organisations involved in the actual work. This requires vision and good facilities at the organisational level. The supervisor verifies if quality elements have been realised, the organisation shows how this has been realised.

Tailor made provisions

Amsterdam's provisions for toddlers are tailor made. That means that there is a range of educational provisions aimed at the broad development of all children and that there is specific attention for children with a (risk at) deficiency.

In pre-school the broad development of children is seen to. This must cover the domains of language, arithmetic and motor and socio-emotional development. A child must have become acquainted with these subjects and skills if it is to make a smooth start at primary school. The developments are registered in a tracking system.

Transfer

For all children in pre-school a transfer document is made for the primary school. In this transfer document it is shown how the child developed in pre-school and what the primary school could or should take into account. When there is concern about children the transfer is done orally, preferably together with the parents.

Care

Tailor made provisions also mean extra care for children who need it. Pedagogues identify the need for care, the organisation is responsible for organising the necessary support, for example through extra coaching for the pedagogues or by supplying an extra pedagogue. Organisations for assistance to young people can also offer support to groups in day care centres. Amsterdam has also developed provisions for children who, as a result of a disorder or a deficiency, cannot attend a regular pre-school group,

- pre-school-plus groups: groups of fewer than 16 children for extra attention
- Medical Pedagogical Centre/Pre-school and early school (MOC/VVE) groups: analysis/treatment group for children about whom there is a lot of concern and about whom it is not yet clear what the matter is.
- Asylum seekers group: group at a centre for asylum seekers for children from 0-6 years.

Parental involvement

Parental involvement is the joint responsibility of parents and the pre-school provision or school to stimulate the child's development best. Parental involvement at the pre-school provision and early school is characterized by being tailor made, at the location level as well as at the city level.

Cooperation with the primary school

In Amsterdam we try to achieve a continuous development from 2 years to the end of primary school. The pre-school and early school act on the basis of one pedagogical vision and create a continuous line of development together. In some schools a pre-school pedagogue works in the infants' group of the early school (combined functions) to stimulate the continuous development

and to improve cooperation. Schools and pre-schools choose the partner they want to work with. The municipality only formulates standards concerning the quality of both parties and the quality of the cooperation.